

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

21st March 2014: 11.00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
10**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Purpose of Report

This report provides updates and comment on various areas of work.

Recommendation:

- 1. The report be received**
- 2. The draft annual report 2012-13 be approved.**

Contents

- I) Defra and IFCA
- II) Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)
- III) EMS programme and Byelaw 6.
- IV) Health and safety policy
- V) Officer changes
- VI) Outcome of legal claim against the Authority
- VII) Association of IFCA
- VIII) Procurement of a replacement main patrol vessel
- IX) Annual Report 2012-13
- X) Cumbria FLAG
- XI) Joint Agency liaison
- XII) Foreshore gatherers training courses
- XIII) 10th Anniversary of Morecambe Bay Cockling Tragedy

I) Defra and IFCA

- In January, Defra announced a further year of their funding of IFCA giving security until March 2016. This is welcome but short term and defers any longer term decision for the next government.
- A government report on IFCA performance is required under the Marine Act every 4 years. The first report is due to be laid before parliament by the end of 2014. A report committee has been set up with representatives of Defra, MMO, NE and EA. The reports' authors are scheduled to attend the June meeting of the NWIFCA and give a presentation about the report and how it will be compiled. They also intend to take evidence from members and officers and give opportunity for comments which the Authority would wish them to take into account.

II) Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

- The two MCZ designated in the NW are deemed by Defra/Natural England to be low priority. No management requirements have yet been identified.
- In February, Defra announced a new list of potential tranche 2 MCZ including several in the NWIFCA District. These are shown in fig 1 below. There will now be a period of evidence gathering to see if the proposed sites meet the standard required for designation.

Consultation on sites proposed for designation will take place in 2015 with designation in 2015-16.

III) **The EMS programme and Byelaw 6**

5. Byelaw 6: Protection for EMS has been advertised and the consultation closing date was 28 February. Responses were received from fishermen with an interest in the Lune Deep, the Dee and the National and Local Wildlife Trusts. The comments received are being addressed. We expect to apply to MMO for confirmation of the byelaw in March.
6. There is no progress to report on the next stage of the EMS programme.

