



North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Annual Report 2025/26



September 2026

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Front page image: NWIFCA Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer (IFCO) at Leasowe cockle fishery, Wirral
© Tessa Bunney

1. Introduction

North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NWIFCA) is the lead statutory regulator under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA) responsible for protection of the marine environment and sustainable use of sea fisheries resources within our district. Our statutory duties are defined in MaCAA, which include the requirement for us to publish an annual report detailing how we delivered against our main objectives and priorities for the previous financial year; this is that report, covering the period of April 2025 through to March 2026 and should be read in conjunction with the associated 2025/26 Annual Plan.



Sunderland Point, Lancashire © Tessa Bunney

2. Governance

The Authority's full Committee has 30 members as defined in UK Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 2200. Ten members come from the Authority's nine constituent councils, with 17 appointed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) from a variety of stakeholder groups, each with skills and experience relevant to the management of inshore fisheries and marine conservation. There are three statutory members from the MMO, Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE). Appendix III lists the Authority's members in 2025/26 with dates of appointments. At year-end, the Authority was carrying three member vacancies, two of which were MMO appointees and one councillor.

Standing Orders and other corporate governance policies and procedures are laid out in the Authority's Constitution available on the website. The current edition of the Constitution was published in March 2022.

The Committee held quarterly face-to-face meetings in June, September, December and March. Meetings of the Technical, Science and Byelaw Sub-Committee (TSB) were held in May, August, November, February and March. The Finance and Personnel Sub-Committee met twice within the reporting period, in May and November, and the General Purposes and Standards Sub-Committee was not required to meet at all during this period.

There are several national IFCA groups established to provide coordination and exchange of experience across the ten IFCAs. The Association of IFCA (AIFCA) is an umbrella organisation representing the IFCAs and, alongside its executive arm, acts as a policy and strategy committee formed of IFCA Chairs and Chief Officers. Members receive the ratified minutes in the CEO's quarterly reports. The Marine and Fisheries Chief Officer Group (MAFCO) is an operational-level group consisting of IFCA Chief Officers and Defra Policy colleagues and meets on a quarterly basis. The IFCAs' Chief Officers' Group (COG) is a working group to discuss delivery approaches, develop solutions and agree coordinated implementation of national marine fisheries policy. This group met quarterly online and in person during the reporting period. In addition, there were enforcement meetings of the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) which are attended by the Head of Enforcement, and scientific meetings of the IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which are attended by the Head of Science. An IFCA Strategic Operations Group (SOG), made up of members of COG, NIMEG and the MMO, has a remit to report to both groups and assist with strategic themes in the inshore marine environment.

3. Resources

3.1 Officers and Assets

NWIFCA began 2025/26 with 20 permanent staff and two Defra-funded fixed-term staff, with no vacancies. Following member approval, our two fixed-term staff members were made permanent in December 2025. The Authority's year-end organogram can be seen in Appendix II.

Premises, vessels and vehicles are listed in Appendix VI. The Authority retained our main patrol vessel North Western Protector, but our two rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) were disposed of due to lack of utility of one and a coding downgrade rendering the other operationally redundant.



North Western Protector at Whitehaven, Cumbria © NWIFCA

3.1.1 Training

Officers' skills were updated under the Authority's training programme. Training objectives were identified in staff reviews and an organisational training programme included:

- Defined training aimed at specified roles and responsibilities provided in house or by IFCAs as a group, the MMO or external providers
- Tailored training to meet organisational and personal objectives for each officer delivered by the CEO, Head of Enforcement or Head of Science

- Assessment of the Authority's existing and future skills and needs by the Senior Management Team (SMT)
- Consideration of external training available to bridge capacity gaps
- Monitoring and evaluation of training to achieve added value and effectiveness
- Specific training to ensure compliance with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's new Workboat Code Edition 3.

Four officers attended the IFCAs' national competent officer training course. The Head of Science completed a qualification in Chartered Management Institute Level 5. Other mandatory and essential training undertaken by staff in 2025/26 is set out in Appendix VII.

3.2 Financial¹

The budget for 2025/26 was passed by the Authority's Committee in December 2024 with an agreed 6% statutory levy increase for our nine constituent councils. The Budget Review for 2025/26 is shown in Appendix IV.

The Authority's accountants continued to deliver payroll and financial reporting and oversight services in 2025/26.

3.2.1 Income

As a result of the agreed 6% increase in local authorities' levies, 2025/26's levy increased to £1,855,000; this income remained the Authority's primary source of income. In addition, the Authority received £33,000 in shellfish sampling fees from certain local councils' environmental health departments, on whose behalf we deliver this work. £80,000 was received in permit fees. £119,000 of interest was earned on monies in reserve. Also, £143,000 of revenue funding was received from Defra, which is provided to all IFCAs for increased responsibilities around marine protected area (MPA) management, marine spatial prioritisation, fisheries management plans (FMPs) and, uniquely to NWIFCA, for monitoring of the new Allonby Bay Highly Protected Marine Area (HPMA). This was intended to support an increase in resources for IFCAs to take on this additional work and in 2025/26; the Authority continued to use this to fund two additional staff.

3.2.2 Expenditure

The Authority's biggest expenditure continued to be around staff expenses (e.g. salaries, expenses and National Insurance and pension contributions). For 2025/26, this totalled £1,213,000, which was £80,000 under budget. This significant underspend was in the main due to less than busy fisheries during the year leading to low unsocial hours payments to enforcement officers, along with a reduced employer pension contribution obligation. Expenditure on premises topped out at £175,000, which was £30,000 less than expected for the year. Transport costs were over by £19,000 collectively, against a budget of £125,000. The value of the Authority's main capital assets, our vessels and vehicles, depreciated by £109,000 in 2025/26. This is

¹ All figures quoted here are rounded to the nearest £1,000 for illustrative purposes; for exact figures, see Appendix VI.

primarily due an ageing patrol vessel and is despite the replacement of several old vehicles with new but is a reduction on last year's £120,000 depreciation figure. The Authority continued to contribute a proportion of our levy income towards our Capital Asset Replacement Fund (CARF) in 2025/26; this amounted to £72,000. Finally, Corporate expenditure totalled £274,000 by year-end, against a budget of £247,000. This overspend was primarily due to some unanticipated costs for external IT services.

Overall, the Authority ended the year with a surplus budget of £125,000. This was despite some significant over-expenditure against the Transport and Corporate budgets, which were offset by high levels of interest earned and a large underspend against our Employees budget.

3.2.1 Balance

The balance sheet for the Authority at year-end is shown in Appendix V. This shows the Authority held tangible assets to the value of £617,000 along with financial assets of £4,781,000. We had total liabilities of £2,056,000 and, after taking into account the year's earnings, our total in capital and reserves was £3,343,000.



Common cockle (*Cerastoderma edule*) and razor clam (*Ensis* sp.) from the Wirral © Tessa Bunney

4. Performance Against Annual Plan Objectives

2025/26 marked only the second year in which the Authority's Annual Plan set out specific objectives for the year ahead regarding the fisheries, MPAs and organisational challenges associated with NWIFCA specifically, rather than more generalised, opaque IFCA objectives. Therefore, this Annual Report for 2025/26 can report against these objectives and describe if and how we met them.

4.1 North Western Protector

A total of 59 fisheries protection patrols covering 3,146 nautical miles were carried out over the year, with 513 inspections of vessels and static gear, as well as sighting 475 commercial and recreational fishing vessels in the district. North Western Protector also conducted 31 patrols of the Allonby Bay HPMA, 44 patrols of other MPAs, such as Cumbria Coast and West of Walney MCZs, and carried out two scientific voyages, one for side scan sonar equipment training and the other to conduct a benthic grab survey in the Solway Firth.

New standard operating procedures (SOPs) for North Western Protector were implemented during this reporting period, which included planning and reporting on all patrols, along with checklists for equipment and other requirements. The adoption of a new vessel safety management system also occurred this year.

Objective Status	Met
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IFCOs launching from North Western Protector for a fisheries inspection © NWIFCA

4.2 Vessel Replacement Strategy

Following the adoption of our new vessel replacement strategy in late 2025/25, the Head of Enforcement and CEO worked to progress this in 2025/26, culminating in officers working with a select group of members to finalise a specification for the first of two new vessels, and a tender exercise commenced late in the year. This exercise will move through to selection of the preferred supplier, contract award and build in 2026/27.

Objective Status	Met
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4.3 Drones

The operational competence of the Authority's trained drone pilots was further developed in 2025/26. We replaced a departed trained officer with a new one from the Science Team, and all four officers continued to retain logs of their flight hours and activities. The Enforcement Team completed 21 flights across the district, whilst the Science Team conducted 37. During this year the two operational teams worked together to develop pre-defined operational plans for sites where drones are routinely flown from, therefore reducing some of the burden of the planning documents required for each flight.

Objective Status	Met
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Senior Science Officer Jon Haines flying our Science drone © Tessa Bunney

4.4. Office Moves

We relocated our Whitehaven Office to a more suitable property at Whitehaven Marina, with staff moving into the new premises in January 2026. After careful consideration, the decision was taken to renew our lease on our Head Office in Carnforth and to commence a project to upgrade our facilities there, which will get underway in 2026/27.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Met</i>
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4.5 Research Plan

An objective to create a new long-term Research Plan for the Authority was not met during this financial year, due to competing priorities and our Head of Science taking an extended period of leave. This objective will be carried over into our 2026/27 Annual Plan.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Not Met</i>
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4.6 Wirral Netting

This objective could not be delivered in 2025/26 due to the Science Team's workloads associated with delivering other strategic objectives and routine survey work. However, a research plan was developed during this period, and the project will commence in the spring and summer of 2026.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Working Towards</i>
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4.7 Brown Shrimp Study

In 2025, NWIFCA completed the initial assessment of the district's shrimp fishery by producing a comprehensive summary of the current fishery and its historical context. This work identified the key stakeholders involved, characterised fishing activity across the district (including effort, seasonality, fishing practices and gear), mapped the spatial distribution of the fishery, and reviewed historical records, landings and previous research. The project also collated available ecological information on shrimp biology and their role within the wider marine ecosystem, providing the evidence base required to inform future monitoring, research and fisheries management.

