



**North Western
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Meeting 4: 30 September 2011
Morecambe Town Hall: 10.30 a.m.**

Agenda Item: 8

NWIFCA REVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Recommendations:

1. General principles for sustainable fisheries within the District (Annex 1) are adopted.
2. Proposals to implement a Sustainable Fisheries Project with partner agencies are agreed
3. Officers are instructed to develop the sustainable fisheries project

ADOPTION OF PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Background:

1. Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) Section 153 (1 & 2), the NWIFCA has a legal duty to manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources within its District. In performing its duty, the Authority must:
 - (a) seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way;
 - (b) seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the District with the need to protect the marine environment or promote its recovery from the effects of such exploitation;
 - (c) take any other steps which in the Authority's opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development; and
 - (d) seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the District. (MACA 2009).
2. In undertaking this review of sea fisheries resources and their management, the NWIFCA must ensure that it complies fully with its nature conservation duties.
3. The NWIFCA Annual Plan for 2011-12 identified a Working Level Objective for achieving Success Criteria 6: 'Begin work on a full review of sea fisheries resources and a sustainable management plan for the marine waters of North West England' with target date for progress set as April 2012.
4. The NWIFCA has an obligation to outline progress towards achievement of these objectives in the annual reports, the first of which must be produced in April 2012.

5. The proposed principles will provide a framework against which the fisheries within the NWIFCA's District and their management will be reviewed to meet the NWIFCA's duties above and to progress its vision and objectives.

Progress to Date:

6. The first step is for the Authority to adopt a working Set of Principles to enable the NWIFCA to deliver its duties on the ground. Various models have been considered that will give an appropriate balance between fishery, community and environmental aspects. The most tried and tested one appears to be the principles developed by the Marine Stewardship Council¹ and accordingly this paper recommends a working set of Principles adapted from those recommendations, which will be subject to review in line with Defra guidance. These principles will be used as a standard to guide the NWIFCA in managing sea fisheries resources in its District.
7. The principles are set out with commentary at Annex 1. The NWIFCA is asked to consider and adopt these principles making any comments and amendments it requires.

NWIFCA SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES PROJECT

8. Officers recognise that the NWIFCA will require additional resources to carry out the work involved in order to fulfil the High Level Objectives and Success Criteria in relation to sustainable fisheries in the District.
9. An enormous amount of work will be involved in conducting a full review of the District's sea fisheries resources. For every fishery assessed and considered for sustainability, it will be necessary to:
 - (i) collect and analyse the full range of scientific data to gain a better understanding of population dynamics and factors affecting reproduction, settlement and recruitment;
 - (ii) consult with and engage with fishers and the full range of stakeholders;
 - (iii) assess the level of risk posed by each fishery and prioritise the work of the Authority accordingly;
 - (iv) assess the socio-economic impacts associated with change to managing each fishery sustainably;
 - (v) assess the environmental and conservation impacts of current levels of fishing activity, and potential impacts of managing each fishery sustainably;
 - (vi) draw up and implement sustainable management plans;
 - (vii) monitor and evaluate their effectiveness;
 - (viii) adapt management measures as a result of (vii).

Officers consider the high volume of work identified, necessitates the establishing of a tailored, externally funded project to achieve the objectives. One or more Project Officers should be funded depending on the speed of implementation of the project.

10. Partner agencies, the Environment Agency and Natural England, have expertise in securing external funding within their staff and have offered use of this knowledge to assist the NWIFCA in identifying potential funding sources and in generating a project bid.

11. Officers recognise the necessity to progress this work as soon as possible in order to meet the target deadline for the Working Level Objective, and recommend that effort is directed into working with partner agencies to generate a bid for funding to secure the resources needed for a NWIFCA Sustainable Fisheries Project.
12. The NWIFCA Sustainable Fisheries Project will constitute a pilot project, using a risk-based approach to assess which fisheries within the District should be prioritised. The outcomes of the pilot will be used to inform and develop subsequent reviews.

Mandy Knott
Scientific and Morecambe Bay Fishery Order Officer
20th September 2011