



Inshore Fisheries and
Conservation Authority

Sea Angling Strategy

Draft

Introduction

This strategy aims to ensure that people understand how as an organisation we plan to engage with the angling sector to help us to make the right decisions for delivering our vision and how we can work with stakeholders to help enhance the angling experience within our district.

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 gives an outline of what Parliament wants IFCAs to achieve. As part of developing the role of IFCAs, a national vision has been developed, which sets out the overall aim in sustainably managing the inshore marine environment to achieve the intentions of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and wider UK and EU marine legislation.

“Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority 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”

The importance of the angling sector to our district can be seen in the composition of the Authority which includes two angling experts on the Authority. In addition to this an IFC officer has been appointed specific duties to promote and report on the progress of objectives identified in this strategy. In this way KEIFCA has assigned key resources to understand the social, environmental and economic benefits of the angling sector in the district, with a view to include this perspective when making management decisions.

Understanding the environment into which we are engaging is important, as the marine sector is comprised of commercial, recreational, and public interests that can sometimes have conflicting needs and requirements. KEIFCA will be looking to work closely with local communities as well as other governmental and non-governmental organisations to help promote the issues and priorities identified by the Authority. This strategy has been developed internally by KEIFCA officers and members and it is hoped that this will form a starting point for a discussion with anglers, angling groups and local angling businesses.

As an organisation KEIFCA has developed a number of strategy documents (The Way Forward – Our long term approach to fisheries and conservation management, KEIFCA research strategy, KEIFCA Communication Strategy and our Enforcement Risk Register), these documents outline KEIFCA's approach to key issues to all sectors. The angling strategy acts to highlight some of these key approaches that might affect the angling sector and to identify issues and actions that are specific to the angling sector. By developing and delivering aspects of this strategy we recognise the importance of engagement with anglers, that it underpins our high level strategies, and that building effective engagement will help us develop and deliver many of the KEIFCA core objectives:

- Review of byelaws
- Implement and review the KEIFCA enforcement plan and our risk based approach
- Implement and review the KEIFCA research plans
- Run an effective Authority that successfully balances social, environmental and economic needs

It is hoped that this document will help lay the foundation for a long term productive relationship between the angling sector and KEIFCA. Once complete and approved, we can work towards achieving the objectives of the strategy by developing an Angling Plan. This will form the operational part of the strategy, but also serves as a useful evaluation tool in its own right.

The Angling Sector Landscape

Sea Angling represents a large and diverse community of individuals, clubs and businesses all of which have the potential to give significant input and effect on the management of marine resources within the district. With the number of sea anglers estimated as being in excess of 40,000 within the Kent and Essex IFCA (KEIFCA) district and many more anglers travelling into the area from other parts of the country, sea angling is an important part of inshore sea fisheries management. Within the district, there are a number of key piers, beaches and harbours where shore-based angling is enjoyed. In addition to this there is also a well distributed network of charter boats for angling at sea. It is therefore important to understand that sea angling in the district is an important activity recreationally but also as a source of income to many individuals as well.

While angling can have as much of a significant impact on coastal marine environments as commercial fishing, a report into the economic value of Recreational Sea Angling was commissioned from Drew Associates by DEFRA. Published in July 2004, it calculated that the direct spend by recreational sea anglers in England & Wales amounted to £538 million and the total worth of the sector could be some £1.3 billion.

Charter Boats

Commercial charter boat numbers have grown substantially over the last decade in our district and current levels are around 65. Charter boats typically take out groups of anglers (5-10) for day trips at sea. Charter boats will usually set out to target a particular catch, either denoted by the time of year, the persons chartering the vessel or as a suggestion by the skipper. In each case, the skipper will have a set number of known marks where they believe the best chances of successful catches will be found. It is this knowledge and experience from the skipper as well as the facilities that anglers are paying for.

Private Boats

Due to the large number of ports and marinas (around 25 significant sites along the Kent and Essex coastline), many keen anglers living in and around the counties of Kent and Essex are able to own and take private boats out for a day of fishing. As most small private boats are capable of taking between 2-5 people on board, many with 2+ rods each, private boats must be considered as an important part of the sector for this strategy.

