

Devon and Severn IFCA News

D&S IFCA Hosting Meetings with Permit Holders in North Devon

Meeting dates now announced for Ilfracombe and Appledore in February 2024.



D&S IFCA's Environment Officers are now arranging meetings with permit holders across the District. The Ilfracombe meeting will be held on Monday 19th February 15:00-17:00 at the Ilfracombe Harbour Office. The Appledore meeting will be held on Tuesday 20th February 17:00-19:00 at the Appledore fish quay. Subsequent meetings in the south of the District are to follow.

There are three topics that Officers hope to discuss, to help D&S IFCA better understand the activities and the concerns of Netting and Potting Permit Holders:

- 1) **Concerns about management of crab and lobster.**
Building on the momentum from the Crab and Lobster Fisheries Management Plan, Officers would like to hear more about local concerns for these fisheries, and opinions on their management: including for example effort controls, access arrangements, and the issues surrounding soft-shelled ("white") crab as bait in whelk fisheries.
- 2) **Importance of fishing grounds to local fishermen.**
D&S IFCA regularly responds to consultations on the impacts of marine developments, aiming to highlight impacts of these development on fishing activities and fish. By identifying important fishing areas, D&S IFCA can engage with national decision-making bodies to ensure that the existing fishing uses of the sea are properly accounted for, and that the possible impacts of co-location and displacement of fishing activities by marine developments are properly considered/mitigated/avoided. Although the increasing use of iVMS devices will help with this over time, it won't yet provide a full picture of fishing activity and so it is important that the views of permit holders are heard now.
- 3) **Fishing in the Bristol Channel.**
D&S IFCA is required to assess interactions between fishing activities and harbour porpoise in the Bristol Channel Approaches Marine Protected Area, and Officers

aim to ensure that any management measures (if required) are proportionate. This discussion is an opportunity for local fishermen to provide sound, accurate data to best inform the assessments. More complete information on current fishing activities may reduce the level of precaution required in management approaches.

Permit holders will receive direct communications about meetings taking place near them. However, if you would like more information then please get in touch with the Environment Team using the details below.

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