



# Inshore Insights

## Newsletter – November 2020

Welcome to our e-newsletter.  
It provides you with an insight into some of our core work that is all related to the management of Inshore Fisheries.

Click [here](#) to view the 2020 - 2021 D&S IFCA Annual Plan

You can visit our website [www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk](http://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk) for more information and news items.

## Our Headline News

### The Achievements of D&S IFCA Published in the 2019/20 Annual Report



D&S IFCA has produced an Annual Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. The report sets out which tasks D&S IFCA has completed to meet its duty to manage inshore fisheries in the District.

You can read the 2019/20 Annual Report [here](#).

The Annual Report for the 2019 to 2020 period is divided into core work areas.

- Management of Fishing Activities (including byelaw and permit condition development)
- Compliance
- Evidence/Research
- Internal Process (including communication)

[Read More:](#)

### D&S IFCA Increases the Legal Size for Whelk

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020 the size of a whelk (the Minimum Conservation Reference Size) increased from 55mm to 65mm.



The increase is of most significance to commercial and recreational fishers with a D&S IFCA [Potting Permit](#); however, the change will also apply to fishers with a [Category One Mobile Fishing Permit](#).

#### The Potting Permit Condition

##### Time Restrictions – Paragraph 4.3

A Permit Holder or Named Representative is only authorised to remove from a fishery within the District, whelk of a size specified in Table 1 as measured along the length of the shell.

Date	Size
1 <sup>st</sup> November 2018	55mm
1 <sup>st</sup> November 2020	65mm

Click [here](#) more information about how and why there has been an increase. The link also provides some guidance for fishers regarding the size of a riddle that can be used to assist fishers sorting their catch whilst at sea.

## Engagement

### Local Knowledge Helps to Inform Fisheries Research and Management Plans

As part of the Government's Marine Pioneer project, the North Devon Biosphere and D&S IFCA are working to create Fisheries Research & Management Plans focusing on **bass, herring, squid, whelk and skates and rays** within the Bristol Channel. These plans aim to review the biology and fisheries for these species in order to highlight gaps in knowledge and help direct future management. Local knowledge is important and can highlight how inshore fishing has changed over time in the Bristol Channel and to highlight the challenges facing fishers in the region today. It is extremely important to the plans that local knowledge and expertise is included so that the views and experiences of commercial and recreational inshore fishers is represented.

#### Have Your Say

Interviews are open to the public and this is a real chance to ensure that the views of local fishers are accurately represented in these plans and incorporated into future management. If you have experience fishing off North Devon and North Somerset (past and present) and would like to be involved please contact our Fisheries Research & Management Plan Officer, [Martin Peverley](#).

More information about Fisheries Research and Management Plans can be found on the D&S IFCA website by clicking [here](#).

## Consultation: Did You Have Your Say?

D&S IFCA undertakes regular consultation and engagement relating to different fishing activities and fisheries management which provide you with the opportunity to influence our decision making. When a consultation is complete the findings are documented into reports which are presented to D&S IFCA's Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC). The following links enable you to read the reports and our website consultation page is a good place to follow much of our consultation work.

#### Scallop Closed Season: Have Your Say



A permit condition that is relevant to mobile fishing gear and commercial diving is the scallop closed season that applies in July, August and September each year.

D&S IFCA recently invited all stakeholders to have their say on the existing scallop closed season. [Information](#) and some questions (for guidance) were circulated to all fishers that have a permit (all methods) to fish in D&S IFCA's District. The information was also provided to all our contacts with an email address.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to respond. The responses will now be examined, and a report will be prepared for the B&PSC. The report will be published on the website in due course.

### **Hand Working Fishing Activity: The Development of Bag Limits**

The consultation finished on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020. A [report](#) (for information only) was prepared for the B&PSC to examine on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The consultation response has helped to inform the on-going development of the Byelaw. Officers will continue to study the findings of the consultation and determine how the development work can continue. It is envisaged that the need for additional engagement will form part of the recommendations that will be prepared for the B&PSC and published on D&S IFCA's website.

