

## **AIFCA Chief Officer's Report**

### **Catchwise – Angling Survey**

The AIFCA has accepted an invitation to join the steering group of Catchwise. Catchwise is a ground-truthing new survey of recreational sea angling taking place across England and Wales in 2023 and 2024. Substance, the Angling Trust and Cefas have partnered to deliver this exciting, new project. The project has been co-developed with the recreational sea angling community and aims to significantly improve recognition of sea angling's value to coastal communities and inform relevant fisheries management decisions accurately.

Get involved and volunteer with Catchwise to help conduct shore surveys of recreational sea anglers around the English and Welsh coast throughout the year! Catchwise will start on site in July 2023 and run for 12 months to the end of June 2024.

To find out more about becoming a Volunteer Angling Citizen Scientist click here: <https://www.catchwise.org/> To sign up, click here. The IFCA's are asked to distribute details of the opportunity to participate amongst their members and the wider community.

### **CABFISHMAN Conserving Atlantic Biodiversity by Supporting Innovative Small-scale Fisheries Co-management**

CABFISHMAN is an international project aimed at improving the protection of the marine environment and marine resources in the Northeast Atlantic. By engaging small-scale fisheries and facilitating a collaborative approach between stakeholders, the project seeks to establish an ecosystem-sensitive approach to management of small-scale fisheries in the area. Since 2019, CABFishMan has worked alongside fishermen, fisheries managers, researchers, and policy makers to identify and address knowledge gaps, and provide practical tools that are specifically designed to support the sustainable, collaborative management of small-scale and inshore fisheries.

The AIFCA was invited to attend the final interactive symposium, in person in Bilbao, Spain. At the event, the CABFishMan team provided tutorials on how to use the tools in different management and fishery scenarios, gave guidance on how they may apply to different regulations and policy themes, and explored real life examples drawn from the projects research case studies. Further details on the project may be found here: <https://www.cabfishman.net/>

### **NFFO Chief Executive Handover**

On the 3rd of April the AIFCA attended a reception, hosted by the Fishmongers Company at Fishmongers Hall in London to mark the retirement of Barrie Deas OBE as Chairman of the NFFO and welcome Mike Cohen as the new Chief Executive. Mr Andrew Wallace, of Fishmongers Hall provided a welcome to the Hall and Tony Delahunty, former President of the NFFO made a speech reflecting on Barrie's the long service and his achievements since he joined the organisation in 1985. This timespan means he has worked for the federation for 38 of its 45 turbulent years of existence, which has seen momentous changes such as the move to the post-1973 CFP regime, devolution, many changes of UK government, the ever-increasing influence of the environmental movement, rapid advances in technology, Brexit and much more. Mike Cohen, Chief Executive (Designate) of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations paid tribute to Barrie and set out his commitment to represent the fishing industry and engage in effective fisheries management.

## **Water Quality, Shellfish Production and Failures in Regulation**

A Westminster Hall debate on water quality and shellfish production was held on 15 March on behalf of APPG Shellfish. This considered the need to improve the UK's water quality, the need for a flexible shellfish classification system, and for negotiations with the EU on the live bivalve mollusc class B issue to be resolved. Also discussed were the environmental and food security benefits of Pacific oysters and the need for a pragmatic policy to facilitate their cultivation.

A recording of the debate and a transcript are available on the UK Government website.

The House of Lords has published 'The affluent and the effluent: cleaning up failures in water and sewage regulation' report which summarises the evidence heard in relation to its inquiry into Ofwat and regulation of the water industry. The reports calls on the Government to publish a National Water Strategy and set out clear expectations for the quality of the water environment.

## **Spurdog Guidance 2023**

Following ICES advice on the Northeast Atlantic stock, Spurdog have been removed from the prohibited species list, enabling the Spurdog fishery to recommence in UK and EU waters. A Statutory Instrument permitting this has come into force.

## **Marine Plans**

The Welsh Government Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, has published a statement on the future of the Welsh National Marine Plan following a review into the first three years of its implementation. This notes the plan's positive influence on approaches to marine management in Wales.

For England, the Defra and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) have published a three year review of the East Marine Plans. The review indicates that the plan policies have had a positive effect. However, wider legislative and policy changes since the adoption of the plans means that their intended outcomes are no longer aligned to the UK's national priorities. It is expected that the plans will be replaced by 2027.

## **Marine Net Gain**

A summary of the responses to the Principles of Marine Net Gain consultation has been published. 92 responses were received, which Defra will use to inform the government's response to the consultation. Publication of the government response is expected later in 2023.

## **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Synthesis Report**

The IPCC has prepared a Synthesis Report that integrates and summarises the findings of three Working Groups Assessment Reports (WGI – The Physical Science Basis; WGII – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability; and WGIII – Mitigation of Climate Change) together with three Special Reports (SR15 - Global Warming of 1.5°C; SRCCL - Climate Change and Land; and SROCC- The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate).

