



Boston Advisory Group meeting: 1900-2100 8th November 2018

Boston Witham Sailing Club, 8 Witham Bank W, Boston PE21 8PP

- Welcomes/introductions
- Apologies
- Previous minutes/matters arising

1. WNNMP

- Managing recreational pressures
 - Disturbance monitoring
 - Recreation guide
 - PROWAD – nature protection as a driver for sustainable growth in tourism
- Litter Free Coast and Sea
- Wild Seas Week
- Saltmarsh Research
- Friskney Sea Lane Access Working Group

2. Coastal Site Manager updates

3. Eastern-IFCA: Managing Fisheries in Marine Protected Areas

- Fisheries management
- Marine Protection
- Engagement

4. Natural England

- Condition Assessment
- Conservation Advice Package
- English Coastal Path
- Offshore windfarms
- Wildfowling

5. Environment Agency update: Boston Barrier

6. Witham Fourth update: Wrangle Sea Banks

7. Photographs

8. Date of the next meeting

9. AOB

Eastern IFCA update

1. Managing Fisheries in Marine Protected Areas

1.1. Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

Eastern IFCA have drafted an assessment of the impacts of commercial fishing activities on features of the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone. Our assessment was submitted to Natural England in September for formal advice. Although final conclusions have not yet been drawn, tentative results suggest that the potting fishery does not cause significant damage to the habitats protected in this site. [We are separately considering the sustainability of crab and lobster stocks – please see below.] However, we identified that trawling would damage chalk habitats, so we are considering spatial restrictions on this type of fishing within the site. Where new management is proposed, it will be introduced following engagement with fishery stakeholders as well as public consultation.

The Agents of Change project recently held public workshops and surveys relating to the MCZ, attended by a range of stakeholders, with feedback indicating that these workshops were well-received and informative. Any queries regarding these consultations can be addressed by Hilary Cox or Alice Tebb.

1.2. Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

This site extends between 5 and 25 miles offshore, off the east coast of Norfolk. Eastern IFCA is responsible for managing fisheries in the 0 to 6 nautical mile area. We are currently developing measures to restrict trawling within this site to protect *Sabellaria spinulosa* (Ross worm) reef from damage. We are liaising with Natural England in relation to the extent of this sensitive feature. We want to understand what impact these closures could have on fishing – so we will be keen to engage with anyone who fishes in that area.

1.3. North Norfolk Coast Habitat Mapping

We've been out on our patrol vessel FPV Sebastian Terelinck off the North Norfolk Coast recently, using our Sidescan Sonar and drop-down camera to enhance our knowledge of benthic habitats in the area. The results of these surveys are being processed, and we are hoping that they will help us to determine the sensitivity of sediment in the area to fishing.

2. Other Marine Science Workstreams

2.1. Whelk Project

Results of Eastern IFCA's research on the size of maturity of whelks over the last few years are in the process of being written up into a research report and are due to be published shortly. We would like to thank all the fishers who have provided us with whelk samples.

2.2. Offshore Wind Farm Developments

The Crown Estate recently announced a new Leasing Process for offshore wind farms and extensions to three wind farms off the Norfolk coast: Race Bank, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon. Five development areas in the North Sea are likely to require export cables through inshore waters of Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire. Eastern IFCA has highlighted to The Crown Estate concerns over potential impacts on fisheries and conservation interests in the inshore area. We also highlighted concerns over the lack of research into impacts of electromagnetic fields (EMF), particularly with the proliferation of windfarms currently and plans to double the national GW capacity reaching the shore to 30 GW by 2030. Eastern IFCA will continue to input to the consultation process for existing and new offshore wind farm project.

2.3. Annual Mussel Surveys in The Wash

Eastern IFCA are in the process of completing our annual surveys of the Regulated intertidal mussel beds in The Wash. Results of these surveys will be used to calculate the total stocks and analyse the size of mussels on each bed to decide whether there is potential for a mussel fishery in The Wash. If a fishery is proposed,

Eastern IFCA will undertake an appropriate assessment to help identify measures needed to ensure the fishery will not adversely affect the site.

2.5 Crab and Lobster Stock Assessment

Eastern IFCA is responsible for ensuring fisheries are sustainable, in relation to stocks as well as interactions with the environment. We are currently analysing landings data from the crab and lobster fisheries to help us understand the status of the stocks. We are working closely with Cefas and other experts. Our engagement with fishermen is crucial in helping us understand the fishery. The work could lead to changes to management of these fisheries; if required, proposals will be discussed with fishery stakeholders before being implemented.

3. Marine Protection

3.1 The Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 and Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2018

The formal consultation on the two byelaws has ended and Eastern IFCA are considering the responses received. Officers would like to thank all those who participated in the formal consultation. More information on the results of the consultation, including how Eastern IFCA have listened to responses, will be available in due course.

3.2 The Wash Emergency Byelaw

The High Court handed down a decision regarding the boundary of the Le Strange Estate (The Wash, Norfolk) on the 27th July 2018. The judgement reduced the seaward extent of the boundary with the effect of leaving a gap between the boundary of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 and the Le Strange Estate within The Wash, where no management measures applied. To protect the area (which is within The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site) from potential impacts of fishing activity, Eastern IFCA implemented an emergency byelaw. The byelaw enables Eastern IFCA to manage fisheries by issuing permits with conditions. A fishery is currently open under this byelaw. More information can be found on the Eastern IFCA website: <http://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wash-emergency-byelaw-2018/>.

3.3 Wash Fishery Order 1992 Cockle Fishery

The 2018/19 Wash Fishery Order cockle fishery is still underway. The level of fishing activity is reducing, and the total allowable catch is nearing exhaustion. General feedback from the industry indicates that it has been a relatively successful fishery.

