

# Regional Fisheries Groups NEWSLETTER

Find out more about our upcoming port and coastal visits on our webpage [here](#)

## Regional updates and ongoing actions: **YOU SAID**

Many of you voiced concerns regarding the number of seals in the North East region and the effect that they have on catch.

Many of you informed us that you had lost large amounts of gear due to Storm Babet, or the gear had bundled together rendering it too heavy to lift.

## Update from the North East Regional Fisheries Group: Storm damage

[Ghost Fishing UK](#) is a British registered charity dedicated to removing abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear known as 'ghost gear'.

The organisation is completely independent and consists of over 70 volunteer divers working hard to tackle the problem of ghost gear. They have plenty of experience working with gear entanglements where there is just too much weight for the fishing vessel to safely haul their gear.

They first survey the site, then make a recovery plan and work out the safest way to get the gear safely to the surface.

## Regional updates and ongoing actions: **WE DID**

The Regional Fishers Group (RFG) team have partnered with two researchers from University of Oxford who are looking into seal depredation of catch around the UK, and we will be organising workshops with the industry over the coming months.

If you wish to report an issue with seals in your area, please contact Dr Claire Tanner at: [Claire.Tanner@biology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Claire.Tanner@biology.ox.ac.uk)

The RFG team have been in contact with 'Ghost Fishing UK' who are a charity that are willing to help retrieve any lost gear and return this gear back to the owners.

They are careful not to further damage the fishing gear so that it can be returned to its owner with minimum repair.

## Fisheries Management Plans - Engagement event feedback

Throughout November and December 2023, the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) team held several in-person and online engagement events for the southern North Sea non-quota species FMP, and the southern North Sea and Channel skates and rays FMP.

### Did you take part in any of these events?

If so, we would be grateful if you could please use the

link below to fill in a short survey on how you think the events went and what could be improved for future FMP engagement.

[Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management](#)

## Grant funding opportunities - UK Seafood Fund support

Back in January 2023, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) announced an initial £2 million investment to trial new, greener engines and help create a safer, more sustainable fishing fleet.

This opportunity is available through Round 3 of the [UKSF Infrastructure scheme](#).

Defra announced in December that they are expanding Round 3 to provide further support for the catching sector in **improvements to boats, ports, and health and safety**.

Application forms and guidance can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafood-fund-infrastructure-scheme#round-3](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafood-fund-infrastructure-scheme#round-3)

MMO grants team who are delivering the scheme are happy to have a call with potential applicants via:

03300 416 579 or by email at [UKFisheriesSupport@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:UKFisheriesSupport@marinemanagement.org.uk)

## FVL webpage improvements

MMO's service design team are looking at MMO's fishing vessel licensing (FVL) webpages and want to speak with the industry about their experiences with the website to find out what works, and what doesn't work for those who are trying to get licensed or make changes to entitlements, vessels, and authorisations.

If you are interested in taking part, please email: [regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk) to register your interest.

## MCA consultation

On the 16 January 2024, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) launched a 6-week public consultation on the possibility of exempting those who fished on vessels 10m and under for at least 4 weeks between 30 November 2022 - 30 November 2023, from the ILO188 medical certificate requirement.

The links to the consultation, which **closes on the 27 February 2024**, are here:

[Government to support small-scale fishing industry across the UK in latest medical consultation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Medical Exemption – Existing Fishers on Vessels of 10 Metres and Under - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## North East port visits

### Port visits scheduled for February

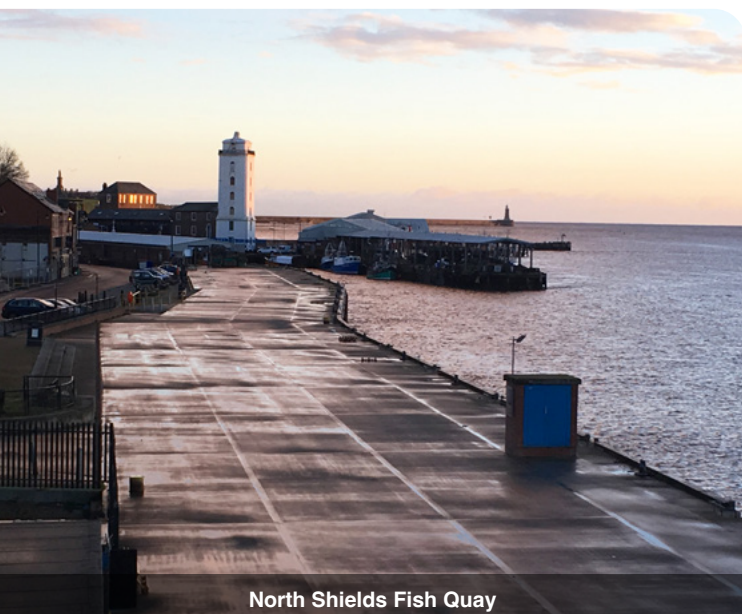
Further North East port visits are scheduled to take place throughout February.

If you would like Caley to visit your area, please email her:

[Caley.McIntosh@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Caley.McIntosh@marinemanagement.org.uk)

If you would like to get in contact with any member of the RFG team, please email us at:

[regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk)



North Shields Fish Quay