



# Annual Report 2024-2025

[www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk)

# Foreword

## **Chairman's foreword**

Having been Chairman of first Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee and then Kent and Essex IFCA for over 20 years I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the vital role that IFCA members play in the running of the Authority and the huge amount of time and energy they give to our organisation. The diverse membership of our Authority drawn from councillors, regulators and MMO appointed members, brings together a wide range of expertise, practical marine experience and passion that always makes for an interesting and informative meeting. Over the years the Authority has had to make numerous difficult decisions that have had a direct impact on our stocks, our marine habitats and our fishers. From clearly expressing local views and needs to Whitehall and parliament, to making byelaws and regulating orders, IFCA members have been the heartbeat of an organisation that wants our key local fisheries to be run sustainably long into the future and our coastal communities to thrive. As chairman it is clear that members do not always agree, however the IFCA provides a public forum to listen to each other's views, for everyone to have their say, and for people to work thought sometimes very emotive and difficult issues.

Over the last four years the replacement of our cockle regulating order in the Thames has dominated our work with numerous extra meetings and papers for members to digest and review. I would like to thank all the members and especially the members of the applications panel for their time and effort in helping to progress this complex and detailed work. I think it is fair to say that without this commitment from our members we would not have been able to complete such a significant piece of work.

I hope the report provides you with an insight into the important work of the Authority and the management of inshore fisheries of the coast of Kent and Essex. The foundation for this work, is a sound financial governance using the resources granted to us through our constituent Local Authorities (Kent County Council, Essex County Council, Medway Council, Thurrock Borough Council and Southend Borough Council) and a team of dedicated and knowledgeable officers delivering across the Authority's remit.

This report is inevitably a snapshot but demonstrates the scale of the work which has been undertaken this year from clam trials on the Essex coast to our changing seas conference, from commissioning a new 10.5m cabin RIB to aiding the implementation of the new Whelk FMP. If, having read our report, you would like further information on how we work I encourage and invite you to attend one of our Authority meetings which are held quarterly at locations throughout the district.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Lamb".

JOHN LAMB  
KEIFCA Chair

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## Publication

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## Background

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA 2009) provides a framework for managing the demands put on our seas, and aims to ensure clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas, by putting in place better systems for delivering sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment. Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (KEIFCA) and the District for which it has responsibility were established by the Secretary of State under sections 149 and 150 of MCAA 2009 and took on its full statutory role from the 1st April 2011.

The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority has clearly defined duties to manage fisheries in a sustainable manner and conserve the wider marine environment within the coastal waters of Kent and Essex. This annual report provides information regarding how the Authority has fulfilled its duties and reports on actions taken during this year which contribute towards the Government’s Marine Policy Statement and High Level Marine Objectives.

Although the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 provides the outline of change, important detail has been added by the implementation of Orders and Defra guidance documents. These documents include the IFCA vision statement, success criteria and high level objectives, as well as key outputs and performance indicators; these have been used to assist in the development of our priorities as an organisation for 2022-2023 (see [www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk) for documentation).



## Vision and Duties

### *The national IFCA vision*

*"Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry"*

### **Kent and Essex IFCA** **DUTIES**

#### **Competent and Relevant Authority for transposed directives:**

- The Habitats Directive 1992
- The Water Framework Directive 2000
- The Marine Strategy Framework

#### **Managing local fishery orders:**

- The Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 1994
- The River Roach Oyster Fishery Order 2013.

#### **Duties under Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009**

#### **Section 153. Managing the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district:**

- a) Ensure exploitation of resources is sustainable.
- b) Balance social and economic benefits of fishing with environmental protection and recovery.
- c) Take steps to achieve sustainable development.
- d) Balance the different needs of stakeholders.

#### **Section 154. Protection of marine conservation zones:**

- a) Seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district are furthered

# The Kent and Essex IFCA District

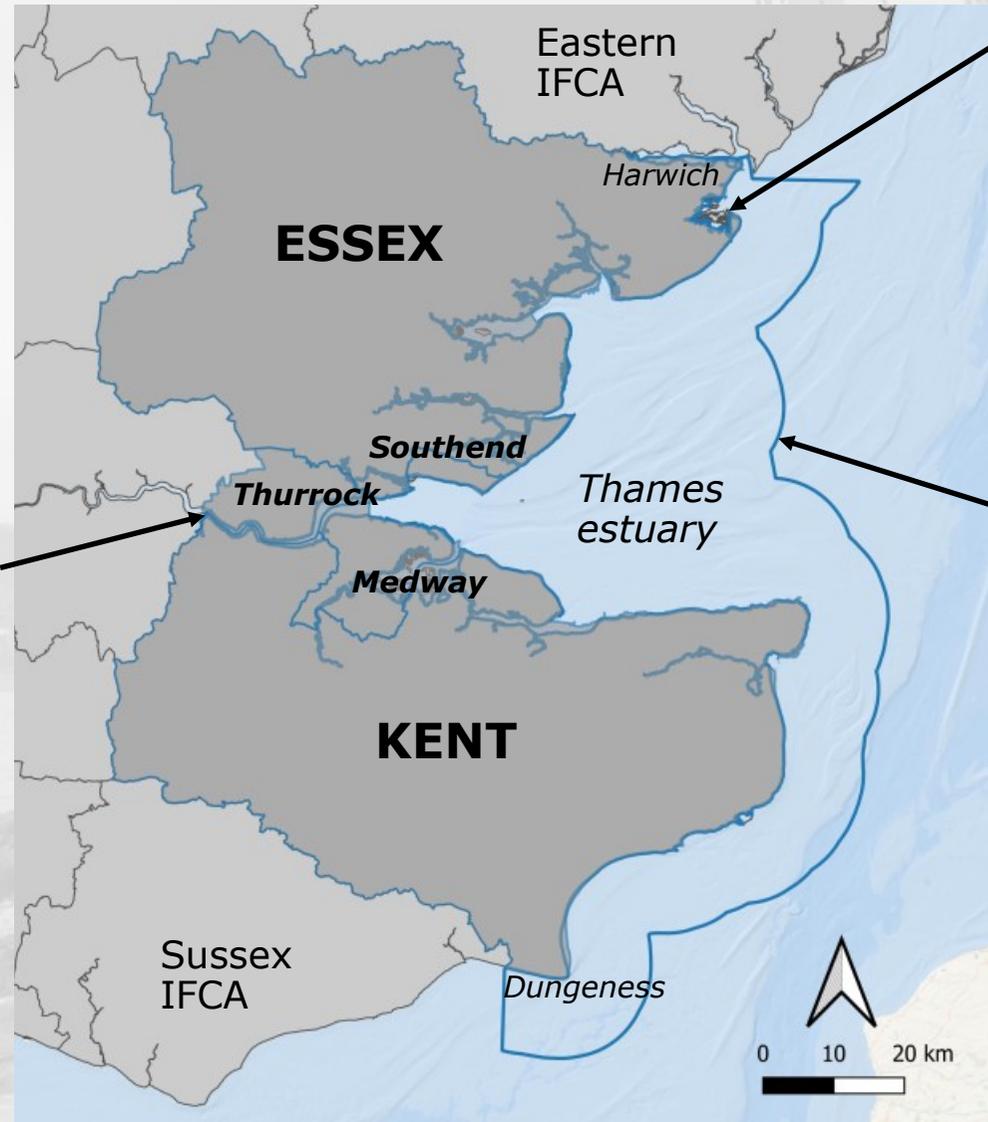
Chart of the KEIFCA district

**The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 defines the extent of both the landward and seaward elements of the District:**

- the combined areas of the relevant councils (the "basic area" of the district); and
- the sea adjacent to the basic area to a distance of six nautical miles from the 1983 baselines.

## Upstream district boundaries

The up-river KEIFCA boundary in the Thames includes the waters adjacent to Kent County Council and Thurrock Council, with the district boundary running from Dartford creek (River Darent) on the south shore to Mar Dyke on the north shore. District limits for other rivers and estuaries located within the boundaries of Kent and Essex are to their tidal limit (including the Medway, Blackwater, Crouch and Colne).



## Coastline

The coastline of the District is extremely varied, including the reported 'longest coastline of any county' in Essex with its creeks and rivers, to the open Channel coast and chalk cliffs of South Kent, stretching approximately 800km.

## Seaward district boundaries

Kent & Essex IFCA district covers an area of over 3,379 km<sup>2</sup>, and extends from the east end of Rye Bay in Kent to the northern boundary of Essex on the River Stour. The seaward boundary follows the 6 mile nautical limit measured from the 1983 baseline, which, due to drying sand banks, extends up to 15 miles offshore at its furthest point.



## Overview of 2024/2025

At a national level the publication of the first 6 Fisheries Management plans in early 2024 created a new direction and framework for UK fisheries management. The challenge moving forward is to make the system work for local fishers and integrate regional management systems into a new framework allowing us to manage our key fisheries in a regional context whilst working in a coordinated way to reach national objectives.

KEIFCA has worked throughout the year with the Association of IFCA's and other IFCA's to attend and contribute to the different FMP working groups, respond to calls for evidence and input when required into management measure proposals.

As with any new system it will take time to bed-in different management groups and for processes to work efficiently, however it is likely over time, that this new framework will change how KEIFCA plans, prioritises and reports on its work.

At a district level it has been a busy and challenging year and we have worked hard to maintain key commitments including surveying and running the final year of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 1994, managing the whelk permit fishery, running Authority meetings, and attending local and national meetings.



## Overview of 2024/2025

The emergence of potentially commercially viable Manila clam stocks in the Thames quickly became an important new workstream. Whilst this stock could provide a new and much welcomed fishing opportunity for local fishers, there were significant challenges to overcome especially as the stocks are located within historic cockle beds and Marine Protected Areas.

Working with local fishermen, KEIFCA ran a trial to assess a range of different types of fishing gear to see which methods which could, both catch efficiently, and have minimal damage on the seabed, cockle stocks and harvested clams. The trial ran throughout October 2024 and proved to be very successful in identifying types of fishing gear to take through to future trials.

Building on last year's scoping work and following the agreed tendering and evaluation process the Authority approved a tender to start work on a new 10.5m cabin RIB. The new RIB will replace Vigilant as the primary enforcement vessel working out of Brightlingsea on the Essex coast.

The vessel has been part funded from a national DEFRA capital fund and is to be named Nemo after HMS Nemo the World War II Brightlingsea Royal Navy base which played a crucial role in naval operations along the Essex coast.



## Overview of 2024/2025

KEIFCA officers have worked hard to throughout the year to enforce existing legislation and have endeavoured to maintain if not increase enforcement activity at sea and on land. Specific targeted enforcement operations have been run over the year, such as joint land and sea-based patrols enforcing seabass legislation with the MMO and enforcing whelk legislation. Working in conjunction with two licence holders and building on previous work by Devon and Seven IFCA, KEIFCA officers worked to set up a Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) system trial during the TECFO fishery. The REM system combines cameras, gear sensors, video storage, and GPS units so that key fishing parameters like vessel position, speed, bearing, and gear deployment can be monitored remotely. The trial proved to be very successful and suggested that the new REM systems could provide a reliable, low cost and flexible way to manage the TECFO fishery in the future.



All enforcement officers have continued developing their enforcement skills with specific external and internal training courses and KEIFCA officers continue to play a lead role in delivering national training and the annual training course run in February down in Brixham.

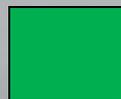
Looking back over the last year this has been a very productive period in the continuing development of KEIFCA. This year has seen a stepping-up of a number of key work streams for the Authority, not only in delivering on the protection of the most vulnerable features in regional Marine Protected Areas but also continuing to engage and develop sustainable fisheries management measures.

*Will Wright, Chief Officer*

## Success Criteria

This report summarises the outcomes of the Annual Plan, structured in relation to progress against the five IFCA Success Criteria:

- **Success Criterion 1: Communications and engagement** - IFCA's are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.
- **Success Criterion 2: Compliance and Enforcement** - IFCA's implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.
- **Success Criterion 3: Management measures** - IFCA's use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts.
- **Success Criterion 4: Governance and Training** - IFCA's have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.
- **Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science** - IFCA's make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.



*Objective completed*



*Significant progress made but objective not completed*



*Minimal progress made*

## Success Criterion 1: Communications and Engagement

### ***Changing Seas in the Thames Estuary: What We Heard***

In November 2024, KEIFCA brought together fishers, county councillors, and scientists from government, universities, and charities to discuss the major ecological changes taking place in the Thames Estuary. Fishers have repeatedly warned that commercial species are in decline. The conference set out to bring their experiences together with the latest scientific evidence.