3.4 Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (iVMS)

The Department for the environment, food and rural affairs (Defra) is consulting on the proposed national roll out of iVMS for vessels under 12m in length and is seeking the views of interested parties. More information can be found at the following link: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine-management/introduction-of-inshore-vessel-monitoring-systems/>

3.5 Bass Measures for Recreational Fishers

Bass restrictions in relation to recreational fishers have been amended. From the 1st October to the 31st December 2018, recreational fishers are permitted to retain one fish, per person, per day. The increased minimum conservation reference size of 42cm does apply. More information can be found on the Eastern IFCA website and the MMO website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bass-industry-guidance-2018/bass-fishing-guidance-2018>

4. Engagement

Please follow what we've been up to lately on our social media pages:

https://twitter.com/eastern_ifca <https://www.facebook.com/eastern.ifca> For any specific questions feel free to message on social media, give us a call on 01553 775321, e-mail us at mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk or pop into our office at 6 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn PE30 2JG

Natural England update

1. Condition Assessment

We are currently finalising the condition assessments for the Wash and North Norfolk Coast, the two offshore sites (Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SAC and Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC), the Alde Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC and Orfordness to Shingle Street SAC. Natural England's marine team met with EIFCA earlier this month to discuss fishing activities and how this influences the condition assessment and as a result The Wash habitats such as mudflats are being reviewed in light of EIFCAs evidence. Once we have all the information needed to make the assessment it will then be subject to internal review to ensure consistency between sites, and we will then be able to share the results with you.

2. Conservation Advice Package

Breydon Water SPA and Benacre to East Bavents SAC draft conservation advice packages were published September 2018, they are currently in the invitation to comment stage.

Great Yarmouth North Denes SPA and Minsmere-Walberswick SPA are being drafted for publication in March 2019.

Following the publication of the draft packages for Stour & Orwell SPA and Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ (in March 2018). Natural England have responded to stakeholder feedback - either through the area team or in some cases the feedback has been escalated to specialists who will respond accordingly.

3. English Coastal Path

The English Coast path will form a national trail which will extend around England's coast.

a. Skegness and Mablethorpe

This is still at the same stage as was reported at the June meeting. The first section of the England Coast Path in Lincolnshire, between Skegness and Mablethorpe is due to be officially opened in Spring 2019. Currently works including signage and installation of gates etc. is being undertaken.

b. Sutton Bridge to Skegness section.

This is still at the same stage i.e. Stage 4 – Determining as was reported at the June meeting.

On 24 January 2018 Natural England submitted its coastal report to the Secretary of State for coastal access for the 57 mile (92km) stretch of the coast between Sutton Bridge and Skegness. The period for making representations and objections about the report closed at midnight on 21 March 2018. The report is still available to view.

Objections were considered by an independent planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The inspector will make recommendations to the Secretary of State in respect of each one.

Natural England may not make any further changes to the report as a result of the representations and objections. In April Natural England made comments about the representations and objections for consideration by the Secretary of State and, in the case of objections, the appointed planning inspector. The Secretary of State will consider all the representations and objections before making a decision about Natural England's report.

Once the Secretary of State has approved the report, Natural England will start work with Lincolnshire County Council on preparing the route for public use.

The first step will be to contact owners and occupiers of the affected land to discuss the design and location of any new infrastructure which is required such as signs and gates.

When preparations are complete, new access rights will be brought into force along the route and adjoining spreading room. This is expected to happen in summer 2019.

c. Weybourne to Hunstanton stretch

NE published our proposals for the stretch on Wednesday 21 March 2018 and the period for making formal representations and objections about them closed at midnight on 16 May 2018. All objections have been forwarded for consideration to an independent planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The inspector will make recommendations to the Secretary of State in respect of each one. Natural England may not make any further changes to the report as a result of the representations and objections, but will make comments about them for consideration by the Secretary of State.

We are currently analysing the objections and representations received and considering all the additional /new information presented in them. Many relate to the saltmarsh at Burnham Overy Staithe and Wells-next-the-Sea where we proposed restrictions to public access on the grounds of suitability and safety. Most respondents wanted the existing access arrangements to remain. In light of this we are considering if there may potentially be ways, other than statutory restrictions, of managing use of the saltmarsh to minimise risk.

At Burnham Overy Staithe we have decided to recommend that instead of our proposed S25A restriction, we supplement or replace existing signage with bespoke advisory signs telling people how to stay safe on the saltmarsh. If approved by the Secretary of State we would place these where regularly accessed routes adjoin the line of the ECP. We will do the same at Brancaster which is currently experiencing a high number of safety incidents. At Wells next the Sea we are still considering what our recommendations should be, but plan to make a decision about this in the next month.

We hope local people will be heartened to see that the process Natural England follows to improve access to the coast works. We received a lot of additional information in objections and representations on our proposals, we've listened to these, talked further to local people about them and refined our recommendations accordingly.

d. Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge

Natural England is still visiting land on this stretch of coast that is likely to be affected by our proposals and discussing the options in detail with owner's occupiers and other relevant interests. Due to the length and complexity of this stretch, this phase of site visit work will take some months to complete. The proposals will be finalised and then published in a report to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This is expected to take place in winter 2019.

Dogs on the Marsh

As part of this work Natural England will be having further conversations with RSPB / LWT regarding signage along the route (in particular to control of dogs) – specifically around Gibraltar Point and River Steeping area but also RSPB Frampton/ Kirton Marsh. I hope to be involved with this along with The Wash NNR manager and also ECP Lead Advisor.

Following on from this we have had an enquiry from a Member of the Public, asking about keeping their dogs under effective control. We have supplied them with some information including a copy of the Countryside Code, Lincs CC guidance which NE inputted into along with the Kennel Club. These documents are available on the internet and we can provide a link if anyone is interested. The member of the public has been persistent in coming back to us, the query has been passed to our legal team, and one of our solicitors has provided a formal response.

4. Offshore windfarms

a. Hornsea Project 3 – Examination has started 2nd October 2018 – 2nd April 2019

The documents can be found at

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/hornsea-project-three-offshore-wind-farm/?ipcsection=overview>

The deadline for our Written reps on the project is the 7th November and we have a week of issue specific hearings in December and January.

We are working with the developer on statements of common ground and by default uncommon ground. They have also provided some clarifications notes on key areas of concern in our relevant rep - which we are starting to review. These clarification notes will be submitted to PINs at deadline 1 on 7th December. However, initial review is indicating that some outstanding concerns remain, in particular for Ornithology and Benthic.

b. Race Bank OWF

The project has entered its operation phase.

