



Fish Quay, North Shields

**NIFCA CEO Mike Hardy** writes - during the summer the work of NIFCA continues to ensure a sustainable fishery and stocks in the district. Two examples are worth noting. Following on from our lobster survey project in 2014-16 where environmental IFCO Sally Stewart-Moore worked with 4 fishing vessels and their skippers in the district gathering additional data to aid management of the fishery, NIFCA is

now beginning an escape gap project. This includes the aim of working with members of the local potting fleet, trialling the voluntary use of escape gaps throughout the district, gauging attitudes to their use as well as recording catch details to assess the effectiveness of escape gaps. This study project will take place over the next 12 months and be reported on prior to any consideration by

NIFCA and consultation as to whether to bring in byelaw provision for escape gaps. We are also continuing this summer with our annual v-notching programme where around 1200 egg bearing female lobsters are returned to the sea with a "V" in their tails, thus protecting them under our Crustacea conservation byelaw. Further details can be found on the NIFCA website.

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# The Annual Amble Puffin Festival



Amble Harbour Village

On the rather blustery bank holiday Monday 30<sup>th</sup> May, 3 NIFCA Officers attended the annual Amble Puffin festival. A gazebo opposite the entrance of the Amble boat yard held the Authority's display of information about the work of NIFCA and details of the marine species which can be found in the district.

The Bravo One RIB stood proudly next to the Officers creating a crowd drawing back drop to the Authority's stand, where members of the public of all ages enjoyed learning about and even touching (with all due precautions!) the 2 lobsters (one male and one berried hen)

that rested in the fish tank at the front of the table. As the day went on the strong, cold, northerly wind began playing tricks with the gazebo and displays which had to be tied down several times but the Officers continued to battle the elements and were rewarded with a steady flow of interested adults and children. An assortment of NIFCA pens and small fluffy toys were gratefully received by many members of the public who were also braving the weather to enjoy the festival.

The day was a huge success which was enjoyed by all and the Authority is already looking forward to seeing what



fun (and weather) next year's festival brings.

Oh and not to forget that at the end of the day the two lobsters were returned alive and safely to the sea.

**Eric Balsdon, IFCO**



IFCO Willis at the NIFCA Stand



Guests viewing the Authority display met IFCO Ricky Willis and learned about the lobsters from DCIFCO Southerton at the Amble Puffin Festival

## Technical Advisory Group, (TAG)

Every 4 months, Officers from all of the IFCAs come together for the Technical Advisory Group, (TAG) meeting. This gives environmental and scientific IFCOs the opportunity to discuss issues and share research projects from their district. Environmental IFCO Vicky Rae was delighted to take part in this meeting at the Marine Stewardship Council Headquarters in London on 1st June. Each IFCA provided an update on their progress with the Article 6 (of the Habitats Regulations) MPA work, including which new management measures had been brought in by the process and future plans for MCZ management. A presentation was provided by Fabrice Stephenson from Newcastle University for his PhD research in the NIFCA district, the results of which will directly inform NIFCA's potting Appropriate Assess-

ment for the BNNC SAC and provide essential additional evidence for other IFCAs.

Talks were also provided by Natural England who are currently undertaking internal research on the available potting data and different approaches on how to measure effort. They also announced their research plans for 2016/17 for gathering evidence for informing condition and management of MPAs. Two are scheduled within the Northumberland district: 1) A desk based study looking at the accessibility for breeding sites of Grey Seals within the BNNC SAC and 2) An intertidal sediment survey with EA in Aln Estuary MCZ.

New projects promoting MPAs to the general public came from Natural England and the Marine Conservation

Society producing broadcasts of MPAs, showing video footage of the unseen marine environment and a new interactive habitat/ activity map by Sussex IFCA, which links to websites and their own Youtube channel!

An Innovative research project, FISH-FACE, which aims to use cameras on board vessels to ID, count and measure catch, without the need of an on board observer is currently seeking funding from European Maritime Fisheries Funding (EMFF). It is hoped that some vessels within the Northumberland district will want to participate, with the objective of monitoring brown crab stocks.

**Vicky Rae, EIFCO**

## Fantastic Fish from The Dales School, Blyth

Pupils from the Dales Primary School in Blyth took part in creating some fantastic artwork for an event held by the Kent and Essex IFCA in July. The children beautifully decorated some wooden fish templates which then migrated South and were displayed at the River Medway Event on Saturday 9th July. Our thanks go to the School and the pupils for their participation in this fun activity.



*Fantastic wooden fish decorated by the pupils of The Dales School, Blyth*

# The Bounty of the Sea, NIFCA Stakeholder Event



*NIFCA seafood stall at the Stakeholder event on 9th July*

On Saturday 9th July, Northumberland IFCA held an event at the Northumberland Seafood centre in Amble. Members of the public were invited to join the Officers and during the day over one hundred visitors of all ages heard about “the bounty of the sea” at the Authority’s own fish counter and learnt about the range of species that can be caught off the coast between the Tweed and the Tyne, as well as hearing about the work of NIFCA in the district, including the findings of its local lobster and mussel surveys and other areas of the NIFCA remit. Thanks to the Authority IFCOs and Vice Chairman Les Weller for helping to make this such a successful event.