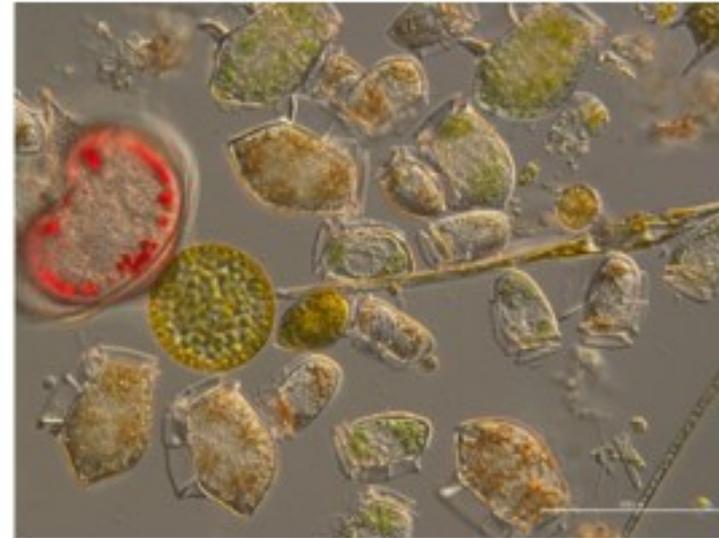
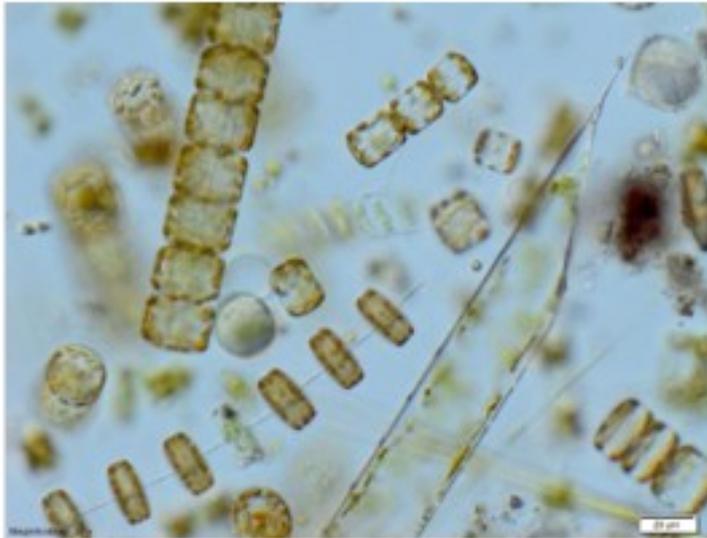
#### *Water quality and plankton*

The Environment Agency reported that most pollutants in the Thames Estuary now met good standards although a few chemicals, including mercury, tributyl tin (used in anti-fouling paint), and some pesticides, remained a concern.

Climate change is likely to add pressure. Hotter summers and heavier rainfall can speed up biological processes. For example, sudden bursts of nutrient-rich runoff may trigger algal blooms, especially in warm water where oxygen levels are lower. This combination can stress marine life and reduce water quality.

Nutrients are also shifting. Since the late 1990s, the balance between nitrogen and phosphate had changed, leading to more small plankton and fewer large ones such as diatoms. Plankton are the base of the marine food web, so these shifts ripple upwards to affect fish and shellfish. While the full impacts were not yet known, the system appeared to be tilting towards species that feed on smaller particles.

*Pictures: The shift of the plankton food web towards higher proportions of Dinoflagellates relative to Diatoms.*



# Success Criterion 1: Communications and Engagement

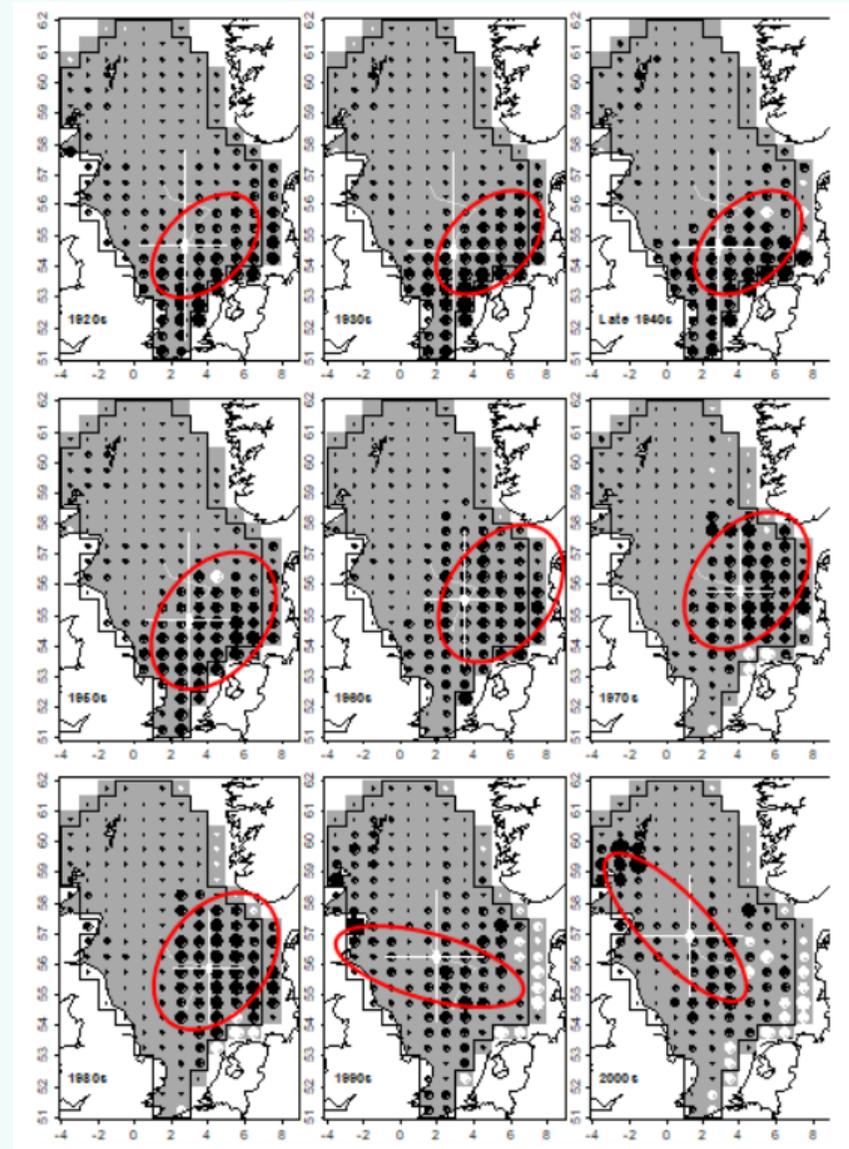
## Wildlife shifts

Citizen scientists with Kent Wildlife Trust have recorded northward movements of species such as the flat topshell and snakelocks anemone. Invasive species are also spreading, including Pacific oysters and red pompom weed, which compete with native life. Meanwhile, kelp forests are declining around Thanet due to warmer seas, replaced by turf algae that provide less shelter and food for marine species. Together, these changes are reshaping coastal habitats.

## Fish and shellfish on the move

Cefas presented results from their 100 data set, which showed that warming seas are driving fish northwards and into deeper waters. Cold water species, like most flatfish, as well as once superabundant cod have moved north and east in the North sea, while bass, a warmer water species, are now far more common in our waters. Squid, another warmer water species, have also become much more widespread along the Kent coast.

In 2022, record sea temperatures off the Kent coast coincided with a large-scale die-off of whelks, a key commercial shellfish. KEIFCA has since been reporting regularly on these events.



The figure above shows the change in distribution of plaice recorded by CEFAS over 100 years.



## Success Criterion 1: Communications and Engagement

### *Seals in the estuary*

ZSL surveys showed grey seals in the Thames Estuary have risen to almost 3,000, while harbour seals have halved since 2015. The harbour seal decline may be linked to competition, food shortages, or disease. Fishers' reports of increasing seal encounters appear to be driven mainly by the growth of grey seal numbers.

### *Voices from fishers*

KEIFCA interviewed 34 commercial and recreational fishers with decades of experience. Their stories painted a stark picture: "Cod has almost disappeared." "Thornback rays and sole have dropped sharply." "Catches of crab and lobster are down."

At the same time, apart from bass, most of the species that have increased (dogfish, spider crab and seals) have less commercial value to local fishers. These observations closely match the scientific findings.

### *What happens next*

The conference made it clear that climate change, invasive species, and habitat loss are transforming the Thames Estuary. For fishers, this means lower catches and growing uncertainty about the future.

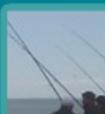
There was strong agreement to work with other IFCA's, scientists, and government bodies to gather more evidence, raise awareness nationally, and explore ways to support fishing communities through these changes.

This work builds on our research into water temperature stress in whelks, following a mass mortality event on the Kent North Coast in 2022. Together with the University of Essex and with financial support from The Fishmongers Company and Kent and Essex IFCA we have provided funding for a new PhD study, Shellfish fisheries under pressure from increasing frequency and intensity of marine heatwaves. We hope this study will provide insight into which fisheries are next to come under stress from climate change and Marine Heatwaves, and may provide some direction into new opportunities. By understanding how shellfish are likely to respond to large scale environmental drivers, KEIFCA will be better equipped to support coastal fisheries and develop the adaptive tools and strategies needed to manage future challenges.



## Success Criterion 1 – Outputs

Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1A) Support the Association of IFCAs</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributed financially to the funding of the AIFCA</li> <li>Attended 3 AIFCA meetings and took forward meeting actions</li> <li>CIFCO sits on AIFCA as a Director</li> <li>Chair of KEIFCA sits as a member of AIFCA</li> <li>Fed into AIFCA annual plan and report</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1B) Support national IFCA working groups</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 Chief Officers Group meetings</li> <li>Attended 4 NIMEG meetings and took forward meeting actions</li> <li>Contributed to the running of NIMEG in officer time.</li> <li>Attended 4 TAG meetings</li> <li>Contributed to the running of TAG in officer time</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1C) Attend and contribute to external meetings</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 Fisheries Management Plan meetings</li> <li>10 Chief Officers Group meetings</li> <li>7 Natural England meetings</li> <li>9 MAFCO meetings</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1D) Reply to Consultations/ Correspondence</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 consultations processed</li> <li>Local and national information requests and replies processed</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1E) Maintain website, quarterly e-bulletin, and stakeholder database</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The website has been regularly updated with Quarterly meeting papers, before meetings so that the community can be briefed before the Authority meeting. Decisions made by Members are added within 1 week of each meeting to the papers.</li> <li>The ebulletin has been reviewed to include more content relating to the work of bodies that work in association with the IFCA</li> <li>Maintained an up-to-date list of addresses and email addresses of stakeholders, updated every 12 months</li> </ul>	Development and rollout of new KEIFCA website
<b>1F) Promote new cockle management system (T24)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertised new Regulating Order on website and notified to all interested stakeholders</li> <li>Engaged with interested stakeholders as to how to apply for a TECFO licence under the new Regulating Order.</li> <li>Processed 22 applications for transitional and non-transitional licences.</li> <li>Facilitated 7 x LAP members scoring of non-transitional licence applications</li> <li>Held 1 day moderation LAP meeting</li> <li>Held 2 days oral evidence hearings with LAP</li> </ul>	
<b>1G) Support community engagement in Tranche 3 MCZ management</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach to industry to explain each site and discuss and develop management options where required; notably for Goodwin Sands, Dover-Deal and Thames Estuary</li> <li>Consult with industry and NGOs to inform management measures</li> <li>Coordinate with partner organisations to communicate introduction of T3 MCZ byelaw update.</li> </ul>	
<b>1H) Produce an Annual Communication Plan</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication plan is produced each year and contained within the Annual Plan.</li> </ul>	Further updates to website required to improve accessibility



## Success Criterion 2: Compliance and Enforcement

### **Compliance and Enforcement Introduction**

KEIFCA is responsible for managing the sustainable use of sea fisheries resources within our District. To fulfil this duty, our warranted enforcement officers maintain an ongoing presence along the coast, conducting patrols and inspecting fishing activities to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

Enforcement priorities reflect the seasonal cycle of key fisheries in the district, including bass, cockles and whelks, whereas Marine Protected Area enforcement, particularly monitoring of areas closed to bottom towed fishing gear, remain a year-round priority. A range of statistics demonstrating hard work carried out by our enforcement officers can be seen on the infographic on the following page.

KEIFCA enforcement strategy follows a risk-based approach, using the best available intelligence to target individuals most likely to be operating illegally, maximising the efficiency of our operations. To enhance our efforts, we collaborate closely with partner agencies such as the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Environment Agency, local authorities, Border Force, and the police, sharing key intelligence and working together to support each other's enforcement objectives. In 2024-25 we carried out three targeted joint operations with the MMO to address bass fisheries compliance issues, and additionally carried out cross-warranting with local Environment Agency fisheries enforcement officers to bolster each other's enforcement capabilities in the field.

Staying at the forefront of enforcement systems and technology is essential to ensuring we remain as effective as possible. Over the past year, KEIFCA has joined the other nine IFCA's and the MMO in adopting *Clue*, a new digital intelligence and case management platform that is already proving to be a powerful tool for collaboration, efficiency, and intelligence sharing. This is just one element within a wider suite of new enforcement systems currently in development. Cutting edge Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) systems have also been trialled in the Thames cockle fleet over the last year with great success. Both *Clue* and REM will be explored in greater detail later in this report through dedicated case studies, highlighting how these innovations are shaping the future of modern fisheries control and enforcement.