The Race Bank windfarm has applied for a marine licence variation to increase the operation and maintenance cable remedial work that can be done over the life time of the project. This is in the region of a 100% increase. Natural England is currently unable to support the application as we require more information in relation to the rationale and justification. There is obviously a necessity here, but it is not clear on location etc.

Equally we have had a marine licence application consultation on the cables which have not been sufficiently buried in the Wash. This includes sections that are sub-optimally buried, on the seabed and free spanning where the cable are hanging. There are also trenches that have been created during the cable installation procedure that have created trenches. The suggested solutions include backfilling with material from either just inside The Wash or just outside or rock armouring. We are aware the fishermen have asked that there is no rock armouring landwards of KP17 and that according to Ørsted the harbour authorities would like the whole lot rock armoured. Again having looked at the documentation further evidence/information is required, but over all Natural England believes that the proposals pose a significant risk to interested features of the site and will provide our full comments to the MMO by 7th November. However, we are in discussions with the Harbour authorities and EIFCA.

We will also have the monitoring surveys of the cable installation to review.

c. Lincs OWF

We continue to have discussions about potential impacts to the Greater Wash SPA from the presence of the turbines. We have also had consultations under our discretionary advice service in relation to further operations and maintenance works they are proposing to do. We hope to update you more on our advice once this becomes a formal application.

d. Dudgeon

Post construction monitoring continues.

e. Sheringham

Post construction monitoring expected in 2019.

f. Extension Projects

The Crown Estate has published the list of proposed OWF extension projects and included in them are:

- Race Bank
- Sheringham Shoal
- Dudgeon

Natural England has provided advice to The Crown Estate and the developers on the proposals raising our concerns about these three extensions. We understand the cable routes will not go through The Wash, but there are still considerable concerns about grid connection and cable route as well as other significant concerns relating to birds and seascape.

We will be feeding into the Strategic Habitats Regulation Assessment on these before Christmas and leasing decision is due to take place in Spring next year.

5. Wildfowling consents

Natural England is looking to develop the working relationship with Wildfowling groups on The Wash as a part of moving to a longer term way of working and a more regional way of assessing bag returns. Contact from wildfowling groups that Natural England's Gillian Fisher hasn't yet met or worked with would be very welcome.

Please Contact Gill Fisher for further information.

Gillian.fisher@naturalengland.org.uk or 02080261750

6. Other

Friskney Lane

We have been working with other members of the WNNMP to restrict access onto The Wash at Friskney Lane to discuss the pro/ cons of the potential options. We met on site on the 4th September and again on the 17th October with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), WNNMP Project Manager, LWT, Wainfleet and Skegness Wildfowling and landowners. Natural England will be working in the coming weeks with the DIO so to help facilitate the consent and depending on the approach used we will undertake a HRA.

Filming on The Wash Over the summer we had a report of unauthorised filming activities on the saltmarsh at Holbeach – we have undertaken an investigation of the incident and have contacted both the landowner and the film company so that they are now aware of the correct process i.e. asking Natural England for a consent. We are considering sending out a reminder to owner/ occupiers on the process that they need to follow in similar situations and for any other projects that may cover The Wash. Natural England uses a Film Locations Management Company (Locality online) who have, since this case came to light, contacted the main Funding Bodies such as Creative England to pass on the correct process to their members.

Boston Haven

We have been contacted for our initial advice on Boston Haven flood embankment works from the EA National Environmental Assessment Service. The project is only at the tender stage, but works are expected to start next year. I have suggested they contact the RSPB as the works will lie adjacent to the RSPB Frampton site.

Litter Pick

Natural England (with the EA) undertook a litter pick along out stretches of the River Nene and across the upper saltmarsh/ sea defence along the Sir Peter Scott footpath. We collected 4 large building sacks worth of rubbish (a lot of plastic but a lot of glass bottles which had been left on site rather than washed up with the tide) which we were kindly allowed to use a skip donated by Black Sluice IDB.

Boston Advisory Group meeting notes, Thursday 8 November 2018, 7pm

Boston Witham Sailing Club, 8 Witham Bank West, Boston PE21 8PU

Attendees:

Project Manager	Sam Lew
Chair	Bryan Bowles
EIFCA	Stephen Thompson
	John Butler
Boston Borough Council	Peter Udy
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Dave Miller
Natural England	Louise Denning
NFU	Andrew Roughton
Environment Agency	Georgia Thompson
Wildfowlers	Tim Bee
	Tom Holland
	Steve Cook
	Graham Wall
Secretary	Rachel Marriott

Apologies:

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Tammy Smalley
	Kev Wilson
RSPB	John Badley
Port of Boston	Richard Walker
Boston Belle	Rodney Bowles
Wildfowler	Trevor Amos
RAF	Christa Lawrence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the above apologies were given.

The minutes of the last meeting were gone through page by page, any alterations made and agreed by the group.

1.0 WNNMP

1.1 Managing recreational pressures

Recreation is a non-regulated activity. Recreational disturbance monitoring has been carried out since 2004 in The Wash region. Sam has raised funds to create an online tool for recording recreational disturbance. He now has written confirmation that the funds have been secured. It will hopefully be ready for use in a month's time and Sam will run some training sessions with the advisory groups on how to use the new online recording tool. The main difference between this and the old method is that photographs can be uploaded onto the system. There was a great example at Dawlish, where the Wildlife Trust employed someone to take photographs of disturbance, and have now managed to create a byelaw to manage the issue.

Steve commented that at 06:10 this morning there was someone riding a trail bike in the Friskney/Wainfleet area. He will follow this up.

Sam would like to create a recreation guide, giving examples of good practice. Sam has raised funds to have this done. He wants to know if best practice at a national scale still works at a local scale. He will consult the advisory groups on what best practice looks like. Sam will start work on this in the New Year and hopefully will have it ready for the start of the season.