This work successfully led to a partnership with the University of Salford and a successful external funding bid. Building on the initial assessment, the project has established a comprehensive sampling programme to investigate the causes of the observed decline in Morecambe Bay shrimp populations, while collecting baseline data on population structure, including size, sex ratio and seasonal variation. This work will be conducted in 2026/27.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Met</i>
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Brown shrimp picking, Flookburgh, Cumbria © Tessa Bunney

4.8 Academic Partnerships

During 2025/26, the Authority's close working relationship with Bangor University culminated in a partnership for a PhD project in looking at cockle larval dispersal in the district, which commenced in September and will run for the next four years.

Over the same period, NWIFCA strengthened its academic partnerships to support evidence-based fisheries research via a collaborative project with the University of Salford to continue research into the Morecambe Bay shrimp fishery. For this project we successfully secured external funding to deliver an expanded programme of field sampling and laboratory analysis. In addition, new links were developed with the University of Liverpool through the Wirral netting project, enabling the exchange of data, expertise and methodological approaches to support the development of our research methods.

Objective Status	Met
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4.9 Coastal Patrols

Enforcement and Intelligence

During 2025/26, the Enforcement Team completed 951 officer patrol days across the district, covering patrol locations across the district.

Patrol activity continued to be intelligence-led, with priorities identified through fortnightly Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) meetings. These meetings enable emerging intelligence,

seasonal risks and areas of concern to be assessed and translated into operational tasking. Many issues were addressed through routine, discreet patrol activity. Where a heightened risk or priority was identified, a dedicated operational plan was developed to provide clear objectives and coordinate the necessary resources.

Eight operational plans were implemented during the reporting period. These supported fisheries regulation and enforcement across the district, focusing on priority areas including seasonal cockle fisheries, bass nursery areas and the gathering of bivalve molluscs.

The year also saw significant development of the Enforcement Team's intelligence capability, including the trial of a full-time Intelligence Officer position; this trial was made permanent later in the year. This additional capacity was required to manage the increasing volume of intelligence received and to ensure information was appropriately assessed, sanitised and developed. During the reporting period, 217 intelligence reports were processed—understood to be the highest number recorded by any fisheries regulatory body in the UK.

Intelligence Officer Anthony Graham played a key role in NWIFCA becoming the first IFCA to conduct TCG meetings through the new CLUE intelligence system. The system has strengthened operational support by improving the allocation and monitoring of tasks, intelligence analysis and development, and the sharing of information relevant to officer safety.

Partnership Working and Training

Joint working remained a priority throughout the year, recognising that cooperation between agencies operating in coastal and estuarine areas can deliver stronger and more coordinated outcomes. Officers continued to attend the external North West and Irish Sea TCG, where shared risks and operational requirements were discussed and joint activity planned between the relevant agencies.

Multi-agency patrols took place across the district, including in the Wirral, Morecambe Bay and Barrow areas. These patrols supported the exchange of intelligence, more effective use of available resources and a coordinated response to issues involving overlapping regulatory responsibilities.

In January 2025, the Enforcement Team completed cross-warranting training delivered by the EA. This covered fisheries legislation and enforcement, local and national regulatory frameworks, and invasive non-native species. Further training sessions with the EA's North West team are planned to build officer knowledge and strengthen joint working across NWIFCA's inshore and estuarine areas.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Met</i>
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4.10 RIB Patrols

The objective was not met primarily because Protector Gamma and Bay Protector were sold during the reporting period. Their disposal significantly reduced the Authority's capacity to undertake RIB patrols and meant that the planned target of 20 patrols could not be delivered.

The sale also affected the associated targets for fishing-vessel boardings and sightings, as these activities depended on the availability of suitable operational vessels. In addition, the planned development of SOPs for the two RIBs was no longer required, while opportunities for in-house sea-time training and building officers' practical experience were reduced. To reduce the future impact of this, officer training continued onboard North Western Protector and Protector Charlie

and officers focused on assisting senior management with the procurement of the first of two new vessels.

Although relevant training and preparations for compliance with Workboat Code 3 remained valuable, the loss of both RIBs changed the Authority's operational capability and priorities. Consequently, the objective became unachievable in its original form and was revised in plans to reflect the Authority's available vessels and current arrangements for maintaining an at-sea presence.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Not Met</i>
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4.11 Quarterly Reviews

Our Head of Admin developed a suite of key performance indicators to allow for continuous assessment of the functions performed by our Administration Team. These were integrated into the CEO's quarterly report to Full Authority members.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Met</i>
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4.12 Cockle FMP

The Cockle FMP development was completed by our Head of Science, following consultation and internal feedback from officers. At year-end, it was on track to be brought to TSB in early 2026/27 for confirmation and subsequent implementation in time for the summer 2026 surveys and the 2026/27 season.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Met</i>
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4.13 Cockle Season

A comprehensive review was carried out of a trial early opening, early closing cockle season for this year's season from July to February. Following consultation with relevant stakeholders, our TSB members voted to return to our standard September-April open season for our cockle fisheries across the district.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Met</i>
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4.14 Netting Byelaw

Following completion of the quality assurance process with MMO, our Netting Byelaw was sent to Defra for confirmation and adoption. At year-end, the byelaw was still with Defra and was being held up due to a wider, national policy review on commercial shore-based bass netting.

<i>Objective Status</i>	<i>Met</i>
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4.15 Byelaw 3 – Cockles and Mussels Permit Review

A new Minimum Use Policy for Byelaw 3 cockle and blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) permit was agreed by TSB members in 2025/26. The intention is for this to be adopted in time for the 2026/27 season.

Progress was not made on a potential Handover Scheme for permit holders giving us their permits. This will be assessed by the CEO and senior officers in 2026/27, with a view to bringing an appropriate recommendation to members later in the year.

Objective Status	Working Towards
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4.16 Byelaw 4 – Potting Permit Review

Following adoption of a fixed minimum conservation reference size for common whelk (*Buccinum undatum*) of 65mm at the end of 2024/25, our Science Team reviewed the overall levels of effort in the district's whelk potting fishery. They determined that there was latent capacity in the fishery and so, following a recommendation to TSB members, applications were reopened for new Byelaw 4 permits to pot for whelks, subject to a cap of an additional 2,500 pots. New permits will be issued in early 2026/27.

Objective Status	Met
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4.17 Dee Cockle Fishery Regulating Order

Good progress was made on the Authority's proposed joint application with Natural Resources Wales for a new Regulating Order to manage the Dee Estuary cockle fishery. In January, an initial application was submitted to Defra and Welsh Government, along with further development of policies, procedures and a new FMP. An initial consultation with stakeholders was ran in the autumn of 2025. This application, and the associated management framework, will continue to progress in 2026/27, towards an objective for a summer 2028 implementation.

Objective Status	Met
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4.18 Solway MCZ Assessment

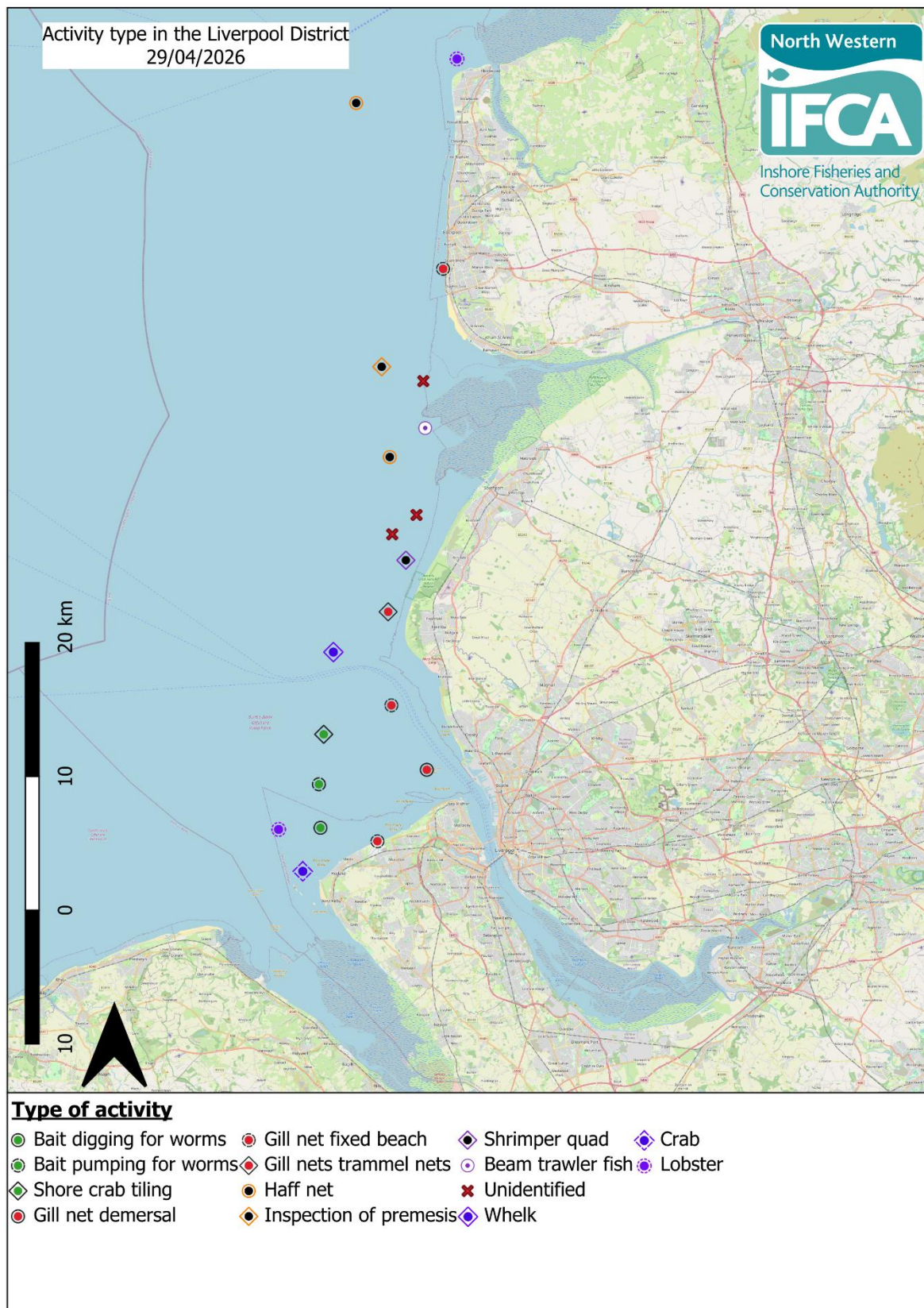
During 2025/26, a draft assessment for the Solway Firth MCZ was completed, with the remaining work focused on refining the long-term monitoring approach. This will be progressed during 2026/27 to ensure the assessment is supported by an appropriate evidence framework. Assessment of Allonby Bay MCZ has been scheduled to follow the implementation of the relevant byelaws, allowing the assessment to incorporate evidence of the site's management measures and their effectiveness.

