



Agenda Item B5

Success criteria 5

By: Chief Fishery Officer

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – 4 September 2015

Subject: KEIFCA Strategic Evidence Plan

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: provide an overview of research projects undertaken since 2011 and discuss the need for the creation of a strategic plan

Introduction

IFCAs are small multi-functional organisations that combine a range of management, enforcement and evidence gathering duties, and as such work is rarely segmented (e.g. when an IFCA vessel undertakes a survey it still gathers enforcement data and can act if an offence is seen). Due to the integrated nature of our work the KEIFCA annual plan is used as the key planning and operational document where actions and priorities under a range of headings including evidence gathering can be agreed in context. The KEIFCA strategic documents help identify wider and longer term approaches and priorities for the organisation, and help in identifying strategic asset needs, skill requirements and future areas of opportunity as well as help explain our role to others and maximise the coordination of our resources. As the four year IFCA cycle has come to an end, and new budgets and priorities (IFCA success criteria) are being established it would seem timely to review those documents.

Table of research projects carried out to date (Projects since becoming an IFCA*)

Ongoing (core duties)					
	When	Key Equipment/resource	Approx officer days	Evidence used for	Partners in the project
Cockle Survey – Inside the Regulating Order (licence fishery)	4 surveys a year (April, June, September, December)	Quad bikes, vessel Grab	43	Setting TAC in Regulating Order cockle fishery	
Cockle Survey – Outside the Regulating Order (permit fishery)	April (3 weeks)	Vessel Grab	50	Setting TAC in permit cockle fishery	
Blackwater, Colne, Crouch and Roach MCZ oyster survey – annual*	September (1 week)	Vessel Dredge	32	Assess oyster stocks against MCZ conservation objectives	Natural England
Medway WFD small fish survey*	April – June	Work with EA equipment	10	Data used for bass stock assessment and KEIFCA nursery area closure	EA, CEFAS, ROFF
Informing the future – fishermen’s questionnaire*	All year	Liaison officer	5	Develop commercial fishing baseline	Commercial fishermen
Fishing Activity Mapping	All year	All patrol vessels GIS support	All officers, all days at sea	Spatial baseline of fishing activity levels in the district	
Annual whelk permit questionnaire*	December	Admin support	3	Inform Authority when deciding whelk stock management measures	Commercial fishermen
Analysis of whelk catch return data	All year	Admin support	4	Inform Authority when deciding whelk stock management measures	Commercial fishermen

Medium term						
	When	Key Equipment/resource	Approx officer days	Evidence used for	Partners in the project	Funding contribution from partners
Sponsoring Oyster PhD*	2015 - 2019	Vessel Snr Officer support	40	Help inform future Oyster MCZ management	Essex University Essex Wildlife Trust Local	KEIFCA £9K Grant £90K (over 3 years)

				<i>measure s</i>	<i>fisherme n</i>	
<i>Blackwater, Colne, Crouch and Roach MCZ – harrowing trials*</i>	<i>June 2015 June 2016 June 2017</i>	<i>Vessel Grab Underwater video camera</i>	<i>46 per year</i>	<i>Help inform future Oyster MCZ manage ment measure s</i>	<i>Local fisherme n, Essex Universit y Essex Wildlife Trust E-NORI</i>	

One-off projects						
	When	Key Equipment/ resource	Approx . officer days	Evidence used for	Partners in the project	Funding contribut ion from partners
<i>Red Throated Diver survey*</i>	<i>Winter 2011/12 Winter 2012/13</i>	<i>Vessel ID training</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>Assess the impact of gill netting on Red Throated Divers for EMS</i>	<i>Natural England</i>	<i>£20K (Natural England)</i>
<i>Whelk pot experiments*</i>	<i>Autumn 2012- 2013</i>	<i>Vessel Pots Riddle</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Evidence to set measure s in whelk permit byelaw</i>	<i>CEFAS, Sussex IFCA, local fisherme n</i>	<i>£18K (CEFAS)</i>
<i>D. vex survey*</i>	<i>Spring 2012</i>	<i>Vessel Underwater video camera</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>Evidence to inform NE invasive species plans</i>	<i>Natural England, CEFAS, EA</i>	<i>£10K (Natural England)</i>
<i>Angling 2012*</i>	<i>All 2012</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>Evidence to inform national angling policy</i>	<i>DEFRA, CEFAS</i>	<i>£20K (CEFAS)</i>
<i>Hythe Bay megafauna/ sediment size survey*</i>	<i>Summer 2013</i>	<i>Vessel Grab Underwater video camera</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>Evidence to inform Hythe Bay MCZ manage ment decision s</i>	<i>DEFRA</i>	<i>£17K (DEFRA)</i>
<i>Blackwater, Colne, Crouch and Roach MCZ oyster survey – whole site*</i>	<i>Summer 2014</i>	<i>Vessel Dredge Underwater video camera</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>Evidence to inform MCZ conserva</i>	<i>Natural England</i>	<i>£10K (Natural England)</i>

				<i>tion objectives/ management decisions</i>		
Whelk MSc. Assessing the genetic similarities between stocks in the district*	2014/15	Vessel Pots Riddle	20	Evidence used to set Whelk permit management	Queen Mary University, London	MSc student self funded, plus funding for laboratory analyses from Queen Mary University

Why Create a Strategic Plan?