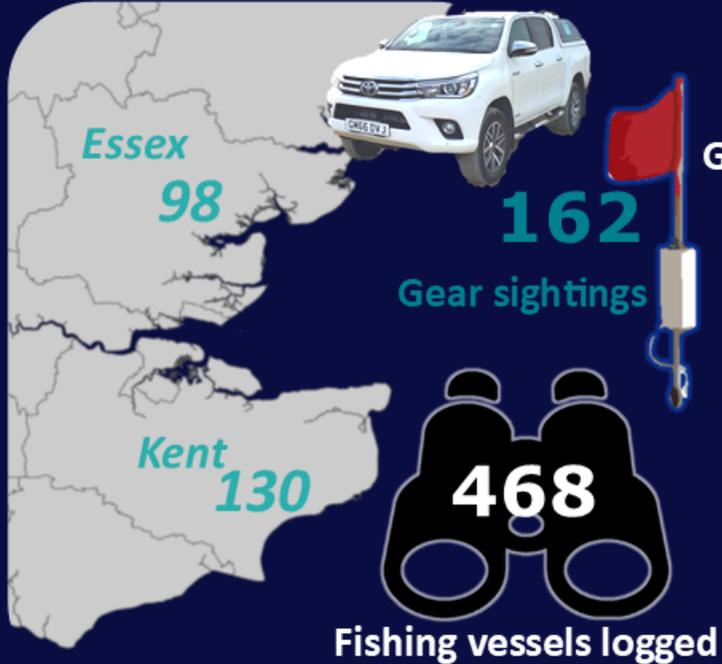
*Hayden Hurst, Principal Compliance and Enforcement Officer*



## Success Criterion 2: Enforcement at a glance...

# Enforcement statistics 2024/25

Number of shore patrols



39 Gear inspections



366 Angling engagements



83 Vessel inspections at sea

3962 Nautical miles patrolled

3962 Nautical miles patrolled



772 Nautical miles patrolled

772 Nautical miles patrolled

FPV Tamesis



1259 Nautical miles patrolled

1259 Nautical miles patrolled

FPV Vigilant



246 Intelligence reports processed



37 Offences



146 Commercial Inspections from shore



## Success Criterion 2: Compliance and Enforcement Report

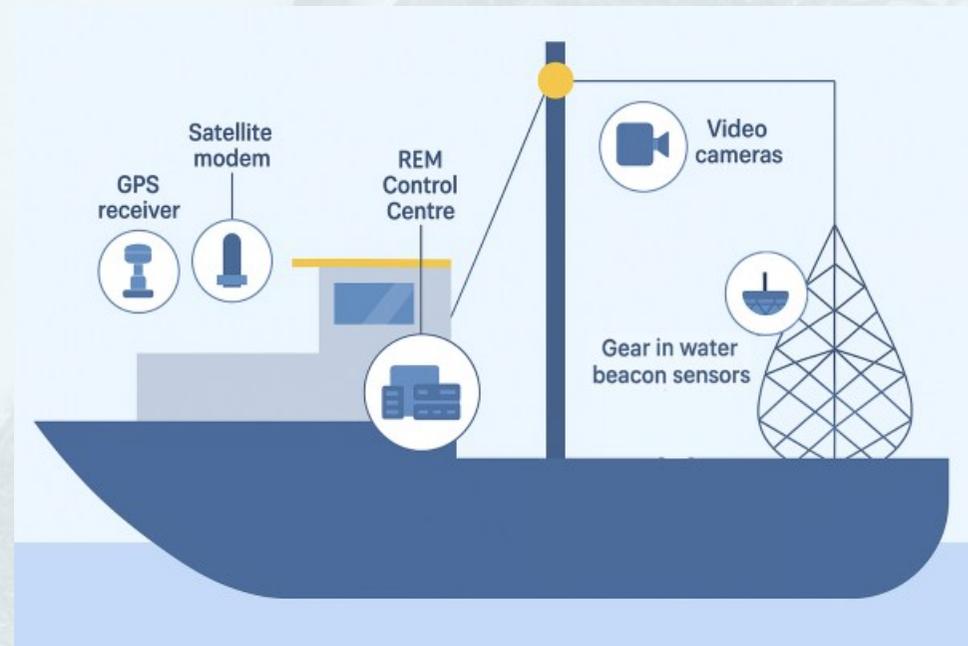
### Case study: Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) - future fisheries management

Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) is a broad term for integrated on-board systems that may include cameras, gear sensors, video storage, and GPS units. Together, these tools can record video, vessel position, speed, bearing, gear deployment, and other data to monitor fishing activity remotely. With the recent integration of machine learning and artificial intelligence, REM camera systems can now automate complex tasks such as species identification, verifying gear use, and monitoring catch limits. This innovation offers, for the first time, the potential for fisheries data to be fully documented with high accuracy, without the need for costly on-board observers.

Technological monitoring solutions for scientific research and fisheries management are the international direction of travel and are part of a wider trend towards digital transformation. REM has been developing as a fishery monitoring tool for nearly 20 years, with countries including Australia, Canada, the USA, and New Zealand having demonstrated REM's effectiveness as a tool in fisheries compliance and data collection.

In the UK, Defra has consulted on the national rollout of REM, with initial implementation focused on the largest commercial vessels, such as those in the pelagic trawling sector. As this has limited relevance for smaller inshore vessels, several IFCAs have initiated local REM projects tailored to their fisheries and management needs. Defra has supported these efforts while emphasising the importance of interoperability between emerging systems. By 2024–25, at least four IFCA-led REM trials were underway across England, alongside the development of a national IFCA REM strategy framework to ensure consistency and good governance in future projects.

In the KEIFCA district, Thames Estuary Cackle Fishery Order (TECFO) vessels presented an ideal test case for initial REM trials. They are relatively large for inshore vessels (typically 14m), operate potentially high-impact gear within tightly managed and environmentally sensitive areas, and participate in an exclusive, high-value fishery with a limited number of licences. These characteristics make them particularly well suited to trialling advanced monitoring systems that can enhance scientific monitoring and compliance.



Above: diagram of the components of a Remote Electronic Monitoring system on board a fishing vessel. Adapted from an original diagram published by the European Fisheries Control Agency.

## Success Criterion 2: Compliance and Enforcement Report

### 2024 REM Trial on Cockle Suction Dredgers

In the 2024 Thames cockle fishery, two licensed operators agreed to trial REM devices developed jointly by Fastview360 and Rewire Security. Fastview360 specialises in robust mobile camera systems, while Rewire Security provides advanced tracking and sensor technology with proven applications in fisheries across the UK. The result is a device that incorporates a tracking device similar to VMS but with a far higher resolution, but unlike VMS it additionally comprises Bluetooth gear sensors to detect when the dredge is deployed or retrieved from the water, and CCTV cameras which record real time footage of the dredge, riddle and hold.

Results from the trial on two cockle vessels in 2024 are extremely promising, with the devices providing high-resolution tracking data and accurate gear in water detection which is corroborated by high quality video footage of the fishing gear. Already we can see that REM would provide clear benefits to both science and enforcement: providing high fishing data while simultaneously promoting compliance throughout the fleet due to the provision of objective video evidence of fishing activity. See maps showing the difference between

### Next steps

With the success of the trial, ultimately KEIFCA aim to adopt REM across the entire TECFO fleet. From an enforcement standpoint, REM stands to drive improved compliance and provide the best possible evidence in future investigations, while reducing the need for costly FPV patrols to monitor the cockle fleet at sea. In a broader context, REM will also be able to provide our scientists with accurate data on fishing effort and catches, which can in turn be used to implement increasingly flexible spatial and temporal management measures that would be simply unworkable without this technology. FastView360 have also been developing artificial intelligence software to analyse video footage to maximise data outputs, and would be able to develop an machine learning which would automatically measure of the volume of cockles in the hold. Vessel owners would also have the option of installing additional cameras to improve the safety of the crew and vessels and reduce downtime, with the possibility of live streaming mechanical issues to engineers ashore to help problem solve and keep the vessel at sea.

The application of REM is not necessarily limited to the cockle fishery however, and with emerging fisheries for manila clam REM could be extremely useful too. Manila clams have only been fished on a trial basis in the KEIFCA district, and a significant challenge to opening a regular annual fishery will be KEIFCA's ability to accurately monitor fishing activity and ground impact, due to the clam ground being located in various Marine Protected Areas in the same manner as the cockle fishery. If the emerging manila clam fishery were to be fully documented with REM, the case for securing HRA approval would be very strong indeed and would additionally demonstrate KEIFCA's ability to deliver world-class fisheries management.

*Hayden Hurst, Principal Compliance and Enforcement Officer*



Above: REM CCTV footage of a cockle dredge being brought back to the surface at the end of a fishing operation. A sensor attached to the dredge head sends a message to KEIFCA to notify that fishing activity has stopped.



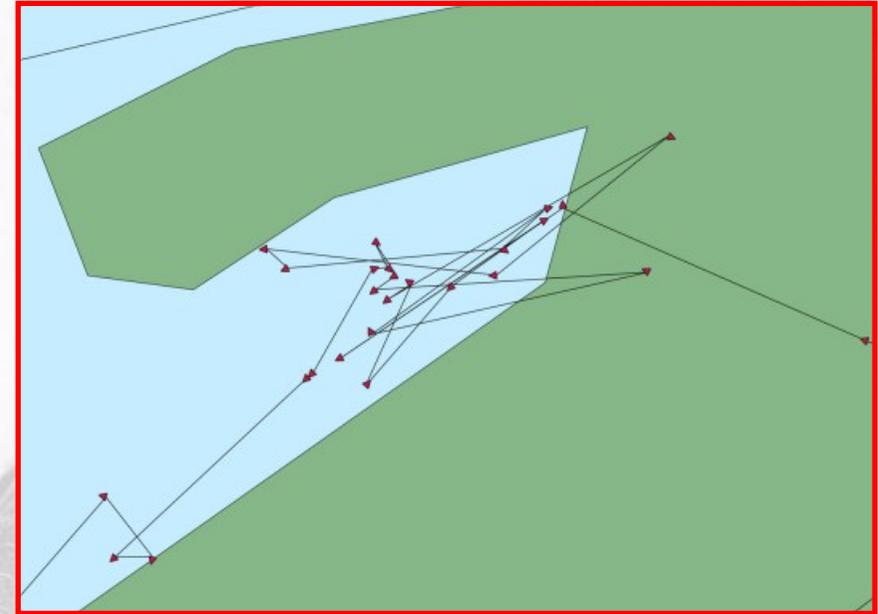
Above: REM CCTV footage showing cockles passing along the riddle and into the hold. Future management approaches may be able to use this to incorporate fine-scale spatial management measures that have not been possible until now.



## Success Criterion 2: Compliance and Enforcement Report

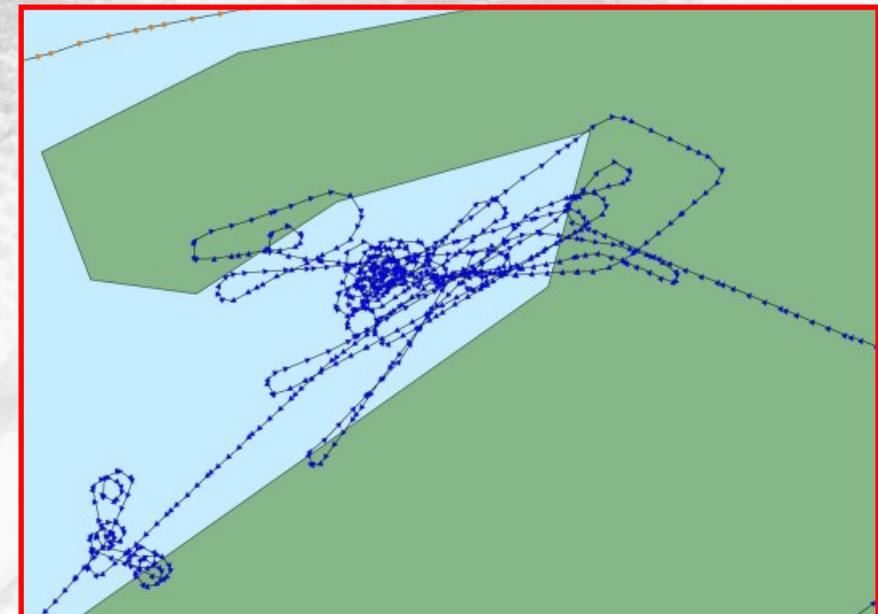
### VMS track:

- 5-minute data intervals (low resolution)
- No 'gear in water' information



### REM track:

- 30 second data intervals (high resolution)
- Gear sensor - verified 'gear in water' data



Above: Charts show green areas as intertidal cockle beds in the Kent and Essex district, with track data of a commercial cockle dredging vessel. Top images show the current Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) vessel track data, compared with the new REM track data below. Note that VMS data is low resolution at 5 minute intervals compared with high resolution REM data at 30 second intervals. Furthermore blue arrows on the REM track show that the fishing gear is in the water, and orange arrows indicate when the gear is out of water, and therefore provide verified data on when the vessel is actively fishing.