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called the Synthesis Report “a survival guide for humanity” and “a clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe.” For further information see:

- IPCC press release
- Headline statements

Summary report for policymakers

## **Resilient UK coastal communities and seas**

Through the Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) programme, Defra are launching a competition with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to enhance the resilience, health and wellbeing of UK coastal communities and seas. This funding opportunity for UK research organisations opens in April 2023.

Consultations:

- 17 April 2023: Scottish Government consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas.
- 29 May 2023: Defra consultation on management measures for industrial sandeel fishing in English waters of the North Sea.

## **Vessels of the Future Forum (VOTFF)**

In 2019, the UK became the first major global economy to pass a net zero emissions law, to require all its greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to net zero by 2050 (Scotland has set a target for 2045). Evolving Fisheries Management Plans will set out the road map to achieve the sustainable management of different fisheries, in line with Fisheries Act 2020 objectives (in particular objective 'h'). This Forum has a key role to play in supporting the fishing sector (and aquaculture service vessels) transition to net zero.

The AIFCA represents the IFCAs at the Forum. At the last VOTFF meeting (10/2/23), a roundtable 'show and tell' session was conducted which centred on submitted summaries which outlined members' interests on net zero transition. The programme is being led by Seafish.

## **Westminster Hall Debate on Marine Protected Areas**

A UK Parliament 'Westminster Hall' debate was held on 2 May on Marine Protected Areas. The debate was opened by Chris Grayling MP. Back in March 2022, the MP for Epsom and Ewell introduced a Ten Minute Rule Motion entitled 'Marine Protected Areas (Bottom Trawling)'. At that time, Chris Grayling, supported by six other MPs, said: "There are no circumstances in which any fishing boat should be dragging a net along the bottom of the most environmentally important areas."

The debate can be viewed here: <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/97414fdd-6ceb-4b7a-bb93-f7c877ee7cd8>

A briefing note and accompanying debate research pack, which makes reference to the role of IFCAs and our management, has been produced by the House of Commons research team. The governments response to the debate included; 1) the commitment to iVMS on u/12m vessels 2) restrictions on Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (BRFG) where it is necessary to achieve conservation objectives, therefore avoiding unnecessary social and economic costs, 3) reference to the legal commitments to achieve favourable condition in MPAs 4) the role of IFCAs and MMO byelaws, 5) reference to the Environment Plan as to the strategy.

## **More action needed to protect the world's ocean, says Environment Secretary on World Wildlife Day**

The Environment Secretary calls for countries to join together to halt and reverse the loss of nature and protect at least 30% of the world's ocean by 2030. Countries around the globe must join together, raise ambition and act faster to protect and restore nature on both land and sea, Environment Secretary Thérèse Coffey has said on World Wildlife Day (3 March). Following the historic agreement reached at the UN Biodiversity summit last year, the Environment Secretary is attending the Our Ocean conference where she will work with other countries to make this the decade we halt and reverse the loss of nature and protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030. She will also acknowledge the effectiveness of established tools such as CITES convention that celebrates 50 years of protecting endangered species today.

## **Update on Retained EU Law Bill**

In May, UK Ministers announced a change in approach to the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill's sunset provision. The announcement can be found in full here and confirms that the Government is tabling an amendment for Lords Report, which will replace the current sunset in the Bill with a list of the retained EU laws that we intend to revoke under the Bill at the end of 2023. This will provide certainty for businesses by making it clear which regulations will be removed from our statute book, instead of highlighting only the REUL that would be saved.

The Government amendment will replace Clause 1 of the Bill ("the sunset clause") with a new clause and schedule that lists specified items of REUL to be removed by the end of 2023. REUL not listed in the schedule will be automatically preserved and assimilated into domestic law but without associated interpretive effects (as the principle of supremacy of EU law and general principles of EU law will still sunset on 31 December 2023). The amendment also includes a limited preservation power that will be conferred on both UK Government Ministers and DAs which would allow DAs to preserve any REUL included on the revocation schedule, to the extent it falls within their competence. If preserved by the DAs, that REUL would only continue to operate for that specific administration and would still be revoked for the rest of the UK.

Please find a link to the new clause and Revocation schedule: HL Bill 117—Running List 10 May v2 ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk)).

The REUL dashboard has also been updated Retained EU law dashboard - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)) and the Government has also published a paper on smarter regulation setting out how the Government proposes to deliver an improved better regulation framework, drive growth and reduce burdens Smarter regulation to grow the economy - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

This government amendment and its change in approach to the sunset will impact some of Defra's and Marine and Fisheries planning for REUL.