*Live lobster at the Stakeholder event on 9th July*

# RIB, Camera, Action! Filming for Vera



Film crew at Farne Islands on the set of Vera



IFCO Docherty and "Vera"

Earlier this year, the Authority was approached by an Art Director from ITV looking for a RIB to be used in a scene for the new series of Vera. NIFCA were delighted with the opportunity and happy to assist with the filming of this popular TV series based in the North East.

Deputy Chief IFCO Southerton and IFCO Docherty were posted between Craster and Seahouses for three days spanning Thursday 9th and Saturday 11th June 2016.

As well as acting as a safety boat on the second day, they were also tasked with manoeuvring the RIB with actors on board and were filmed by both conventional means from land and boat and also via a drone.

The Officer's help was well received by the production crew and in turn, the IFCOs were very well tended to by the assistant directors and runners.

The days were very long (up to and above 15 hours) but the Officers involved feel that NIFCA was well represented as a body that delivers a quality service in the Northumberland district.



Filming at Longstone



Filming at Beadnell Bay



Drone used for filming

## Kayak Rescue off Blyth Bay

While out on patrol on Saturday 2nd July St Aidan and TT St Aidan (RIB) responded to a group of 3 kayak's who contacted Humber Coastguard to say that they were in difficulty off Blyth bay, struggling in the strong offshore winds. St Aidan attended the scene

and recovered an adult male along with his kayak. TT St Aidan approached 2 kayak's, one of which was towing the other as the younger of the boys was exhausted. The lad was taken onto the RIB and the kayak was towed to the beach where they were

both safely taken ashore. The second boy managed to paddle back himself and the RIB returned to St Aidan to take off the boys uncle and kayak, returning them back onto the beach. All were extremely grateful for the assistance.

# Tyne-Tees News - A Day With St Aidan



After the very successful naming ceremony of St Aidan in August 2015, NIFCA was approached by Tyne Tees News Presenter Jonny Blair who was interested in doing a feature on St Aidan and the duties and responsibilities of NIFCA.

On the sunny Monday morning of 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Chief IFCO Al Browne, Deputy Chief IFCO Mark Southerton and IFCOs Darren Graham and Eric Balsdon welcomed Jonny and Pete (cameraman) on board St Aidan with a nice cup of tea. The Authority's crew prepared St Aidan for a routine sea patrol in the southern part of its district. This patrol would include the first of the seasons 'V' Notching drops (this is NIFCA's 17<sup>th</sup> year of this project), which on this day, NIFCA had planned to release the lobsters in an area 2 miles off Cresswell.

Once St Aidan had cleared the Royal Quays Marina and was heading down the River Tyne, Jonny was given a run down of the normal tasks carried out by the officers whilst at sea - this includes monitoring the movements of all fishing vessels both commercial and recreational, recording all sightings and ensuring all have the relevant licences or permits needed to fish within the NIFCA district. The officers also have the capability to launch the on-board Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) if they need to board any vessels, or check any fishing gear.

Whilst at sea, Chief IFCO Browne sighted a number of smaller commercial fishing boats working close inshore and proceeded to manoeuvre the St Aidan alongside these boats giving the ITV crew the opportunity to see some of the local fisher-

men in action. Cameraman Pete had also brought along a Drone, which was successfully launched from the stern of St Aidan whilst off Druridge Bay resulting in some excellent footage being taken of St Aidan.

Approximately 5 hours later St Aidan entered the Tyne piers and made its way back to its mooring in the Royal Quays Marina. The ITV crew and all of their equipment were safely deposited on dry land. The feature was shown on the local ITV 6 o'clock local news on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

On behalf of the Authority a big thank you goes to both presenter Jonny Blair and his cameraman Pete for putting together an excellent feature which can be seen on the NIFCA web-site.

**Al Browne, Chief IFCO**

## Upcoming Events...

With a busy summer ahead, we hope to see you at one of the following upcoming events:

### Tall Ships Festival: 26th August - 29th August 2016

St Aidan will be present throughout this fantastic occasion and NIFCA will also have a stall in the town market square

### Wildlife Trust Event: 20th August 2016

NIFCA will also have a stall at the Northumberland Wildlife Trust event at Blagdon on 20th August

### Heritage Open Day: 10th September 2016

A NIFCA stall will also be open at the Heritage open day at Dove Marine in Cullercoats on 10th September

### And in other news...

We will also be involved in a fisheries day summer school held by Newcastle University in Blyth on 23rd August

## CONTACT US:

01670 797 676 | [nifca@nifca.gov.uk](mailto:nifca@nifca.gov.uk) | [www.nifca.gov.uk](http://www.nifca.gov.uk) | 8 Ennerdale Road, Blyth, NE24 4RT



Northumberland IFCA

@N\_IFCA