## Success Criterion 2 – Outputs

### "Clue" investigation and intelligence management system

To address the need for a modern intelligence system, a new purpose-built database system was developed, by the MMO on with input from all 10 IFCA's. Given the significant overlap between IFCA and MMO responsibilities in the marine sector, effective information sharing was a priority, and a joint platform was identified as the most efficient solution.

The chosen software provider was "Clue," a proven company already used by policing, public protection, border, and regulatory agencies in the UK and beyond. Clue's software already supports a wide range of compliance and enforcement threat areas, including organised crime, safeguarding/public protection, violence against women and girls (VAWG), anti-corruption, online harm and exploitation, immigration, environmental crime, and counter-terrorism.

Clue provides a world-class investigation and intelligence management platform that centralises and connects information in searchable data registers, including intelligence, investigations, addresses, persons, vessels, vehicles, and more.

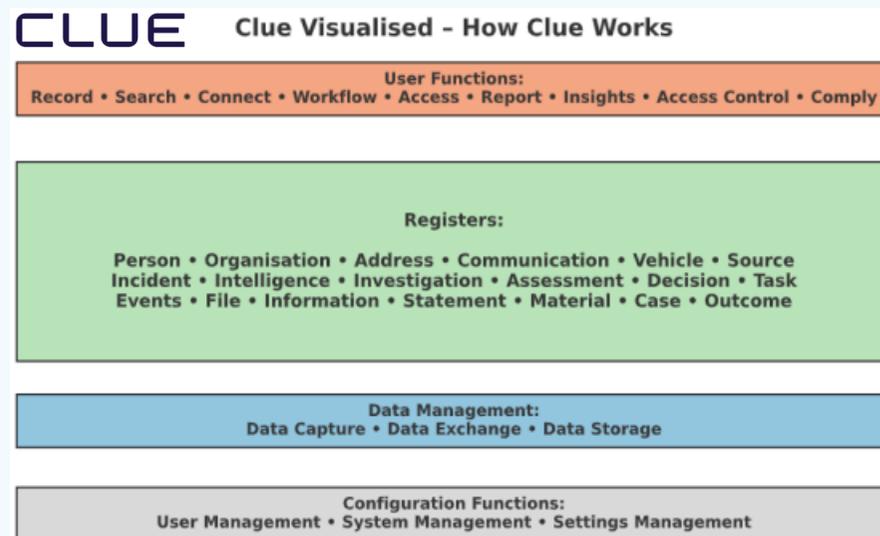
#### The core functions of the Clue database are to:

- Improve sharing and analysis of intelligence.
- Enable an evidence-based approach to assessing priority risks in the marine environment.
- Promote intelligence-led, risk-based enforcement activity.
- Streamline the management and progression of investigations.
- Safeguard personal information through strict access controls.

KEIFCA are now using Clue to its full capacity for intelligence reporting and sharing, while continuing to work closely with MMO colleagues to refine and develop the system. Investigations and offences are also being recorded within the database, with future development aimed at full integration with the Mobile Working app to enable inspection data to be captured digitally in the field. MMO have additionally trialled the use of Clue's Events register to run TCG meetings, which will allow taskings to be logged directly against the intelligence that informed them and allocated to officers in real time. KEIFCA will aim to roll out Clue-based TCG's next year if trials are successful.

The adoption of Clue has already transformed how intelligence and enforcement are managed across the marine sector. By standardising reporting, improving data security, and making information easier to share and cross-reference, the system has significantly strengthened the effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement activity. KEIFCA and MMO officers are now better equipped to identify risks, target resources, and deliver intelligence-led enforcement that safeguards sustainable fishing and a healthy marine environment.

# CLUE



Hayden Hurst, Principal Compliance and Enforcement Officer

## Success Criterion 2 – Outputs

Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2A) Coordinate KEIFCA enforcement effectively with national partners</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KEIFCA PCEO attended all National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) meetings.</li> <li>• PCEO chaired the Mobile Working App Group (MWAG), a task and finish group developing mobile working for IFCAs.</li> <li>• PCEO represented NIMEG on the Bass FMP Authorisations subgroup.</li> <li>• Regular joint work with partner organisations was undertaken, including coordinated enforcement operations and patrols.</li> <li>• Intelligence reporting and sharing was improved through the introduction of the new Clue intelligence system.</li> <li>• Training was delivered for partners, including Environment Agency cross-warranting.</li> </ul>	Deliver Mobile Working App for IFCA use nationally
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2B) Maintain and run national enforcement systems and processes</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 246 intelligence reports were processed to national standards.</li> <li>• Training was provided to officers on an individual needs basis to improve standards and promote best practice.</li> <li>• Relevant intelligence for partner agencies was gathered and disseminated, with improved awareness through attendance at TCG meetings.</li> <li>• KEIFCA worked with NIMEG to deliver the new “Clue” intelligence system, replacing the national intel database. Clue system now in full use by PCEO and enforcement officers.</li> <li>• Rapid dissemination of officer safety information was prioritised.</li> <li>• The Maritime and Coastal Surveillance System (MCSS) is being phased out for IFCA use, with the Mobile Working App set to replace it as the national inspection recording system.</li> <li>• The PCEO led the NIMEG Mobile Working App Group (MWAG), a Task &amp; Finish group to deliver mobile working for IFCAs.</li> </ul>	Continue input on Clue development and Mobile Working app
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2C) Plan effective enforcement operations and actions</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three operation orders were implemented to target high-risk seasonal fisheries, including cockle fisheries, shellfish gathering, and bass non-compliance (in partnership with MMO).</li> <li>• Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) meetings were held on a bi-weekly basis to focus enforcement resources on high-risk intelligence.</li> <li>• TCG charts were further developed and used effectively to review enforcement outcomes and guide taskings.</li> <li>• The Enforcement SharePoint site was used daily by officers, improving access to operational resources.</li> <li>• The “Enforcement Record System” was used to record all inspection data, with vessel IDs monitored and maintained by a duty officer in each county.</li> <li>• A case file management system was maintained to national standards.</li> <li>• The patrol planning system was updated and migrated onto SharePoint to improve accessibility.</li> <li>• KEIFCA Crib books were reviewed, updated, and expanded to strengthen officer understanding and field knowledge.</li> <li>• Annual enforcement plans and reports were completed. Risk register updated.</li> </ul>	Develop use of Clue Event register for TCG meetings





Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2D) Compile case files and oversee investigations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case files were built and proportionate outcomes delivered according to legal advice and in line with the Compliance and Enforcement Strategy.</li> <li>• National protocol and best practices were adopted via NIMEG.</li> <li>• A total of 37 offences were detected, resulting in:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3 Financial Administrative Penalties (FAPs) issued and paid</li> <li>– 10 seizures</li> <li>– 17 Written Warnings</li> <li>– 3 Advisory Letters</li> <li>– 14 Verbal Warnings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Three officers attended the Competent Officer course.</li> <li>• On-the-job training and feedback were provided by the PCEO to maintain and develop enforcement officers' skills, particularly around evidence gathering and case file preparation.</li> </ul>	Further formal training required to improve and maintain officers skills
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2E) Maintain and run seagoing enforcement assets</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KEIFCA vessels were maintained and operated for enforcement purposes</li> <li>• Vessel-based enforcement equipment was maintained, with boarding bags checked regularly to ensure readiness.</li> <li>• Reports on vessel operation, maintenance, and refits were delivered to the Authority.</li> <li>• Options for best available vessel equipment continued to be explored to ensure operational effectiveness</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2F) Enforcement activities – sea-based</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 151 sea patrols were conducted, resulting in 62 commercial vessel inspections, 21 recreational vessel inspections, and 39 gear inspections at sea.</li> <li>• Six sea patrols were carried out with partner agencies.</li> <li>• Intelligence was gathered and compliance risks prioritised through TCG meetings and Operation Orders, alongside reactive enforcement in response to live intelligence.</li> <li>• KEIFCA improved and updated its understanding of partner agency intelligence needs through joint meetings and external TCGs.</li> <li>• Body Worn Video was routinely used during inspections at sea, with footage providing evidence for case files.</li> <li>• KEIFCA supported MMO and DEFRA by undertaking joint taskings at sea, including targeted enforcement in the key bass fishery.</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2G) Maintain and run land based enforcement assets</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KEIFCA vehicles were maintained and used for enforcement patrols.</li> <li>• Shore-based enforcement equipment was maintained, with shore bags checked regularly to ensure readiness.</li> <li>• Body Worn Video was routinely used during shore inspections, with footage used as evidence in case files.</li> <li>• New scales and calibration weights were purchased to support inspection procedures.</li> <li>• Regular reporting on the operation, maintenance, and refit of key shore-based equipment was provided to the Authority.</li> <li>• Drones continued to be used to in a limited capacity.</li> </ul>	Source new body worn video cameras to replace older models, explore expansion of drone use



Objective completed



Significant progress made but objective not completed



Minimal progress made

Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2H) Enforcement activities – shore-based</b>	Objective completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 228 shore patrols resulting in 146 commercial and 366 recreational shore-based inspections being completed.</li> <li>• 15 joint shore patrols carried out with partner agencies</li> <li>• Intel gathered and compliance risk prioritised and actioned via TCG and Operation Orders in addition to reactive enforcement to live Intelligence when needed.</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2I) Enforcement training</b>	Objective completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The accreditation programme continued to be developed nationally, led by the DCIFCO.</li> <li>• Updates to legislation and procedures were disseminated to officers by the DCIFCO and PCEO.</li> <li>• CRIB books were issued to all officers and are under continuous review; they are routinely used in the field to maintain legislative knowledge, guide enforcement practice, and form the basis of the operational training package, which supports new staff training and helps standardise/optimize the skills of experienced staff. Training with partner agencies, including Essex Police, the Environment Agency, and MMO, was delivered to strengthen operational capability.</li> <li>• The admin assistant was trained in data extraction and processing for TCG charts, enhancing intelligence and analysis capacity.</li> <li>• 5 officers were cross-warranted with the Environment Agency (limited SAFFA warrants), and 8 EA staff were cross-warranted to enforce KEIFCA byelaws.</li> </ul>	All staff refresher training on Conflict Resolution & Breakaway techniques. Accreditation programme requires development.
<b>2J) Improve our use of enforcement information and integrate IVMS into enforcement process</b>	Significant progress made but objective not completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement Record System / patrol plans on SharePoint records enforcement data effectively</li> <li>• Working with MMO via NIMEG to develop Mobile Working App for IFCA use nationally</li> <li>• Clue software adopted for IFCA and MMO use as national intel and case management system.</li> <li>• I-VMS project delayed nationally</li> </ul>	Adopt tactical use of IVMS once implemented. Develop Mobile Working App for IFCA use
<b>2K) Integrate Marine Protected Area enforcement risks into KEIFCA enforcement activities</b>	Objective completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPA byelaws were incorporated into the KEIFCA risk register.</li> <li>• MPAs requiring increased patrol effort were identified through the TCG process and prioritised accordingly.</li> </ul>	
<b>2L) Improve records of private ground boundaries and understanding of their fishing rights</b>	Objective completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIS maps of private grounds were updated and maintained.</li> <li>• Guidance on how regulations apply within private grounds was provided to officers and stakeholders.</li> </ul>	
<b>2M) Improve communication with stakeholders on bass management and enforcement and highlight joint working with the MMO.</b>	Significant progress made but objective not completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term Bass FMP goals highlighted to Bass Management Group (BMG) via NIMEG and COG.</li> <li>• PCEO represents NIMEG on Bass FMP Authorisations sub-group.</li> </ul>	Further FMP engagement and improved comms.



# Success Criterion 3: Management Measures



## Fisheries Management Plans

As Fisheries Management Plan work moved from feeding into and evaluating plans to implementing the actions of the plans, the nature and the pace of work changed for IFCA as the work became more operational with a direct impact on our local fishers. As IFCA focus and gather expertise in regionally important fish stocks each IFCA has taken the lead on a specific FMP and are the national point of contact for that Fisheries Management Plan.

As whelks are an important species in the KEIFCA district we have taken on this role for the Whelk FMP, which involves attending meetings, disseminating key information to other interested IFCAs and stakeholders, and then compiling and feeding back views when required. The Whelk FMP contains short-term commitments to introduce some form of whelk permit and review the minimum landing size of whelks, as this work would directly impact local fishers', officers have worked to facilitate whelk FMP meetings in Whitstable so that the needs of local inshore fishers could be included in the designing future management options. Building on this feedback and KEIFCA members views, officers have collated feedback on the specific proposals, suggested new options and tried to shape new management measures so that they workable for the inshore fleet.

KEIFCA have also fed into the development of the next wave of FMPs that include the Cockle FMP and the Skates and Rays FMP, two important local species to the KEIFCA district. KEIFCA reviewed and discussed these plans, along with the other relevant FMPs at the November 2024 quarterly meeting and officers used this feedback to inform the KEIFCA FMP consultation reply. KEIFCA continues to work closely with the Association of IFCAs to answer DEFRA's questions relating to the cockle FMP and how potential actions could be implemented.