### **Sand Eel Trawling: The Development of Permit Conditions**

This consultation was to help inform the development of permit conditions to manage sand eel trawling for both commercial and recreational fishers. The work is part of the five-year review of the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw.

The consultation report can be read [here](#) and a further report explaining how aspects of new sand eel permits (if implemented) could function can be read [here](#). Work is on-going to develop a more detailed draft Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw and associated permit conditions, including those to manage sand eel trawling. There will be more engagement work relating to this work stream in 2021.

### **Potting Permit Conditions: Amendments to the Permit Conditions to Manage the Live Wrasse Pot Fishery**

The formal consultation ended on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Potting Permits were amended with a start date of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The final report can be read [here](#).

### **Keep yourself Informed**

When a consultation is about to begin, we directly notify all our permit holders (fishers) and all our contacts on our email mailing list. You may not want to engage and if so, just ignore the email. Our [consultation page](#) on our website is also a good place to follow this area of our work. We have a duty to consult with our permit holders. If you are not a permit holder you can choose to unsubscribe from our mailing list by contacting D&S IFCA.

## **Do you need a permit to fish?**

D&S IFCA issue permits to manage different fishing activities. These include:

- Mobile Fishing (Trawling, Scallop Dredging & Ring Netting)
- Potting
- Netting
- Diving for crab, lobster and scallops

If you conduct these fishing methods, you need a permit.

You can visit our [on-line permit application facility](#) or contact the office to get an application form.

You can have a look at our [enforcement page](#) and scroll down to examine the different permits to see what conditions of use apply.

## Environment News

### Stock Assessments of Cockle and Mussel Beds



Over the last couple of months D&S IFCA Officers have been undertaking stock assessments of several shellfish beds. Mussel beds were surveyed in the Exe, Teign and Taw-Torridge estuaries, while cockle beds were surveyed in the Exe, Teign and Devon Avon estuaries. These surveys are carried out annually, in line with [D&S IFCA's Annual Plan](#) to build up a long-term picture of the stock status of each bed, which is used to inform management of the resource. This year's data is still being analysed and reports will follow shortly, but previous year's reports can be found on our [website](#).

Shellfish beds form important habitats for many species in estuaries, particularly as a significant source of food for overwintering and migratory wading bird populations. These birds are often priority features of an estuary designated as a [Marine Protected Area](#) (MPA), such as the Exe Estuary SPA or the Taw-Torridge SSSI. Cockle and mussel beds play an important role in the healthy functioning of marine ecosystems, not just by acting as a food source to wading birds, but mussels provide an enhanced area of biodiversity in an otherwise sediment-dominated environment. Mussel beds support their own diverse communities as the mussel matrix, composed of interconnected mussels and accumulated sediments and debris, provides numerous microhabitats and an organically enriched environment.

[Read More:](#)

#### Temporary Closure of Beds

The public mussel beds in the Teign and the Exe Estuaries have been closed to the removal of mussel since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, after data from the D&S IFCA stock assessments concluded stock levels were too low and needed extra protection to ensure the resource remained as a food source for overwintering birds. Details of the closed areas and the charts in full size for both the Teign and the Exe can be viewed on the website by clicking [here](#).

### Crab Tiles Surveyed by Drone

Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&S IFCA) has a duty to manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA). This includes intertidal shore-based shellfish harvesting, one method of intertidal harvesting is crab tiling. The continuing use of drone technology is helping to assess the numbers of crab tiles within estuaries.

Every four years, surveys are carried out to determine the number and location of crab tiles in estuaries in the D&S IFCA's District. These surveys enable D&S IFCA to assess the potential impacts of crab tiling on sensitive estuary environments, and to inform the development of appropriate management. After a successful trial using a drone to carry out the survey in 2016, on two of the estuaries in the District, it was decided that the same approach would be taken on all estuaries where crab tiling takes place in 2020. [Read More:](#)



## Representation Submitted to the Planning Inspectorate regarding Acoustic Fish Deterrents at Hinkley Point C



The NNB Generation Company, Hinkley Point C Ltd (a subsidiary of EDF Energy) have launched an appeal against the Environment Agency, whom they deemed to have refused their application to abstract water from the Severn Estuary without Acoustic Fish Deterrents.

