

NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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OUR REF:

ANNEX A

YOUR REF:

Mr. Nigel Gooding, Mr. Chris Preston, Ms. Kath Cameron,
Defra,
Marine Biodiversity, Area 2C
Nobel House,
17 Smith Square,
LONDON, SW1P 3JR.

Dear Nigel, Chris, Kath,

I apologise for not making the COG meeting on 16 April but understand there was a useful discussion around the difficulty of completing the EMS and MCZ work by 2016. Also that there was an action for IFCA's to send Defra plans of work they expect to deliver.

I have seen the 13 May letter agreed by a number of IFCA. Most of it is uncontentious but aspects of the commitments appear unsuitable for this District. I support the priority of bottom towed gear issues in the 5th paragraph but I am not certain that the reporting template, although impressively structured, will be useful where there is little known MCZ work at this stage. NWIFCA does not at present have the sorts of priorities for which the template is designed.

I can offer the following draft plan for MPA work to 2016 which I expect this Authority would support:

MCZ

1. There is no MCZ work identified for the NWIFCA District tranche 1 sites.
2. The work programme for the 2 MCZ tranche 2 sites is not yet clear. NWIFCA stands ready to assist with survey work and consultation to designate these sites. The coastal Allonby Bay site is of a similar nature to Cumbria Coast. Survey work is scheduled. The West of Walney is mostly outside our District therefore MMO will lead on measures for this site.

EMS

3. We do not yet know of any measures which will be required under the amber assessments. Therefore NWIFCA will focus on screening over 1700 EMS ambers and carrying out assessments.
4. There are key dependencies for which Natural England is responsible, namely the evidence for feature location and conservation advice on feature objectives.

5. Subject to these dependencies, NWIFCA will:

- I. Identify amber risk feature /gear combinations in the District (completed spring 2014).
- II. Collate feature data on as many as possible.
- III. Agree implications of conservation advice from Natural England and set priorities.
- IV. Deliver assessments of top priority amber groups (commencing with bottom towed gear sites followed by other priorities as agreed).
- V. Dependent on I-IV, determine management measures for priority amber feature gear combinations, start preparation and development of any measures required.

With current resources, I estimate that I-IV will be incomplete by end 2016. However, if Defra's priority is to see some management measures in place it may be appropriate at some point to interrupt the assessments and commence work on measures. We have essentially a resource of 3 science officers with half their time allocated to MPA work. Defra is invited to advise the Authority on how it would wish this resource to be allocated.

I would be pleased to discuss this programme, the priorities for the NWIFCA District and a workable scheme of monitoring.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. STEPHEN ATKINS
Chief Executive.