As the whole Fisheries Management Plan process is new and very different from the previous top-down system it will inevitably take time for the procedures and structures need to implement the actions of the different FMPs to bed-in. Industry involvement has been at the heart of the new FMP system, and KEIFCA will work hard to ensure that local fishers and their needs will be included in implementation discussions as the different FMPs move forward.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website for Fisheries Management Plans. It includes a search bar, a list of articles, and a 'Dive into FMPs' section with a diagram illustrating the process involving partners, governance, and stakeholder engagement.

Will Wright, Chief Officer

## Success Criterion 3: Management Measures

### **TECFO 2024**

Following submission of an application for a new Thames cockle regulating order in April 2023 and running a statutory consultation from the 29 February until the 29 March 2024, The Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No.2) Order 2024 came fully into force on 18th December 2024 and provides the legislative structure for the management of cockle harvesting within the majority of the Thames Estuary. The Order is for a total period of 28 years which is split into four 7-year licencing periods. The first 7-year period is 2025 – 2031. The Authority previously decided that for the first 7-year period, 15 licences would be available to issue.

At the November 2024 Authority meeting, members confirmed the key dates for the application process. The window for licence applications opened on 19th December 2024 and closed on 19th January 2025. A total of twenty two applications were received including the transitional licences application. The process of scoring and ranking licence applications was undertaken by the Applications Panel as set out in the Management Plan. Total scores were used to rank applications and where the final scores were similar or the Applications Panel required further information and/or evidence, the relevant applicants were invited to a meeting of the Applications Panel and asked to orally run through their application and answer questions on their application from the Panel.

Following finalisation of the recommended ranked list and upon notification to TECFO 24 applicants of their position on the recommended ranked list, the Authority received nearly 40 pages of very detailed and technical feedback from applicants and local Fishing Associations. The feedback included legal issues concerning the application of the transitional licence provisions within the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No.2) Order 2024.

KEIFCA officers sought legal advice and worked closely with DEFRA concerning the technical legal issues raised by the feedback. From this rapid review, it was established that there were drafting issues in the 2024 Order which had unintended consequences and did not deliver the policy intent that the Authority had agreed at the 7 March 2023 and the 14 July 2023 Authority meetings. Specifically, the wording prevented nearly half of the transitional licence applicants from being able to hold a transitional licence, significantly impacting a number of long-established companies whose business models are built around access to TECFO.

The intention of the Authority which evolved through the cockle review process has consistently been to facilitate a transition from the 1994 Order and to provide certainty and continuity for all holders of the 1994 Order licence, with that transition ending after 7 years to allow greater and more diverse opportunity for the holding of licences under the 2024 Order going forward. The Authority was consistent that the intention was for all fourteen TECFO 1994 Order licence holders to have the opportunity to apply for a transitional licence. KEIFCA worked closely with DEFRA to understand the full implications of the situation and then seek solutions that allowed for a positive resolution, in line with the stated intention of the Authority, within a reasonable timeframe.

As the problem was contained in the wording of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishing (No.2) Order 2024, specifically Article 5 (12), a new regulating order was required to amend this issue and deliver the policy intent that the Authority had previously agreed. Following Defra's process and the requirements set out in the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish Act) 1967, the draft Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No.2) (Variation) Order 2025 was laid on 15 July 2025.

*Dominic Bailey, Deputy Chief Officer*



## Success Criterion 3 – Outputs

Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 3A) Administration of KEIFCA licences and permits</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed 30 cockle permits and 14 licence applications</li> <li>• Produced 4 cockle fishery update letters</li> <li>• Held industry meetings to discuss management measures for cockle fishery</li> <li>• Processed 25 whelk permit applications</li> <li>• Produced 1 whelk fishery update letters</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 3B) Administration of new KEIFCA legislation (e.g. Byelaws and Regulating Orders)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to maintain communications with the MMO Byelaw team in order to inform national resource allocation for progression of IFCA byelaws.</li> <li>• Engaged with the MMO byelaw team to provide advance notification of upcoming byelaws in early development by KEIFCA</li> <li>• Engaged with Defra through the Shellfish Team and legal to develop new TECFO based upon the indicative wording submitted by KEIFCA with the Regulating Order application.</li> </ul>	
<b>3C) Progress the development of future Cockle fishery management and legislation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held extraordinary Authority meetings to enable members to make decisions in a timely manner to meet the objectives and timescales necessary for successful delivery and application of the new Regulating Order.</li> </ul>	
<b>3D) Provide input into the development of Fisheries Management Plans</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attended national FMP meetings supporting AIFCA</li> <li>• CIFCO National FMP lead for the Chief Officers Group</li> <li>• Attended Whelk Management Group, Whelk Science Group and the Whelk Implementation group meetings</li> <li>• Helped facilitate local fishers involvement in the proposed national whelk permit work lead by Seafish.</li> </ul>	



Objective completed



Significant progress made but objective not completed



Minimal progress made



Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>3E) Complete tranche 3 MPA assessments and when required develop appropriate management measures</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T3 MCZ fisheries assessments completed</li> <li>• Worked with local stakeholders to develop management options for Goodwin Sands site.</li> <li>• Discussions with MMO and NE held about joint site management.</li> </ul>	
<b>3F) Further measures and management to aid the recovery of native oysters in in the BCRC MCZ</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ Native Oyster byelaw in force.</li> <li>• Process in place to discuss fishery opening with stakeholders including industry, Natural England, NGO's and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>	
<b>3G) Contribute and support the Fish Local project</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with Thames Estuary Partnership to obtain funding from London Gateway develop the Fish Local project and build a stronger local market for fish.</li> <li>• Assisted with bid from Seafood and Fisheries Fund to help support and grow the project. Project due to start in September 2025.</li> </ul>	'Commercial Fishing Assessment' process not yet established—carry into next Annual Plan
<b>3H) Provide support for process of SE Marine Plan review and update</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead officer acts as point of contact for Marine Planning and Licencing</li> <li>• Officers have attended meetings and provided consultation feedback when required</li> </ul>	

## Success Criterion 4: Governance and Training

### **National training update**

Kent and Essex IFCA continue to lead on the delivery of the National IFCA Competent Officer course held in February of each year. For 2025 this was moved from its previous home of Torquay, down to Brixham. This course was led by the Deputy Chief IFCO, together with the Deputy Chief IFCO from Southern IFCA. Also for the first time, a new course was held concurrently for officers, the Environment, Science and Conservation Course. This was specifically designed for scientific staff, with Kent and Essex IFCA sending one officer on the course.

### **Kent and Essex IFCA training update**

Kent & Essex IFCA continues to invest in training its staff to enhance the skills and knowledge of its employees to increase their productivity and efficiency in their respective roles. Investment in training programs for Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers is vital in ensuring the competent and effective enforcement of regulations and the sustainable management of marine resources. By equipping officers with the necessary skills and knowledge, we can significantly contribute to the protection of our seas and the conservation of marine life.

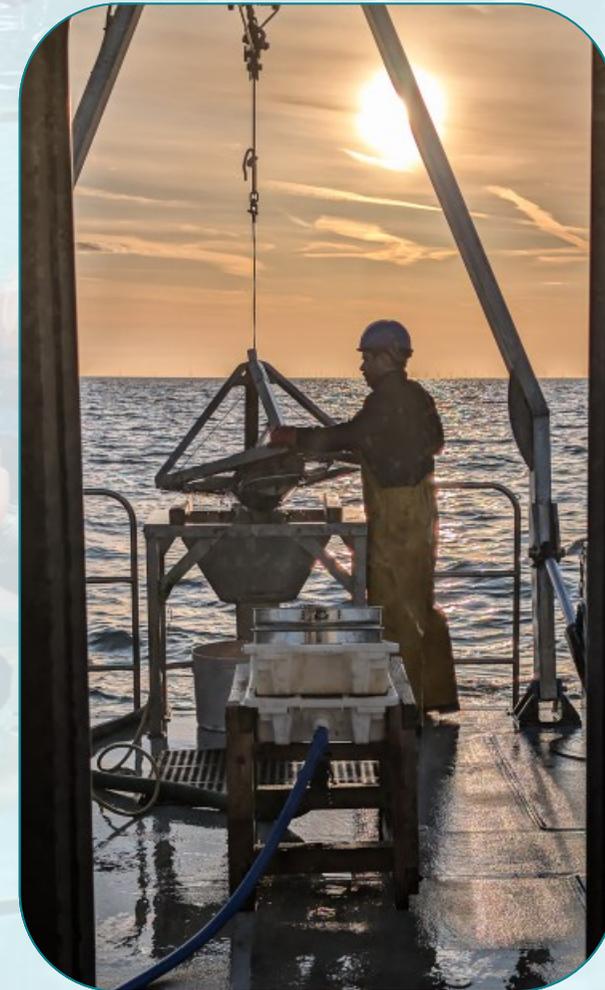
#### *Enforcement training*

During 2024/2025 selected officers attended the Competent Officer Course

The Competent Officer Course is a comprehensive program designed to provide officers with a solid foundation in the following areas, as well as providing a mechanism for Continuous Professional Development for experienced staff:

- Fisheries management and conservation.
- Navigation and vessel inspection.
- Legal aspects of fisheries enforcement.
- Safety at sea.
- Search and seizure procedures.

The objective is to equip officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively enforce regulations, ensure sustainable fisheries and conduct successful investigations. The program encompasses a combination of classroom instruction, practical exercises, and hands-on training. Courses are conducted through a combination of classroom instruction, practical demonstrations, and field exercises. Officers are provided with up-to-date materials and access to experienced instructors.



## Success Criterion 4: Governance and Training



### *Investigative Interviewing Techniques:*

The Investigative Interviewing Techniques component is a specialised training program focused on developing the skills and knowledge necessary for effective interviews and interrogations. This includes:

- Ethical considerations in interviews.
- Developing rapport with subjects.
- Questioning techniques.
- Recognising deception.
- Documentation and report writing.
- STCW basic safety training

### *STCW training*

All sea going IFCA officers are required to take STCW basic safety training courses every 4 years. There is a legal requirement for seafarers to undergo this training : The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) sets the standards for training and certification of seafarers. IFCA officers currently undertake training in the following areas:

- STCW Personal Survival Techniques
- STCW Elementary First Aid
- STCW Fire Prevention & Fire Fighting
- STCW Personal Safety and Social Responsibility
- STCW Security Awareness

These courses provide essential knowledge and skills to respond to emergencies and ensure the safety of staff and others on board a ship. This is crucial in the maritime industry, where accidents can have severe consequences.

### *Boarding and crossdeck training with Essex Police*

In order to ensure CPD in our at-sea operations, KEIFCA worked with Essex Police Marine Unit to develop a bespoke 1-day course aiming to refine and further focus officers skills in vectoring, locking on and boarding vessel from our RIBs. This took place using KEIFCA vessels with Police trainers and was extremely successful, to such an extent that three other IFCAs have since attended the same training at the KEIFCA Brightlingsea Office. Kent and Essex IFCA continues to lead in the development of training across IFCA skill sets.

*Dominic Bailey, Deputy Chief Officer*



## Success Criterion 4 – Outputs

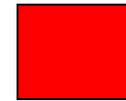
Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4A) Budget Management - Handling invoices, Oracle Administration, compile budget, budget meetings etc. Manage and coordinate funding applications e.g. EU</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved budget with quarterly updates</li> <li>• Maintained and processed 13 oracle statements</li> <li>• Held internal budget planning &amp; review meetings</li> <li>• Mid and end of year Internal audit completed</li> <li>• Budget held for NLTO post on behalf of AIFCA</li> <li>• Processed 1197 invoices</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4B) Annual planning and reporting</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created and published 2025-2026 annual plan and 2024-2025 annual report</li> <li>• Documented and presented to Authority and displayed on website</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4C) Facilitating staff matters - Run current staff performance monitoring system. Run annual staff workshop. Recruiting new staff. H&amp;S reviews. Responsibility for HR matters – contracts, payroll, pensions etc.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual staff appraisals undertaken</li> <li>• Maintained and updated H&amp;S documentation</li> <li>• Recruitment of 2 members of staff</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4D) IFCA Meetings - Run and provide support for quarterly IFCA meetings and technical panel meetings.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held 4 quarterly meetings with approved minutes.</li> <li>• Held 1 extraordinary Authority meetings with approved minutes</li> <li>• Maintained handbook for Members</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4E) Staff training - Accredited Enforcement Training, Internal training, PACE course training, Sea tickets/training, survey training (ATV training) etc.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 officers completed sea survival training</li> <li>• 2 officers completed 1st aid training</li> <li>• 4 officers completed fire fighting training</li> <li>• 2 officers completed security awareness training</li> <li>• 2 officers completed the competent officer course</li> <li>• 1 officer completed the science officer course</li> <li>• 2 officers completed PSSR training</li> <li>• 2 staff completed working at heights, manual handling and confined space training</li> <li>• 2 officers completed short range VHF training</li> <li>• 2 officers completed anaphylaxis training</li> <li>• 1 officer completed COSHH training</li> <li>• 1 officer completed cybersecurity training</li> <li>• 2 officers completed GDPR training</li> <li>• 12 officers completed CPR/Defib training</li> </ul>	