PROWAD, a project run by the Norfolk council, aims to provide resources to small tourism businesses, helping them to ensure their practice doesn't have detrimental effects on the environment and recognise nature as a key economic asset. Two members of staff will be delivering this as part of a £500k project which is directly linked to the partnership. Sam will be attending a meeting in Denmark. They will be focusing on looking at the food and gastronomy sector, for example, looking at how cockles and shrimp can be fed back into the UK industry rather than being exported and recreation sector. This project is being supported by EU funding.

1.2 Litter Free Coast and Sea

This project helps to support businesses by using resources that are less polluting and encouraging local communities and people to take action to reduce beach litter. The campaign aims to reduce marine and beach litter and improve water quality at source. Similar projects have been successful in Dorset and Somerset.

1.3 Wild Seas Week

Wild seas week was a real success. Some of the events were really well attended, and others less so. The PROWAD team would like to support Wild Seas Week in 2019, including staff who can provide marketing support. It will start from the first Friday in August. Georgia added that the Environment Agency would like to be more involved next year. Sam will apply to Big Lottery for funding so employ a support officer.

1.4 Saltmarsh research

The saltmarshes are being mapped along with its features and benefits provided to society, and this process will hopefully benefit the local community and regulators. Sam aims to have this project ready for the end of the year. It is linked to a wider national project led by the Universities of Hull and Aberdeen, and the research will be published as a whole.

1.5 Friskney Sea Lane Access Working Group

At the MOD owned helipad with two tracks there has been lots of antisocial behaviour, such as fly-tipping, recreational disturbance and drug taking. A meeting has been held to look at options to resolve issues. Do we allow access to the helipad but close the trackways by blocking them off with concrete barriers? This could stop vehicle access, but would they just drive on the marsh and go around the barriers? An easier partial solution that was supported in the meeting was to have a gate near Fisherman's Cottage that can be locked at night with a combination padlock. A phone number will be provided in case anyone gets stuck the wrong side of the gate, and there will need to be appropriate signage stating that the gates will be locked at 6pm. Something had to be done as the situation was getting very bad, and the wildfowlers were uncomfortable about leaving their cars there in the evening. The question was asked what is the time frame for the concrete barriers? Sam answered as soon as possible, but is not certain of the exact time frame. The MOD already have the concrete blocks, and they just need moving into place. Various solutions were suggested by the advisory group, including blocking access to the whole of the helipad to avoid damage to the salt marsh, or even digging a trench so that people could not drive onto the marsh. Graham suggested that this would be a cheaper option but be unlikely to get supported at the planning stage. It was thought by the group that we will never be able to stop motorbikes from accessing the marsh, but it is hoped that by restricting access they will be able to stop the commercial dog walkers who just drive up to the marsh and then let the dogs off the lead.

This is also a problem at Gedney Marsh. Graham would like to catch someone that flies a blue aircraft far too low over the saltmarsh. This has also occurred at Titchwell. Sam has looked up what the official guidance is for civil aviation. They are recommended to not fly over a bird sanctuary, but if the area is not classed as a sanctuary, they can fly as low as they like as long as no person is within 500ft of them. Places such as Gibraltar Point, Holme, Blakeney and Brancaster have minimum flight recommendations. Frampton, Freiston and Titchwell do not. In the past there has been a tragic accident which included bird collision which led to the death of six airmen in a helicopter crash. Sam says the best way to assist in stopping this disturbance is to take photographs which show how close they are to the ground so that he can forward them onto the civil aviation authority.

Andrew asked that if we stop people being able to walk their dogs on the saltmarsh, where will they go as they need to walk their dogs somewhere. Bryan added that walking is being promoted along the marsh, which provides mixed messages. Tom commented that he has come across people walking their dogs across the Wrangle playing fields who can't be stopped. It is only in the last 12-15 years that dog walkers have become a real problem on the marsh. It is difficult as we want to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and walk to be healthy, but it is very challenging to control where they go to do this. The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Holkham estate are trying to promote responsible and sustainable dog walking working via the WNNMP. There has been a successful pilot carried out in Devon, called 'Devon Loves Dogs'. The project is funded through community infrastructure levies, and has worked really well. The idea behind it is that we need to 'celebrate' dog walkers rather than demonise them. We are working with experts to develop the right concept for the campaign so that they can demonstrate best practice and then roll this out to the wider councils. The aim is to influence people's behaviour as dog walkers – most people have good intentions but may find the signs difficult to interpret or are unaware of byelaws.

The question was raised over access to the marsh by Bryan. Between Boston and Gedney, people often go over private land to access the marsh, and as there are no public car parks, often leave their cars on private land. For access to be private, it needs to have a gate that is closed for at least one day of the year. This can't be done at Shetney car park as it has had open access for so long. Graham commented that we don't want an issue like there is in Norfolk, where members of the public assume that they can go anywhere they like. The issue mentioned previously at Friskney started when the gates were removed,

and then was exacerbated when vehicle access at Wainfleet was stopped. Tom thinks the issue at Wainfleet has improved, but with a detrimental effect to Friskney.

2.0 Coastal site manager updates

2.1 Gibraltar Point

Kev was at a Little Tern conference, so Dave gave an update on his behalf.

The take away containers used at Gibraltar Point's Visitor Centre have been replaced by Vegware which is biodegradable.

The IDB Bridge is being upgraded for the coastal foot path.

The Bulldog Bank feasibility study is underway and it will be very interesting to see how this develops. They are considering whether or not to replace Bulldog Bank after the breach in the 2013 storm surge, and completely reinstating the creeks. This may have an impact on the flora and fauna if it becomes more saline. Bryan asked if this was unnatural. The Environment Agency are not supportive of rebuilding the bank as it would be a huge engineering task. They are looking at a variety of different options which will be going out to consultation in 2019. Would it be a threat to the residential area if the creeks extended towards the golf course? If the bank is put back, it could not be put reinstated in the same way as it was before as it was not well built. It shouldn't have been breached so easily.

2.2 Frampton and Freiston

John is in Sri Lanka, and will provide an update on the RSPB sites for the next meeting.