Shore Anglers

As is common all around the British Isles, shore based anglers are the most numerous in the sea angling sector. This group of anglers includes individuals who go fishing 3 or more times a week or persons who only go 1 or 2 times per year. However, due to their large numbers, shore anglers are believed to be responsible for the largest monetary contribution to the economy from the angling sector and have been proven to have a significant effect on local economies when angling events are held around the coast.

Angling Businesses

Businesses centred on the angling sector involve more than just fishing tackle shops. They also include coastal installations such as Piers where many anglers pay to have access to known fishing marks. All such business avenues employ a considerable number of people and therefore have an important effect on local communities.

Bait such as lugworm and ragworm, is dug and supplied to much of the East and South from Kent and Essex estuaries, the proceeds from which go back into the local economy through tackle shops and bait suppliers.

Our Approach

One of the core principles of developing this strategy was to produce a document that was the starting point for future relationships with all the different parts of the angling sector. In this way it is hoped that this document can be built on and refined as more people assess and comment on its principles. It is in this light that we wanted to develop a core set of principles that we could work to and evolve over time. We are aware that there have been numerous different angling strategies and papers developed by a range of organisations and it is on this landscape that we need to raise confidence in people that ideas developed in this document will be taken forward. The starting point for our approach is to develop a 3 part approach:

- To inform
- To enforce
- To engage

To Inform

We are a new organisation, unknown to some, a variation on the old SFC to others, but few understand or appreciate the extent of our remit. It is in this climate that we must seek to make ourselves known, to send out our message, and to ensure that the stakeholders not only listen to our message but hopefully engage with us and take part in informing our future management policies. The communication strategy highlights our primary message and focuses our efforts on promoting who KEIFCA are and what KEIFCA does.

Primary message:

- Who are KEIFCA, what are we responsible for, and what do we do?

Other key messages were also identified in the communication strategy:

- The legislation KEIFCA enforces and how it is enforced.
- That the Authority is managed in a transparent and responsible way and it is working towards the DEFRA guidance and success criteria.
- Information regarding the district and the activities that take place within it (commercial fishing, recreational fishing, Marine Protected Areas etc).
- Information on fish stocks and fisheries and conservation management within the district (general and current).

An effort has been made to include and address angling issues in producing KEIFCA's general documentation (leaflets, posters, e-bulletins and website) and as KEIFCA further develops its communication resources more specialised angling documentation can be produced. KEIFCA officers will undertake training with their KEIFCA angling representatives to deliver our message in a constructive way.

Key objectives:

- KEIFCA will raise its profile with the objective of including anglers in the decision making process. This will be facilitated by the creation of a feedback loop of communication between KEIFCA and the sea angling community.
- For this project to progress quickly and reach the maximum number of anglers, it is believed that angling clubs and charter businesses as well as tackle shops should be the primary target for stakeholder involvement from the start.

Priorities Actions:

Gather contact information of clubs, businesses and individuals

Current contact information held by KEIFCA and Authority members regarding the angling sector is patchy and does not cover all the stakeholders which the IFCA wishes to be in contact with. Therefore up to date contact information will be collected by KEIFC officers to will create a network, with KEIFCA at the centre and able to communicate with a wider audience than is currently possible. From the contact list, KEIFCA will be able to distribute information that we publish to anglers by email which for information confidentiality reasons would be only accessible to the KEIFCA officers and Authority members.

Develop the KEIFCA website to incorporate sea angling

At present the KEIFCA website does not contain any information targeting the angling sector. As the IFCA continues to raise its public profile it is important that the website reflects the interest which it has with angling activity in the district. As it develops, it will become as a source of information and a reliable contact point for anglers to use regarding any issues they may have which are of relevance to KEIFCA.

Attend Stakeholder meeting, harbour days, angling festivals and events

Such events are an opportunity for officers to have formal and informal meetings with angling stakeholders to update them on the development of projects and consultations. Attendance of these events will also allow anglers to meet officers where they can be a source of information and provide face to face interaction with interested anglers. The KEIFCA annual plan expresses the need to increase the broadness of stakeholder involvement in the district. Increased interaction and involvement with the sea angling sector is hoped to do exactly this.

