

NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



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Fishing around St. Bees Headland

Voluntary Code of Practice 2026

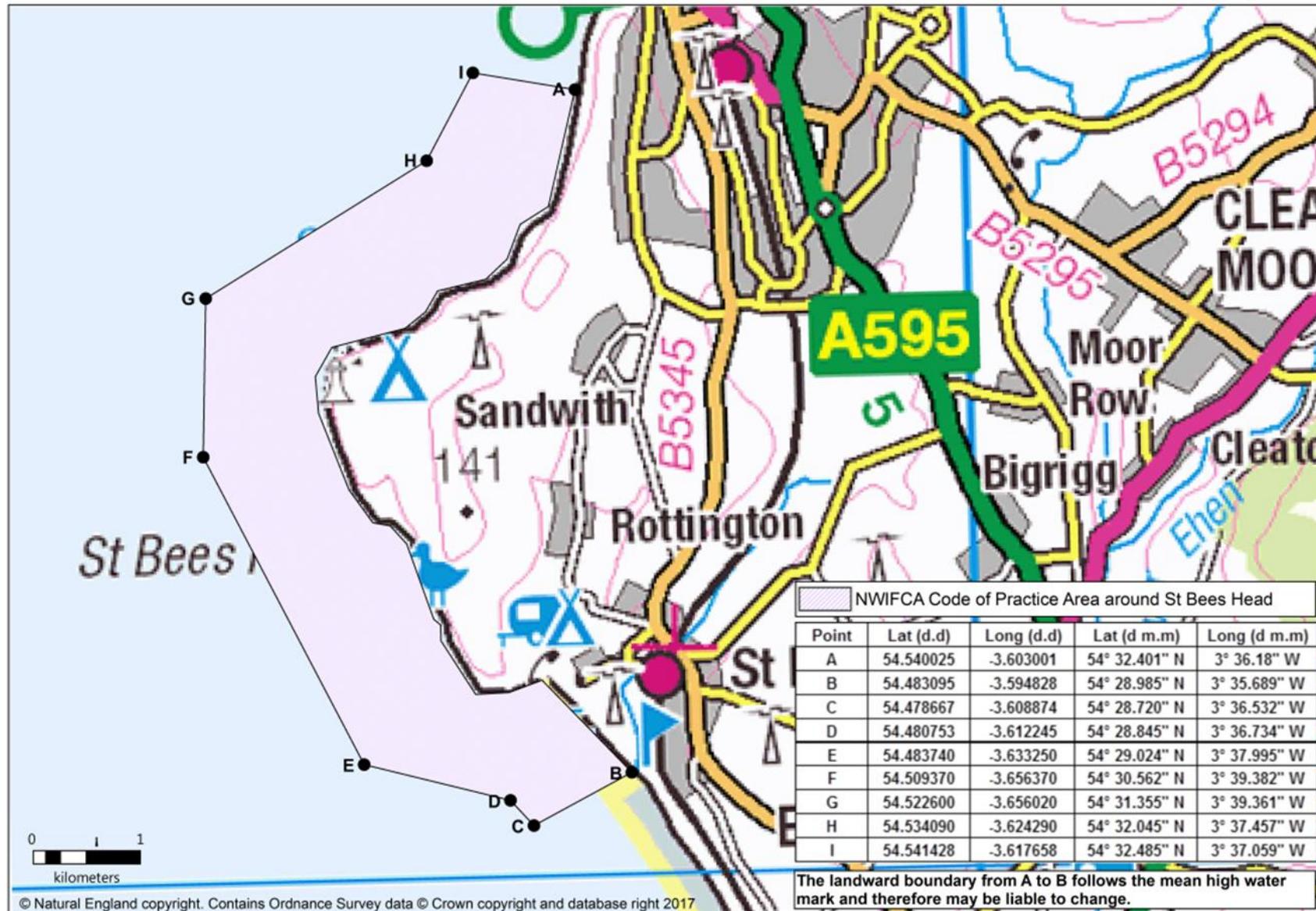
To reduce the risk of bird entanglement in fishing nets the NWIFCA recommends that the following Code of Practice should be followed:

- **No netting of any type in the area highlighted in the map below during the period 15th March to 25th 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 part of the Cumbria Coast Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), 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 during the closure.** 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