

NORTHUMBERLAND IFCA

TRAWLING (BYELAW 1) MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION

Northumberland IFCA would like to invite you to have your say on the proposed changes to Byelaw 1: Trawling. Your views are important to us and the information provided will be considered and could influence management measures.

1. Background

The current IFCA byelaw package was confirmed at the end of 2015, coming into operation during 2016. The Authority undertakes a review of the byelaws in place at least once every three years, and a review falls in this calendar year. Byelaw 1: Trawling is a byelaw under consideration.

Under Byelaw 1, currently all vessels fishing using a trawl (or other towed net) within the Inner Area of the Northumberland IFCA district (0 to 3 nautical miles from the coast) are required to have a permit issued by the Authority.

This permit has conditions attached to it which Northumberland IFCA can change without going through the time consuming and costly full byelaw making process. The Authority can add or change permit conditions based on: data collected from permit holders, scientific and survey data, advice provided by Cefas, any Impact Assessment of proposed changes, advice given by Natural England, information from any other relevant source, as specified in the byelaw. Including the permit fee as a permit condition will allow the Authority to adjust the cost of the permit in-line with inflation. Northumberland IFCA do not profit from permit fees.

It is a condition of this permit that permit holders must supply the Authority with information such as gear type; area fished; number of days fished.

A permit is not currently required for vessels fishing using a trawl (or other towed net) within the Outer Area of the Northumberland IFCA district (3 to 6 nautical miles from the coast). Therefore, NIFCA do not hold detailed information for this area of its district.

Introducing an annual permit for trawling in the Outer Area will align this byelaw with the other permit byelaws in the district and ensure that NIFCA have a record of vital information such as who fishes within the Authority's district for both enforcement and environmental monitoring purposes.

1.1 Scope of Consultation: NIFCA District

NIFCA is responsible for the sustainable management of the sea fisheries resources in its district. The district is located off the North East Coast of England and extends from the middle of the River Tyne in the south to the English-Scottish border in the north and out to 6 nautical miles from the coastal baseline including all estuaries up to their 'Normal Tidal Limit' within the landward boundaries of the NIFCA District.



Figure 1 Map of the Northumberland IFCA district showing the inner area (0-3 nautical miles) and the outer area (3-6 nautical miles).

1.2 Trawl fishery

Trawling is a form of mobile gear fishing. A bottom trawl is constructed like a cone-shaped net that is towed on the bottom. It consists of a body ending in a codend, which retains the catch. Normally the net has two lateral wings extending forward from the opening. The mouth of the trawl is framed by headline and ground rope. It is designed and rigged to catch species living on or near the bottom. Bottom contact with the gear is needed for successful operations.

There are approximately 44 local trawlers working from 4 ports in the NIFCA district, approximately 30 of these are under 10 metre trawlers, the remainder are over 10 metres (as of 2017). In the last 10 years the trawl fleet has become ever more reliant on the local prawn (*Nephrops*) fishery, which is now the fleet's principal fishery. The local fishery takes place between 3-25 miles offshore with best catches being seen during the autumn and winter months. When the fishery is at its height it also attracts a large number of visiting trawlers from Scotland, Northern Ireland and other English ports.

1.3 Existing Management Measures

The current management measures in place that relate to trawling activity within or within the vicinity of the NIFCA district:

- NIFCA Byelaw 1 Trawling
- NIFCA Byelaw 7 Prohibition of the use of mobile Fishing Gear within the English section of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Farne Deeps Technical Conservation Measures

Northumberland IFCA have another consultation running for management of mobile gear within Coquet to St Mary's MCZ, which could affect trawling within the Authority's district. For more information, and to respond to this consultation, please click [HERE](#).

2. Proposed management

The Authority has developed proposals to modify the above byelaw in order to optimise management of the fishery.

The following proposals have been put forward for consultation by the committee of the Authority:

1. Change the terms of the permit for Byelaw 1: Trawling to include in the outer area of the Authority's district (3 to 6 nautical miles from the coast).
2. Move permit fee from being a byelaw clause to a byelaw condition.

These measures can be incorporated into the existing byelaw which can be found on the NIFCA website <https://www.nifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/FULL-BYELAWS-March-2019-updated-7.5.19.pdf>.

The measures have been put forward in order to bring this byelaw in line with other permit byelaws in place. Namely, Byelaw 2: Dredging and Byelaw 4: Crustacea and Mollusc permitting and pot limitation. These byelaws apply to the entire area of NIFCA's jurisdiction.

Byelaw 1 is a permit byelaw. Therefore, to fish commercially using a trawl (currently within the Inner Area and proposed to extend to the Outer Area), fishers must obtain a permit from the Authority. This permit has conditions attached to it which Northumberland IFCA can change without going through the time consuming and costly full byelaw making process. The Authority can add or change permit conditions based on: data collected from permit holders, scientific and survey data, advice provided by Cefas, any Impact Assessment of proposed changes, advice given by Natural England, information from any other relevant source, as specified in the byelaw. Including the permit fee as a permit condition will allow the Authority to adjust the cost of the permit in-line with inflation and other relevant costs. Northumberland IFCA do not profit from permit fees.

Have your say

We would like to speak to as many interested parties as possible about the changes to this byelaw. We need to know how the proposed changes will affect your interests. You can complete online or downloadable questionnaire (links below), or if you prefer you can call our office to discuss your concerns. If you would like more information or would like to talk to an officer face-to-face, we can arrange a meeting.

To respond to the consultation, you have a few options to choose from:

1. You can respond online by clicking [HERE](#).
2. You can respond by post to our office in Blyth. To download a form, please click [HERE](#).
3. If you would like to speak to one of our officers directly, call our office on 01670 797 676 to give your feedback or to arrange a date for you to meet with an Officer.

The deadline for all responses is 14th October 2019.

We look forward to hearing your views.