3.0 Eastern IFCA

Eastern IFCA provided the following update:

3.1 Managing fisheries in Marine Protected Areas

3.1.1 Cromer shoal chalk beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

Eastern IFCA have drafted an assessment of the impacts of commercial fishing activities on features of the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone. Our assessment was submitted to Natural England in September for formal advice. Although final conclusions have not yet been drawn, tentative results suggest that the potting fishery does not cause significant damage to the habitats protected in this site. [We are separately considering the sustainability of crab and lobster stocks – please see below.] However, we identified that trawling would damage chalk habitats, so we are considering spatial restrictions on this type of fishing within the site. Where new management is proposed, it will be introduced following engagement with fishery stakeholders as well as public consultation.

The Agents of Change project recently held public workshops and surveys relating to the MCZ, attended by a range of stakeholders, with feedback indicating that these workshops were well-received and informative. Any queries regarding these consultations can be addressed by Hilary Cox or Alice Tebb.

3.12 Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

This site extends between 5 and 25 miles offshore, off the east coast of Norfolk. Eastern IFCA is responsible for managing fisheries in the 0 to 6 nautical mile area. We are currently developing measures to restrict trawling within this site to protect Sabellaria spinulosa (Ross worm) reef from damage. We are liaising with Natural England in relation to the extent of this sensitive feature. We want to understand what impact these closures could have on fishing – so we will be keen to engage with anyone who fishes in that area.

3.13 North Norfolk Coast Habitat Mapping

We've been out on our patrol vessel FPV Sebastian Terelinck off the North Norfolk Coast recently, using our Sidescan Sonar and drop-down camera to enhance our knowledge of benthic habitats in the area. The results of these surveys are being processed, and we are hoping that they will help us to determine the sensitivity of sediment in the area to fishing.

3.2 Other Marine Science Workstreams

3.21 Whelk Project

Results of Eastern IFCA's research on the size of maturity of whelks over the last few years are in the process of being written up into a research report and are due to be published shortly. We would like to thank all the fishers who have provided us with whelk samples.

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The Crown Estate recently announced a new Leasing Process for offshore wind farms and extensions to three wind farms off the Norfolk coast: Race Bank, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon. Five development areas in the North Sea are likely to require export cables through inshore waters of Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire. Eastern IFCA has highlighted to The Crown Estate concerns over potential impacts on fisheries and conservation interests in the inshore area. We also highlighted concerns over the lack of research into impacts of electromagnetic fields (EMF), particularly with the proliferation of windfarms currently and plans to double the national GW capacity reaching the shore to 30 GW by 2030. Eastern IFCA will continue to input to the consultation process for existing and new offshore wind farm project.

The UK has a piecemeal approach to installing cables compared to, for example, Germany. We think about installing a windfarm and then a set of cables, rather than taking a co-ordinated approach.

3.23 Annual Mussel Surveys in The Wash

Eastern IFCA are in the process of completing our annual surveys of the Regulated intertidal mussel beds in The Wash. Results of these surveys will be used to calculate the total stocks and analyse the size of mussels on each bed to decide whether there is potential for a mussel fishery in The Wash. If a fishery is proposed, Eastern IFCA will undertake an appropriate assessment to help identify measures needed to ensure the fishery will not adversely affect the site.

Surveys are working really well along the North Norfolk coast. They are challenging at this time of year due to the weather conditions and limited day light hours.

3.24 Crab and Lobster Stock Assessment

Eastern IFCA is responsible for ensuring fisheries are sustainable, in relation to stocks as well as interactions with the environment. We are currently analysing landings data from the crab and lobster fisheries to help us understand the status of the stocks. We are working closely with Cefas and other experts. Our engagement with fishermen is crucial in helping us understand the fishery. The work could

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3.32 The Wash Emergency Byelaw

The High Court handed down a decision regarding the boundary of the Le Strange Estate (The Wash, Norfolk) on the 27th July 2018. The judgement reduced the seaward extent of the boundary with the effect of leaving a gap between the boundary of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 and the Le Strange Estate within The Wash, where no management measures applied. To protect the area (which is within The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site) from potential impacts of fishing activity, Eastern IFCA implemented an emergency byelaw. The byelaw enables Eastern IFCA to manage fisheries by issuing permits with conditions. A fishery is currently open under this byelaw. More information can be found on the Eastern IFCA website: <http://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wash-emergency-byelaw-2018/>.

3.33 Wash Fishery Order 1992 Cockle Fishery

The 2018/19 Wash Fishery Order cockle fishery is still underway. The level of fishing activity is reducing, and the total allowable catch is nearing exhaustion. General feedback from the industry indicates that it has been a relatively successful fishery.

Bryan asked how the cockle stocks are this year compared to previous years. It is a reasonably good year, but down slightly after a couple of exceptional years. A private fishery controlled by the Lestrange estate has now been released by the High Court – it is now a smaller line on the map, so there is a larger area open to local fisheries.

3.34 Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (iVMS)

The Department for the environment, food and rural affairs (Defra) is consulting on the proposed national roll out of iVMS for vessels under 12m in length and is seeking the views of interested parties. More information can be found at the following link: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine-management/introduction-of-inshore-vessel-monitoring-systems/>

3.35 Bass Measures for Recreational Fishers

Bass restrictions in relation to recreational fishers have been amended. From the 1st October to the 31st December 2018, recreational fishers are permitted to retain one fish, per person, per day. The increased minimum conservation reference size of 42cm does apply. More information can be found on the Eastern IFCA website and the MMO website at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bass-industry-guidance-2018/bass-fishing-guidance-2018>

3.4 Engagement

Please follow what we've been up to lately on our social media pages:

https://twitter.com/eastern_ifca <https://www.facebook.com/eastern.ifca> For any specific questions feel free to message on social media, give us a call on 01553 775321, e-mail us at mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk or pop into our office at 6 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn PE30 2JG

4.0 Natural England update

Natural England provided the following updates:

4.1 Condition Assessment

We are currently finalising the condition assessments for the Wash and North Norfolk Coast, the two offshore sites (Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SAC and Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC), the Alde Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC and Orfordness to Shingle Street SAC. Natural England's marine team met with EIFCA earlier this month to discuss fishing activities and how this influences the condition assessment and as a result The Wash habitats such as mudflats are being reviewed in light of EIFCA's evidence. Once we have all the information needed to make the assessment it will then be subject to internal review to ensure consistency between sites, and we will then be able to share the results with you.

