

## Devon and Severn IFCA News

### Shad Bycatch Awareness & Reporting

#### D&S IFCA Implement a Shad Bycatch Awareness and Reporting Scheme to Help Protect Twaite and Allis Shad in District's MPAs.

Devon and Severn IFCA are now entering the second phase of a bycatch awareness and self-reporting scheme for twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*) and allis shad (*Alosa alosa*). These species are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended), and are designated features of the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC, respectively.



Twaite Shad – Photo Credit: R. Hillman

*Photo: The twaite shad (pictured) and allis shad are migratory fish species in the herring family.*

This second phase of the awareness and self-reporting scheme involves distribution of a [shad bycatch awareness flyer](#) and a [shad bycatch reporting form](#), to allow fishers to notify D&S IFCA of shad bycatch they may see in their gear. These documents will be issued to anyone applying for or renewing a D&S IFCA Permit for netting activities (including ring netting), with a focus on those that will operate in or near to the Severn Estuary SAC or Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC. Hard copies of these documents can also be sent out to interested parties on request. The first phase of the scheme took place in early 2020, and involved coordinated distribution of these materials to all relevant permit holders.

The bycatch awareness and reporting scheme is being implemented as part of Monitoring and Control Plans for [twaite shad in the Severn Estuary SAC](#) and [allis shad in Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC](#), to help D&S IFCA better understand the potential interaction between shad species and netting activities in these areas. The Monitoring and Control Plans were established in 2019 following Natural England's advice on D&S IFCA's Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRAs). Monitoring and Control Plan baseline reports have also recently been completed for both [allis shad](#) and [twaite shad](#).



*Photo: The shad bycatch awareness leaflet being circulated to permit holders.*

#### Habitat Regulations Assessments & Uncertainties in Shad Bycatch

HRAs are required under Defra's revised approach to the management of commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites (EMSs; including SACs), to ensure that fishing activities do not have adverse effects on the integrity of EMSs in the District. D&S IFCA carried out a range of HRAs, including for the interaction of shad with various netting gears in the relevant SACs.

The assessments concluded that many of these activities were not occurring, or were occurring at a low/ very low (and declining) level, and that there was no likelihood of significant adverse effect on shad. The HRAs also reported low levels of interaction between the current levels of net fisheries and shad, and highlighted that commercial fishermen were aware of legislation which requires them to return all species of shad to the sea immediately.

However, low levels of certain types of netting were concluded to generate the potential for some small shad bycatch events. There were also residual uncertainties regarding the overall level of certain types of netting in the SACs. The Monitoring and Control Plans were established in order to address these concerns. D&S IFCA would like to encourage fishers to continue to return shad bycatch to the sea unharmed, and to participate in self-reporting of shad bycatch events. This will help to ensure that uncertainties in shad bycatch can be addressed and that fisheries management continues to be proportionate and appropriately targeted

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