Objective Status	Met
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4.19 Operational Stats

A mobile app was developed during 2025/26 to record officers' sighting of fishing activity *in situ*, to replace traditional notebook recording. Additionally, this GIS-based approach would allow for more effective and efficient analysis of this sightings data, to help inform future fisheries and associated MPA management. By year-end, the app's development was nearing completion and a trial with officers was launched, with a view to implementation in the summer of 2026.

Objective Status	Met
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A screenshot of our new fisheries sightings app during development © NWIFCA

4.20 Allonby Bay HPMA

The proposed MMO byelaws to prohibit fishing and anchoring in the HPMA were not confirmed during this reporting period, with confirmation not anticipated until summer 2026. However, a memorandum of understanding was agreed with the MMO for compliance monitoring and enforcement of the HPMA's byelaws, once they are in place.

Whilst the new byelaws were awaited, we conducted 31 at sea patrols in and around the HPMA, alongside 42 shore-based patrols on foot and quadbike.

We were not able to continue our joint survey work with NE during 2025/26, due to NE's funding constraints.

Objective Status	Met
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4.21 Stakeholder Engagement Events

In early 2026, stakeholder engagements events for our Byelaw 3 stakeholders were held in Grange-over-Sands, Wallasey and out of district in Rhydymwyn in North Wales. There was good attendance at all three events, with constructive dialogue between senior officers and stakeholders on challenges and opportunities within the district's cockle and mussel fisheries.

Objective Status	Met
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Officers and fishermen in discussion at one of our Byelaw 3 stakeholder engagement events © NWIFCA

4.22 Constitution Review

Officers began an initial assessment of our current Constitution in late 2025/26. In early 2026/27 this will continue, with a draft proposal then being brought to members for their consideration.

Objective Status	Met
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Our Science Officer (Health & Safety) Robin Love and Head of Science Anna Plumeridge © Tessa Bunney

5. Case Studies

In addition to working towards meeting our main objectives and priorities as set out in the previous section, the Authority also made a significant number of achievements in other areas that were not part of our Annual Plan at the beginning of the year.

5.1 Case Study – Science

During 2025/26, NWIFCA successfully developed and implemented a new digital fisheries data collection and reporting system using Mergin Maps, representing a significant step forward in modernising the way fisheries and enforcement information is collected, managed and analysed across the district.

Developed over an 18-month period in collaboration with Maptastic, the bespoke mobile mapping and reporting platform enables officers to record fisheries information directly in the field using mobile devices. The system captures a wide range of operational information, including shore and intertidal fishing activity, vessel sightings, fishing methods, gear deployments and inspections, removing the need for extensive paper-based recording and reducing post-patrol administration.

The introduction of the system has significantly improved information sharing across the Authority, with data now available to colleagues in near real time. This provides greater situational awareness of fishing activity and operational priorities, while giving officers direct access to important fisheries and spatial information during patrols, improving operational efficiency and supporting informed decision-making.

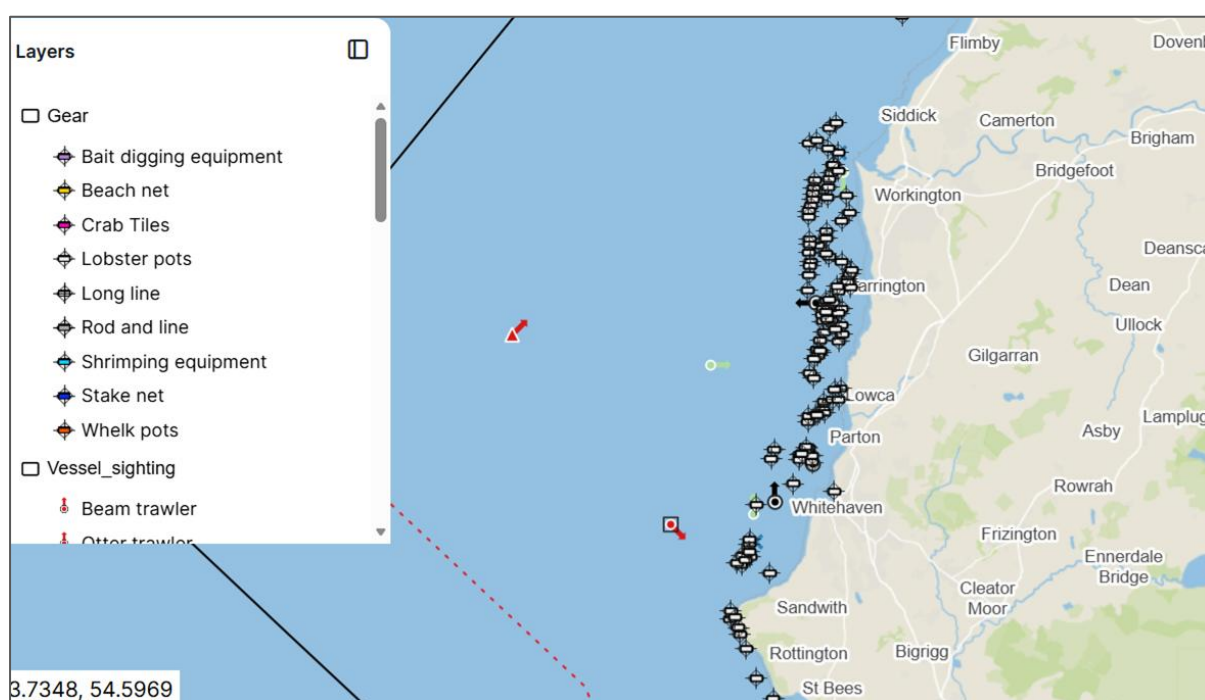


Image of the data collected on Mergin maps by officers in the field

The project has streamlined data collection, automated reporting processes and reduced administrative workload, enabling officers to spend more time undertaking frontline fisheries management and enforcement activities. It has also created a consistent, centralised dataset that benefits both the Science and Enforcement teams by improving the quality, accessibility and analysis of fisheries information. This enhanced evidence base will support the identification of trends, improve understanding of fishing activity and strengthen evidence-based fisheries management across the North West IFCA district.

5.2 Case Study – Enforcement

Throughout 2025/26, the NWIFCA Enforcement Team maintained a focused presence along the North Wirral coastline to enforce Byelaw 2 – North Wirral Foreshore Bivalve Molluscs. The byelaw restricts the gathering of bivalve molluscs in the area, helping to protect vulnerable shellfish stocks and support their long-term recovery.

Aware of seasonal risk surrounding this operational issue, the Enforcement Team adopted an intelligence-led approach. Vehicle, foot and intertidal ATV patrols were directed towards known locations and periods of increased risk. This included early-morning, evening and working every weekend in August during which officers gathered evidence, completed inspection reports and submitted statements to the Head of Enforcement for consideration in accordance with our Compliance and Enforcement Strategy.

Despite prominent signage and continued public engagement, officers recorded persistent illegal gathering during the summer period. Cockles, otter clams and razor clams were among the species being targeted. During one reporting period of three months, officers observed more than 126 people on the foreshore and identified 24 separate suspected gathering offences. This resulted in over 20 official warning letters being issued and one repeat offender being issued a financial administrative penalty. This more serious offence ratified why body worn video camera footage is so crucial as the individual was able to be identified in two different officers' recordings on separate occasions, having been previously issued a warning. The excellent evidence gathering and awareness through this incident from Senior IFCO Andy Brownrigg and IFCO Mark Taylor contributed towards being able to issue such a severe sanction.

Joint patrols were also undertaken with Merseyside Police's Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Team. This strengthened the visible enforcement presence, supported the safe management of incidents and allowed information and intelligence to be shared between organisations.

Officers balanced enforcement with education, explaining the restrictions to foreshore users including the general public and ensuring closure notices remained visible and accessible. Patrol planning also considered activity at open cockle fisheries elsewhere in England and Wales, which could increase the risk of displaced or opportunistic gathering within the closed area.

