

Opportunities for
Inshore Fisheries
and Marine
Environment

FUTURE MANAGEMENT IN ENGLAND

Association of Inshore Fisheries
and Conservation Authorities

Association of



IFCA



FORWARD

This position paper was developed by the chief operational officers of the ten Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) and formally adopted by the National Association of IFCAs on 7 March 2017.

Councillor John Lamb
Chair of Association of IFCAs

FUTURE MANAGEMENT IN ENGLAND

This policy paper outlines the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority's (IFCAs) collective recommendations for inshore fisheries management reform following the EU referendum and subsequent negotiations. As existing inshore fisheries managers for English coastal waters, IFCA's are well placed to highlight and identify opportunities for reform, development and enhancement of the fisheries resources, the commercial industry and the marine environment.



OVERVIEW



The implications of the UK leaving the European Union presents numerous challenges and risks for the United Kingdom¹. Despite this, it represents an unprecedented opportunity to determine the future for inshore fisheries, the marine environment and its management within England; to create globally some of the most productive and socially economically sustainable fisheries within a healthy and biologically diverse marine environment, managed through locally accountable community focussed bodies.



Through recent domestic legislation (Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009) and following a century of development and learning the UK Government established a system of regional inshore management through the development of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). An opportunity exists to build upon current foundations and the regional management model presently in operation throughout English inshore waters, expanding their remit to the 12nm boundary and incorporating appropriate partner duties to develop IFCAs into more efficient and economical regional inshore managers.



Since taking on their management functions in 2011 the IFCAs have established a successful track record of implementation and delivery of tailored fisheries management and marine environmental solutions, promoting sustainable access to resources, increasing opportunities for local fishermen, whilst maximising economic and social potential². This has been achieved in the context of broad stakeholder engagement at a local level and well developed consultation processes.



The regional IFCA model has demonstrated its capability of supporting and implementing national policy and priority workstreams in both fisheries and marine environmental protection, effectively and efficiently delivered through collaborative action, for example delivery of the revised approach to European Marine Site management, demonstrating that regional management systems can remain effective on a national scale.

¹ Brexit: What next for UK fisheries? House of Commons briefing paper CBP7669. July 2016

² IFCA report to Parliament on conduct and operations 2010-2014. March 2015

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1

Where feasible, fisheries and environmental marine management should be developed and operationalised at an appropriate scale, enabling community participation, transparent governance and the opportunity to influence decision structures³. The existing governance structures within IFCAs demonstrate that proportionate representation by commercial fishers and the development of specialist industry working groups can lead to the introduction of effective tailored management maximising potential of the industry.

2

The guiding principles of sustainable stocks, reference points, MSY targets and protection of vulnerable habitats and species from damaging activities⁴ are recognised, valued and embedded in management action. Sound evidence should remain at the heart of management decisions and be scaled accorded to needs such that mobile and transboundary stocks remain well managed and localised stocks are afforded detailed management.

3

Natural Capital and the principles of ecosystem management should underpin and be central to the future direction of regional fisheries and marine environmental management⁵. Where possible, this should ensure that the long term maximum socio economic benefits are realised from the marine environment and the fisheries it supports.

4

Fisheries resources should be allocated with consideration of socio-economic, economic and environmental factors, whilst realising the potential of natural capital and supporting blue growth. Protection for vulnerable inshore fishing communities with limited fishing opportunities should be prioritised and promoted.

³ Symes, D. Inshore fisheries management in England and Wales: Facing up to the challenges of the 21st Century. English Nature research report 448. 2002.

⁴ FAO. Code of conduct for responsible fisheries. 1994.

⁵ Defra. Review of marine nature conservation. Working group report to Government. 2004.

THE REGIONAL APPROACH

1

Local stakeholder participation in governance structures has been demonstrated to provide bespoke guidance and the identification of opportunities to tailor regional management. This places responsibility and decision making at the correct local level to promote effective action for the environment, society and economy.

2

The unique and diverse nature of the current IFCA funding structure supports localised democratic accountability and contributes to the English national marine capacity through the deployment of locally owned assets and workforces. The regional model has been shown to be cost-effective and efficient in consideration of our delivery of fisheries and marine environmental management and wider national enforcement responsibilities⁶.