The Severn Estuary has one of the most diverse estuarine fish faunas in the UK. Some species spend their entire life in the estuary. Others use the estuary for certain critical parts of their life cycle and the estuary is recognised as a nursery area for a wide range of species. This fish assemblage is protected as part of the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The various permits and licences necessary for Hinkley Point C to extract large quantities of cooling water from the Severn Estuary were conditionally granted in 2013 on the understanding that three mitigation measures would be implemented in order to reduce any impacts on the protected fish assemblage. NNB GenCo no longer believe they can deliver the Acoustic Fish Deterrents which were the central part of the three mitigation measures. The company have therefore applied to the Environment Agency to change the conditions of their permit and a public consultation was held in July 2019 which D&S IFCA [responded to](#). Since then the EA has been reviewing the very complex evidence base in order to make its decision. Recently NNB GenCo appealed to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) about the length of time the EA are taking to make a decision and the probable outcome. PINS subsequently asked for representations on the appeal. D&S IFCA submitted a [representation](#) recently.

D&S IFCA's representation includes major concerns about the levels of uncertainty in estimates of how many fish Hinkley Point C will kill, and the impacts any such mortality might have on the Severn Estuary SAC and wider fish populations. D&S IFCA's representation therefore supports the Environment Agency.

NNB GenCo has asked that the case should be heard at a Public Inquiry. During such an Inquiry a Planning Inspector will review the evidence from all parties and make a decision. PINS will decide who can speak or present evidence to the Inquiry, and whether the Inquiry will be held wholly or partly in public. D&S IFCA will continue to input into the process where possible.

If you would like to receive updates on Hinkley Point C from the Environment Agency please email them at: [WessexEnquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:WessexEnquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Update on the Live Wrasse Fishery

D&S IFCA's Environment Officers are now undertaking observer surveys as part of the fully documented Live Wrasse Fishery in the Plymouth Sound.

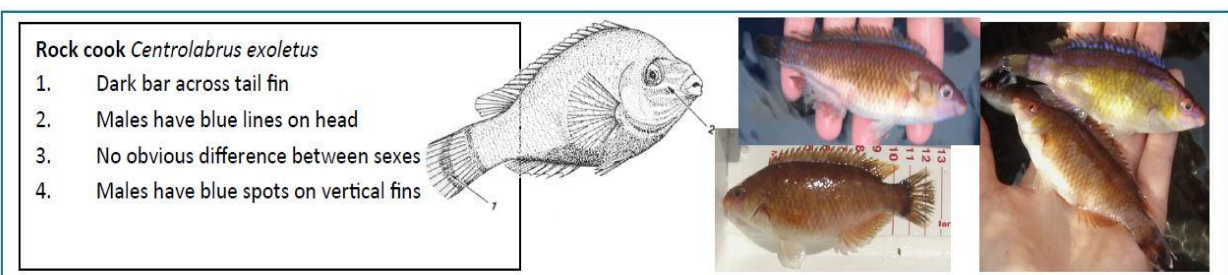
Using D&S IFCA's RIB, officers are working with fishers to implement a new COVID-safe observer survey protocol that minimises health risks while allowing continued monitoring of fishing activity.

## PDF Version of E-Newsletter

The data collection programme provides an opportunity for D&S IFCA to closely monitor the fishery, including any changes over time that may relate to sustainability, and to implement adaptive management.

The Live Wrasse Fishery targets wrasse for use in Scottish salmon aquaculture, where they clean parasites (lice) from the salmon. The salmon farming industry regards this as a more environmentally-friendly method of parasite control than using chemicals.