Objective completed



Significant progress made but objective not completed



Minimal progress made

Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4F) General administration - Fill in timesheets, filing, post, travel &amp; expenses, purchase card etc.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of timesheets</li> <li>• Processed 28 travel &amp; expenses claims</li> <li>• Maintained data records and filing</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4G) Health and Safety Systems</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual reporting of H&amp;S issues to Authority</li> <li>• Regular meeting of H&amp;S committee to discuss any issues and to put procedures in place to mitigate against further incidents.</li> </ul>	
<b>4H) Complete an organisational review focusing on staff structure, roles and responsibilities and terms and conditions</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carried out and implemented outcome of review of staff structure, roles and responsibilities and terms &amp; conditions.</li> </ul>	
<b>4H) Complete a review of KEIFCA health and safety policy</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed KEIFCA Health and Safety Policy, including all risk assessments and standalone policies e.g. lone working and life-jackets, taking into account other similar organisations and learning from best practice.</li> </ul>	Continue into next year with SeaFlux provision



## Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science Report

### ***Evidence and Science Introduction***

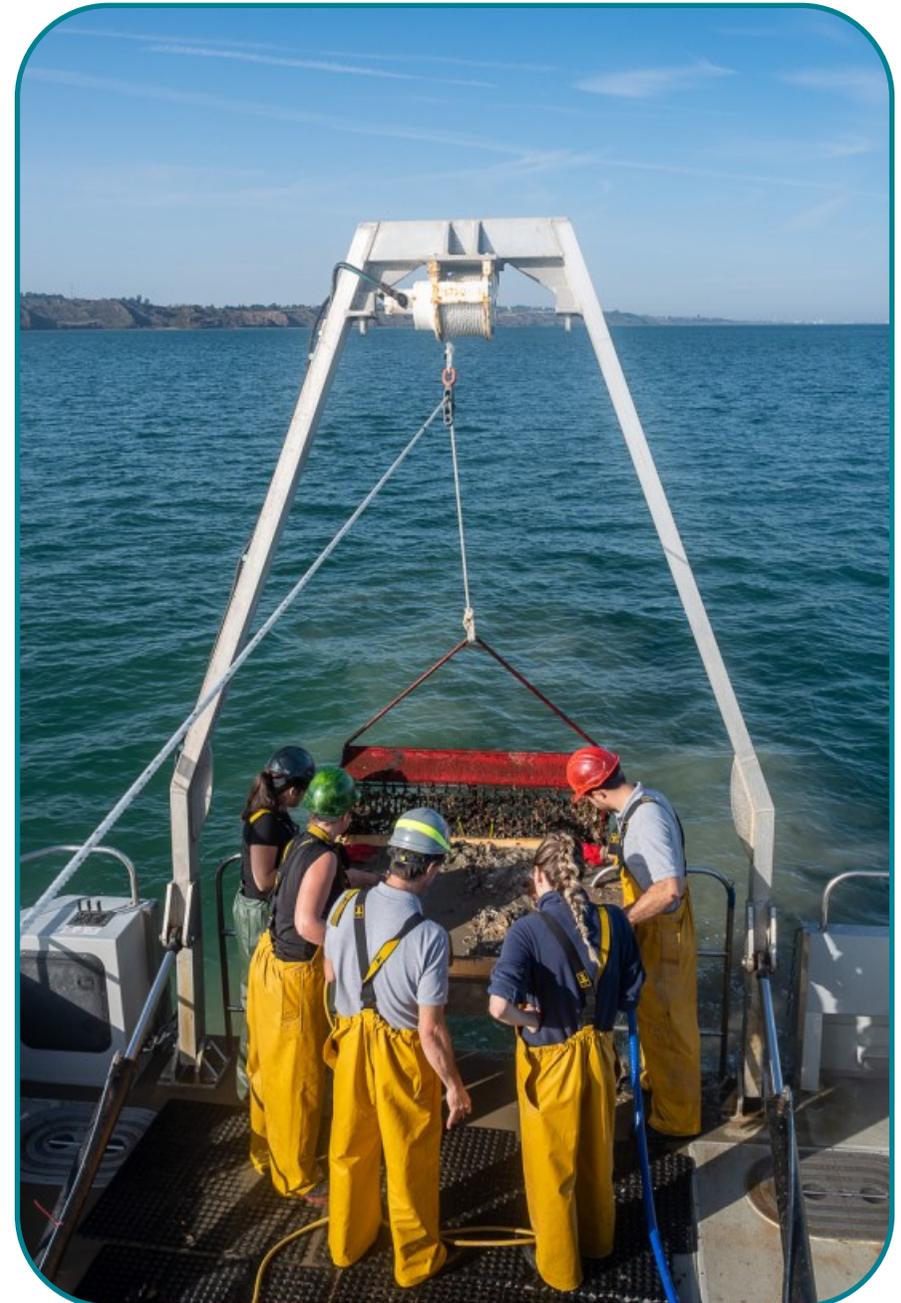
Kent and Essex IFCA conduct essential scientific research to support Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), promote sustainable fisheries, and ensure accessible evidence (data and insights) within our district. The highlights of our 2023/2024 research agenda are presented under three themes: (1) Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), (2) Sustainable Fisheries, and (3) Access to Evidence. The first two themes report on how KEIFCA fulfils its statutory duties as set out in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and the third is the organisation's obligation make information available to the public.

Through field surveys, we collect and analyse data to assess the status of key fish stocks, primarily shellfish, which guides fishery management across the district. For example, surveys of cockle stocks inform quota setting, access regulation, and the management of permit-based fisheries. This evidence base also informs decisions when fisheries are in decline, leading to management measures such as byelaws, regulatory adjustments, and enhanced enforcement.

In 2024/2025 KEIFCA focused on four priorities:

- 1) Running a new trial Manila clam fishery in the Thames Estuary;
- 2) Assessing appropriate riddle size gaps to sort clams according to Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (MCRS);
- 3) Addressing the large-scale ecological changes on our coast over the last decade and their implications for fishers and the scientific community (see SC1);
- 4) Improving our data management systems to the improve storage and security, streamline flow of information; and translating data analysis into management recommendations that support sustainable fisheries across the District.

*Philip Haupt, Principal Science and Conservation Officer*



# Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science Report

## Building a better cockle database

Over the past year we have been developing a new database to manage the large amount of information collected through our annual cockle stock assessment surveys. These surveys, which have been running since 1998, provide the foundation for understanding the trends of cockle stocks in the Thames Estuary and underpin our decisions for sustainable fishery management.

Until recently, the survey data were stored and processed in a series of standalone spreadsheets, which could be difficult to manage and time-consuming to compile the data for analysis. The new database, built using PostgreSQL (a secure and reliable data system), now provides a single home for all the survey results. This makes it easier to organise, search and protect the information that we collect.

The database links directly with mapping software, so survey results can be displayed on maps in QGIS. This allows us to see more readily where adult cockles are most abundant, or where we have had good (or weak) spatfall, on admiralty charts (seabed maps). This provides opportunities to assess spatial patterns in the data in relation to fishing effort for example. The data are also connected to R, a specialist analysis programme that helps us carry out more detailed statistical work and produce clear graphs and figures to communicate the trends in cockle stocks to fishers and the public. These outputs can then be viewed in an interactive R Shiny App, which allows managers and scientists to explore the results and test different options for managing the fishery.

We are also developing a user-friendly front end for the database (the part of the database that we commonly interact with, such as data entry) using Microsoft Access – with which staff are already familiar. This will allow data from future surveys to be entered directly into the system in a simple, standardised way. The result will be a much smoother process, saving time and reducing the risk of errors.

By modernising the way we handle cockle survey data, we are improving both efficiency and security. More importantly, this work helps ensure that the best available evidence is at hand to guide decisions about the fishery. Our aim is that the new database will provide a long-term, reliable resource to support the sustainable management of cockles in our district.

Fig. 1: Abundance of cockles from 2004 to 2024 in the main cockle harvesting areas of the Maplin and Foulness sands.

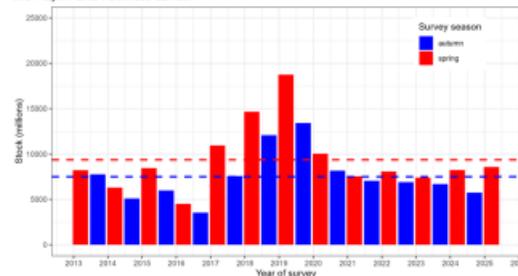


Fig. 2: Abundance of spat before and after the first winter for 2003 to 2023 year classes in the main cockle harvesting areas of the Maplin and Foulness sands. Stock size of spat before and after first winter.

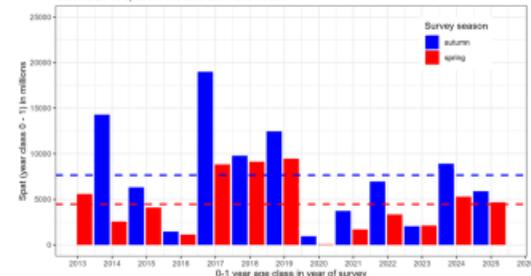
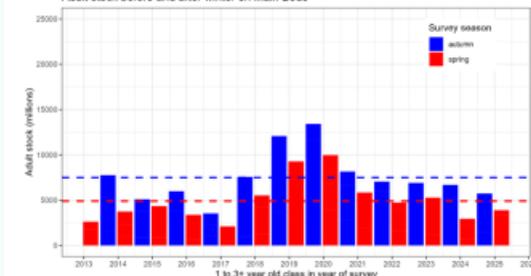


Fig. 3: Abundance of adult cockles from 2005 to 2024 in the main cockle harvesting areas of the Maplin and Foulness sands. Adult stock before and after winter on Main Beds.



## Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science Report

### 2024 Clam Trial

The Manila clam (*Ruditapes philippinarum*) is a high-value seafood first introduced to the UK as an aquaculture species in the late 1980s. Over the last few years Manila clams have become ever more abundant in the Thames and have the potential to become a viable future fishery. Key beds are currently found within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), so any potential future fishery would have to be compatible with Natural England's advice. At the March 2024 KEIFCA meeting, the Authority agreed to run a trial to understand the environmental impact and economic potential of different types of Manila clam harvesting gear and operations.

KEIFCA requested expressions of interest in participating in the trial fishery, which received 38 responses. All the fishers who had expressed an interest were invited to apply, and from these, fifteen fishers submitted a formal application to participate in the trial. Due to a limited number of places on the trial, these applications were assessed and ranked by a panel of KEIFCA members. Four vessels planning to use batch dredges with water injection were awarded a place on the trial as well as two vessels planning to use hydraulic suction dredges and two planning to use dry batch dredges.

In preparation for the trial, port visits and face-to-face meetings kept trialists informed about the trial, along with e-Bulletins developed to inform those who expressed interest about the progression of the trial. All trialist gear underwent biosecurity checks and was measured, and each vessel fitted with GPS tracking. KEIFCA collaborated with multiple organisations to set up the trial, including Natural England, the Food Standards Agency, the Ministry of Defence, local government councillors, Southern IFCA, and shellfish purification businesses.



## Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science Report



The trial was a success, largely due to the investment of time and money by the trialists, and their open collaboration with KEIFCA. The trial fleet completed 36 fishing trips, with six of the eight vessels landing their full allocated TAC. KEIFCA collected and processed 165 samples, with four damage rates calculated across six vessels. Seven interviews were conducted once the trial had concluded.

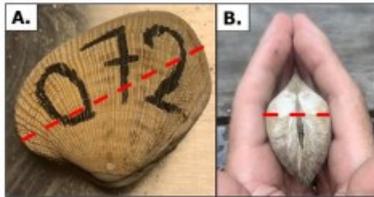
A large quantity of data was collected, allowing several key conclusions to be reached:

- Water injection batch dredges provided low damage rates to clams, while being economically feasible. This gear type should be carried forward to future trials.
- Cockles and undersize clams were successfully discarded by harvesting and sorting gear used in the trial.
- All harvested catch was able to be sold.

A 2025/2026 trial has been approved, to investigate the impact of the fishery on the seabed, and how the fishery may operate on a fleet level.



## Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science Report



### Clam Riddle Experiments

Manila clams have an MLS of 35mm, and determining the bar spacing appropriate for harvest and sorting of the species is complex. Therefore, KEIFCA has undertaken a study focussed on the effect of changing bar spacing on the size of retained/discarded Manila clams, with the aim of setting a standardised bar spacing for any future trials or fishery. Setting a standard bar spacing on fishing and sorting gear is a simple, but effective way to drastically reduce the risk of undersize clams being landed and sold. This improves the sustainability of the fishery by ensuring that individuals are able to reproduce at least once before becoming vulnerable to harvest.