3

The regulatory framework supporting the regional model affords significant agility for the implementation of immediate management responses providing a unique capacity to address emergent issues and to tailor actions precisely to them.

4

IFCAs have demonstrated that effective partnerships and collaboration can be developed with statutory partners, NGO's, academia and the fishing industry. Opportunities exist for the IFCAs as inshore managers to develop and expand these partnerships, playing a greater role in coordinating statutory enforcement, management research and monitoring duties in inshore waters, which could avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and prove considerably more cost-effective than existing practices.

⁶ IFCA report to Parliament on conduct and operations 2010-2014. March 2015

THE REGIONAL APPROACH

► 5

English coastal waters are amongst the most productive, diverse, intensively used and complex to manage in the world. These support a wide range of commercial industries and recreational users encompassing substantial European, national and local inshore fisheries concerns.

► 6

Regionalised governance and tailored management solutions are internationally recognised as supporting more productive and effective inshore management solutions than through a single centralised approach or by multi-national governance structures over large sea areas that encompass both inshore and offshore areas⁷.

► 7

The existing IFCA localised governance structure and decision making model encompasses representation from a wide range of local stakeholders and sectors, providing tangible accountability for management decisions. The governance system is transparent, accessible and answerable to the local community.

⁷ Symes, D. Inshore fisheries management in England and Wales: Facing up to the challenges of the 21st Century. English Nature research report 448. 2002.



BOUNDARIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

► 1

Community relationships with existing IFCA boundaries are generally characterised by natural divisions which allow for management on a cohesive and effective regional scale.

► 2

Offshore boundary realignment of the existing IFCA model could maximise the economic potential of fisheries resources whilst supporting the wider implementation of sustainable fisheries management and marine conservation plans⁸. The IFCAs have unanimously agreed in principle, that they have the potential to encompass the 6nm to 12nm region. This would be subject to appropriate strengthening and resourcing, but could deliver a significantly more cost effective and efficient overall inshore management service.

⁸ Symes, D. Inshore fisheries management in England and Wales: Facing up to the challenges of the 21st Century. English Nature research report 448. 2002.

NORTH EASTERN GUARDIAN III

Fisheries Patrol





WIDER CONSIDERATIONS

1

Opportunities exist within fisheries reform for the reallocation of fisheries resources, maximising the economic and socio-economic benefits as well as the viability of the English inshore fishing fleet through improved diversification and access options within territorial waters and beyond. The implementation of the CFP by the UK government has negatively impacted the inshore fleet; limiting access options, reducing diversification opportunities and has concentrated effort on non-TAC species such as shellfish. IFCAs could be well placed to adopt management of the under 10m fleet within 12nm in a reformed system, where tailored regional management solutions could maximise economic and socio-economic potential.

2

Monitoring and compliance responsibilities could be more cost effectively delivered through full incorporation into an expanded IFCA regional management model. This would remove unnecessary duplication of responsibilities, supporting more efficient deployment of resources and strengthen national enforcement capacity. Overlapping enforcement duties with the Marine Management Organisation and Environment Agency could be incorporated into the IFCA model as lead inshore fisheries managers within the 12nm, delivering more cost-effective and efficient enforcement, whilst maintaining existing service levels.

3

The continual renewal and enhancement of the IFCA fleet has generated numerous offshore assets strategically placed throughout the English coastline. Opportunities exist for closer collaboration with appropriate partner agencies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, where offshore components of the WFD, MSFD and MPA condition assessments could be more efficiently co-ordinated and cost effectively delivered.

4

The successful assessment process developed and implemented during the review of commercial fisheries management in Europe Marine Sites could be extended to incorporate additional offshore MPAs, providing a more cohesive approach to the review and management of these sites through the expansion of the IFCA model to the 12nm boundary

5

Opportunities exist to further develop and enhance standing IFCA national governance structures to strengthen the coordination and cohesion of 'in house' collective national policy delivery.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Dr Stephen Bolt

Chief Executive Officer
Association Of IFCAs
127 Nowton Road
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 2NH

www.association-ifca.org.uk

