

Appendix 1: NWIFCA Advice and Guidance Policy Statement

The foundation of full compliance is easy access to reliable information to help those regulated to adhere to the obligations imposed by the law, be it local, national, or international. A closely related requirement is to provide access to the scientific evidence behind the approach of the law to help those regulated understand the reasoning behind the obligations imposed. The NWIFCA will therefore seek to inform and educate stakeholders, providing advice and guidance to regulated users of the marine environment on the rules it will enforce.

The NWIFCA provides a range of guidance and information. Much of this, for example byelaws (with notes), and minimum-landing sizes can be found on the NWIFCA website at <http://www.nw-ifca.gov.uk>. Further information, including some scientific data and other guidance and policy documents is available on request from: NWIFCA, 1 Preston Street, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA5 9BY.

The NWIFCA recognises the importance of such advice, guidance and information being suited to those who will need to use it. Good guidance requires a detailed understanding of the target audience and so consultation is essential to producing good guidance. Therefore, the NWIFCA aims to incorporate its guidance in its broader consultations on enforcement and regulatory approach. The NWIFCA therefore has as a goal that its guidance should be structured around the first hand expertise of those it concerns and their ways of working. The membership of the NWIFCA is selected to represent a wide range of the views of the local users and managers of the marine environment and so is already sensitive to many of the practices and experiences of the target audience. In addition, NWIFCA officers continually assess their regulatory and enforcement approach with reference to the conversations and interactions they have on a day to day basis with marine users.

The NWIFCA aims to ensure that its guidance is in simple, clear language and avoids the use of jargon where possible. Where an issue is necessarily technical the NWIFCA will not gloss over the difficult aspects but will seek to provide proper explanation of the relevant information. It is also intended that such guidance will recognise its limitations where any subject is too technical or difficult, such that it should not mislead users.

The NWIFCA will also try and ensure that the guidance it keeps on regulation will be up to date. Details of upcoming changes will be provided in advance wherever possible. The NWIFCA will continue to gather and interpret scientific data, in partnership with other relevant organisations, to promote the development of well-founded and pragmatic legislation. Where possible guidance and information will include the date it was written and if relevant, the date it is due for review.

A strength of the NWIFCA is the experience and dedication of its enforcement and scientific officers who aim to serve as a link between the local users of the marine environment and the regulatory and conservation organisations. The NWIFCA will continue to develop the skills and experience of these officers with the goal that they serve as an invaluable source of knowledge and guidance to regulated users in all sectors. The officers of the NWIFCA will continue to be proactive in helping those regulated to understand and comply with the law.

The NW IFCA will seek to conduct its business in a way which is transparent, reasonable and fair, such that any interested party can gain a clear understanding of the rationale behind any decision taken. The quarterly meetings of the NW IFCA are open to the public and where possible, the documents for such meetings are made available on the website in advance.

If you would like further information about IFCA in general and their regulatory role and background please see the website of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/wwo/ifca/>.