

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**

You wanted to discuss possible new fisheries including razor clams.

You wanted to hear more about the future of the bass Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) following its publication.

Wanted more assistance with grant applications.

Many of you have voiced concerns regarding the volume of seals in the area and the affect they have on catch.

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

Conversations have been held between members of industry, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (K&EIFCA) to understand the data we hold and possibilities for the future.

Those that have expressed interest have been connected with the bass FMP team to register their interest to be part of the bass working group.

Connected those who asked with members of MMO grants team to support their applications.

Caley from the Regional Fisheries Group (RFG) team has partnered with 2 researchers from Oxford University who are looking into seal depredation of fisheries catch. They are looking to host an in-person workshop in Suffolk later this year to discuss mitigation measures. If you wish to report an issue with seals in your area, please contact Dr Claire Tanner at: Claire.Tanner@biology.ox.ac.uk

Opportunity to support fishing vessel licensing improvements at MMO

MMO is aware that getting the right fishing vessel license can be a complicated process for people to follow.

We are starting by looking at MMO's fishing vessel licensing webpages and MMO's service design team is looking to speak to fishers 1-2-1 about their experiences with the website.



A key priority is to make understanding and applying for a license much more straightforward and accessible for all who need it.

We want to understand how the website helps or hinders those who are trying to get licensed or make changes to entitlements, vessels and authorisations fish.

Are you part of the below groups?

- We are looking to speak to fishers who have fishing entitlements, domestic licences (all categories), and fishers with authorisations for bass, sole recovery zone (SRZ), Western waters crabs & scallops.
- We are very interested in speaking to people who have struggled to use the website in the past (e.g. finding information easily, filling application forms for your fishing vessel license).
- We are also keen to hear from people who do sometimes use the website to try to get information you need, so we can understand what works and what doesn't work for you.

This is a chance to have your say and help MMO to understand what your needs and preferences are, so we can design services that are much easier to use.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact:

regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk

Fisheries Management Plans – Did you attend any events?

Throughout November and December last year, the MMO's FMP team held a number of 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, 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](#)



Wells-next-the-Sea

Grant funding available

This round is aimed specifically to provide benefits for the commercial fishing sector and we encourage those eligible to apply for funding.

What's being funded and how much are the grants?

Funding will be made available to projects which fall into three categories that directly impact the catching sector:

- Projects that improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions on vessels will be eligible for grants of between £65,000 and £200,000.
- Projects that improve infrastructure at ports will be eligible for grants of between £150,000 and £500,000.
- Projects that improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of the workforce will be eligible for grants, starting at £100,000 for boats, and at £150,000 at ports, both up to a maximum of £500,000.

Where can I apply?

Application forms and guidance can be found [here](#).

You will need to create an account on the [UK Fisheries Support System \(UKFSS\)](#) to register your business and upload the required forms and evidence.

Marine Protected Area consultation – Southern North Sea & Outer Thames Estuary

MMO Marine Conservation Team (MCT) have opened their call for evidence on the Stage 4 MPAs.

The areas of particular interest to the East are the Outer Thames Estuary Marine Protected Area (MPA) (to protect specific species of marine birds) and the Southern North Sea MPA (looking to protect harbour porpoises).

We have attached a handout that goes into a bit more detail about what we are looking to do, and what information is needed.

You can respond using [this link](#) until the **13 February 2024**.

Please direct any queries to:

conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk



Wells-next-the-Sea

East Marine Plan consultations

MMO are beginning the process of replacing the East Inshore and Offshore Marine Plans.

Marine planning is management of the seas resources to make sure that the activities happen in the right place, at the right time and in the right way.

We would prefer comments to be made using our [Citizen Space consultation tool](#).

You can also make representations by email:

planning@marinemanagement.org.uk or in writing to:

Marine Planning Team
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE4 7YH
United Kingdom

MCA consultation on medical fitness

On 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