There is a Coastal Network Partnership meeting being held in Cardiff later this month, and Louise will report back at the next meeting. Sam is a board member. It started as a group of volunteers trying to make sure there is a consistency in the information being shared, and they now have funding for an officer.

4.2 Conservation Advice Package

Breydon Water SPA and Benacre to East Bavents SAC draft conservation advice packages were published September 2018, they are currently in the invitation to comment stage.

Great Yarmouth North Denes SPA and Minsmere-Walberswick SPA are being drafted for publication in March 2019.

Following the publication of the draft packages for Stour & Orwell SPA and Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ (in March 2018). Natural England have responded to stakeholder feedback - either through the area team or in some cases the feedback has been escalated to specialists who will respond accordingly.

4.3 English Coastal Footpath

The English Coast path will form a national trail which will extend around England's coast.

a. Skegness and Mablethorpe

This is still at the same stage as was reported at the June meeting. The first section of the England Coast Path in Lincolnshire, between Skegness and Mablethorpe is due to be officially opened in Spring 2019. Currently works including signage and installation of gates etc. is being undertaken.

b. Sutton Bridge to Skegness section.

This is still at the same stage i.e. Stage 4 – Determining as was reported at the June meeting.

On 24 January 2018 Natural England submitted its coastal report to the Secretary of State for coastal access for the 57 mile (92km) stretch of the coast between Sutton Bridge and Skegness. The period for making representations and objections about the report closed at midnight on 21 March 2018. The report is still available to view.

Objections were considered by an independent planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The inspector will make recommendations to the Secretary of State in respect of each one.

Natural England may not make any further changes to the report as a result of the representations and objections. In April Natural England made comments about the representations and objections for consideration by the Secretary of State and, in the case of objections, the appointed planning inspector. The Secretary of State will consider all the representations and objections before making a decision about Natural England's report.

Once the Secretary of State has approved the report, Natural England will start work with Lincolnshire County Council on preparing the route for public use.

The first step will be to contact owners and occupiers of the affected land to discuss the design and location of any new infrastructure which is required such as signs and gates.

When preparations are complete, new access rights will be brought into force along the route and adjoining spreading room. This is expected to happen in summer 2019.

c. Weybourne to Hunstanton stretch

NE published our proposals for the stretch on Wednesday 21 March 2018 and the period for making formal representations and objections about them closed at midnight on 16 May 2018. All objections have been forwarded for consideration to an independent planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The inspector will make recommendations to the Secretary of State in respect of each one. Natural England may not make any further changes to the report as a result of the representations and objections, but will make comments about them for consideration by the Secretary of State.

We are currently analysing the objections and representations received and considering all the additional/new information presented in them. Many relate to the saltmarsh at Burnham Overy Staithe and Wells-next-the-Sea where we proposed restrictions to public access on the grounds of suitability and safety. Most respondents wanted the existing access arrangements to remain. In light of this we are considering if there may potentially be ways, other than statutory restrictions, of managing use of the saltmarsh to minimise risk.

At Burnham Overy Staithe we have decided to recommend that instead of our proposed S25A restriction, we supplement or replace existing signage with bespoke advisory signs telling people how to stay safe on the saltmarsh. If approved by the Secretary of State we would place these where regularly accessed routes adjoin the line of the ECP. We will do the same at Brancaster which is currently experiencing a high number of safety incidents. At Wells next the Sea we are still considering what our recommendations should be, but plan to make a decision about this in the next month.

We hope local people will be heartened to see that the process Natural England follows to improve access to the coast works. We received a lot of additional information in objections and representations on our proposals, we've listened to these, talked further to local people about them and refined our recommendations accordingly.

d. Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge

Natural England is still visiting land on this stretch of coast that is likely to be affected by our proposals and discussing the options in detail with owner's occupiers and other relevant interests. Due to the length and complexity of this stretch, this phase of site visit work will take some months to complete. The

proposals will be finalised and then published in a report to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This is expected to take place in winter 2019.

Dogs on the Marsh

As part of this work Natural England will be having further conversations with RSPB / LWT regarding signage along the route (in particular to control of dogs) – specifically around Gibraltar Point and River Steeping area but also RSPB Frampton/ Kirton Marsh. I hope to be involved with this along with The Wash NNR manager and also ECP Lead Advisor.

Following on from this we have had an enquiry from a Member of the Public, asking about keeping their dogs under effective control. We have supplied them with some information including a copy of the Countryside Code, Lincs CC guidance which NE inputted into along with the Kennel Club. These documents are available on the internet and we can provide a link if anyone is interested. The member of the public has been persistent in coming back to us, the query has been passed to our legal team, and one of our solicitors has provided a formal response.

The advisory group were interested to learn more about the spreading room associated with the coastal footpath. Louise confirmed that people should be sticking to the main route, and anything else would be considered as trespassing. At one point the idea was that there would be access from the footpath to the sea, but this is no longer the case. Louise can circulate the wording that the Natural England principal solicitor wrote to a persistent female dog walker. If the group would like further clarification then Louise can find out more. The question from the dog walker was about control of the dog, and whether or not she could be prosecuted if the dog went on the marsh. It would be a case of trespass, and therefore any action would be the responsibility of the individual landowner.

From the Nene to the Welland there will be no spreading room. Sam is trying to get more information about this from Natural England. Steve asked how is the lay person going to understand this? Louise is asking the question about signage, and asked the group if they can email her with any hotspots that they can think of that may require additional signage. Graham commented that the signs need to be fire proof and not metal due to vandalism. Louise may be able to persuade the coastal team to add more signage. Tim asked if the Friskney to Wainfleet route has been decided? The decision is still with the Secretary of State.

