

Questionnaire – Formal Consultation

Wash Cockle Fishery 2022



Inshore Fisheries and
Conservation Authority

This consultation closes at midday on Monday 19 June 2023

We are seeking the views of Wash fishermen about the management measures proposed for a hand-work cockle fishery this year.

We would like your views on all the management measures, but there are some key areas we would like feedback on:

- Revised Total Allowable Catch calculation;
- Measures for protecting small cockles;
- Closed areas (seal haul-out areas and closures on the Thief)
- Operating times for the fishery.

This questionnaire is intended for you to have your say on our proposals and to inform a decision on the matter.

The information you provide will be processed in accordance with our privacy notice found here: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/consultations/>

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our consultation.

Please return completed questionnaires to the address below. You are welcome to provide a written response instead of filling out a questionnaire, also to the address below.

The CEO
Eastern IFCA
Unit 6 North Lynn Business Village
Bergen Way
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE30 2JG

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Section 1. Your Details

Please provide your details below. This will enable us to provide specific support if it is requested and to contact you about your answers if we require further clarification.

Full name:

Operating port:

Vessel name(s) and PLN:

Address:

Telephone (landline):

Mobile:

Email:

Section 2: Revised TAC calculation

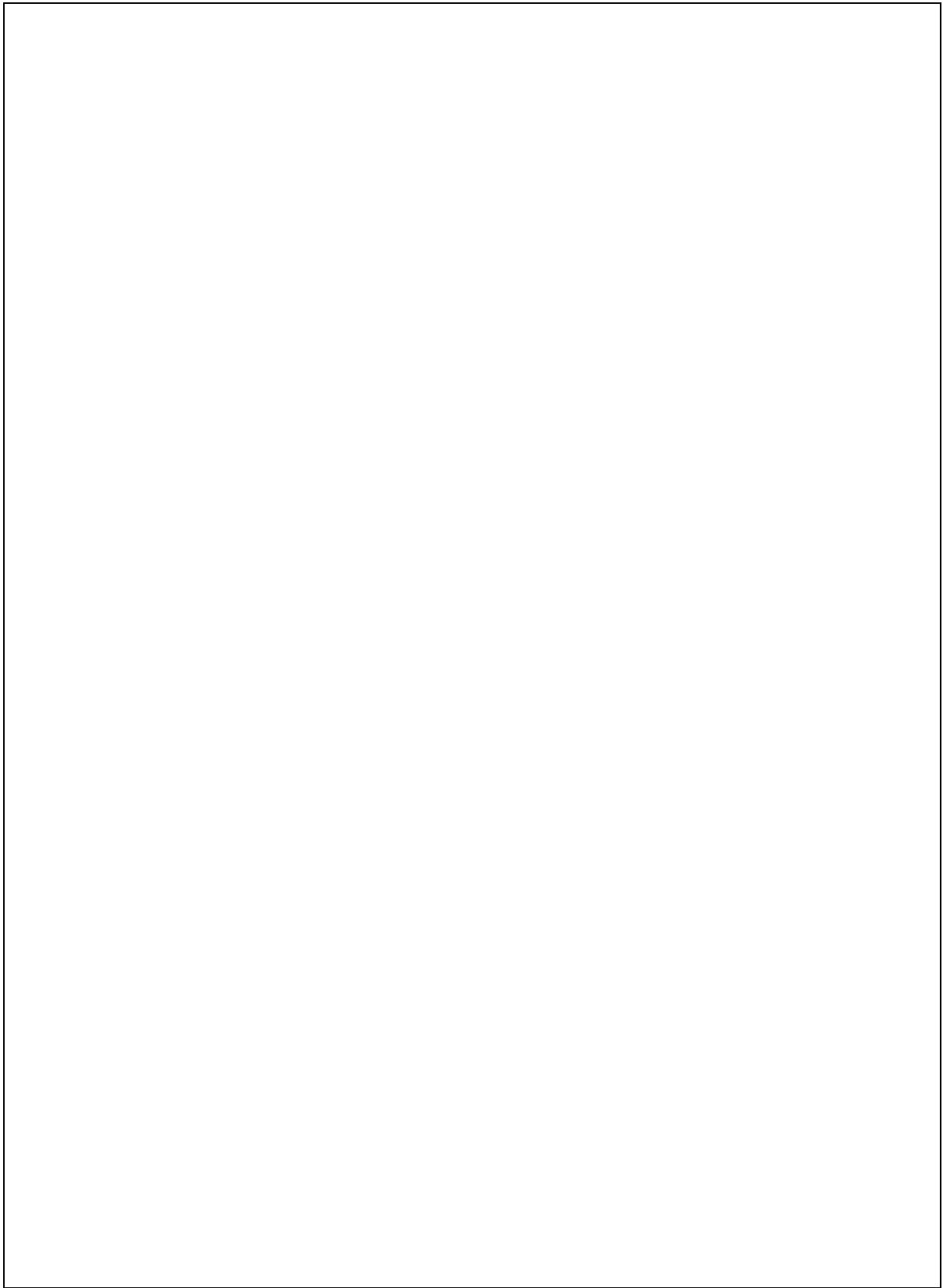
We are considering revising the way we calculate the TAC. The current model bases the TAC on the quantity of adult cockles (14mm or greater) in the stock which is historically the minimum size which has been targeted in the fishery. However, since around 2008, adult cockle stocks have been affected by atypical mortality and the fishery has relied more on smaller cockles. We have investigated a revised method for determining the TAC and produced a detailed report on the matter. In summary, it is proposed that the TAC is determined as 1/6 of the total cockle stock this year as a trial and the key findings are set out below:

