

**NWIFCA Technical, Science and Byelaw  
Committee  
31 October 2017.**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO.  
6**

**Report to TSB on St Bees Netting Voluntary Code of Practice**

**Purpose:** to provide a revised version of the Voluntary Code of Practice for netting around St Bees SSSI

**Recommendations:**

- a) TSB approve the revised wording of the Voluntary Code of Practice;
- b) TSB approve the implementation of the Code of Practice in 2018;
- c) TSB approve the monitoring and reporting of compliance levels with the Code of Practice.

1. As previously reported Officers held two meetings with fishing stakeholders (commercial and un-licensed) in Whitehaven earlier in the year to discuss concerns and potential management options to prevent entanglement of and disturbance to breeding birds nesting on the cliffs. There have been instances when diving birds such as guillemots and razorbills have become entangled and drowned, and also concerns around disturbance to birds rafting at the base of the cliffs, particularly juvenile birds.
2. Natural England have been consulting with recreational users (eg. jet skiers, sailing clubs etc) and further measures within a code of practice regarding boat speed and proximity to birds rafting for all users, both the fishing sector and otherwise, will be considered in due course.
3. A draft NWIFCA Voluntary Code of Practice for netting activity, which would apply to all fishing sectors, was presented at the last TSB. Concerns were raised about the dates of the restricted period, and officers were asked to re-draft the Code with flexibility to adapt the dates depending on advice from Natural England each year. This is presented as Annex A and if approved by Members will be implemented in 2018.
4. In order to ensure this management approach is appropriate, compliance of the Code will be monitored by Officers, and reported back to TSB. Should it not be effective the next step of introducing a Byelaw is recommended.

**Recommendations:**

- a) TSB approve the revised wording of the Voluntary Code of Practice;
- b) TSB approve the implementation of the Code of Practice in 2018;
- c) TSB approve the monitoring and reporting of compliance levels with the Code of Practice.

**Mandy Knott  
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16th October 2017**

## NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



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### Fishing around St. Bees Headland

#### Voluntary Code of Practice

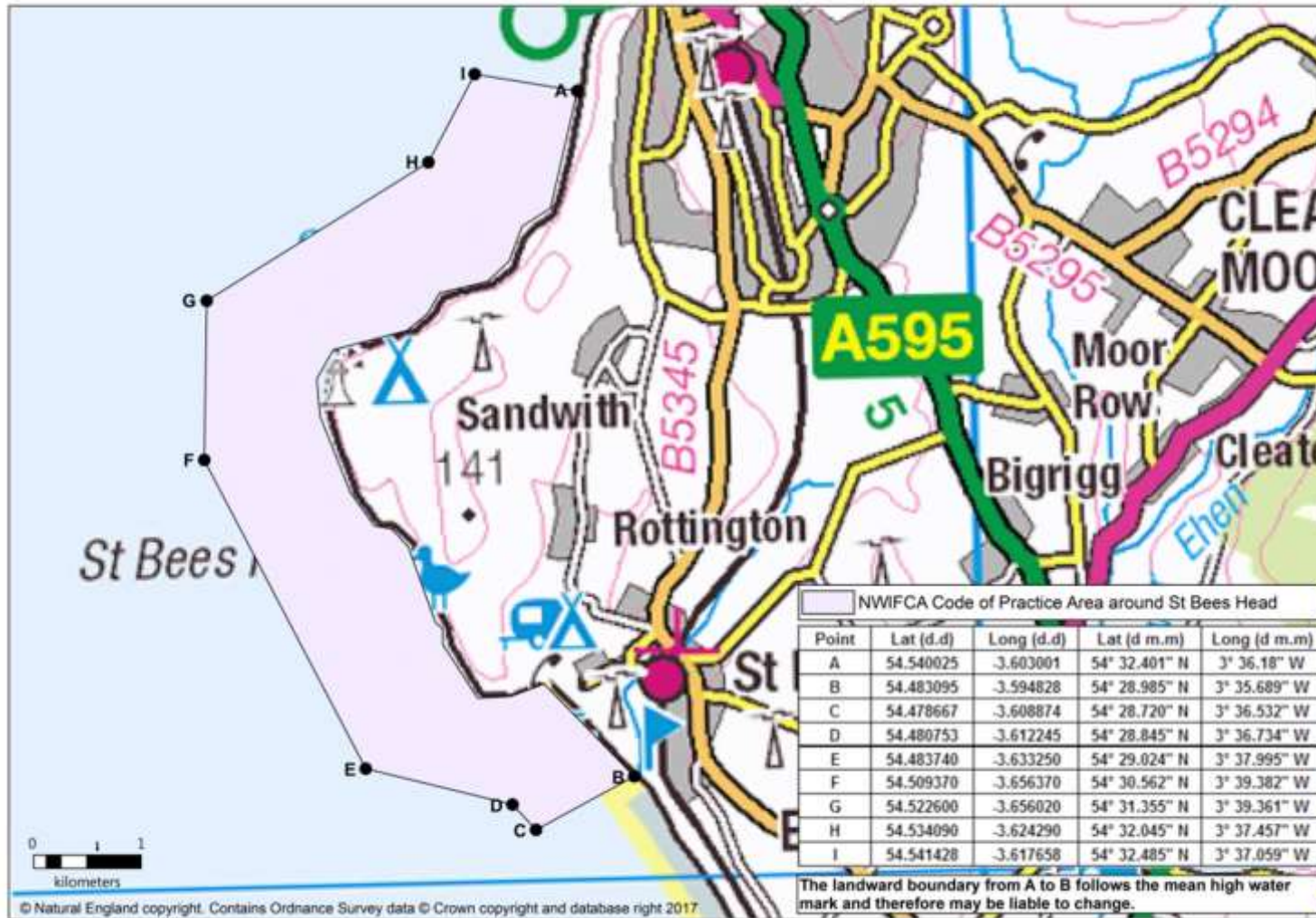
To reduce the risk of bird entanglement in fishing nets the NWIFCA recommends that the following Code of Practice should be followed:

- **No netting of any type in the area highlighted in the map below during the period 1<sup>st</sup> March to 15<sup>th</sup> July\*\*.**
- **If you do accidentally catch a bird in your net outside of the area or in any non-netting gear within the area ensure that you contact the NWIFCA on the details above with details of the capture including location, number of birds and species.**

The sea around St. Bees Head is important for many species of birds which nest on the cliffs and feed on fish in the area. Some of the birds are susceptible to becoming accidentally entrapped by nets and disturbed by vessel movement. At particular times of year (around the breeding season) these birds are at especially high risk. Nobody wants to see birds caught in fishing gear, including those fishing the gear. Apart from the obvious damage to those individual birds, it can cause distress to the public and lead to a damaging perception of fishing.

Note: St Bees Head is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and an RSPB Reserve.

\*\* **NB. These dates to be reviewed annually.** The restricted period may be started earlier or extended depending on weather, the behaviour of the birds, and assessment by Natural England and the RSPB of the risk of netting to the birds, particularly juvenile birds.



NWIFCA Code of Practice – Netting Box  
 Map is for illustration only and should not be used for navigation