By the end of the summer, targeted patrols recorded no further illegal gathering offences. Although continued monitoring remained necessary, this represented a significant improvement and demonstrated the value of visible, intelligence-led and partnership-based enforcement.

Key outcomes

- Twenty-four suspected gathering offences identified and sanctions issued promptly;
- Joint patrols undertaken with Merseyside Police;

- Targeted use of vehicle, foot, ATV and nocturnal patrols;
- No illegal gathering detected during the subsequent reporting quarter;
- Continued protection of vulnerable shellfish stocks and improved public awareness.

5.3 Case Study – Staff Survey

In an effort to strengthen employee engagement, improve workplace culture, and drive data-led decision-making, NWIFCA implemented a new colleague survey, using the HR company WeThrive. The initiative aimed to capture real-time employee sentiment, identify key drivers of engagement, and empower senior managers to take meaningful action.

Prior to adopting WeThrive, NWIFCA faced several key challenges:

- Limited insight into employee sentiment;
- Slow responses to issues, with leadership lacking timely data to address emerging concerns;
- Lack of accountability for action.

These challenges created a gap between employees' experiences and our organisational goals, impacting morale, productivity, and retention.

Our Head of Administration, Alison Nicholson, along with input from our senior managers, introduced the WeThrive platform to enable a more dynamic, continuous listening approach. The bespoke survey was designed around core factors such as engagement, wellbeing, manager effectiveness, communication, and inclusion. The rollout was conducted in three phases:

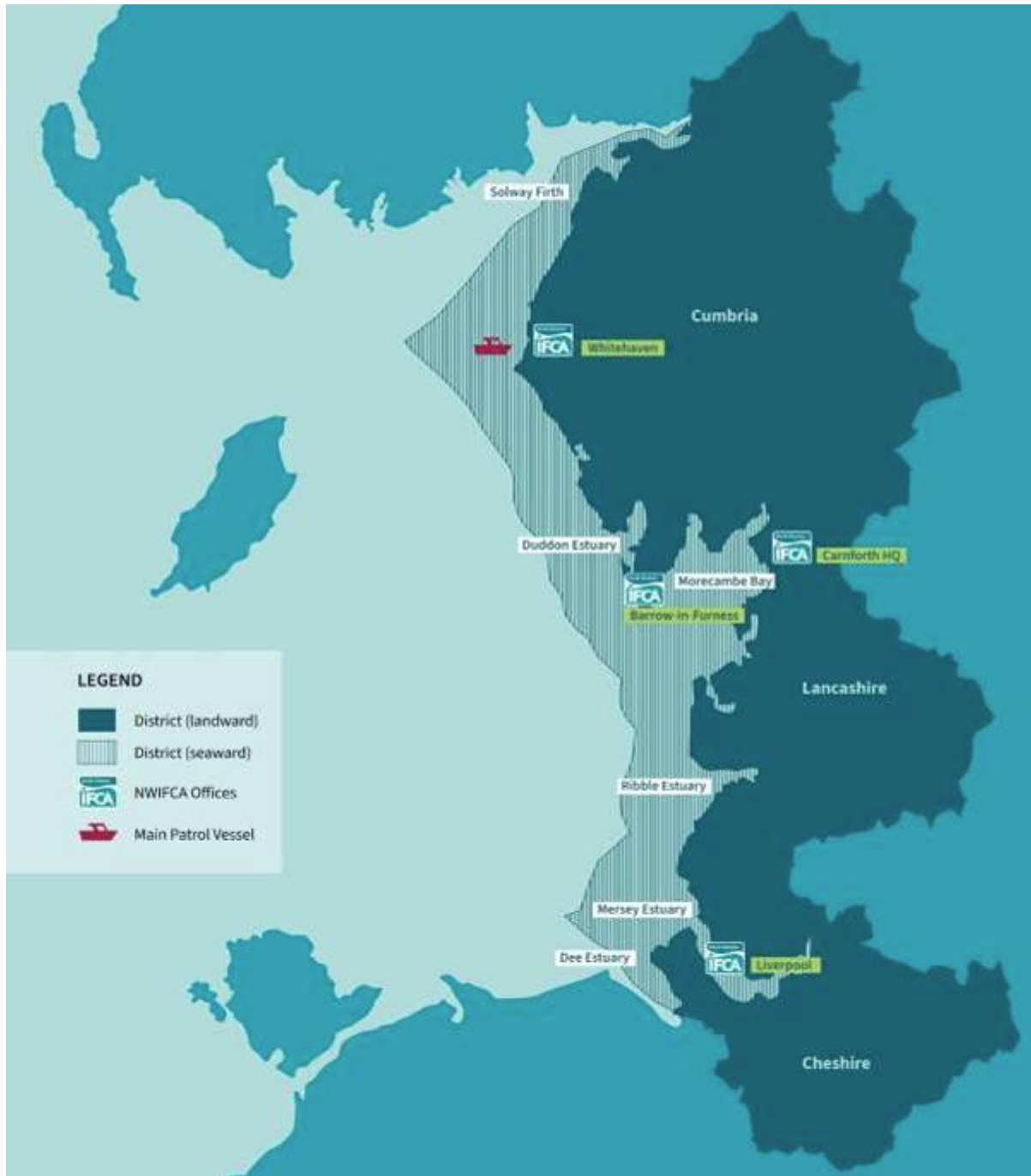
1. Preparation, with clear communication to staff explaining its purpose and value, along with training for managers on interpreting data and taking action;
2. Launch – survey distributed across all staff, with anonymous participation and 100% response rate;
3. Post-Survey – reporting dashboards summarised by WeThrive staff, with key themes and leadership insights identified; targeted action plans based on results.

The survey results were initially discussed within the senior management team, with ideas about potential actions for less favourable areas. These were then taken to a face-to-face full team meeting, with staff given the opportunity to provide further feedback. Key actions following the survey included the introduction of an employee suggestions scheme, a new project to establish organisational values, an electric car salary sacrifice scheme, and focussed communications on senior managers' workloads for greater transparency.

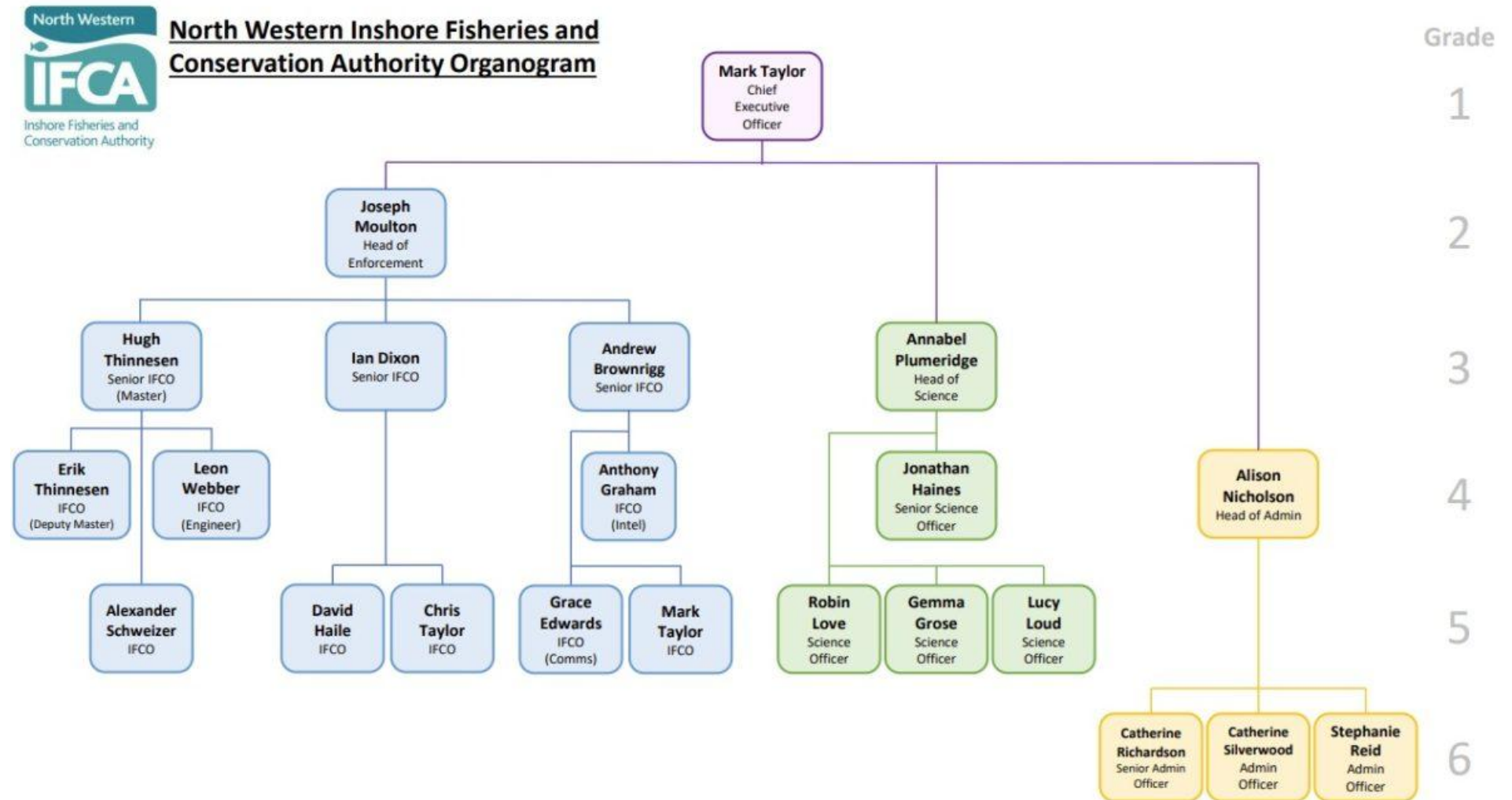
The WeThrive colleague survey has transformed how NWICA listens to and acts on employee feedback. By enabling continuous insight and empowering managers to respond effectively, the organisation has created a more engaged, inclusive, and high-performing workplace.