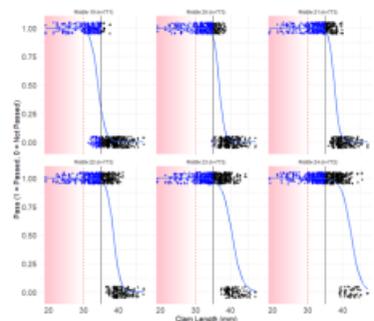
The overarching aim of the study was to develop the understanding around 1) gear specification measures to ensure that the Manila clam trial fishery is managed sustainably and 2) better understand the potential impacts on cockles and the cockle fishery in the Thames Estuary.

Both practical experiments and modelling using existing data were undertaken, to gain as much understanding as possible with limited resources.

Across all tested bar spacings there were low levels of cockle retention (<1%). This is consistent with findings from the 2024 Manila clam trial fishery, which found that only very low levels of cockles bycatch were retained. Cockles are much smaller than Manila clams, and this study presents further evidence that Manila clam harvesting gear effectively excludes cockles.

It was concluded that a bar spacing of either 21 or 22mm balances the need to comply with the legal minimum length for Manila clams and discard cockles with the need to retain a reasonable proportion of available sizeable catch. Considering real world factors which may cause a greater retention of undersize clams than found in this experiment, 22mm may be an appropriate bar spacing.

However, it is recommended that before a standardised bar spacing is set for trials and the potential fishery, more experiments be undertaken in the 2025 Manila clam trial. These experiments should consider real world factors that could result in a refinement of the findings from this experiment to better inform a final management recommendation on bar-spacing to be used to fish for Manila clams in the Thames Estuary.



## Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science Report

### MPA update

#### *New MPA byelaws*

Following on from MCZ Fisheries Assessments for Swanscombe, Dover to Deal, and Goodwin Sands MCZs, KEIFCA worked with a range of stakeholders, including Goodwin Sands Conservation Trust, the MMO, fishers and Fishing Associations in the District to develop and agree appropriate management measures. The management measures for all three sites were combined and added to the schedule of the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (Prohibited Areas) Byelaw 2024. The updated byelaw will protect an additional ~170km<sup>2</sup> of seabed in the KEIFCA district from bottom towed fishing activity.

The draft byelaw, an Impact Assessment and an Economic Calculator was put forward to the Authority for approval. Formal consultation followed, and after this concluded, all three documents were passed onto the MMO for Quality Assurance. The MMO responded in September 2024 and provided feedback. These changes have been incorporated and the draft byelaw, Impact Assessment and Economic Calculator re-submitted in January 2025. The MMO's response is anticipated by the end of the year. Once this stage is passed, the byelaw will go to DEFRA for further approval and implementation.

#### *Providing local data for MMO Offshore MPA management measures*

Officers have worked with the MMO to ensure coherent management across the Goodwin Sands MCZ (a shared MPA site). As VMS data is not available to use when assessing the fishing activity of under 12-meter vessels, KEIFCA undertook a project to assist the MMO in understanding activity in the offshore portion of the Goodwin Sands MCZ. Fishermen in the district were asked to identify where they fish at the site, what gear they use, how often they use that gear, and over what part of the year. This comprehensive information was provided to the MMO, who have used it in their Stage 3 assessment of the Goodwin Sands MCZ. KEIFCA have continued to work with the MMO, responding to their Stage 3 MPA proposed management consultation.

#### *Accurately monitoring the impact of fishing gears in MPAs*

One of the key strategic goals this year has been to develop and trial systems that help us better understand and quantify fishing impacts in our Marine Protected areas. Building on developments in REM (see Case study: Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) - future fisheries management) we are now in a position to take forward and integrate these new systems into our future fisheries and MPA management. Rolling out the REM system help will provide detailed and accurate assessments of fishing activity and help make better informed and real-time management decisions taking into consideration the requirements of MPAs.

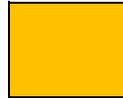


## Success Criterion 5 – Outputs

Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5A) Produce an Annual Research Plan accompanying Annual Report</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Research Plan and Report produced &amp; reported to Authority</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5B) Attend and contribute to TAG meetings</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attended and contributed to all TAG meetings in 2024/25, playing a more influential role within the forum.</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5C) Maintain scientific survey equipment</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KEIFCA vessels and equipment provided and maintained for the purposes of scientific surveys and data collection</li> <li>Vehicles provided and maintained for shore based scientific surveys and data collection</li> <li>Vessel &amp; vehicle status reported to Authority at quarterly meetings</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5D) MPA management</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Byelaw developed to ban bottom towed gear inside Goodwin Sands-, Swanscombe and Dover-to-Deal MCZs.</li> <li>Address outstanding MPA Fisheries Assessments</li> <li>Participation in update of regional Southeast Marine Plan</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5E) Engagement with major marine developments in the district and reply to consultations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate overview of all marine developments in the district of relevance</li> <li>Evaluate and Prioritise engagement</li> <li>Liaise with relevant Fishers Groups</li> <li>Provide verbal and written feedback when there is a potential impact on local fisheries, MPAs or byelaws.</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5F) Evidence gathering and reporting for the TECFO licenced and permitted cockle fisheries</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and carry out annual cockle stock assessment surveys (inc. cockle samples for MESL)</li> <li>Delivery of recommendations relating to stock management (inc. data entry and analysis).</li> <li>Organisation and delivery of pre-fishery stakeholder meeting (License holders):</li> <li>Production of Habitat Regulations Assessment, including consultation with NE</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5G) Evidence gathering and reporting for the whelk permit fishery</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate, analyse and prepare whelk landings report and improve alignment with FMP objectives</li> <li>Routinely collect water temperature data</li> <li>Expand collaborative research with academic partners (University of Essex, Bangor University, Herriot-Watt) to better understand whelk environmental envelope through MSc/PhD studies.</li> </ul>	Continue study



Objective completed



Significant progress made but objective not completed



Minimal progress made

Action	Completion Status	Outputs Completed	Next steps
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5H) Evidence gathering for a potential clam fishery</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial fishery</li> <li>- Organising and mobilising the trial fishery</li> <li>- Fishing footprint in MPAs: Develop better data collection methods on fishing impacts using REM.</li> <li>- Analysis &amp; write-up</li> <li>• Survey planning &amp; delivery of stock assessment*</li> <li>• Ground Impact survey*</li> <li>• Engage with fishermen to communicate results and recommendations</li> <li>• Literature review of other clam fisheries</li> </ul>	
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5I) Evidence gathering and reporting on the potential native oyster fishery in the BCRC MCZ</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and deliver the annual native oyster survey.</li> <li>• Statistical analysis, map preparation and report writing.</li> <li>• Delivery of recommendations relating to stock management to Authority</li> <li>• Engage with oyster fishermen and plan to carry out a collaborative industry led fishing survey</li> </ul>	Look to carry out survey in 2026/27
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5J) Provide support for small fish surveys</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborated in EA and Essex University small fish surveys (River Stour, Kent)</li> <li>• Serving on the steering committee for Livings River's small fish surveys in the River Medway</li> </ul>	
<b>5K) Undertake a <i>Sabellaria</i> validation survey in Goodwin Sands MCZ</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed and completed analysis side-scan survey data.</li> <li>• Grab sample collection.</li> <li>• Prepared management for all T3 MCZs: Dover to Deal, Swanscombe and Goodwin Sands MCZs</li> </ul>	
<b>5L) T24 cockle stock assessment database</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the T24 cockle stock assessment data recording methods, database, data analysis &amp; reporting mechanisms</li> </ul>	
<b>5M) Host TAG symposium</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise and host the 2025 Technical Advisory Group of IFCA's bi-annual symposium</li> </ul>	
<b>5N) Project CHLE</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-develop IFCA's role in Coastal Health Livelihoods Project with AIFCA's</li> <li>• Attend train the trainer event &amp; make assessment of KEIFCA resource requirement to act as a coastal node</li> </ul>	



## Structure of the Authority

### The formation of the Authority

The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 makes provision for the establishment of the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District and for the Authority for that district. The Order lays out the membership and proceedings of the Authority and makes provision in relation to the expenses of the Authority and to the reimbursement of members' expenses.

The Order states that the Authority is to consist of 21 members. The Order also makes clear the number of councillors to sit on the Authority (9) the number of "general members" or MMO appointees (10) (of which one member must be an employee of the MMO) and 2 "additional members" drawn from the Environment Agency and Natural England. The Order also lays out how the expenses of the Authority should be divided between the councils.

Relevant Council	Number of members	Percentage payment of KEIFCA levy
Essex County Council	3	43.12%
Kent County Council	3	43.12%
Medway Council	1	7.55%
Southend on Sea Borough Council	1	2.42%
Thurrock Council	1	3.79%

*Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 local councils have annually received 'New IFCA Burdens' money from Defra via the area based local government grant. This funding is intended to help KEIFCA meet its new duties as stated in MCAA 2009.*

### List of Members (\*\*Chairman, \*Vice-Chairman)

<b>**Cllr John L Lamb</b>	Southend BC	<b>Cllr Jane Fleming</b>	Essex CC
<b>Cllr Derek Crow-Brown</b>	Kent CC	<b>Cllr George Coxshall</b>	Thurrock BC
<b>Cllr Tony Hills</b>	Kent CC	<b>Cllr Simon Curry</b>	Medway BC
<b>Cllr Conrad Broadley</b>	Kent CC	<b>Mr Alex Baker</b>	NE representative
<b>Cllr Alan Goggin</b>	Essex CC	<b>Mr Justin Rowley</b>	MMO representative
<b>Cllr Michael Skeels</b>	Essex CC	<b>Ms Lindsay Faulkner</b>	EA representative
<b>*Mr P John E Nichols</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Commercial- finfish</i>	
<b>Mr Peter Wexham</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Commercial - finfish</i>	
<b>Mrs Esther Gilson</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Commercial - shellfish</i>	
<b>Mr Richard Turner</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Marine environment and recreational fishing</i>	
<b>Ms Tanya Ferry</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Marine environment and other</i>	
<b>Mr Eden Hannam</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Marine Policy</i>	
<b>Mr William East</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Recreational</i>	
<b>Mr Craig Collins</b>	MMO Appointee	<i>Recreational</i>	
<b>vacancy</b>			

# Governance

Good governance is at the heart of sound decision-making and it is because of this that KEIFCA has already adopted or is about to adopt key working documents that will aid the smooth and transparent working of the Authority (i.e. Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, register of members' interests and a policy on Members' Allowances/Expenses). As well as this, KEIFCA has formally agreed to use Kent County Council for legal, constitutional, financial and HR support, as well as one-off support on procurement and other key activities.