4.4 Offshore Windfarms

a. Hornsea Project 3 – Examination has started 2nd October 2018 – 2nd April 2019

The documents can be found at

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/hornsea-project-three-offshore-wind-farm/?ipcsection=overview>

The deadline for our Written reps on the project is the 7th November and we have a week of issue specific hearings in December and January.

We are working with the developer on statements of common ground and by default uncommon ground. They have also provided some clarification notes on key areas of concern in our relevant rep - which we are starting to review. These clarification notes will be submitted to PINs at deadline 1 on 7th December. However, initial review is indicating that some outstanding concerns remain, in particular for Ornithology and Benthic.

b. Race Bank OWF

The project has entered its operation phase.

The Race Bank windfarm has applied for a marine licence variation to increase the operation and maintenance cable remedial work that can be done over the life time of the project. This is in the region of a 100% increase. Natural England is currently unable to support the application as we require more information in relation to the rationale and justification. There is obviously a necessity here, but it is not clear on location etc.

Equally we have had a marine licence application consultation on the cables which have not been sufficiently buried in the Wash. This includes sections that are sub-optimally buried, on the seabed and free spanning where the cable are hanging. There are also trenches that have been created during the cable installation procedure that have created trenches. The suggested solutions include backfilling with material from either just inside The Wash or just outside or rock armouring. We are aware the fishermen have asked that there is no rock armouring landwards of KP17 and that according to Ørsted the harbour authorities would like the whole lot rock armoured. Again having looked at the documentation further evidence/information is required, but over all Natural England believes that the proposals pose a significant risk to interested features of the site and will provide our full comments to the MMO by 7th November. However, we are in discussions with the Harbour authorities and EIFCA.

We will also have the monitoring surveys of the cable installation to review.

c. Lincs OWF

We continue to have discussions about potential impacts to the Greater Wash SPA from the presence of the turbines. We have also had consultations under our discretionary advice service in relation to further operations and maintenance works they are proposing to do. We hope to update you more on our advice once this becomes a formal application.

d. Dudgeon

Post construction monitoring continues.

e. Sheringham

Post construction monitoring expected in 2019.

f. Extension Projects

The Crown Estate has published the list of proposed OWF extension projects and included in them are:

- Race Bank
- Sheringham Shoal
- Dudgeon

Natural England has provided advice to The Crown Estate and the developers on the proposals raising our concerns about these three extensions. We understand the cable routes will not go through The Wash, but there are still considerable concerns about grid connection and cable route as well as other significant concerns relating to birds and seascape.

We will be feeding into the Strategic Habitats Regulation Assessment on these before Christmas and leasing decision is due to take place in Spring next year.

The question was asked – has anyone calculated the costs of reburial compared to other methods? Graham advised that the only way to keep the cable down in running silt is to cover it with a mat and hold it down with rocks, as has been done in the Humber Estuary, but fishermen do not like this method, and Natural England are not keen. There has been a piecemeal approach which has dictated where the cables go and cabling has almost been an afterthought. The group are hoping that lessons will be learnt for the future.

4.5 Wildfowling consents

Natural England is looking to develop the working relationship with Wildfowling groups on The Wash as a part of moving to a longer term way of working and a more regional way of assessing bag returns. Contact from wildfowling groups that Natural England's Gillian Fisher hasn't yet met or worked with would be very welcome.

Please Contact Gill Fisher for further information.

Gillian.fisher@naturalengland.org.uk or 02080261750.

Gillian is yet to contact the South Lincs group of the Skegness and Wainfleet group. Gedney have been promised a 5 year consent but have yet to receive it. It is slightly different for them due to being partially on NNR land.

5.0 Environment Agency update: Boston Barrier

The first round of piling at the Wyberton Low Road has come to an end, and secondary piling is starting in 2019 further downstream (on the left bank). The fishing fleet are now moored at the Port of Boston. The grain silo has been pulled down.

The 19m bypass channel can now be used by boats, and the Boston Belle has used it. The landscape architects are just finalising the consultation results, which Georgia will share with the group via Rachel. The control room has been built. They are still in conversation with the Port of Boston about the location of a turning circle during the build, and they are close to agreeing.

Bryan commented on Rodney's behalf that previously work has been carried out from a stoning barge, which did a much neater job than the current method from the bank. The marsh has been badly damaged due to access. Other projects have not been allowed to go ahead in the past as they have not been allowed access – it seems inconsistent. Georgia agreed to look into this.

Eastern IFCA have been looking into have been looking at the boundary of the SAC and it does not go into the river. The top of the SSSI is in the centre of the current sea bank. The new sea bank is further inland, so where will the boundary be? Mark Robinson (EA) thought it would be the crest of the new bank. Bryan commented that his solicitor said that boundaries do not move.

Sam raised a query with Georgia about Horseshoe Lagoon. Hugh Drake, the landowner, wanted to remove the plastic 1 tonne sacks but was not allowed access. The sacks are degrading and if they are not removed soon then they will not be able to move them at all. Louise commented that it is still classed as a flood defence even if it is a secondary defence, and they would need consent for access over the saltmarsh. Louise suggests that the easiest way would be for someone to go and cut the bags off, but the landowner is not content with this. The contents of the bags are not harmful. At Friskney Sea Lane, following the earlier discussion about putting concrete bollards in the salt marsh, it was commented on by the group that this action would be damaging the salt marsh, but would be

preventing further damage. Natural England did not feel that this was equivalent case as it takes 25 years for the salt marsh to recover from compaction from vehicles.

The green marsh provides a really good flood defence. Scouring and erosion caused by vehicles could lead to creeks forming which could affect the integrity of the marsh. What about plastic pollution from the bags.

6.0 Witham Fourth update: Wrangle Sea Banks

Sam circulated an update of the banks to the group and showed the group a drone video of the works (NE would like to remind the group that you need consent from them to fly a drone over the marsh). Witham Fourth have offered a site visit to the advisory group in the New Year and Sam will circulate the invite.

7.0 Photographs

Bryan sent two photographs to Sam which he shared with the group. If anyone has any photographs of incidents, activities and projects that they would like to share with the group, please send them to either Rachel or Sam, and Sam will put them on a Powerpoint at the next meeting.