Appendices

Appendix I – Map of District



Appendix II - Organogram as of Year-End



Appendix III – Committee Members as of Year-End

Council Members		Date Appointed
Blackpool Council	Cllr. S. Brookes	June 2024
Cheshire West and Chester Council	Cllr. H. Deynem	August 2023
Cumberland Council	Cllr. A. Markley	October 2010
Halton Council	Cllr. B. Woolfall	May 2015
Lancashire County Council	Cllr. D. Shaw	May 2025
	Cllr. A. Jones	May 2025
Liverpool City Council	Cllr. P. Norris	July 2024
Sefton Council	Cllr. C. Richards	July 2024
Westmorland and Furness Council	Cllr. T. Bloomer	June 2025
Wirral Council	Vacant	N/A
MMO Appointees		Date Appointed
Marine Environment	Mr. N. Baxter	March 2020
Commercial Fisheries	Mr. R. Benson	December 2018
Recreational Fisheries	Mr. S. Brown	October 2017
Marine Environment	Mr. M. Burdekin	January 2026
Marine Environment	Mr. P. Capper	May 2021
Marine Environment	Ms. G. de Jong Cleyndert	July 2024
Recreational Fisheries	Mr. W. Friend	March 2020
Commercial Fisheries	Mr. T. Jones	March 2024
Recreational Fisheries	Mr. B. Leigh	March 2015
Recreational Fisheries	Mr. R. Lomax	May 2021
Commercial Fisheries	Mr. G. Pidduck	March 2020
Recreational Fisheries	Mr. L. Stainton	March 2020
Commercial Fisheries	Mr. K. Thompson	October 2014
Marine Environment	Dr. M. Tupper	November 2024

Recreational Fisheries	Mr. D. Williams	October 2023
Statutory Appointees		Date Appointed
MMO	Mr. S. Johnston	June 2022
EA	Mr. J. Turner	June 2022
NE	Mr. L. Browning	March 2021

Appendix IV – 2025/26 Budget

Budget Heading	Actual	Budget	Variance
INCOME			
Levy	£1,855,358	£1,855,358	£0
Sampling	£32,897	£0	£32,897
Permit Fees	£79,608	£85,000	(£5,393)
Interest	£118,621	£0	£118,621
Enforcement Fines	£250	£0	£250
Miscellaneous	£797	£0	£797
Gross Profit	£2,087,529	£1,940,357	£147,172
EXPENDITURE			
Employees	£1,212,968	£1,293,192	£80,224
Estates	£174,552	£204,149	£29,597
Transport	£143,768	£124,500	(£19,268)
CARF	£71,500	£71,500	0
Corporate	£273,844	£247,016	(£26,828)
Gross Expenditure	£1,876,632	£1,940,357	£63.725
Net Budget	£210,897	£0	£210,897

Appendix V – Balance Sheet as of Year-End

FIXED ASSETS	
Vehicles	£271,581
Vessels	£338,979
IT Equipment	£6,890
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash at Bank and In Hand	£3,161,439
Debtors' Control	£1,414,635
Payments in Advance	£175,337
Accrued Income	£3,000
VAT Debtor	£26,861
Total Current Assets	£4,781,272
Total Assets	£5,398,722
CREDITORS ²	
Accruals	£7,402
Creditors' Control	£63,376
Deferred Income	£1,937,602
Employee Super	£20,313
Inland Revenue Suspense	£27,007
Total Current Liabilities	£2,055,700
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)	£3,343,022
CAPITAL AND RESERVES	
CARF	£1,211,439
RDEL	£463,402
Current Year Earnings	£124,747

² Amounts falling due within one year

Bangor PhD	£36,000
Office Moves	£78,369
Dee RO	£80,000
General Reserves	£485,089
Other Reserves	£863,976
Total Capital and Reserves	£3.343.022

Appendix VI – Assets as of Year-End

Buildings	Carnforth Office	Leased, head office, 12 staff
	Whitehaven Office	Leased, six staff
	Old Whitehaven Office	Leased
	Barrow Office / Lock-Up	Leased, two staff and vessel, two vehicles and two ATVs
	Liverpool Office / Lock-Up	Leased, two staff, two vehicles and two ATVs
	Carnforth Lock-Up	Leased, vehicles and ATVs
	Whitehaven Lock-Up	Leased, vessel, vehicles and ATVs
Vessels	North Western Protector	2018 20m aluminium catamaran hull based in Whitehaven Harbour
	Protector Charlie	2018 5.3m daughter craft / boarding vessel for North Western Protector, constructed of aluminium alloy with rigid collared sponsons
Vehicles	Pick-Up Trucks (four)	One each in Whitehaven, Barrow, Carnforth and Liverpool
	Small vans (four)	One each in Whitehaven, Barrow, Carnforth and Liverpool
	Crew van (one)	Carnforth
	ATVs (11)	Two in Whitehaven, two in Barrow, five in Carnforth and two in Liverpool

Appendix VII – Staff Training

Type	Training	Number of Staff Trained
Health and Safety	ML5 / ENG1 Seafarer Medical	11
	NEBOSH Fire Safety	1
	NEBOSH Health and Safety Leadership Excellence	1
	NEBOSH HSE Award in Managing Risks and Risk Assessments at Work	1
	NEBOSH HSE Introduction to Incident Investigation	1
	RoSPA Level 3 Award for Manual Handling Trainers	1
	HSE Creating a Safety Culture of Excellence	1
	Managing Stress at Work	1
Maritime	Intermediate Powerboat	7
	Day Skipper Theory	5
	Small Ships Navigation and Radar	5
	Approved Engine Part 2	3
	Food Hygiene	6
IT	SharePoint	5
	QGIS	1
Other	GVC (Drone)	1
	ACAS Work Place Investigations	3
	GDPR Foundation Course	1
	Research Infomatics	1
	Competent Officer Training	4

Appendix VIII – Significant H&S Occurrences

Date	Type	Location	Description	Outcome
11.04.25	NM	0.2nm W of Whitehaven	Starboard injector leak pipe alarm would not clear. As the engines are linked, both went into limp mode and the vessel returned to harbour.	Engineers believe an electrical fault with either the wiring loom or the injector leak pipe return sensor. Loom cables found bunched together, though none appeared broken and the wiring is in a hard-to-reach part of the engine. Wiring freed up, alarm sensor unplugged, cleaned, and reassembled, and the engine run at full load for 30 minutes with no recurring alarms. Engineer and crew to continue monitoring as the fault may be intermittent.
11.04.25	I	Whitehaven Marina to Leece, Ulverston	Jockey wheel worked loose and lost from the trailer while collecting a quad from Leece, Ulverston. Only noticed on return to Whitehaven.	Replacement jockey wheel required and recommend coupling and jockey wheel security added to pre-tow checks.
01.05.25	NM	Foulney	Officers assumed low water was 10:00 and planned to be off Foulney by then. The tide had already turned and was filling the channel; low water had in fact been 09:00. Quads had to be moved clear.	A second officer assigned to quality assure tide times before surveys.
21.05.25	NM	Ainsdale Beach, Sefton coast	Rider had to avoid large holes dug in the sand by holiday makers when leaving Ainsdale beach car park at around 15kph, while also watching the public.	Hazard added to the associated risk assessment.
20.05.25	A	Workington Port	Officer's back jerked while helping to lower a 150kg jet drive bucket that dropped an inch after retaining pins were knocked out. It had to be held at arm's length. Back went	Pain relief only, no medical assistance required. Staff member spoken to by line manager as no procedures or expectations given to lifting the jet drive bucket by hand. Further training in manual handling to be given.

			into spasm later while jet washing. Officer has a pre-existing weakness from a fractured spine.	
01.07.25	NM	Flukehall Lane, Pilling	A fisher set off in a flatbed wagon and trailer with no warning while the officer was talking to a permit holder. The permit holder pulled the officer clear of the trailer. Driver had not checked his wing mirror.	High vis PPE instated at fisheries and discussion around secured areas on fisheries
17.07.25	NM	Patrol boat, Whitehaven	Port steering ram stuck hard over to port. Starboard steering sensor found 1-2mm out of sync.	Engineer rectified the fault within five minutes. To be monitored, as vibration causes the sensor to drift over time and there is no permanent remedy.
31.07.25	I	Whitehaven Harbour	Hydraulic hose on the HIAB deck crane burst while the crane was being folded away.	Investigation found the hose had been rubbing on the crane during operation, in an area hidden from the operator. Hose replaced by Yarl Hydraulics and anti-wear material fitted to that area of the deck crane.
31.07.25	A	On board NWP at sea	Left shoulder dislocated and relocated while pulling on a rope attached to an anchor tangled with a pot. Pain felt only on sitting down afterwards. Shoulder has dislocated before outside work.	Medical assistance declined at the time; ice pack applied, paracetamol taken and ibuprofen at two hourly intervals. No defect with the pot and net hauler. Officers to be reminded that they should not heavily pull any rope, pots or anchors when hauling gear. Return to fitness procedures established
12.08.25	NM	Morecambe (in transit)	Two men on bikes pointed at the trailer and quads being towed through Morecambe, then followed the officer to Morrisons and stood watching. No approach made.	Discussed with officer; no further action at this stage. Highlights a lone working exposure created by the change to roles, as quads will at times be moved and cleaned alone in the evening, though usually in public locations.
18.09.25	I	Field (Vessel)	Radar reflector found damaged after refuelling, vessel alongside. Video confirms damage occurred after 21 August; cause not established.	Flagged to the Deputy Master, who assessed and straightened it to his satisfaction. New radar reflector recommended, with a review of structural integrity.

