

**NWIFCA Technical, Science and Byelaw
Committee**

31st October 2017: 10:00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.**

7

Report to TSB - NWIFCA MPA Monitoring and Control Plan

Purpose: i. to inform Members of the direction from Defra for all fisheries regulators to implement Monitoring and Control Plans for fishing activity in Marine Protected Areas;

ii. to provide a simplified approach with a draft NWIFCA plan for approval.

Recommendations: i. Members approve the approach to the NWIFCA MPA M&C Plan presented;

ii. Members approve the continuation of work to complete a finalised draft of the NWIFCA MPA M&C Plan to be brought back to TSB.

Report:

1. Defra have directed English fisheries regulators to draw up and implement Marine Protected Area Monitoring and Control Plans (M&C Plans). Officers have been requested to provide details to Defra of the progress made.
2. The requirement for M&C Plans is that following assessment of fishing activity (both through HRA in European Sites and MCZ assessments in UK designated MCZs) that management is monitored to ensure it is effective in protecting features of conservation, and that non-compliance in management measures is detected and acted upon.
3. Assessments of fishing activity in MPAs are made on current activity, effort, gear method, spatial extent etc. and any change in any of these could affect whether or not the assessed risk of damage to features remains the same.
4. MPA assessments are also based on 'best available evidence' and as time moves on and research and evidence improves, understanding of gear, intensity, features' sensitivity, recoverability and vulnerability will also change.
5. To ensure assessments remain current and relevant each regulator needs to have a documented system of:
 - a) Monitoring to trigger a review of assessment following any changes;
 - b) A system of enforcement of management measures;
 - c) A built-in review period.
6. Enquiries to other IFCA's have revealed that some are approaching their M&C Plans on a site by site basis, while some are dealing with them as gear-type across the District. Drafts seen have been quite lengthy and potentially very time-consuming to produce.
7. Members will be aware of the high volume of work created by the Defra Review of Fishing Activity in EMS and the large number of MPAs in the NWIFCA District. There is a danger that individual M&C Plans could create a significant workload.

8. In an effort not to duplicate the work and detail that has already been put into the individual site specific gear assessments, the Senior Scientist has drafted a simplified M&C Plan with separate site specific tables that heavily references the HRAs / MCZ assessments. The tables include a suite of parameters that will be monitored and specific triggers for review of existing assessments. Annual reviews are built in should nothing be triggered throughout the year.
9. Methods of monitoring are outlined. These are mainly based on IFCO and MMO sightings data. The Science Team will take the lead in ensuring monitoring is carried out, and report when reviews are triggered.
10. Should concerns be raised over site or feature condition Natural England can trigger a review at any time.
11. The Science Team will work with other agencies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency to further the possibilities of sharing resources for site condition / feature condition / fisheries impact monitoring. The potential for this will be greatly enhanced with the acquisition of the new vessel and the science facilities on-board.
12. The draft NWIFCA Monitoring and Control Plan (not fully completed yet) is presented at Annex A for consideration by Members. It shows the approach being taken. By clicking on the Excel icon on page 9, the full table format can be opened for viewing.

- Recommendations:**
- i. **Members approve the approach to the NWIFCA M&C Plan as presented;**
 - ii. **Members approve the continuation of work to complete a finalised draft of the NWIFCA M&C Plan to be brought back to TSB.**

**Mandy Knott
Senior Scientist
19th October 2017**