8.0 A.O.B.

Sam shared the following points with the group:

Friskney Lane

We have been working with other members of the WNNMP to restrict access onto The Wash at Friskney Lane to discuss the pro/ cons of the potential options. We met on site on the 4th September and again on the 17th October with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), WNNMP Project Manager, LWT, Wainfleet and Skegness Wildfowlers and landowners. Natural England will be working in the coming weeks with the DIO so to help facilitate the consent and depending on the approach used we will undertake a HRA.

Filming on The Wash Over the summer we had a report of unauthorised filming activities on the saltmarsh at Holbeach – we have undertaken an investigation of the incident and have contacted both the landowner and the film company so that they are now aware of the correct process i.e. asking Natural England for a consent. We are considering sending out a reminder to owner/ occupiers on the process that they need to follow in similar situations and for any other projects that may cover The Wash. Natural England uses a Film Locations Management Company (Locality online) who have, since this case came to light, contacted the main Funding Bodies such as Creative England to pass on the correct process to their members.

Boston Haven

We have been contacted for our initial advice on Boston Haven flood embankment works from the EA National Environmental Assessment Service. The project is only at the tender stage, but works are expected to start next year. I have suggested they contact the RSBP as the works will lie adjacent to the RSPB Frampton site.

Litter Pick

Natural England (with the EA) undertook a litter pick along out stretches of the River Nene and across the upper saltmarsh/ sea defence along the Sir Peter Scott footpath. We collected 4 large building sacks worth of rubbish (a lot of plastic but a lot of glass bottles which had been left on site rather than washed up with the tide) which we were kindly allowed to use a skip donated by Black Sluice IDB.

9.0 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 13 March at 7pm**. Georgia has offered the space at the Boston Barrier Hub down Marsh Lane (near the Audi garage), which the advisory group has agreed to try for the next meeting as there is better parking. Details to follow.

ABSTRACT TITLE: RAISING WRANGLE SEA BANKS, LINCOLNSHIRE

Author: Peter Bateson BA FCCA MBA, Chief Executive, Witham Fourth District IDB, UK

Summary

This paper is a CASE STUDY on the above project. The presentation will demonstrate the issues and the unique partnership arrangement and funding sources that contributed to this important coastal flood protection asset. The presentation will include a three-minute drone video footage along the entire 5.8km project area during construction, together with some still photographs.

The main Issues:

Many East Coast catchments in the UK were reclaimed from peat and salt marshes over the last 400 years and at the above location, there is only one single sea bank built in 1810, providing the sole defence against the North Sea.

Climate change since 1810 has resulted in several breaches of the banks, the most significant in terms of loss of life in 1953, but again in 1978 and most recently in 2013. This risk is further exacerbated by the East Coast sinking by an estimated 0.4 to 0.7mm per year (Durham University, 2009).

Coastal catchments along the East Coast of Lincolnshire tend to be rural and as such, do not have the businesses and domestic properties required to trigger and compete for flood defence grant funding, making the affordability of large scale projects difficult. As a result, no single Risk Management Authority (RMA) would be able to deliver this project.

The Sea Banks around The Wash are maintained by the Environment Agency (EA) and a survey of the Banks in 2012 had identified a 5.8km length of bank at Wrangle in Lincolnshire as being the most vulnerable. In places the banks were less than 6.0 metres. Similar EA managed projects on the Humber Banks suggested that the COST/BENEFIT ratio produced by improving the defences at this rural location, would not result in sufficient funding.

Harnessing the stakeholders:

A fresh approach was required that harnessed all of the stakeholders that would benefit from the improved standard of protection that a higher sea defence would offer. The stakeholders identified were:

- The EA, who maintain the defences and wanted them to be improved
- Witham Fourth District IDB (W4IDB), the Drainage Board that manages water levels and pumping stations behind the sea banks
- Landowners, who farm behind the sea banks
- The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) who were keen to promote economic growth, facilitated by a higher standards of flood protection
- Natural England, who are responsible for maintaining the SSSI and UNESCO RAMSAR status of the adjacent saltmarsh in The Wash
- Cattle owners and herdsman, who graze the saltmarsh and need access across the bank to organic pastures behind the banks at high tide
- The public who regularly walk along the sea bank

The EA approached W4IDB to lead a project which would utilise their close relationship with landowners and other partners and the ability to procure a local contractor to deliver the project. This process began in 2014 and preliminary discussions resulted in an outline scheme being promoted for funding applications.

The Objectives of the scheme:

The original objectives of the scheme were to re-instate the bank to its original design standard of 6.5 metres and to create at least 5 hectares of improved habitat by taking land out of agricultural production.

A competitive OJEU tender process would be used to ensure the project costs were minimised. DEFRA funding of £1.5M was sought to achieve this and landowners were approached to give up to 40 linear metres of land behind the sea banks, to provide the spoil for construction. The cost of carting spoil to site was uneconomic and the value of this in-kind contribution is £200K

Through the LEP, an additional £0.5M was targeted under European ERDF funding to add an additional 0.5 metres to the banks. The LEP's economic growth agenda necessitated a much higher standard of protection, to give agri-businesses the confidence to invest for the long term in the area. Due to the UK's EU exit decision in 2016, this funding was only available for a limited time.

The intention was that the project would therefore be completed with 100% grant funding as W4IDB did not have any funds available, but the significant leadership and project management time required would be provided at no cost.

Project Outcomes

The bank construction works began in April 2018 and were completed on 28 September, and subject to the establishment of grass on the banks over the next 12 months, the new bank is now providing increased levels of protection for 3,500 Hectares of prime agricultural land and 460 properties.

Over 5 hectares of habitat has been created and the new bank will form part of the UK's National Coastal Path once this is established by 2020.

Before:



After:



Conclusion and recommendations

The true partnership nature of this project demonstrates that a scheme can be delivered within the funding constraints imposed by the UK government and this establishes an important precedent for raising the height of other sea banks along the East Coast of England.