23.09.25	NM	Field (Vessel)	Olex lost GPS data and the second sounder lost bottom at sea. Traced to corroded cable connection terminals.	Terminals disconnected, cleaned, and reconnected by the engineer; bottom lock and GPS signal restored and vessel fit for sea. Cable survey recommended at the next low maintenance period. Leon emailed to have these checks written into the pre-vessel checks.
23.09.25	I	Carnforth Office	Shower head rail came away from the wall while in use. Plastic retaining clip had failed.	New shower rail ordered.
02.10.25	NM	Field (Shore)	Officer stepped into a sinkhole 3-4ft deep on the weigh-in path near the slipway at Roosebeck, Newbiggin cockle fishery. No injury.	Council contacted and the hole reported; no action taken by them to date. All officers emailed to alert them to the hazard and its location.
15.10.25	NM	Field (Vessel)	Steering control lost while tying up in the sea lock. Little play found in the port side water jet pump drive belts.	Belts tightened on both sides as a precaution, steering gear tested satisfactory and the patrol continued. No damage to NWP. Recommend jet unit belt inspection moves from monthly to weekly whenever the vessel has been at sea.
08.01.26	NM	Field (Vessel)	Starboard steering failure at sea, jet unit steering bucket jammed hard over to port.	Starboard engine disengaged and vessel returned to base on the port engine. Investigation traced the fault to a faulty relay on the steering system.
27.01.26	I	Field (Vessel)	Electrical arcing in the 25m shore to vessel charging cable and connectors at both ends. Vessel fuse tripped, but the shore pod may not have, risking a small fire. Possible faulty shore pod, since replaced by the harbour authority.	Cable and connectors taken out of service and vessel batteries isolated. New connectors sourced and fitted, with the vessel connector on order.
04.02.26	NM	Field (Shore)	Left side rear brakes on ATV PK73 DYO found non-functional on return to Pilling car park. Officer had to stay on the bike until strapped down to stop it rolling off the trailer.	Vehicle defect sheet completed and maintenance scheduled, with Ross to repair the brakes on 11.02.26. Rear of the bike thoroughly cleaned, though the semi-sealed callipers prevent access to the moving parts. Pre-use and post-use check routines specified in the SOP, as already

				exist for drone use, and brake testing to specify that left, right and foot brakes checked individually.
12.02.26	NM	Field (Shore)	Mid-flight warning that a drone battery was below 10 degrees, while live readings showed 20-26 degrees. Second occurrence on this battery set.	Heliguy contacted for service advice; if replacement needed, batteries must be replaced in pairs to keep wear even and voltages balanced.
04.03.26	I	Field (Vessel)	FLIR camera control unit broken when the joystick was knocked during MOB exercises.	New control unit fitted.
09.03.26	I	Field (Vessel)	Low level bilge alarm in the port engine room. Sea water fitting to the hydraulic cooler had corroded and was leaking.	Fitting temporarily secured to reduce sea water ingress and the bilge pump run to control it. A new stainless-steel fitting and pipe required to prevent further corrosion.
18.03.26	I	Field (Vessel)	Small exhaust gas leak from the port engine on start-up. Hole found and the leak persisted after refitting the clamps and fittings.	Welding and fabrication company contacted and agent sent to review job.
18.03.26	NM	Carnforth Office	Sudden bitter smell and taste on opening the battery recycling tub. Taste lingered briefly.	Tub left ajar. Noted that previous battery recycling boxes not sealed shut, presumably to allow for slight effervescence.
19.03.26	NM	Field (Vessel)	Starboard jet drive steering went hard to port when the autopilot was engaged. Engines also went into limp mode on faulty sensors, and a diesel smell was traced to the leaking exhaust.	Jets recalibrated on 24 March when IFCO (Engineer) returned from leave. Investigated sensor terminals for dampness caused by poor deck hatch seals, which were then fixed. Exhaust monitored through the day and no worse but required welding as soon as possible in case the leak worsens; price being obtained.
26.03.26	I	Field (Vessel)	Two coolant pressure sensor faults put the vessel into limp mode at sea, reducing RPM and speed. Water ingress from poor hatch seals identified as the likely cause.	Engine kept below 1430 RPM for the remainder of the passage. Engineer to strip and clean the sensors and assess the wiring once the engines have cooled.

Appendix IX – Fishing Vessels Operating within District

Type	Number
<10m District Commercial	47
>10m District Commercial	20
<10m Visitor Commercial	5
>10m Visitor Commercial	4
Unregistered / Unlicensed	34

Appendix X – Inspection and Compliance Data

Summary of quarterly reports 2025/26

Q1:

- I. Trawling – Local trawlers operated mainly south-west of St Bees, targeting nephrops, plaice and dogfish. Smaller landings of thornback ray and other prime fish were also reported, with some catches sold through co-operatives or directly to the public at Maryport and Whitehaven.
- II. Angling – Recreational angling increased with the warmer weather. Bass, mackerel, plaice, dogfish, thornback ray, dab and whiting were among the species recorded. Activity was concentrated on beaches, piers and other popular coastal locations, particularly at weekends.
- III. Potting – Whelk vessels operated both within and outside the district. Local vessels continued to target lobster and brown crab around Whitehaven and west of Walney, although catch reports were mixed.
- IV. Cockle and Mussels – Commercial mussel gathering remained at a low level. Crook Scar underwent classification sampling and achieved Class A status, while little stock remained on some other surveyed beds. North Morecambe Bay cockle beds remained closed for most of the quarter, although Pilling Sands opened on 1 July. Officers also supported shellfish surveys and sampling.
- V. Netting – Commercial vessel netting remained limited, partly because of large numbers of smooth-hounds in Morecambe Bay. Some beach nets targeting plaice and flounder were inspected, with occasional sole catches reported. One net was seized for breaching shallow-water restrictions. No flue-netting activity was recorded.

Q2:

- I. Trawling – No significant change in trawling activity was reported during the quarter. Monitoring of local vessels operating within the district continued, with occasional vessel boardings and inspections undertaken.
- II. Potting – Whelk vessels from Whitehaven and Fleetwood continued to operate inside and outside the district. Lobster and brown crab potting increased west of Walney, although activity began to decline as autumn weather developed and some commercial and recreational vessels brought their gear ashore. Creel pots were also used for shrimp, with mixed results.
- III. Angling – Recreational angling remained popular, particularly for bass, plaice and flounder. Shore angling continued along the north Wirral, Sefton and Cumbrian coastlines, while recreational vessels operated in Morecambe Bay, Liverpool Bay and the River Mersey. Catch-and-release remained common
- IV. Netting – Vessel netting remained below normal levels because of poor weather and the presence of small bass. Commercial and recreational netting continued

around the Mersey, north Wirral and Sefton coasts. Catches included plaice, sole, skate and flounder, with inspected nets and catches generally compliant.

- V. Shrimping – Activity remained very low across Morecambe Bay. Up to three tractors were observed in the Leven Channel. Effort increased later in the quarter, although the average size of shrimp remained small. Creel pots were also used for shrimp in the northern area, with mixed results.
- VI. Bait Collection – Peeler-crab collection continued but declined seasonally, particularly in Walney Channel. Bait digging was regularly observed in the Duddon Estuary, Earnse Bay, Newbiggin, Mockbeggar Wharf and Ainsdale/Birkdale Sands. Pumping remained the most commonly observed method.
- VII. Hand Gathering bivalves – Mussel gathering increased at Foulney and Crook Scar. Approximately 5 tonnes were removed from Foulney, while around 63 tonnes were gathered from Crook Scar, although pearling affected marketability. Pilling remained open for cockle gathering, while Newbiggin and Flookburgh opened on 1 September. Newbiggin attracted moderate effort, whereas Flookburgh received little or no commercial interest. All inspected permit holders at Pilling were compliant.

Q3:

- I. Trawling – No significant trawling activity was reported during the quarter, reflecting the generally quieter winter period
- II. Potting – Lobster and brown crab potting declined during the winter, although a small number of vessels continued to operate within the district and beyond the six-nautical-mile limit. Whelk vessels from Whitehaven and Fleetwood also remained active inside and outside the district.
- III. Angling – Angling activity decreased seasonally as many target species moved farther offshore. Few reports of winter cod angling were received. Recreational and charter-boat angling continued in Liverpool Bay and the River Mersey, while two under-10-metre commercial vessels remained active.
- IV. Cockle and Mussel Hand Gathering- More than 32 tonnes of mussels were removed from Crook Scar, although activity was affected by pearling and a temporary environmental health closure. Limited gathering also took place at Foulney, Morecambe and Knot Spit.

Newbiggin, Flookburgh and Pilling cockle beds remained open but attracted little fishing effort. Modest quantities were removed from Newbiggin and Pilling, while Flookburgh was worked only occasionally. No illegal gathering was detected from the closed north Wirral cockle bed.

- V. Bait Collection- Peeler-crab gathering fell to a very low level. Occasional bait digging continued in the Duddon Estuary, Earnse Bay, Newbiggin, Mockbeggar Wharf and Southport. Only limited numbers of bait diggers were observed, with pumping remaining the most common method.

- VI. Netting - Vessel and beach-netting activity remained very low because of unsuitable weather and reduced numbers of larger bass. Occasional beach nets were reported in the Leven Estuary. Four recreational set nets were inspected at Taylor's Bank, Formby, and were found to be compliant.