- The TAC would better reflect cockle stocks available to the fishery.
- Risks to stock would be lower, as the TAC will be set based on the cockle sizes actually fished, reducing risk of over-fishing small cockle in years when the TAC would otherwise be too high.
- The TAC may be higher or lower compared to calculating as 1/3 of adult stocks in any given year. Table 1 (below) sets out what the TAC would be under both models over the last three years.
- Overall, slightly more cockle would have been made available to the fishery since 2008 if the 1/6 of total stock calculation had been used.

TAC calculation	Year		
	2021	2022	2023
1/3 adult stock	5283 tonnes	2742 tonnes	1152 tonnes
1/6 total stock	3359 tonnes	2285 tonnes	2937 tonnes
Estimate taken (based on return forms)	3485 tonnes	2456 tonnes	n/a

We would like to know your views as to whether the TAC should be determined using this new model and any concerns you have about this.

Do you think that we should adopt the new TAC calculation this year on a trial basis? <i>(please tick)</i>	Yes	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the space below to provide any comments or thoughts to support your view (space provided on the following page)		



Section 3: Measures to mitigate risk of removing small cockles

The following measures are proposed to be included in the conditions for this year:

1. It is prohibited to remove from the fishery any cockles unless such have been sorted using a hand-held net which is capable of rejecting the majority of cockles which are under 10mm (width) and / or are of the 2022-year class of cockles;
2. Shovels, spades or any other implement which are capable of moving cockles without also sorting them, must not be used prior to them being sorted for size in accordance with the above;
3. Cockles of less than 10mm should be left on the cockle beds and not landed. Where cockles of less than 10mm are landed excessively, the Authority will consider closing the fishery or parts thereof.

These are in line with the voluntary measures implemented last year but we are seeking to include them as formal measures this year (i.e. as conditions). It is felt that these measures, combined with proposed closures for higher density small cockles, will be effective in protecting stock which will form the basis of future fisheries.

Do you agree with the proposed management measures?	yes	No
<i>(please tick)</i>		
Please use the space below to provide any comments or thoughts to support your view (please continue on a separate sheet if needed)		

