

North Western



**Recreational Sea Angling
Strategy 2017-?**

Working Document

Version 1.0

AC 07-12-2016

NWIFCA Recreational Sea Angling Strategy

1. Introduction

This Recreational Sea Angling Strategy has been drafted in recognition of the need to sustainably manage marine fisheries resources within the NWIFCA District. Management of fisheries resources plays a large role in enabling recreational sea angling (RSA) activity and for the sector to continue to be of great social and economic importance. The District sees a wide range of sea anglers, from beach based individuals, to club matches and charter boat businesses.

This Strategy is intended to be a working document, and subsequent versions will dynamically reflect an iterative process that will be led by information gathered along the way.

2. Context and Need

The North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority was established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and created in 2011. Prior to the IFCA's creation, Sea Fisheries Committees were not tasked with managing or regulating recreational fishing. The statutory duties of the NWIFCA are set out in the Act and the vision is as follows:

"North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries in its District by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry."

The NWIFCA RSA Strategy seeks to achieve the overarching aim of the IFCA: to seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the District, and to sustainably manage these resources. We currently lack comprehensive knowledge surrounding the type, extent and importance of sea angling within our District. In order to achieve balanced sustainable management, we must endeavour to fill this knowledge gap. This is no simple task; the NWIFCA has a large District and has a broad range of coastal environments covering around 1,280 km, including many different locations suitable for sea angling.

It is broadly accepted that RSA sector contributes a large amount to the local economy, so its health brings obvious benefits to the wider coastal community. Sustainable management and balancing need must be at the heart of a successful RSA Strategy.

3. Aims and Objectives

The NWIFCA has drafted three Aims and Objectives to begin to build a picture of the current situation in the angling sector and assess management needs.

3.1. Aims

- 1- Sustainable management of sea fisheries resources and balancing the needs of all parties involved in exploitation of the sea.

- 2- Engage with anglers in our District in order to understand their needs and requirements to inform the development of the Recreational Angling Strategy.
- 3- Recognise and maintain the RSA sector and its social and economic benefits.

3.2. Objectives

- 1- Assess information, analyse data, and implement a balanced and adaptive management approach.
- 2- Connect with the angling sector to build a good relationship, to open communication, to identify areas of conflict and to determine the needs of sea anglers from regulators including the IFCA.
- 3- Understand the social and economic importance of RSA for the District.

4. Our Approach

The following steps are designed to achieve the Aims and Objectives above:

4.1. Engagement

- Contact angling clubs, attend club meetings, find anglers *in situ*, gather contacts, encourage anglers to “register as a stakeholder” on website.
- Officers to assist- enforcement team have most contact with sea anglers.
- Send out information in the form of emails/ newsletter/website updates/twitter posts/Facebook page/information leaflet/signage/ MCRS cards.
- Need to make sure the message that the IFCA is not just about enforcement, but management and conservation too.

4.2. Information Gathering

- Find out what anglers think of the IFCA- do they know what we do? Can we do more/do we need to do anything differently? What do they want to see the IFCA doing?
- Metadata: find out what information clubs hold- e.g. historic catch data and what is recorded as a matter of course.
- Club rules- often have large minimum sizes than legal MCRSs
- Find out where fishing takes place, what species are targeted and when.
- What are the catch and release practices

4.3. Survey

- Meetings and workshops to gauge opinion
- Club and individual questionnaires
- Start to get quantitative information.

4.4. Conflict Identification

- Identify conflicts between a) IFCA and Anglers, b) Commercial and Recreational, c) Conservation need and Angling Practices.

4.5. Data collection and Citizen Science

- Once we know what sort of issues need addressing, and where gaps in the data exist we can collect data- e.g. fish sizes/species/location/catch and release/scale samples.