Q4:

- I. Trawling – Local and visiting trawlers targeted nephrops south-west of St Bees and farther south along the Cumbrian coast. Catches occasionally exceeded 20 stone per day, with landings made at Maryport and Whitehaven. Northern Irish vessels were also observed operating in the area. Small landings of thornback ray and plaice were reported.
- II. Shrimping – Shrimping began to increase after Easter. Three tractors were observed periodically, with two operating in the Kent Channel and one in the Leven Channel. Landings appeared slightly better than in recent years, although the average size of the shrimp remained smaller than expected. Creel pots were also used, with mixed results.
- III. Potting – Whelk vessels from Whitehaven, Fleetwood and Maryport operated both inside and outside the district. Lobster and brown crab potting increased around Whitehaven and west of Walney, although catch reports were mixed. Creel pots were also used for shrimp, with variable results.
- IV. Angling – Shore and vessel angling increased as conditions moved into spring and numbers of bass and smooth-hound improved. Species recorded included dab, whiting, plaice, dogfish, thornback ray and codling. Commercial vessels were also observed targeting bass using rod and line, although catches remained relatively poor.
- V. Bait Collection - Peeler-crab gathering increased seasonally, particularly in Walney Channel, around Foulney and on the northern side of the Duddon Estuary near Millom. Bait digging continued occasionally in the Duddon Estuary, Earnse Bay, Newbiggin and along the north Wirral and Sefton coastlines, with pumping remaining the principal method observed.
- VI. Netting – Vessel netting remained low but began to increase toward the end of the quarter. Stake nets were reported in the Leven Estuary, and a fyke net was observed in the Morecambe area. Set nets and beach purse-seine nets were also inspected along the Sefton and north Wirral coastlines, with catches including plaice, thornback ray and mullet. Non-compliant nets were addressed during inspections.
- VII. Mussels & Cockles Hand gathering – Mussel gathering remained limited. Small numbers of fishers worked Bare Ayre, while no activity was observed at Foulney or Crook Scar because of limited suitable stock and continuing marketability issues.

All cockle beds closed at the end of February. Before closure, only three people were observed gathering small quantities of large cockles at Newbiggin. Shellfish sampling and stock surveys continued throughout the quarter.

Activity type noted throughout 2025/26 – key indicates the level of activity in each area

0 = none, 1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high

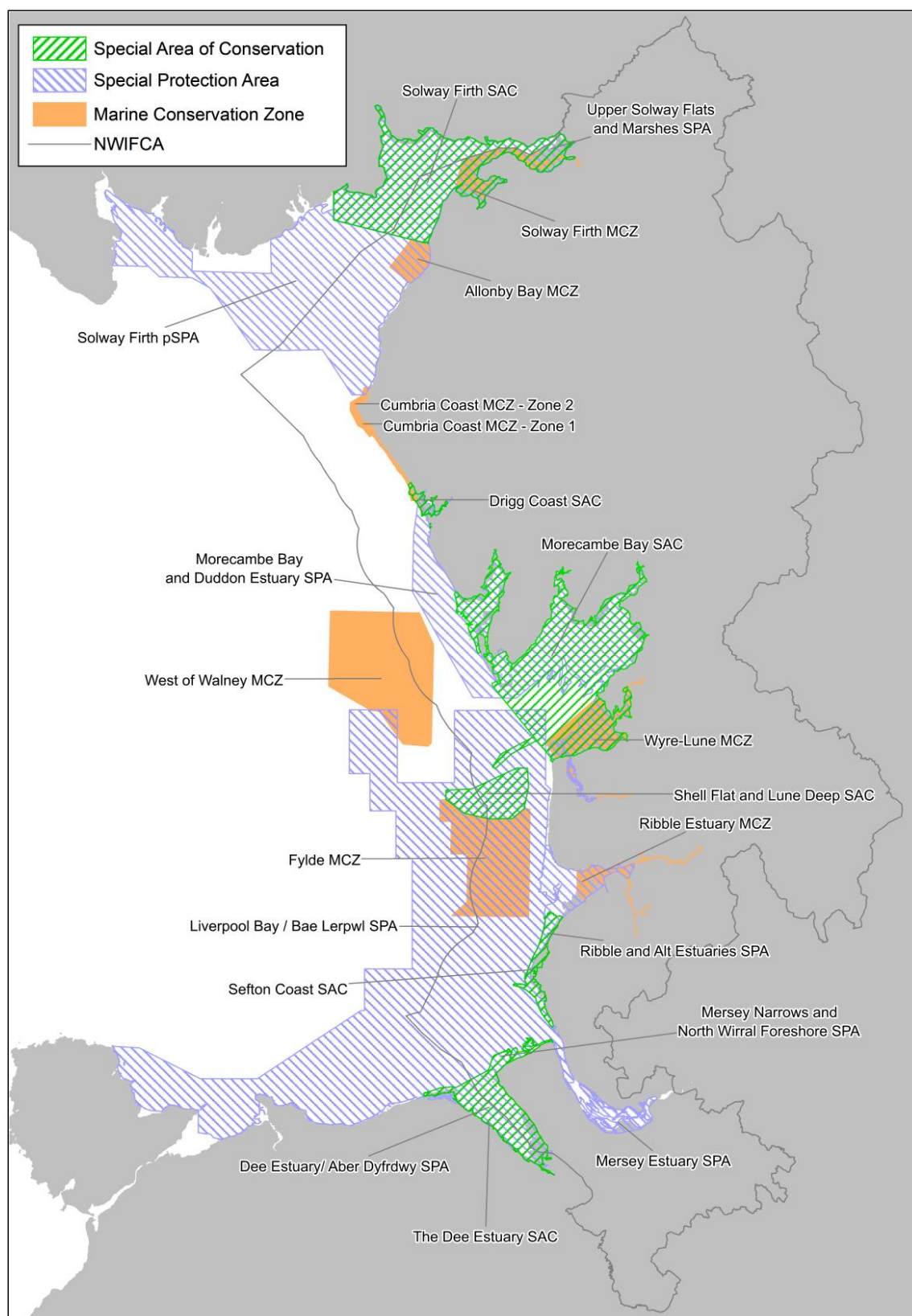
Area	Activity / Area	Species	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Burgh Marsh to Haverigg Point	Trawling	Wet fish	1	1	1	1
		Nephrops	1	1	1	1
	Potting	Lobster and crab	1	2	2	2
		Whelks	2	2	2	2
		Shrimps	0	1	1	1
	Angling		1	1	2	2
		Bass	0	1	1	0
	Netting		0	1	1	0
	Bait digging		0	0	1	0
Haverigg Point to Arnside	Bi-valves	Cockles	0	0	2	0
		Mussels	1	2	2	1
	Potting		1	0	1	1
	Netting		1	2	0	1
	Angling		2	2	1	1
	Bait digging		0	0	1	1
	Shrimping		0	1	1	1
Arnside to Knott End	MB	Cockles	0	2	0	0
	Foulney	Mussels	0	0	0	0
	Angling	Bass	1	2	2	1
	Netting	Bass	1	2	0	1
	Bait collection		1	1	1	1
River Wyre to River Dee	Angling		2	2	2	2
	Bi-valves	Cockles	0	0	0	0
	Netting		1	2	2	1

	Bait collection		0	1	2	2
	Shrimping		0	1	0	1
	Potting		0	1	0	0
	Premises		0	0	0	0

Patrol and Inspection Data 2025/26

At Sea	Vessel patrols	59
	Boardings	10
	Closings (not included as boardings)	19
	Fishing vessel sightings	475
	Gear inspections	484
On Land	Shore patrols (Officer effort)	951
	ATV Patrols (Officer effort)	199
	Premises inspections	2
	Inspections	1055
Outcomes	Verbal warnings	1
	Advisory Letter	7
	Official Warning Letter	25
	Formal Cautions	0
	Financial Administration Penalty	1
	Cases pending court proceedings	0
	Individuals prosecuted in court	1
	Gear Notices	3

Appendix XI – District MPAs



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Appendix XII – Science Annual Cockle and Mussel Survey Data

Year	Month	Day	Surveys
Year	Month	Day	Survey
2025	May	1	Foulney DW survey
2025	May	1	Walney Channel DW survey
2025	May	30	Heysham Inspection
2025	Jun	5	Duddon drone survey
2025	Jun	16	Lytham cockle beds
2025	Jun	23	Southport cockle survey
2025	Jun	24	Pilling cockle survey
2025	Jun	26	Perch and Black scar inspection
2025	Jun	30	Leasowe cockle survey
2025	Jul	2	Aldingham and Newbiggin cockle survey
2025	Jul	8	Middleton cockle survey
2025	Jul	9	Leven cockle survey
2025	Jul	15	Flookburgh cockle survey
2025	Jul	16	Perch and Black scar inspection
2025	Jul	17	Flookburgh cockle survey
2025	Jul	22	Newbiggin cockle extension survey
2025	Jul	26	South America mussel inspection
2025	Jul	29	Heysham Inspection
2025	Jul	30	Thurstaston and West Kirby
2025	Aug	10	Wyre end mussel inspection
2025	Aug	11	Duddon mussel inspection
2025	Aug	12	Fleetwood mussel inspection
2025	Aug	26	Low bottom DW survey
2025	Sep	9	Walney Channel DW survey
2025	Sep	10	Foulney DW survey
2025	Sep	23	Black scar mussel inspection
2025	Oct	10	Foulney DW survey
2025	Oct	1	Foulney DW method survey
2025	Dec	2	Foulney DW method survey
2026	Jan	23	Bare Ayre mussel inspection
2026	Jan	28	Foulney Drone flight
2026	Mar	2	Heysham Inspection
2026	Mar	5	Bare Ayre mussel inspection
2026	Mar	6	Duddon mussel inspection
2026	Mar	23	Low bottom DW survey
2026	Mar	24	Walney channel DW survey
2026	Mar	31	Foulney DW survey
2026	Apr	23	Bare Ayre mussel inspection

