



## Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Annual Environment and Research Plan

2014-2015

Sarah Aftergood, Environmental Officer



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Northumberland IFCA

8 Ennerdale Road

Blyth, Northumberland

NE24 4RT

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## 1. Introduction

Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (N IFCA) is one of the ten Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities in England created under Section 150 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA, 2009) providing inshore fisheries and conservation management. The N IFCA was fully vested on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and its district extends along the East Coast of England. The NIFCA District encompasses the rivers in the district up to the national tidal limit as well as the estuarine and coastal waters around Northumberland, from a line drawn through the centre of the River Tyne to the Scottish border out to 6 nautical miles from baselines. The N IFCA district neighbours the North Eastern IFCA and with the Scottish Government.



The Authority's district contains both EU and UK Marine Protected Areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserves as well as a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). N IFCA will need to develop management measures for these sites.

The IFCA Vision is a shared vision for all IFCAs where we "will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry".

This Annual Research Plan sets out the research projects and work priorities for N IFCA between April 2014 and April 2015. The research will be based on the priorities outlined in the N IFCA Annual Plan 2012-2013. There were five main areas of focus detailed in the annual plan and these are:

- The development of Marine Protected Area management plans
- Fishing activities and European Marine Sites: Bait Digging, Potting and Netting
- Marine Conservation Zones
- The long term sustainability and management of shellfisheries within the district
- The assessment and development of recreational sea angling (RSA) within the district.

This research plan has been produced to outline the research activities needed to be undertaken to collect data to inform these work priorities and to provide a sound evidence base to aid the Authority in its decision making process both in terms of achieving successful and sustainable management and a protected marine environment.

## 2. Research Resources and Capabilities

### **Northumberland IFCA Environment Team**

Northumberland IFCA has 15 members of staff including a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Officer, 2 Deputy Officers, an Environmental Officer, 6 IFCO's and 5 Office staff.

The Members of the Environmental team are:

Deputy Chief Officer (Environmental)

Jon Green

[jon.green@nifca.gov.uk](mailto:jon.green@nifca.gov.uk)

Environmental Officer

Sarah Aftergood

[sarah.aftergood@nifca.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.aftergood@nifca.gov.uk)

Each member of the environment team brings a variety of qualifications, specific skills, expertise and experience in conducting research and have the capability to collect analyse and interpret a wide range of scientific and research data. All have a background in marine biology and bring wide ranging expertise from habitat mapping to underwater video analysis; management of shellfisheries to developing MPA management plans, stock assessment to appropriate assessments. Officers sit on a variety of focus and working groups in particular relating to national committees and IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG). All IFCOs both in the enforcement team and environment team will work together to ensure that research priorities outlined in this plan will be delivered. Strong working relationships have been developed with academic institutions in the district which have proved to be very beneficial and researchers, students and interns work with the N IFCA officers to help deliver certain aspects of the research work undertaken.

### **Northumberland IFCA Research Equipment**

Northumberland IFCA has a variety of equipment which may be utilised to undertake research to fulfil the work priorities outline in this plan. Officers are skilled in a range of survey methodologies and analytical and reporting skills. Details of the equipment including vessels available to undertake research can be found in Table 1 below:

Item Description	Brief Description of Use
Patrol Vessel-St. Oswald	Used for enforcement duties
6 m Shore Rib Delta 1	Used for enforcement duties with St. Oswald
<p>7m Shore Rib Bravo 1 (towed by Authority Landrover)</p> 	Used for survey work and enforcement
1 estuary survey seine net	Beach seine net surveys for juvenile fish
Inflatable flat bottom boat with outboard engine	Used for estuary surveys
2 double "D" estuary survey fyke nets	Used for juvenile fish surveys.
75 metre umbilical surface cable and a stainless tow cable	Mapping reef features in district-ground truthing
Starfish 452F sidescan and 50 metre tow cable	Mapping Sea bed features in district-ground truthing
<p>Surface box for camera, 7 inch LCD video screen, GPS overlay, Lyn Hawk video enhancer (with own power source), Pinnacle dazzle H.D. screen capture, Getac fully rugged laptop with 1 terabyte additional storage.</p> 	Mapping reef features in district
<p>1 GoPro black edition HD camera in Sea Pro housing, LED light source, 2 X laser scalers live video feed.</p> 	Mapping reef features in district
<p>1 Sony HDR XR260 8.9 megapixel in SeaPro housing frame with LED light and 2 X laser scalers, towing system, live video surface feed.</p>	Mapping reef features in district

3. Research and Environmental Projects for 2014-2015.

Task	Area	Frequency	Resource Requirements	Potential for Collaborative Work	Additional Resource Requirements
<b>Core Work</b>					
Mussel Survey	Fenham Flats, located in Lindisfarne SPA/SSSI.	Annual in March	-NIFCA Officers (Enforcement/Environmental) -Land rover -Sieves -shovel	-Natural England -Environment Agency -EMS Officer	Additional travel for volunteers and staff.
Lobster survey	Throughout NIFCA district	Survey 4 boats every month for the next 2 years.	-NIFCA Officers -Participating fishermen	-Marine Management Organisation -Newcastle University	
Aln Estuary Survey	Lower part of the Aln estuary, parallel to Alnmouth	Bi-Annual in May/June and September/October to correspond to migration and spawning seasons	-NIFCA officers -Fyke Nets -2 Seine nets -NIFCA boat	-Natural England -The Rivers Trust -Environment Agency -Local stakeholders and residents of Alnmouth	
Recreational Sea Angling	Throughout NIFCA district	Survey recreational anglers 3-5 times a month	-NIFCA officers -GIS software -Survey forms	-Newcastle University -Cefas -Natural England	
<b>EMS Review-Amber sites</b>					
Assessment of netting activity – all sites	Throughout the NIFCA District-concentrate on hot spots and where netting is known to	There is a flexible time frame as this is a new area of research. Therefore frequency	-NIFCA officers -NIFCA boats	-Natural England -Environment Agency -National Trust -Wildlife trust	

	occur.	will occur when nets are being used to gather as much information as possible about this activity in the district.		-RSPB	
Assessment of bait collection activity including crabs – all sites	Throughout the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC.	An MPhil student at Newcastle University will be assessing the activity for the next year.	The student may use NIFCA personnel for knowledge if they choose.	-Natural England -The fishing industry -NIFCA	
Assessment of potting	Throughout the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC on subtidal reef.	PhD student at Newcastle University completing this work for the next 3 years. Assessments will take place mostly throughout the summer.	The student may use the NIFCAs boats and equipment for assessing impacts on reefs if required.	-Natural England -Other IFCAs	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Resource Requirements</b>	<b>Potential for Collaborative Work</b>	<b>Additional Resource Requirements</b>
<b>MCZ Tranche 1</b>					
Assessment of all fishing activities including recreational (desk-top initially)	Aln Estuary MCZ	One – off initial assessment to inform management	NIFCA Environmental Officers	MMO  Fishing industry – stakeholder meetings and engagement	Meeting rooms and advertising / publicity

#### 4. Partnership Working

The Research and Environmental Projects outline the key pieces of work that will be taking place within Northumberland throughout the course of this year. Partnership working is crucial for the effectiveness for all IFCA's. Key partner organisations for the NIFCA's research and environment team include our funding authorities-Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside County Council-The Marine Management Organisation, Natural England, The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), the Environment Agency, local biodiversity partnerships, and wildlife NGOs including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Wildlife Trusts. In addition, the NIFCA benefits from collaborating with other relevant authorities on the management groups for the European Marine Sites within the district.

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