



Agenda Item B5

Success criteria: 2,3,4,5 & 6

By: Chief IFC Officer

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

Subject: **MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: to provide an update on discussions held with Defra and the meeting held on 25 July 2014 of the MPA Working Group

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***General MPA Update***

Since the last Authority meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> May discussions have taken place with DEFRA as to how KEIFCA and the Association of IFCAs can develop more detailed plans that help develop an integrated approach to management across the MPA network. The four KEIFCA high risk-high priority gear/ feature interactions have been discussed with DEFRA and, in general, DEFRA support a prioritised approach to addressing this work stream. More detailed proposals were requested by DEFRA in early June and discussions are ongoing as to how KEIFCA's proposals will meet national targets and expectations. Further discussions are planned and progress will be reported back to the Authority. It is hoped that the resolution of these discussions will then help officers finalise the KEIFCA byelaw review process documents and that hopefully papers can be put to the Authority at the next meeting.

In addition to integrating the Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and the European Marine Sites (EMS) work streams, a series of Tranche 2 MCZ meetings have been held by DEFRA to discuss the proposed Swale MCZ site and the Dover to Deal and Dover to Folkestone MCZ sites. KEIFCA officers attended both meetings and supplied evidence when available. The consultation documents for the Tranche 2 sites are expected to be produced in the near future.

### ***Screening progress***

The Habitats Directive require screening of all activities within EMS prior to them taking place. This requires KEIFCA to carry out Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA) of all fishing activities within EMS in our district. To carry out an HRA two processes are required, the first step by assessing for potential impacts that might be significant (Test of Likely Significant Effect (TLSE)) and the second step by an in-depth assessment (Appropriate Assessment). TLSEs filter any plan or project to uncover which activities require further assessment by examining if any activity will have a significant effect on any feature in an EMS.

Any gear feature interaction that fails an LSE test will undergo an in-depth appropriate assessment. This is to be undertaken on a prioritised basis and involves working with Natural England to fill in the data gaps that were currently present in the EMS.

To date, 530 interactions between EMS features and fishing activities have been assessed across the KEIFCA district producing approximately 170 TLSEs. These have focused on Special Area of Conservation (SAC) features but the process has now moved to assessing Special Protected Areas (SPA) features. It is estimated that 18 appropriate assessments will be required.

### ***MPA working group actions***

The minutes of the working group are shown as **Appendix 1**. The recommendations of the Group are:

- the IFCA should contact Defra to ask that they attend the next meeting so that the Group could be informed as to how the wider MPA process is implemented and fits in with national strategy;
- the IFCA to write to Defra to enquire on the progress of the Hythe Bay site;
- the key gear/feature interactions discussed within the group and the outline management plans be given priority;
- the sites at Folkestone Pomerania MCZ, Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne MCZ, Essex Estuaries SAC and Hythe Bay MCZ be given priority by the IFCA in the developing of management plans to maintain and recover the habitats and features of the sites considering the gear/feature interactions upon them;
- that the two sites in Dover be combined with Folkestone Pomerania MCZ and Hythe Bay MCZ when considering management plans; and
- the next meeting should be held in November 2014 in Folkestone to discuss in more detail the Folkestone Pomerania MCZ site as well as management of the proposed Dover to Deal and Dover to Folkestone MCZ sites (Tranche 2) and Hythe Bay MCZ site (Tranche 3). Fishermen and Stakeholders to be invited to attend the first part of the meeting, following which the Group would discuss matters by itself.

The proposed next meeting date of the working group will be the Tuesday 4 November 2014 at the Pleydell room at The Best Western Clifton Hotel in Folkestone beginning at 11am.

The Authority is asked to **NOTE** the information provided and **APPROVE** the recommendations of the MPA Working Group