2026	Apr	30	Heysham Inspection
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Appendix XIII – Marine Licence Consultations

Date	Marine Licence
15/04/2025	Morecambe Offshore Windfarm - Floating LiDAR
16/04/2025	Area 457 Marine Aggregate Licence Renewal Application
30/04/2025	Barrow Floating Solar Array, Cavendish Dock and adjacent land
12/05/2025	Burbo Bank Bird Guano reduction systems
19/05/2025	Liverpool Docks Renewal Maintenance Dredge
04/06/2025	Llanfairfechan Coastal Defence
04/06/2025	Braystones Directional Wave Bouy
26/06/2025	Liverpool Bay Alternative Disposal Site - scoping report
27/06/2025	Morgan and Morecambe River Ribble Geotechnical Survey
28/08/2025	Beneficial Use of Dredged Sediment to Improve Fleetwood, Wyre Estuary 2025
23/09/2025	Scoping Request - Area 393 Hilbre Swash Marine Aggregate Extraction
07/10/2025	Stena Salt Island Bridge Replacement Works
28/11/2025	Variation to Morlais demonstration zone
09/12/2025	Dubmill Point Coastal Defences
19/01/2026	Western Link 2 - Geotechnical surveys
28/01/2026	Wardleys Marine Yacht Club Boreholes
05/02/2026	Acoustic tracking of migratory fish through the Dee Estuary and River
05/02/2026	A494 River Dee Bridge Replacement Scheme
12/02/2026	SeaSTORE lander deployment - Site A
19/02/2026	Awel y Môr Offshore array area geotechnical survey
24/02/2026	Mersey Tidal Power Project - Baseline Survey Works
24/02/2026	Morlais Variation - Further information submission
25/02/2026	Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Geotechnical Works
17/03/2026	Hoylake Beach Vegetation Removal
26/03/2026	Barrow offshore wind farm O&M marine licence

Appendix XIV – Scientific Dispensations

Date	Dispensation
21/05/2025	Wyre Rivers Trust Estuary fish survey programme 2025
31/07/2025	EA - Fish surveys
21/08/2025	EA - Mersey Otter trawls
27/08/2025	Cefas Irish Sea Beam Trawl Surveys 2025
01/10/2025	EA - Mersey Estuary fish surveys
01/10/2025	Westinghouse Springfields Fuels Limited
17/10/2025	EA - Ribble & Wyre Estuary fish surveys
29/10/2025	Unriddled brown shrimp - Raymond Porter
31/10/2025	Natural England - Smelt Survey
05/11/2025	Lake District Coast Aquarium
10/11/2025	Unriddled brown shrimp - Steve Brown
26/02/2026	Cefas Clean Seas Environmental Monitoring Programme 2026
26/02/2026	Cockle Wet Dredge Demo for NWIFCA Officers

Appendix XV – Performance Assessment of Success Criterion

Indicators	Tasks Completed	Performance Assessment (RAG)
SC1A: The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts reviewed and updated by 31 st March each year.	The Authority maintained an up-to-date stakeholder database from which the following permit schemes were operated in 2025/26: NWIFCA Byelaws 3 and 4; NWSFC Byelaws 9, 26, 27, 30; CSFC Byelaw 26. The website's 'Register as a stakeholder' button supports development of stakeholder contacts and their interests.	Completed and Ongoing into 2026/27
SC1B: The IFCA will review its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 st March each year.	The Authority reviewed our communications strategy by 31 st March 2026. The website continued to work well and had good utility.	Completed and Ongoing
SC1C: The IFCA will review its website by the last working day of each month.	A comprehensive review was undertaken by the SMT in conjunction with our Comms Officer. A full refresh was implemented. Ongoing reviews are carried out.	Completed and Ongoing
SC1D: The IFCA will ensure its website meets the objectives of its communication strategy by 31 st March each year.	The website was assessed against the communications strategy.	Completed and Ongoing
SC1E: The IFCA will review all Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) by 31 st March each year. It will have plans in place to update MoUs to agreed timescales.	National MoUs are in place with NE, EA, Cefas and MMO. Review of these MoUs are national tasks led by NE, EA, Cefas and MMO beyond control of each IFCA.	Completed and Ongoing
SC1F: The IFCA will participate proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.	The Authority continued to contribute to all relevant activity as required and within available resources. Bodies active in 2025/26 included COG, AIFCA, TAG, SOG, RFG, MAFCO, Defra MPA committees and <i>ad hoc</i> policy meetings, regional coastal fora (e.g. Solway Firth Partnership, North West Coastal Forum, North West Marine Ecosystems, Dee Estuary Cockle Fishery Advisory Group, Morecambe Bay Partnership).	Completed and Ongoing

SC2A: The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 st April each year.	The enforcement strategy was reviewed by 31 st March 2026. Risk-based enforcement continued as per our Compliance and Enforcement Strategy.	Completed and Ongoing
SC2B: The IFCA will demonstrate in Annual Reports work with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures.	Joint working to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures has been reported within this Annual Report.	Completed and Ongoing
SC2C: The IFCA will record enforcement activity in a standard format, provide to NIMEG and publish on its website.	Enforcement activity was reported to the Committee in quarterly reports and made public via the website. Data continued to be securely stored on the Authority's intelligence management system and with the Central Intelligence Team of the MMO.	Completed and Ongoing
SC2D: The IFCA will adopt the National Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 st April each year.	The Code was adopted by the Authority back in 2012. The annual review of code is a role of NIMEG	Completed and Ongoing
SC2E: The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all IFCOs.	As in previous years, new IFCOs were trained to comply with the code through the competent officer training course. Performance was assessed and continually monitored by the Head of Enforcement and discussed in annual appraisals. Training was kept up to date.	Complete and Ongoing
SC2F: IFCOs attain accreditation and undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD).	IFCOs' work towards accreditation was paused in 2023/24 due to other operational priorities and lack of operational value it affords. The Authority contributed to training development in 2025/26. IFCOs mandatory training was kept up to date to nationally agreed standards. All IFCOs were given CPD to meet organisational needs identified by SMT and individual needs identified by line managers. An internal training register was maintained. Training provided in 2025/26 is set out in Appendix VII.	Partially Met
SC3A: The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for MPAs and report progress to the Committee.	Government MPA policy continued to be implemented and MPA management reviewed in collaboration with other regulators.	Complete and Ongoing

SC3B: The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures on its website	Data and evidence were compiled in regulatory impact assessments for new measures. Stakeholders were consulted before introduction. Evidence was publicly reported to the Committee. Impacts of new measures are being assessed from survey and enforcement data.	Complete and Ongoing
SC3C: Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate their effectiveness.	Post-implementation surveys jointly with partners informed ongoing fisheries management and effectiveness of new measures. Results were reported to Committee and on the website. Inspection and enforcement data informed the Committee of the effectiveness of measures.	Complete and Ongoing
SC3D: The IFCA will develop criteria-based management options, explained to stakeholders through the website and review annually by 31 st March.	New management measures were developed after assessment of options against criteria defining objectives.	Complete and Ongoing
SC3E: New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales.	The byelaw review followed agreed priorities. Byelaw development followed Defra guidance.	Complete and Ongoing
SC3F: The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from FMPs in its own Annual Plan, published by 31 st March each year.	Objectives from plans such as cockle and mussel plans were approved by bivalve working groups and reported in the Annual Plan.	Complete and Ongoing
SC3G: Progress made in relevant FMP areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.	Cockle and mussel management and priority byelaws were further developed in 2025/26, but no formal FMPs yet exist. The Science Team planned the development of species-specific FMPs within available resources and continued the development of a priority internal Cockle FMP in 2025/26. This will be finalised in 2026/27, before moving onto a Mussel FMP. Further priority species FMPs will be developed over the longer-term.	Partially Met
SC4A: The IFCA will publish an Annual Plan on its website by 31 st March each year, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State (SoS).	Annual Plan for 2026/27 was published at March 2026 meeting and sent to Defra. Plans include objectives and priorities under criteria set by Defra and local priorities.	Complete and Ongoing

SC4B: After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish an Annual Report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 th November. A copy will be sent to the SoS.	An Annual Report for 2024/25 was agreed by member in August 2025 and sent to Defra. Activity in the year and audited financial information were included.	Completed and Ongoing
SC4C: IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 st May each year.	Performance Objectives for 2025/26, derived from the Annual Plan, were agreed for all officers. Appraisals for 2025/26 were completed by April 2026. A formal performance management regime was implemented in 2024/25.	Completed and Ongoing
SC4D: An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.	An efficient secretariat remained in place. Documentation was produced and meetings were run in line with Standing Orders.	Complete and Ongoing
SC4E: The IFCA will show, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the district have worked responsively and effectively together.	Targets for Marine Strategy and Water Framework Directives are delivered as directed by EA. These were not required in 2025/26.	N/A
SC5A: The IFCA will show progress towards identifying evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year.	No research plan has previously been published by the Authority. A strategic objective for the Authority's 2026/27 Annual Plan was set to create a five-year Research Plan.	Not Met
SC5B: The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.	All research work in 2025/26 was reported to the Committee at quarterly and TSB meeting, and in this report, showing how evidence is used to support decision making. However, no standalone Research Report has ever been published.	Partially Met
SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report.	The Authority continued contributions to national programmes and reported to the Committee.	Complete and Ongoing