



Agenda Item B4

Success Criteria: 4,5 and 6

By: Chief IFC Officer

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation
Authority – 4 September 2014

Subject: **SEA BASS MANAGEMENT**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: to provide background on the management of sea bass and the options available to the Authority to assist in future management of stocks

Background

An email was received from the Common Fisheries Policy team at DEFRA on 26 June 2013 requesting advice from IFCAs concerning possible future management measures for sea bass. Having spoken to the Common Fisheries Policy team they were anxious to receive opinion on the usefulness and the impact of these measures, so they could best inform the Government's policy opinion by 15 July 2013. Both KEIFCA and the Association of IFCAs fed into this response and the matter was discussed at the September 5th 2013 quarterly meeting.

Since sending the response last year the matter has been discussed in depth at the European level with sea bass management issues being summarised in the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – 46th Plenary Meeting Report (**Appendix 1**). Current stock evidence suggests that the stock is in decline and additional management measures are required.

Key points

- Bass is a key inshore fishery not just for KEIFCA but for most of the IFCAs around England.

- Sea bass stocks have a significant range moving far outside KEIFCA district, although evidence does indicate that adults return to spawning grounds.
- Sea bass is a key fin fish species to commercial netters and trawlers as well as the angling community.
- Under section 153 2(a) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 IFCAs should 'seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way'.
- DEFRA themselves have not set out any clear plans or timelines to manage this stock but are working constructively through the EU fisheries management system. As after a year there are few clear proposed management measures or time line of introduction of measures KEIFCA has been asked to introduce legislation to protect bass stocks (**Appendix 2**).
- As with any trans-boundary fish stock introducing fisheries management measures within the KEIFCA district could help provide some protection, however a coordinated response at a regional and national level would be likely to have considerably more success.

Members are also asked to consider the comments made by Mr Leon Roskilly attached at **Appendix 3** on this subject.

Options available to the Authority

1. Keep a watching brief and support, encourage DEFRA's national and international approach to sea bass management.
2. Work with and through the Association of IFCAs to promote sea bass management and develop and coordinate a possible IFCA lead approach
3. To work on a regional basis with our neighbouring IFCAs to develop combined management sea bass management approach
4. For KEIFCA to develop a sea bass management approach and develop its own legislation.

The Authority are asked to **DISCUSS** the suggested options and make **RECOMMENDATIONS**.