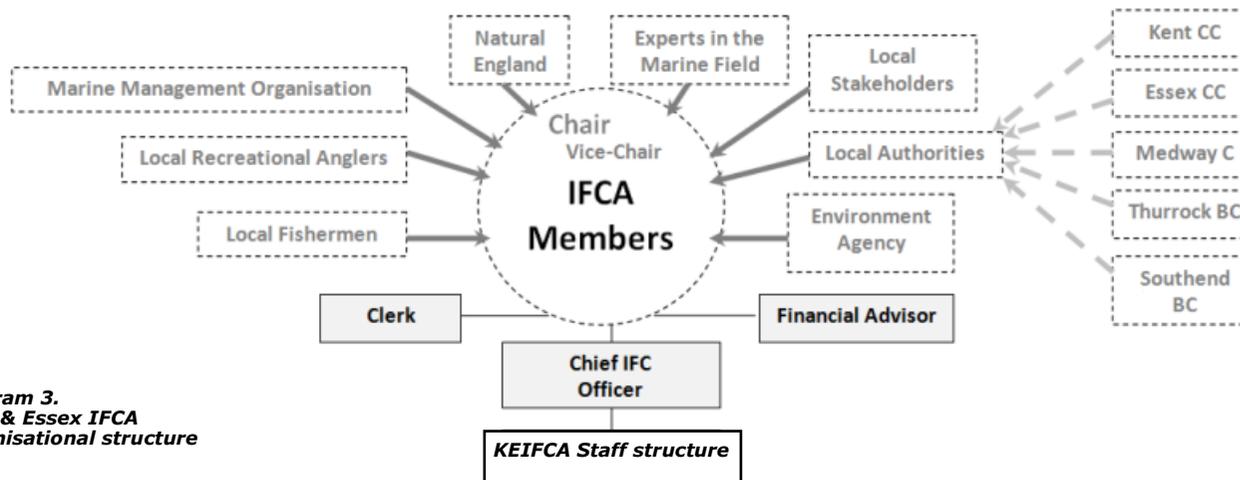


Diagram 3.  
Kent & Essex IFCA  
organisational structure

## Members

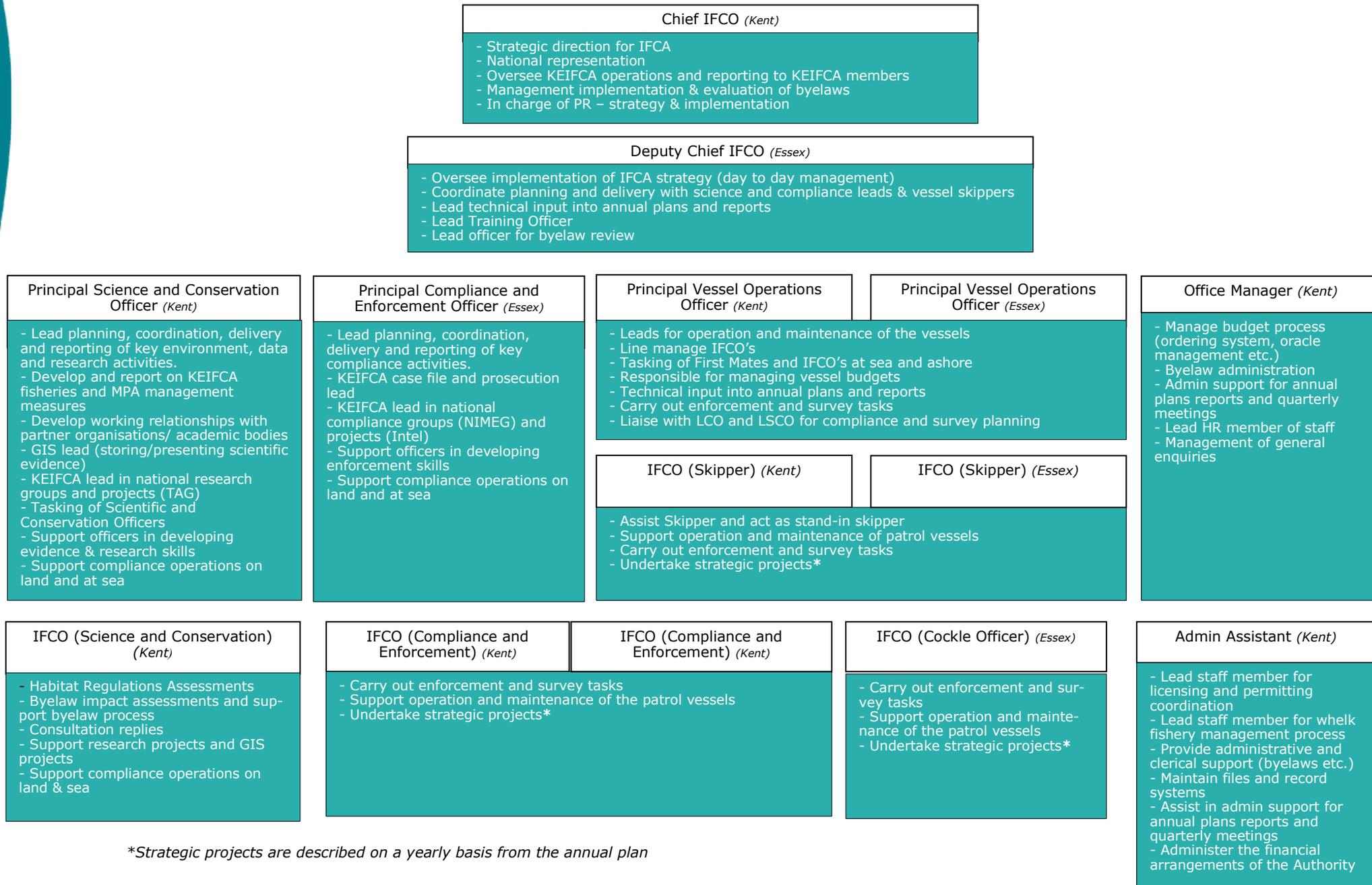
IFCA members are a vital component of helping KEIFCA deliver many of the key concepts expressed in the IFCA vision, but especially in helping to “secure the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry”.

IFCA members attend the quarterly IFCA meetings, with some members also attending specialist Technical Panel meetings where specific issues are discussed in greater detail; recommendations from these meetings are then taken forward to the next full meeting of the Authority.

The member’s role within the organisation (Diagram 3) is to decide and comment on the strategy and direction of the organisation and to make key strategic decisions (e.g. agree budget, staffing levels, stock management measures, etc.).



# Staff Structure



\*Strategic projects are described on a yearly basis from the annual plan

Diagram 4. Kent & Essex IFCA staff structure and key tasks

## Staff

The officers and administration staff implement the strategic decisions that the Authority (i.e. members) have agreed. The IFCA staff, led by the Chief IFC Officer (Diagram 4), are responsible for the ongoing operations of KEIFCA (e.g. appointing staff, setting and managing staff performance, implementing the agreed stock management measures and enforcement etc.) and reporting back to the Members on key issues and matters for discussion each quarter.

At present KEIFCA employs 13 full time staff, 1 part-time staff a part time Clerk and a part time financial advisor. In addition to this the Authority also contributes to the services of the Chair and Vice-chair. The structure and key roles of each member of staff are laid out in Diagram 4. One of the areas that KEIFCA is continuing to develop in the organisation is the ability of each officer to take on each other's roles, and expand their knowledge base so that each officer is competent in a wide spectrum of roles and duties. This approach will give KEIFCA a huge amount of flexibility in being able to deliver all of its duties and to react to events.

### **Staff performance and assessment**

KEIFCA currently apply a system used by Kent County Council (KCC) for staff performance monitoring. The system is based on a yearly review of an employee's performance using a series of objectives that are agreed between the employee's line manager and the employee. The objectives and the outputs of the employee relate back to the overall objectives in the annual plan. Dependent upon how well an employee meets, or exceeds, the targets set during this process, an employee may receive a small percentage increase related to their salary dependant on budgetary constraints and pay scale.

### **Training**

Staff continue to work hard to gain the qualifications and experience they need in order to fulfil the functions of the IFCA. A number of new staff have started with the Authority of the previous year and all are working hard to develop the core understanding, experience and knowledge related to the range of work of the IFCA.

The quarterly tasking's process (where staff report on their progress every quarter and identify new goals), has developed into a useful tool to help both staff members and senior management prioritise work streams and identify key issues.

Important training areas include developing IFC officer enforcement and seamanship skills, building on survey skills within the organisation and developing officers' ability to undertake a range of surveys and help staff expand their IT skills (including using GIS and website maintenance). KEIFCA is leading IFCA national we hope that the next year will bring better training opportunities than ever for our team.



## KEIFCA Assets & Resources

2 offices

Main office in Ramsgate, Kent  
Second office in Brightlingsea, Essex



2 patrol vessels



FPV Tamesis 12m, Brightlingsea  
FPV Nerissa 17m, Ramsgate

2 RIBs

FPV Vigilant 8m, standalone RIB  
FPR Nereus 4.5m, boarding RIB  
launched from FPV Nerissa stern ramp



4 vehicles



2 Toyota Hilux's  
2 VW Corolla's

# Stakeholder engagement, communication and consultation

## **Compliments and Complaints:**

Over the past year three formal complaints or compliments were received, these were addressed using our complaints procedure and we have retained our complaints procedure to deal with any which may occur in future. Three Freedom of Information requests were received this year. All other issues have been addressed by the Authority as they have arisen.

### **Our people**

*We recognise that we rely on our staff to work with our stakeholders in delivering KEIFCA's objectives. We will:*

- ensure our staff are trained and competent to deliver our services.
- ensure our staff treat every user of KEIFCA services as they would wish to be treated themselves, with respect, courtesy and understanding.
- train all staff to work constructively with stakeholders.

### **Reaching us**

*We will provide different ways to help people contact us and access the services they need. We will:*

- make information about KEIFCA and its services easily available.
- publish opening hours and describe how to access services.
- Keep our website updated.
- provide a welcoming, friendly environment, easily accessible to all.

### **How we communicate**

*We want to make every contact a positive experience for our stakeholders.*

*We will:*

- always listen carefully to what stakeholders and colleagues say and be polite and honest.
- give a contact name and details.
- let people know what will happen next.
- point people in the right direction if we can't help.
- provide a suitable environment and ensure confidentiality.
- write letters, emails and publications that are easy to read and understand.
- respond to letters and emails promptly and when that is not possible, we will send an acknowledgement with details of who is dealing with the matter.
- let people know if there will be a delay in responding.
- ensure answer-phone messages are clear and tell people when to expect a reply

### **Involving our stakeholders**

*We will seek to understand what our stakeholders need, and develop our services around our stakeholders' expectations. We will:*

- regularly ask stakeholders for their opinions.
- ensure that our stakeholders help shape the services we deliver.
- be honest about what we can and what we can't do.

### **Measuring how we perform**

*We want to make sure that our commitment to working closely with our stakeholders is making a difference, and we will assess our success by measuring what our stakeholders value. We will:*

- seek regular feedback on stakeholder satisfaction.
- publish details of how stakeholders can tell us about complaints, pay compliments and give us feedback and investigate all complaints thoroughly, as quickly as possible, and learn from our mistakes ([www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk)).
- train all staff in core standards of behaviour and how to interact with stakeholders.
- continue our commitment to make 100% of our services (where appropriate) available electronically.
- respond where possible to all public enquiries within 10 working days.
- issue licences and permits within 10 working days of receipt of a correctly completed form.



## **KEIFCA strategically working with partners**

### **Joined up government**

KEIFCA has worked in conjunction with the other IFCA's to develop MoUs with key public authority stakeholders. The MoUs layout in broad terms how KEIFCA will work constructively with the Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency, Natural England and Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science.

As well as the detailed MoUs the MMO, EA and NE shared objectives have been included in our annual planning process which means that the cooperation and coordination between agencies is hard wired into the system. KEIFCA is looking to build on this relationship to establish protocols of how information will flow between organisations using this mechanism.

### **Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA)**

KEIFCA played an important part in the setting up and effective running of the AIFCA's. The Association is an important national body that allows all 10 IFCA's to speak with one voice at a national level on key topics. KEIFCA see that the Association can act as an important body in helping IFCA's coordinate their actions and resources efficiently.

### **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**

KEIFCA continues to support and work through the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to help it achieve its aims:

- To improve the quality and extent of fisheries management information through better coordination and dissemination of fisheries related scientific research.
- Define and apply best practice relating to the scientific & technical functions and responsibilities of IFCA's.

### **National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG)**

KEIFCA played an important part in the establishment of NIMEG. The purpose of the group is to bring together expertise in the field of regulation and enforcement within inshore fisheries and marine conservation in order to develop and support joint working and consistency; identify and share best practice; and to promote professionalism and competence.

### **Working with national and local associations and partnerships**

KEIFCA continues to build on the current partnerships it has already developed with a wide range of organisations, ranging from fishermen's associations, wildlife trusts, coastal partnerships, harbour authorities to power stations. KEIFCA also sees the need to develop new working relationships with organisations affected by the remit of IFCA's and it is hoped that the communication strategy will help engage with these communities in a productive way. KEIFCA sits on a number of local and national management groups ranging from national enforcement working groups to local marine protected area management meetings. KEIFCA also strongly supports and contributes to the Shellfish Association of Great Britain as well as the Thames Estuary Partnership.

## Abbreviations

<b>ACIFCO</b>	Assistant Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	<b>MaCAA 2009</b>	Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009
<b>AIFCA</b>	Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities	<b>MCSS</b>	Monitoring and Control Surveillance System
<b>ASFC</b>	Association of Sea Fisheries Committees	<b>MCZ</b>	Marine Conservation Zones
<b>AA</b>	Appropriate Assessment	<b>MMO</b>	Marine Management Organisation
<b>CEFAS</b>	Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science	<b>MoU</b>	Memoranda of Understanding
<b>CFP</b>	Common Fisheries Policy	<b>MSFD</b>	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
<b>CIFCO</b>	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	<b>MPA</b>	Marine Protected Area
<b>Defra</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	<b>MSC</b>	Marine Stewardship Council
<b>EA</b>	Environment Agency	<b>MSP</b>	Marine Spatial Plans
<b>ECC</b>	Essex County Council	<b>NE</b>	Natural England
<b>EFF</b>	European Fisheries Fund	<b>NIMEG</b>	National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment	<b>nm</b>	Nautical Miles
<b>EIFCA</b>	Eastern Inshore Fishing and Conservation Authority	<b>RSA</b>	Recreational Sea Angling
<b>EMS</b>	European Marine Site	<b>RIB</b>	Rigid Inflatable Boat
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System	<b>SAC</b>	Special Area of Conservation
<b>IFCO</b>	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	<b>SBC</b>	Southend Borough Council
<b>IFCA</b>	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority		
<b>KCC</b>	Kent County Council	<b>SxIFCA</b>	Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
<b>KEIFCA</b>	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>LSCO</b>	Lead Scientific and Conservation Officer	<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Area
<b>MC</b>	Medway Council	<b>TBC</b>	Thurrock Borough Council
		<b>TLSE</b>	Test of Likely Significant Effect
<b>MCA</b>	Marine Coastguard Agency		

# Meeting our duties

The Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 states:

(s.) **178** Annual Report

**(1)** As soon as is reasonably practical after the end of each financial year, every IFC authority must prepare a report on its activities in that year.

**(2)** A report under this section must be in such form and contain such information as the Secretary of State may require.

**(3)** A report under this section must be published in such manner as the Secretary of State may require.

A copy of the Marine and Coastal Access Act is available online at: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)



## Further Copies

This document can be downloaded from:  
[www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk)

Alternatively a hard copy can be viewed at:  
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