

Joint KEIFCA and EA Agreement

Enforcement

Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (Section 260), Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 and Environment Act 1995, KEIFCA and EA have the power to enter into agreements and delegate some functions to other regulators or enforcement agencies (i.e. cross-warrant). Using these powers, KEIFCA and EA have the potential to cooperate and improve the enforcement network within the River Medway.

Aims

- Cross-warranted KEIFCA and EA Officers
- Joint sea and shore based patrols
- Knowledge sharing during training and sea patrols.

Resources

KEIFCA	EA
2 officer days (Two Lead Enforcement Officers running training day)	
1 officer day per Enforcement Officer for training	
Joint sea patrol aboard KEIFCA and EA patrol vessel	
Joint shore patrols in marked vehicles	

Outcomes

Current high risk activities in estuaries involve recreational fishers angling, netting and trapping, with high risk species being bass, eels and migratory salmonids. Through collaboration, the time spent targeting high risk activities can be increased without a large increase in officer time whilst covering a larger area that could not be covered by one organisation alone.

EA tidal fish surveys (Medway)

The Tidal Fish surveys in the River Medway have been undertaken since 1997 to monitor fish populations in a changing climate. The River Medway is considered a local priority for surveying, but is an important constituent of the Greater Thames Basin fish population which itself is a core priority in the EA monitoring budget. However, the European Commission have reported that few EU countries monitor fish and that further work is needed (ref: WFD water note 6).

The Medway No-Take Nursery Area byelaw contributes to MSFD efforts to safeguard nursery grounds by closing important functioning areas to all types of fishing. However, there are currently no sampling sites within the nursery area under the EA sampling regime.

Aims

- Continue spring and autumn small fish surveys
- Introduce one or more survey sites within the No-Take Nursery Area

Resources

KEIFCA	EA
RIB upon request (contingency)	Survey equipment
	RIB or specialist survey boat (Roker)
Two officers per survey	Survey staff

Outcomes

The River Medway surveys are an opportunity to monitor fish and provide supporting evidence to explain trends in Thames Basin populations. The continuation of both spring and autumn surveys will ensure a reliable dataset that adheres to WFD methodology, therefore making it comparable with other basin monitoring programmes. Any cancellation of surveys would reduce the capability to identify any long-term trends, as the small scale fluctuations in populations could not be identified and accounted for.

The upper tidal sites are likely to receive some influence from the freshwater zone. Therefore, any deterioration in WFD status upstream of Allington Lock needs to be considered. This emphasises the need for the River Medway to be considered not as two independent freshwater and marine environments, but as a transitional environment influenced by both systems.

Under the MSFD, measures undertaken to achieve 'good environmental status' should be monitored, which includes any MPAs. Therefore, data on small fish populations within the no-take zone would contribute to such requirements.

PR – promotional material

An important aspect of working on environmental projects is public awareness of the actions and outcomes. Regarding the Medway Estuary, video and pictures of a net being hauled with hundreds of undersized fish caught is emotive and a strong persuasive tool for promoting our work.

Aims

- Create promotional videos of surveys and important sites to inform the public and stakeholders

Resources

KEIFCA	EA
Sharing of filming equipment (e.g. cameras, tripods)	
Cooperation on PR outputs (e.g. Twitter feeds, publishing videos)	
	Sampling gear for demonstrations

Outcomes

Filming and photographing habitats, flora and fauna, as well as ongoing survey work will create a repository of stock footage that can be used for public engagement such as websites, presentations and events. By pooling resources, the outcomes will have a common theme and better explain the wider picture of national efforts to conserve the aquatic environment.