Produce sea angling educational materials/packs

As part of KEIFCA's strategy to inform the sea angling sector and working with the communications strategy, information material and learning packs will be produced with biological and environmental information on important species relating to angling in the district and the habitats that they can be found in. It is often reported to IFCA officers that other users of the marine environment other than commercial vessels are not aware of gear marking. Therefore basic information on how to identify fishing gears is expected to be useful for many recreational anglers. Any information included in materials produced by KEIFCA will be decided through development meetings with experienced persons. The educational material will aim to enrich the experience for anglers by providing new anglers with something physical which they can take away from a day of angling regardless of what they were able to catch.

To Enforce

KEIFCA has the duty to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way in its district, to this end a range of European, national, and local (byelaws) management measures and legislation are already in place. The different tiers of regulation reflects the need to manage individual fin fish and shellfish stocks on different spatial scales, and also reflects the fact that different sectors access stocks in different ways. Enforcing current legislation that is applicable to anglers is seen as a key part of KEIFCAs delivering its duties. Although the impact of anglers on fish stocks is regarded by many observers as small, inspecting anglers catches to make sure they are compliant with minimum size regulations can be an important management action in specific instances. Much of the angling sector support the promotion and enforcement of minimum sizes and although KEIFCA officers would primarily look to try and educate and work with stakeholders to achieve compliance, KEIFCA officers will enforce the current legislation if offences are found.

Key objectives:

- KEIFCA aim to develop a range of educational enforcement packages and learning materials for anglers that will be supported by our website and also be used by IFC Officers and the Authority, to encourage willing compliance with conservation measures, byelaws and EU regulations.
- Enforcing management measures is seen as a key part of helping to deliver a sustainable fisheries management plan.

Priority Actions:

Produce minimum size boards for key high activity angling sites/marks in the district

Local knowledge combined with evidence from the Angling 2012 survey shows that key angling sites and marks in our district attract a disproportionately high number of anglers and that a wide range of different nationalities and ethnic groups use them. Multilingual fish minimum size notice boards would help inform all anglers of the minimum sizes required to retain fish caught. Examples of key specific high activity locations where boards could be installed include: Walton Pier, Clacton Pier, Southend Pier, Herne Bay, Ramsgate, Deal, Dover and Dungeness.

Produce easy to use minimum size reference material (minimum sizes credit card and minimum size sticker)

In an effort to make it easier for anglers to remember and refer to the minimum sizes used in our district it is suggested that efforts are made to produce this key information in a more angler friendly format. Successful formats used by other organisations include a laminated minimum size wallet sized card and minimum size stickers that can be placed on the wheel house of boats or on fishing tackle boxes. These resources can be produced relatively simply at low cost and can be handed out to anglers during inspections or when officers are attending public event as well as sent to clubs, charter boats and individuals who request them.

Assign 10 – 30 angling specific patrol days (including shore and sea patrols)

The IFCA must still be seen as an active enforcement body that has the power by warrant to enforce management plans for sustainable use of the marine environment by the angling sector. While out on sea patrols targeting commercial fishing activity along the coast, officers are also required to undertake enforcement of byelaws aboard charter and pleasure vessels which are partaking in angling. This will provide opportunities for added interaction with anglers away from the shore. Officers out on patrol will also be asked to record angling effort with rod counts per person and if possible completion of a boat angling survey with the anglers.

To Engage

One of the key aspects of our strategy is to develop a two way dialog with our local communities and stakeholders, where as far as possible the angling sector is involved in the process of developing future KEIFCA fisheries management policy. The first starting point for this discussion is to develop with the angling sector a long term strategy that identifies key approaches and actions. It is hoped that this document can be used as a starting point for this process and as a foundation for a productive long term relationship.

A key part of engaging with the angling sector is to include this sector in the reviewing of our current byelaws and developing new KEIFCA byelaws. The Authority has agreed to prioritise 18 key species and develop a fisheries management plan for each one. The management plans will review the current biological and stock information as well as compile key social and economic data

for each species. KEIFCA then hope to engage the angling sector as well as other key stakeholders in helping to fill in any key gaps in the local knowledge that underpin the management plans. As part of this process stakeholders will also be asked to help identify the key threats or issues that might hinder the sustainable exploitation of the stock or habitat and to help rank and prioritise the impacts and likelihoods of these risks. KEIFCA will then work with stakeholders to help prioritise which actions should take place with which stocks and in which order. KEIFCA will look to local communities to help develop solutions to these issues.

