



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Dear IFCA Chairmen/IFCA Authority Members,

Recent discussions involving Defra, the Association of IFCAs and IFCA Chief Officers have suggested that it would be useful if I wrote to you all with an update on current work to put in place fisheries management measures in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Since I took on responsibility for Defra's work on MPAs a few months ago, I have been made aware of the impressive work already carried out by IFCAs to put in place measures for 'high risk' sites. I should reiterate Defra's thanks to the IFCAs for their cooperation on this work.

I am also grateful for the IFCAs' continued commitment to the next phase of this shared project, which involves development and fine tuning of a plan for delivering management measures for the remaining European Marine Sites, and for the first tranche of Marine Conservation Zones. We in Defra recognise that this work is not only vital for Defra, but also for IFCAs in delivering their statutory conservation obligations under the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the Habitats Regulations.

The partnership approach employed to date is a good basis for enabling us all to complete the next phase of this work by the deadline of end of 2016. To reinforce this, and to ensure that any problems are identified quickly, the Project Board overseeing this work has developed an overall timeline for the work and is asking all project partners to report on progress at each Project Board meeting. For the IFCAs, it will be particularly helpful to have an indication of when assessments of fishing

activities against site conservation objectives are planned to be completed, and when options for management measures will be considered and implemented. We of course understand that initial plans may change as more detail becomes available during the project.

The IFCA's have indicated that there may be a significant number of byelaws that need to be introduced towards the latter half of 2016, which will require sign off by the Defra Secretary of State. To help that process, it would be useful if IFCA's could aim to submit these to Defra by 30 September 2016, and in some cases it may be necessary to submit measures earlier. Early notification, at least 3 months beforehand, of when each IFCA plans to submit byelaws would assist our own planning and that of other project partners, as would informing us when stakeholder engagement or pre-consultation of management measures start.

Clearly, taking forward this work alongside IFCA's other responsibilities is a challenge, which is why Defra has provided an additional £300k to support the IFCA's' MPA work in 2015/16. We are grateful for the constructive proposals put forward by IFCA's for how these resources might be used and will be notifying individual IFCA's of the allocation of this funding shortly.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my thanks for the work that IFCA's have already carried out. We in Defra look forward to continuing our work with you on this project and, for my part, I hope to meet with you further and visit more IFCA's over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Clorley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

John Clorley (on behalf of Terence Illott)

Chair of Fisheries in Marine Protected Areas Project Board