- Helps provide Authority members and the wider community with the 'big picture' and creates a common understanding of the goals of the IFCA.
- Aligns the resources of KEIFCA to the most beneficial work streams.
- The plan helps clarify what the IFCA wants to achieve and how to go about achieving it, helping frame future annual plans.

Focus of new plan

As KEIFCA is a small responsive organisation, in developing any plan there is a strong need to remain flexible to changing and emerging demands. The plan therefore needs to outline a strategic vision for collating evidence, conducting research and developing management whilst being adaptable enough to ensure that our statutory duties are met. One of the most useful ideas utilised by Defra and other IFCAs in their equivalent plans is to focus the plan on gathering key evidence to aid the Authority in its decision making. Including the term evidence in the title of the plan would clearly help indicate the reason and the remit of the work and would strongly imply its purpose in informing KEIFCA actions and in developing impact assessments for byelaws.

After four years as an organisation we now have a far greater understanding of our niche within the research and evidence community (CEFAS, MMO, NE, EA, fishermen, NGOs (Wildlife Trusts, Marine Conservation Society etc.)) and we have a clearer idea of what projects we can do well, efficiently and fit into our flexible approach and what does not fit into this model. In general the projects that have worked well are those where we can maximise our sea going resource and add value through our local knowledge/ contacts and applied scientific skills. We have found habitat mapping ourselves challenging as the costs for particle size and species analysis are usually prohibitive (£400 – 600 per grab sample). As an organisation we have started to build up an expertise in underwater

camera and video work although this can be difficult in our district because of the low water visibility, and we have had to develop ways to work around this limitation. In 2013 and 2014 all the IFCAs joined together to buy shared research survey equipment using funding from Defra. The new pieces of research equipment including side scan sonar and underwater cameras are now being used around the country and will give all IFCAs a far greater ability to collect evidence, especially for MPAs.

Objectives of the plan

- Match our strengths with opportunities
- Cultivate broad research partnerships and promote coordinated, collaborative research with community and national partners
- Identify the best opportunities for funding and maximise KEIFCA evidence/research spend.
- Support the recruitment, training, and retention of highly qualified staff, and ensure that such individuals are able to access the resources required to undertake their role
- Encourage effective communication and dissemination of research results, emphasizing the importance of knowledge transfer and collaborative research with community partners

Research and Evidence Themes

- Theme 1: Marine Protected Areas
 - Continue with oyster assessment and regeneration work
 - Work with others to develop better evidence bases for MPA sites
 - Work with partners to assess impact of management measures
- Theme 2: Sustainable Fisheries
 - Continue to undertake shellfish stock surveys
 - Support finfish surveys
 - Work with partners to develop stock models to help make informed management decisions
- Theme 3: Access to Information and Development of Evidence
 - Continue to work with fishermen to develop low cost methods of utilising local knowledge
 - KEIFCA Data strategy and MEDIN
 - Standard Operation Procedures

- Continue developing GIS capability
- Fishing Activity Mapping

Project evaluation criteria

Since becoming an IFCA we have slowly taken on more ongoing work streams. Whilst maintaining long-term data sets is important, it does mean that we have less and less time to undertake ad-hoc projects. Whilst we always will try and be open to opportunities, developing a project evaluation criteria might help in prioritising new projects and maximising our limited resource. At present the majority of our research capability from April to the end of September is already committed to current projects, although we will always try and help if possible (the strategic plan would explain this in more detail).

Possible project evaluation criteria

- Does the project help KEIFCA deliver its statutory duties?
- Will the project develop key evidence for either one of the 18 priority species or help further the conservation objectives of an MPA?
- Have we got the time and resource available, at the time of year required to undertake this work?
- Is a significant proportion of the project based in the district? / Will the outcomes of the project help work in the district?
- Does the project match our organisational skills and resources?
- Would the project represent the best value for money for KEIFCA?
- Would the project develop evidence that would be used directly in management?
- Does the project have support from stakeholders?

Members are asked to **discuss** the proposal and make **recommendations**