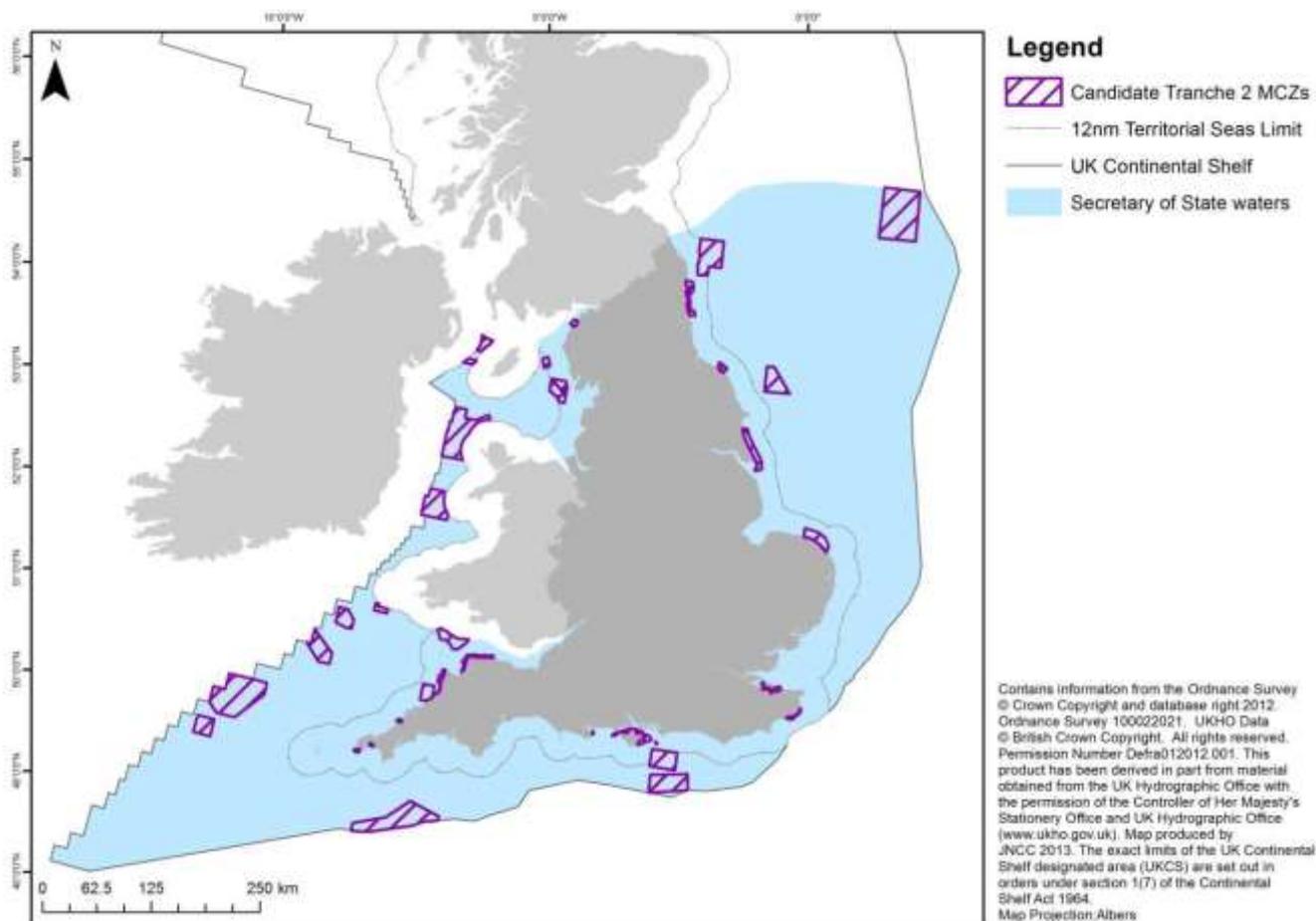


Fig 1 Potential tranche 2 MCZ for consultation in 2015 and designation in 2016.

IV) **NWIFCA Health and Safety policy**

7. The policy has been reviewed in March 2014. There have been no Health and Safety incidents in the past quarter. NWIFCA Officer training to enable them to carry out their duties in accordance with the H&S policy continues. A register of training is maintained and is available for inspection by members on request.

V) **Officer changes**

8. Mr. Erik Thinnesen continues on sick leave since 1 July 2013. Following an operation in March we hope he will be able to return to work soon.
9. Interviews for the vacant IFCO post in Whitehaven were held on 27 February and an appointment was made. The new Officer is scheduled to commence work with the Authority in April.

VI) **Outcome of legal claim against the Authority**

10. In November 2013, NWIFCA was awarded summary judgment in the claim for alleged negligence brought by Mr. H. Benson of Flookburgh. The claim was struck out through lack of evidence. NWIFCA was awarded all costs and will be seeking to recover over £35,000 from Mr. Benson. In the Meantime, the Authority's insurance has paid £25,000 towards the costs.

VII) **Association of IFCA (AIFCA)**

11. The AIFCA Members' Forum met on 8 January at Defra, Nobel House, Westminster, London. The Chairman and CEO attended.
12. Minister George Eustace attended. He announced the additional IFCA funding and was very supportive of the work IFCA have done to advance the EMS project and the designation of MCZ.
13. Natural England provided briefing on the restructuring currently being implemented and the internal preparation underway to deliver the data requirements of the next stage of the EMS programme to enhance protection of features.
14. A meeting of the AIFCA Directors was held at 15.00 on the same day. CEO attended. Papers from both these meetings are available on request from the Clerk.

VIII) **Procurement of main patrol vessel replacement**

15. Lancashire County Council (LCC) is managing the tender process for NWIFCA as reported in September. 3 legal contracts need to be agreed before the tendering process can be launched. LCC have instructed Andrew Oliver to assist with drafting firstly a charter agreement between the Council and IFCA and secondly a vessel building contract to be agreed with the successful tenderer.
16. Drafts of these contracts were circulated in December and a meeting with Andrew Oliver on 12 February
17. There must also be a contract between Council members of the NWIFCA to agree financing of the vessel. LCC will prepare this contract in-house for agreement of all NWIFCA Council members.
18. There is no further news of the possibility that EU may have a budget to assist fisheries enforcement activity in the new European Marine and Fisheries Fund which could become available in 2014.

IX) **Annual Report 2012-13**

A draft of the Annual Report is presented to members. It should contain all the information that Defra require for the Annual Report but if members have any comments they wish to make have or anything to add please send changes to the Clerk. Members are asked to approve the draft report today so that it can be put on the website and sent to Defra to deliver our statutory obligation.

X) **Cumbria FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group)**

19. Outline applications to FLAG from NWIFCA were submitted for

- a) funding towards the new patrol vessel and
- b) funding for Fishery Officer apprentice posts

20. The patrol vessel application was not deemed suitable and was rejected by the FLAG Board. The proposal for apprentices was supported. NWIFCA officers will work with FLAG to understand how an apprentice scheme could work, how it would be funded and if a full application from NWIFCA is viable.

XI) **Joint Agency Liaison**

21. A joint Committee of MMO, NE, EA and NWIFCA has been set up in the North West to seek common objectives and share overlapping work programmes. The Committee aims to reduce duplication in policy development and consultation responses as well as find ways to share resources such as science survey, patrol and research vessel time.

XII) **Foreshore Gatherers Training Courses**

22. Seafish are now in the final stages of developing 2 new foreshore gatherers training courses. These are the basic course for working safely in intertidal areas and an additional course covering the use of small boats in shellfish gathering. These courses will be of a much higher standard than has previously been the case. They will include full accreditation by Seafish and an end of course assessment to establish that participants have achieved a sufficient standard to receive certification.

23. These courses have been tested in detail with IFCOs and will be rolled out as a requirement for new Byelaw 3 permits as soon as possible.

XIII) **10th Anniversary of Morecambe Bay Cockling Tragedy**

24. There was a certain amount of media interest in this event on 5th February 2014. The CEO was asked to do a number of interviews for both the local and national media. The opportunity was used to highlight some of the changes to cockle management which the Authority has introduced since 2004.

Chief Executive
12 March 2014