## **Shark and Ray Conservation Plan Review**

Defra are looking to update the Defra shark skate and ray conservation plan for England which had its last progress review in 2013. So as to kick-start the process, Defra held a meeting, hosted by the Shark Trust, to discuss ideas and resources that can feed in to the update of the plan. The AIFCA attended the meeting and identified the role of IFCA's and will maintain engagement with the group.

## **Coastal health, livelihoods, and environment: a data and analytical framework for long-term resilience, sustainability, and growth**

Support for the Shared Income Fund bid to HMT.

The aim of the programme is to determine a minimum but sufficiently comprehensive ongoing coastal monitoring framework that can operate routinely and country-wide after the pilot programme period, resulting in the ability to: 1. Ensure government responds quickly, effectively, and robustly to adverse marine events (for example mass mortalities of marine animals and impacts of pollution and microbiological contamination effects on human health) to minimise ecological and economic damage, communicating in a consistent 'one government' manner to stakeholders. 2. Improve our understanding of the health of the coastal ecosystem to: a. Better predict adverse events and understand multi-factorial or gradual processes to proactively protect coastal communities. b. Put in place effective management and remediation measures to improve environmental quality to reduce the likelihood of adverse events to minimise the impact to coastal communities.

The commitment made as part of the programme is important in recognising and enhancing or roles visibility in the event of marine events namely "The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will provide operational logistics around coastline of England. Furthermore, they will provide data intelligence in response to marine incidents and help facilitate the assistance of 'Citizen Science' within their communities"

### **UK Sturgeon Action Plan**

The purpose of the plan is to coordinate sturgeon recovery activities, the UK Sturgeon Alliance was formed in 2020 to assist in, and collaboratively work towards, the overall goal of recovering native sturgeons in the UK.

In October 2022, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) hosted a workshop on behalf of the UK Sturgeon Alliance to develop a UK Sturgeon Conservation Strategy and Action Plan. The threats, goals, and actions included in this document were identified during the in-person workshop. They were then finalised and revised during a consultation process involving all workshop invitees. This Action Plan will span 10 years (2023–2033), with a review of progress made after two years (2025). This review will be undertaken by the Steering Group, and will assess which actions have been completed, and which objectives and goals have been met.

The action plan establishes a series of measures, including that the IFCA's "Work with the commercial fishing industry to develop reporting procedures, and best practice for handling"

More details and the plan may be found [HERE](#)

### **Sustainable Development and Resilience of UK Coastal Communities project (ROCC)**

The Sustainable Development and Resilience of UK Coastal Communities (ROCC) project aims to build knowledge to enhance the resilience of UK marine resource-users to future change (including climate change, storm or other environmental events, and industrial, legislative, and social changes), while enhancing peoples' wellbeing and ensuring future environmental sustainability. ROCC is a three-year research project (2021-2024) funded by the UK government's Sustainable Management of UK Marine Resources (SMMR) programme, which aims to address gaps in marine research in the UK.

The AIFCA participated in a 2-day workshop in Bristol which we are reviewed decision-making processes and tools currently used in UK marine policy, planning and implementation, and how they assess and make trade-offs between policy objectives, sectors, stakeholder groups and ecosystem services. The project has interviewed UK marine practitioners responsible for marine and coastal policy and management decision-making, and at the workshop discussed findings and considered ways forward for improving trade-off decision-making.

The overall purpose of the research:

- Create an inventory of decision-making tools and approaches used in marine policies, management actions or interventions in the UK.
- Analyse their evidence needs, strengths and weaknesses, and how they account for elements of resilience, wellbeing, and environmental sustainability.
- Analyse how trade-offs and synergies between policy objectives are assessed or considered in decision-making processes, and their associated tools.
- Analyse perceptions of the equity/fairness of these decision-making processes
- Identify opportunities for tools and decision-making processes to be improved to make more effective and equitable trade-off decisions.

### **Marine and Wildlife Code Published**

On the 24 May 2023 government published a Marine and coastal wildlife code. The Marine and coastal wildlife code can help you to reduce disturbance to marine wildlife when you visit the coast. The Marine and coastal wildlife code does not replace guidance from local councils or organisations. Instead, you can consider the code alongside guidance from other sources.

### **Training**

During the quarter I undertook two training courses from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations eLearning Academy. 1) Evaluating fisheries co-management effectiveness and 2) Governance in small-scale fisheries

The Evaluating fisheries co-management effectiveness developed competencies to evaluate the performance of a fisheries co-management system to enhance its effectiveness in delivering benefits and in contributing to environmental, social and economic sustainability and good governance.

The Governance in small-scale fisheries developed competencies in Understanding the need for and having the capacity to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines, 2015) through the development of good governance frameworks.

The courses are free and available online from the FAO elearning Academy