The fishery in D&S IFCA's District re-opened for commercial fishers on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020, following a closed fishing period from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> July that D&S IFCA implemented in order to allow wrasse to be protected during their spawning season. Four wrasse species have historically been targeted in this fishery: goldsinny, ballan, corkwing and rock cook. However, following a [public consultation](#), a recent update to the [Potting Permit Conditions](#) has prohibited the removal of rock cook from the fishery.



[Read More:](#)

### Interested in our Environmental Work?

If you're interested in our Environment and Research work, you can find a large collection of reports and published information in [Section H of our website Resource Library](#).

We also have a selection of display pages on our [Environment and Research](#) website drop down menu.

- [Marine Protected Areas](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Mariculture](#)
- [Fisheries Research & Management Plans](#)
- [Partnership Projects](#)
- [Marine Environmental Matters](#)

## Exemptions to Byelaws

The Exemptions Byelaw 2019 was confirmed by Defra on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020. The Byelaw enables the Authority to consider an application relating to scientific work or for stocking or breeding purposes where a fishing activity is undertaken that would otherwise be in contravention of one of more of the byelaws, or one or more of the permit conditions as set out in the Byelaws.

We have an [Exemptions to Byelaws website page](#) that includes application forms and a table of issued Exemptions (Authorisations).

## Enforcement News



D&S IFCA has the largest area to manage out of all ten IFCA's around the English coast. A large variety of commercial and recreational fisheries need effective management and enforcement. Ensuring compliance across all sectors is challenging when balanced against the lowest annual budget of all mainland IFCA's.

The employment of four enforcement officers, rather than Defra's estimated requirement of twenty-three is an obvious limitation and impacts on D&S IFCA's enforcement capability. Financial constraints have resulted in a need to find efficiencies in how all of D&S IFCA's work is undertaken and when viewed from an enforcement perspective, how the enforcement work is conducted, when it is undertaken and by whom are essential considerations. Defra's high-level objectives highlight an expectation for collaboration and for D&S IFCA its functionality depends upon it. Along with the greater use of new technology, partnership working, including the collection and sharing of intelligence, forms the basis of [D&S IFCA's enforcement strategy](#).

### Joint Operations in North Devon

Since D&S IFCA officers recovered a [net in Barnstaple in July](#), D&S IFCA have worked closely with Devon and Cornwall Police, Environment Agency and Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority to conduct inspections and monitor activity around the Taw/Torridge Estuary.

During September, over the spring tides, officers worked alongside other agencies and conducted a number of patrols in the Taw and Torridge areas, focussing on assessing the compliance with local byelaws, primarily the Devon and Severn IFCA Netting Permit Byelaw (and associated [permit conditions](#)) along with [EU legislation on Bass fishing](#) and the Salmon and Freshwater Fish Act 1975.

[Read More:](#)

### D&S IFCA's Enforcement Officers assist in a Multi-Agency Operation.

D&S IFCA's Enforcement Officers were recently involved in a day of action in Torbay working with multiple other organisations that included the Devon and Cornwall Police, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Immigration Services, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and the Labour Abuse Licensing Authority.

This partnership working was in response to a high number of reports of organised gangs fishing commercially in popular angling locations at Berry Head and Hopes Nose. With all the agencies working together, they were prepared and equipped to tackle a variety of issues should they arise.

[Read More:](#)



### Querries & Reporting Suspicious Fishing Activity

If you have a general query about fisheries legislation then please [contact us](#). Much of the enforcement work is intelligence led and we have a duty phone number for reporting suspicious fishing activity:

07740 175479

### Following our Enforcement Work

The website is a good way to follow all aspects of D&S IFCA's work.

The [Enforcement & Legislation](#) page and drop down menu provides some useful information and includes a [table of investigations](#).

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## Follow Our Work

Keep up to date with our work which may affect you.

Keep an eye on our news stories posted on our [website home page](#).

Follow us on [Facebook](#) or Twitter.

For an in-depth look at our work have a look in our [website resource library](#).

[Contact us](#).



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