

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

By: Chief IFCO and Lead Scientific and Conservation Officer

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority –  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Subject: **An update on the KEIFCA whelk fishery management.**

Classification Unrestricted

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Summary: To report suggesting the process for the 3 yearly review of the Technical Permit Requirements for the KEIFCA whelk permit byelaw.

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## 1. **Background**

In November 2011 KEIFCA introduced an emergency byelaw limiting the number of whelk pots that could be used in the district to 300. The introduction of the emergency legislation was in response to the dramatic increase in fishing effort as well as the scientific evidence that the life history of whelks made them a prime candidate for overfishing. On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013 the Authority made a flexible whelk permit byelaw that allowed the number of whelk pots, the riddle gap size and the number and size of escape holes to be periodically reviewed. In April 2013 the byelaw was signed by the Secretary of State and permits were issued under the new legislation.

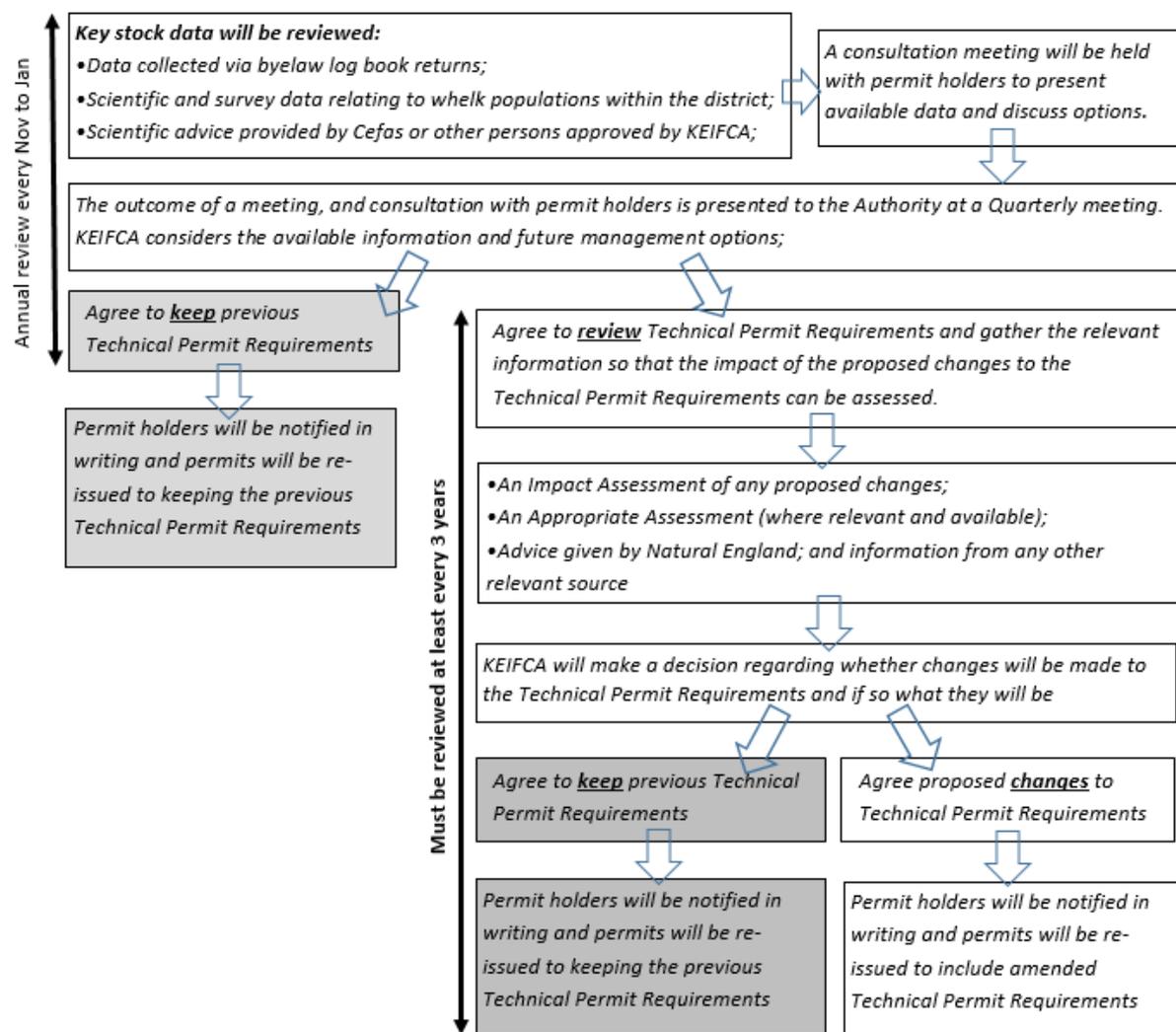
Many of the principles of the new byelaw replicate some of the best practice that has been developed in the Thames cockle fishery, by trying to engage with fishermen and involve them as much as possible in the management process. Since 2013 KEIFCA has gathered evidence from the fishing community (annual survey) and scientists (working with CEFAS and local universities) to review the management measures for this fishery using the wording in the byelaw and following the review process agreed by the Authority in 2014 (see Fig. 1).

## 2. **Proposed review process**

Following this process and the requirement for a three year review explicitly stated in the byelaw, it is proposed that a technical panel meeting would be held on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (11am-3pm at Gravesend) to review the current evidence regarding the whelk stocks in the district and make recommendations for the January 2016 Authority meeting. It is proposed that whelk permit holders and producers would be invited to the meeting as well as representatives from CEFAS, and other IFCAs. The first half of the meeting would aim to summarise our current understanding of whelk biology, stock

structure and fishing practices regionally and nationally and the second half would review the current management measures, with the view to possibly making short term and long term management measure recommendations. One option that would also be discussed would be the value in producing a simple 3 year management plan that would clearly describe the management aims and approach to the regulation of the fishery.

**Recommendation:** To hold a Technical Panel meeting to review the current evidence regarding the whelk stocks in the district and make recommendations.



**Fig. 1** The key steps in the KEIFCA whelk permit byelaw Technical Permit Requirements review process (agreed January 2014).