Continuation sheet

Section 4: Closures

Protection of Year-0 Cockles

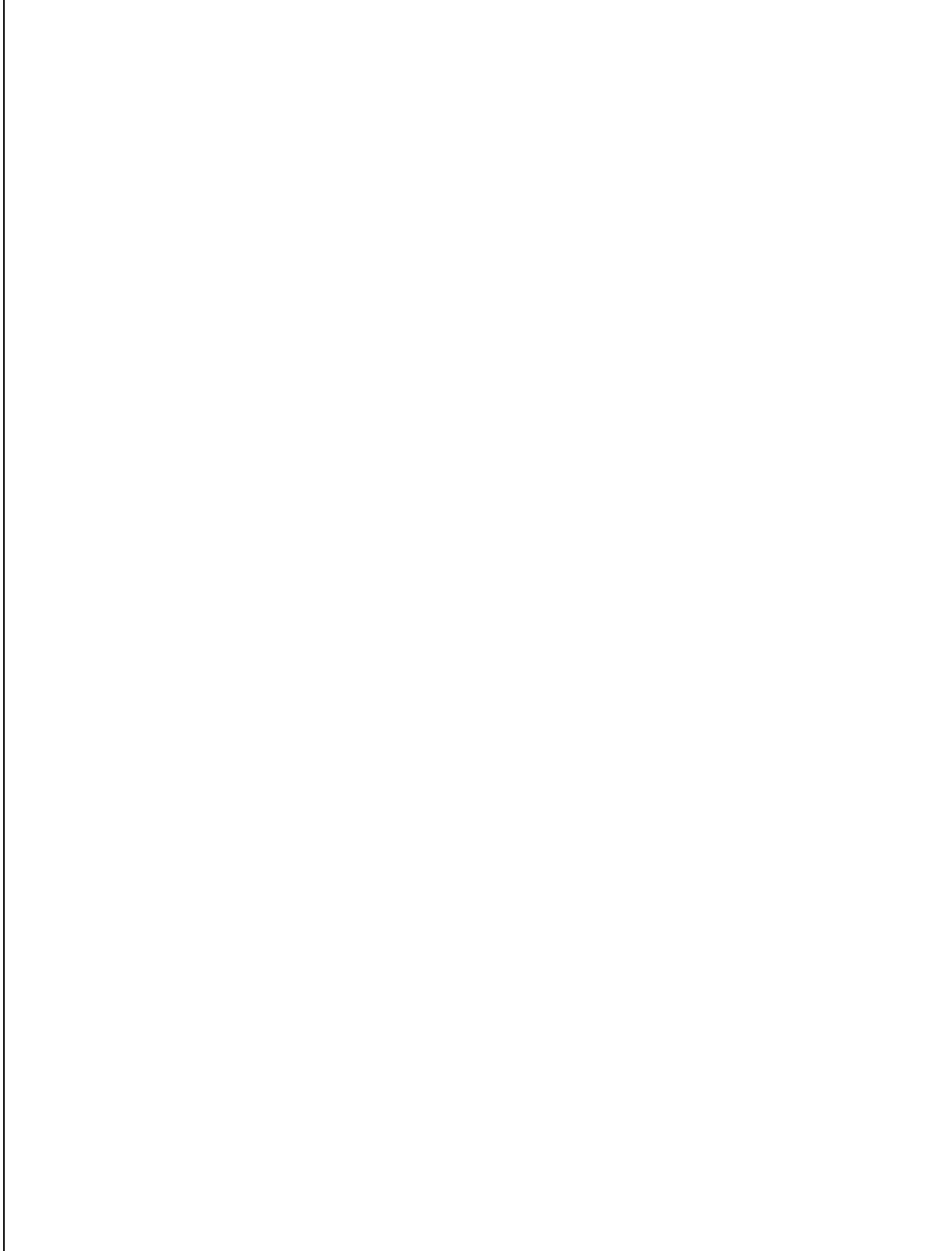
Charts have been included which show proposed closures to protect high-density year-0 cockles. With the exception of the closures on the Thief, these follow the normal approach of closing areas where Year-0 cockles are at densities of more than 1000 individuals per m². These area at Enclosure 1, Charts 1 to 3.

In addition, we are seeking feedback on three options for closures with respect to closures on the Thief. The three potential options are at Enclosure 1, Charts 4 to 6.

Preferred option for closures on the Thief Sand (<i>please tick</i>)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Please use the space below to provide any comments o the proposed closures.			

Closure for seal Haul-out sites

It is likely that closures will be needed for the protection of sea haul-out sites. Enclosure 2 shows where seal haul-out sites overlap with areas open to the cockle fishery (the hatched shapes on the chart). The areas do not appear to overlap with any high density areas of cockles. Please use the space below to provide any comments in relation to these areas.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for providing comments in relation to the areas mentioned in the text above.

Section 5: Operating times

Draft operating times have been developed using the agreed principles as follows:

- 4 days per week
- Minimum tide height of 6 metres
- Weekdays and preferably Mon to Thursday

At the recent Wash Forum, stakeholders identified that often these principles result in the loss of fishing opportunity. We would like your views on the operating times generated from the above principles and feedback on their suitability.

Do you agree with the principles for deciding operating times? <i>(please tick)</i>	yes	No
Please use the space below to provide any comments or thoughts to support your view. Please also provide any suggestions for alternative dates or principles. <i>(please continue on a separate sheet if needed)</i>		

Continuation sheet

Section 6: Other management measures

Please use the space below to provide feedback on any other elements of the proposals for this years fishery.