The management plans will then be used as the starting point to develop KEIFCA's fisheries policy for each stock and help identify and evaluate any future non-regulatory or regulatory management measures for each species and in this way KEIFCA will review its byelaws. Communities and stakeholders thus have a unique opportunity to help shape these plans and in doing so the plans will be made more effective (for more information please read KEIFCA's *The Way Forward – Our long term approach to fisheries and conservation management*).

One of the challenges facing inshore managers is that of the trans-boundary nature of many (but not all) of the marine fisheries resources which are only within the District from time to time. Thus the IFCA may contribute to but not have full control over the management of many stocks. Regulation by the KEIFCA must be consistent with The Common Fisheries Policy and the Directives of the European Union, but KEIFCA may influence policy through engagement.

Key objectives:

- An information/data resource for open use by the angling community will be developed, which can also be used in conjunction with the 'Inform the Future' project for stock management decision making.
- Anglers will be included as stakeholders in the development and evaluation of species management plans. They will subsequently be included in developing management options for key stocks based on the management plans produced.
- The production of voluntary codes of conduct will be used as a management starting point for key species in the district.

Priority Actions:

Continue with survey work initiated by CEFAS in Sea Angling 2012 Project

In 2012, KEIFCA conducted survey work on behalf of CEFAS in the district as part of the Sea Angling 2012 project. This has proved to be an important source of information for our officers and the IFCA with regards to angling activity in the district and has highlighted the key importance of sea angling. KEIFCA will therefore look to continue this work with a series of similar surveys which will record information on fishing activity for shore anglers as well as anglers out on boats (private or charter). The information from these surveys will help build a detailed picture of sea angling in the district, and is hoped will help to identify any future actions which KEIFCA need to take. A key question which will be asked to anglers at the end of surveys is "What would be the one thing you would like to see done to improve your Angling experience?"

Produce an open access data system for anglers to report into and retrieve information on the sector in the district

A new automated database which records angling activity entered from surveys completed by anglers and survey information collected by IFC officer will be created. This database will form the primary source of information to produce statistics on angling in the district including graphical representations showing abundance of catches, angling hot spots and fishing effort. The data will be anonymous and transparent allowing the general public to use it for their own purposes. In the long term the database will be used to produce quarterly summaries of fishing effort and catches which will be analysed to show any long term trends which can be reviewed over a number of years and used to inform management decisions by the Authority.

Develop a voluntary code of conduct with anglers, for anglers

Many sea anglers already use a code of conduct or set of minimum sizes which have been adopted from angling clubs and associations in the district and nationally. However these vary considerably and are often different from the legal minimum landing sizes which the IFCA enforce. The production of a voluntary code of conduct used by all sea anglers in the KEIFCA district is hoped will result in less confusion on which minimum sizes anglers should use.

It is important for more anglers in the district to know that KEIFCA has replaced the old Sea Fisheries Committee and that officers should be the first port of call with any issues they wish to raise with regards to the management of the inshore fisheries and the sea angling sector. Therefore in conjunction with the communications strategy, the following actions in Table 1 will need to be taken to address the above priorities.

Resources

Kent and Essex IFCA have 11 warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) supported by 3 administration staff, as well as two volunteer angling experts on the Authority who have been involved with the production of this strategy document from the beginning.

At the officer's disposal for enforcement and survey work are two Fisheries Patrol Vessels (FPVs), each with its own RIB. The FPV "Ken Green" is based in Ramsgate, while FPV "Tamesis" is based in Brightlingsea. The IFCA also has two vehicles for officers to use on shore patrols which are fully marked up with KEIFCA logo and contact details for anglers to contact us regarding fisheries and angler matters.

As officers will be spending considerably more time with recreation anglers, it has been arranged that a training package will be produced with the authority's two volunteer angling experts Mr Michael Sharp and Mr Leon Roskilly for officers to learn from.