

AIFCA CHIEF OFFICERS' REPORT

Funding & Schemes

FaSS Reopens (and soon closes) with £6m of Investment

The Fisheries and Seafood Scheme opened for applications to support projects that strengthen England's seafood sector and support economic growth while enhancing nature recovery. Fisheries and Seafood Scheme 2025 closed in July following strong demand

Read more: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fisheries-and-seafood-scheme>

Labour & Workforce

UK Fishing Fleet Grapples with Labour Shortage

A new Seafish report confirms the significant and growing challenge of securing skilled labour in the fishing sector.

Read more: <https://www.seafish.org>

Policy & Regulation

New FMP Blog Updating Evidence Gaps

Calling for collaboration in closing these, the list of evidence gaps relating to the Southern North Sea and Channel skates and rays, North Sea and Channel sprat, cockle, queen scallop, and Southern North Sea demersal non-quota species (NQS) fisheries management plans (FMPs) has been updated. More [here](#);

Threat of Bottom Trawling Ban in MPAs

The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee has called for a ban on bottom trawling in offshore MPAs.

Read more: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/48204/documents/252309/default/>

UK & EU Formalise Fisheries Agreement (to 2038)

Long-term reciprocal access confirmed until June 2038.

Read more: <https://ec.europa.eu/>

Defra Reports on Marine Plans 2021–24

Five three-year reports published reviewing the NE, NW, SE, SW, and South Marine Plans.

Read more: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-plans-three-yearly-reports-2021-to-2024>

Research & Publications

New Report: Climate Adaptive Fisheries Management

Reviews 17 climate change adaptation measures for fisheries in the UK and internationally.

Read more: <https://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/ProjectDetails?ProjectId=21773>

University of Essex Research Highlights Coastal Mental Health Gap

Young adults in deprived coastal areas are three times more likely to suffer undiagnosed distress.

Read more: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/news>

Consultations & Calls for Evidence

Marine protected areas Stage 3 Consultation (deadline 29th September)

MMO is proposing management measures for fishing in 42 marine protected areas (MPAs) in English waters. Read more <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/marine-protected-areas-stage-3-consultation>

UK Marine Strategy Part One Update (closed 15 Aug)

Read more: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/uk-marine-strategy-part-one-2025/>

Offshore Wind Environmental Compensatory Measures Reform (open 22 July – 2 Sept)

Read more: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/offshore-wind/offshore-wind-environmental-compensatory-measures-reform/>

MSC Fisheries Standard Review – Public Consultation Closed

Read more: <https://www.msc.org/standards-and-certification/fisheries-standard-review>

Fair Funding Review – Public Consultation (closed 15th August 2025)

The AIFCA responded to a consultation on the government's proposed approach to local authority funding reform through the Local Government Finance Settlement from 2026-27. Read more: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-fair-funding-review-20>

Other Updates

Councils' report recommends enhanced environmental monitoring – and support for affected fishermen

Local councils in the area of North East England affected by the shellfish die-offs that began in 2021 have issued their report on the impacts and the lessons to be learned.

Fishermen blamed the die-off of crabs, lobsters and other marine life on contaminated spoil from dredging in connection with the Teesside Freeport project being dumped off the Tees estuary. They formed the North East Fishing Collective (NEFC) in December 2021 to give the fishing industry a voice.

But a panel of 13 experts from academia and industry commissioned by Defra to examine all the evidence concluded that it was 'about as likely as not that a pathogen new to UK waters – a potential disease or parasite' caused the crustacean mortality.

The full report can be seen [here](#).

'Future Ocean 25: Integrating Science Solutions for Society and Nature'.



Future Ocean 25, hosted by Cefas (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science) brought together leaders in marine science with leading marine managers and users to help accelerate the transformation of science into actionable policy.

The two-day event focused on four key themes essential to both society and nature: nature recovery, clean energy, water health and aquatic food security and was co-convened with partners IMarEST and Seafish.

Future Ocean 25 also included tours of Cefas' 74-metre-long Research Vessel, moored temporarily alongside HMS Belfast on the River Thames, enabling conference delegates, external stakeholders and potential future marine scientists to gain hands-on experience of ocean science. Over 80 schoolchildren and 60 university students from across London and Norfolk explored the state-of-the-art RV Cefas Endeavour, learning how marine scientists address critical ocean challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

See more: <https://www.cefas.co.uk/news-and-resources/news/future-ocean-25-integrating-science-solutions-for-society-and-nature/>

Thrive in Fishing Publication

Encouraging careers in fishing.

Read more: <https://www.seafarerscharity.org>

Lyme Bay CIC Inshore Fleet Survey

Small-scale fishers' views sought.

Read more: <https://lymebayfisheries.co.uk>

Clean Catch Briefing

Practical recommendations on fisher collaboration.

Read more: <https://www.cleancatch.org.uk>

Cefas Guidance

Regulatory steps for expanding seaweed aquaculture.

Read more: <https://www.seafish.org/article/regulatory-guidance-for-seaweed-aquaculture-in-england>

Defra Reports on Marine Plans 2021-2024

Assessing the legislative and regulatory changes that may affect the relevance of the North East, North West, South East, South West and South Marine Plans (the Plans), on 30 June, Defra published five three-year reports on the Plans. More [here](#)