

AIFCA Chief Officer's Report

Consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) – Defra

Defra have launched a 3-month consultation on HPMAs which can be accessed [here](#). This includes the candidate sites, Allonby Bay in Cumbria and Lindisfarne, Northumberland. A factsheet is provided in relation to each site. Defra are planning public meetings in relation to each site. Interested parties are encouraged to respond to the consultation.

The Chief Officer has supported engagement by the IFCA into the HPMAs consultation, including attending a meeting in Northumberland IFCA.

UK Gear Forum

The AIFCA has accepted a position on the UK Gear Forum. The UK Gear Forum discusses and advances sustainability (economic, environmental and social) in all (mobile and static) wild capture fisheries, through the lens of selective gear innovations. The Forum's work programme will be guided by four principles:

- Principle 1 - Bycatch: gear innovations which minimise bycatch.
- Principle 2 – Minimising seabed impacts: gear innovations which advance the elimination of benthic impacts and/or sedimentary carbon disturbance.
- Principle 3 - Net-zero transition: gear innovations which advance greater energy efficiency in wild capture fisheries.
- Principle 4 – Production and use of fishing gears: innovations which advance the sustainable production and use of fishing gears.

Advancing Knowledge Award

The Chief Officer was awarded Bournemouth Universities Advancing Knowledge Award. The judges summed up Robert's achievements by saying: "Robert has demonstrated a significant impact on his industry and on leading environmental issues in the sector. He has enjoyed a very interesting and successful career and is a tremendous role model for BU students"

Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme

The Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme, part of the £100m UK Seafood Fund, will open on 1 August. Bidding will be open until midday on 5 September. A final round is also planned for later in the year opening 21 November and closing at the end of December.

The UK Seafood Fund has been extended to 2025 so applicants will be able to apply for funding for two-year projects with a maximum value of £1 million (or £500,000 per year). A separate opportunity to bid for projects up to £150k, as has been offered in both previous rounds has also opened and Defra have also expanded our list of eligible research projects to include research on wider factors which impact fish stocks, such as offshore wind farms and climate change.

You will be able to access the opportunity through the [gov.uk](#) page once the scheme opens. For further details on the scheme, please visit [here](#).

Bycatch Mitigation Initiative Published by Defra

The Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI) has now been released. Building on existing work such as that of the UK Bycatch Monitoring Programme and Clean Catch UK, the BMI will provide a framework for monitoring wildlife bycatch; and for working to minimise, and where possible eliminate, the problem in UK fisheries.

UK Seafood Fund to be Extended to March 2025

The government's £100 million UK Seafood Fund will be extended until March 2025. The announcement was followed with details of new sustainability projects which have been funded by two of the Fund's streams - the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme and the Seafood Innovation Fund (SIF).

Consultations

It is proposed that the AIFCA respond to the following consultations. Any IFCA wishing to contribute to the consultations, please advise the Chief Officer.

19 Sept 2022: Defra consultation on managing quota in 2023 and beyond.

28 Sept 2022: Defra consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas.

End