



**Boston Advisory Group meeting:** 1900-2100 Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018

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

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

**1. WNNMP**

- Wild Seas Week
- Recreational disturbance
- Research: the benefits of The Wash saltmarshes
- Friskney Sea Lane Access Working Group

**2. Coastal Site Manager's updates**

**3. Eastern-IFCA**

- Development of fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas
- Community Voice Method project update
- Marine Protection update
- Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning

**4. Natural England**

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

**5. Witham Fourth IDB**

- Wrangle Sea Banks

**6. Environment Agency**

- Boston Barrier

**7. Date of the next meeting**

**8. 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://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](mailto: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 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.

**Boston Advisory Group meeting: 19:00-21:00 Thursday 14 June 2018**

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

**Attendees:**

Project Manager	Sam Lew
Chair	Bryan Bowles
Deputy Chair/NFU	Andrew Roughton
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Tammy Smalley
	Kev Wilson
RSPB	John Badley
Witham Fourth IDB	Ed Johnson
Eastern IFCA	Stephen Thompson
	Rebecca Treacy
Boston Belle	Rodney Bowles
Wildfowlers	Tim Bee
	Trevor Amos
	Tom Holland
	Tony Ashton
	Graham Wall
Secretary	Rachel Marriott

**Apologies:**

Environment Agency	Mark Robinson
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Dave Miller
RAF Holbeach	Christa Lawrence
Boston Witham Sailing Club	Ceri Morgan



## **Welcome and apologies:**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were given.

## **Minutes of the last meeting agreed:**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed, with the attendee list amended to show that Trevor Amos was present and Peter Clayton was not.

## **1.0 The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership**

### **1.1 Wild Seas Week**

Sam has organised Wild Seas Week, with approximately 50 marine-themed events taking place between 3-12 August 2018. This follows on from the original Wash Week created by Tammy. The supporting flyers, website and social media campaign have all been launched, but there is still the opportunity to add more events. Graham has a room booked at the Anglian Hotel and there is still room for more stands if anyone is interested. Tammy requested space for a LWT stand and Sam would consider a Marine Partnership stand. The leaflets for the events have been sent to the tourist information centres in the area and others and Tammy has distributed them to LWT sites and will be taking some to the Lincolnshire Show.

EIFCA would like to organise a litter pick around Kirton Marsh. Black Sluice have said they will put a skip out to collect the waste. The wildfowlers present stated that spring is better time of year for a litter pick. In early spring there aren't the nesting birds to disturb and the vegetation is much lower. They have experienced issues previously when trying to get the litter collected or when taking it to the council's waste collection sites. A skip at Black Sluice would be very helpful for the wildfowlers for their future litter pick events. They have noticed in recent years that there is a big issue with syringes (often left in plastic bottles) so would advise caution when enlisting the help of the general public. It is worth checking in advance if the council will take the litter collected – the wildfowlers have been advised that if they separated the waste into clear plastic bags then they would. The Marine Conservation Society advertise on their website that they will organise the collection of recycling from a beach clean. The EIFCA event would be part of the 'Litter Free Coast and Sea' campaign, which is why they want to do it as a public event so that they can raise awareness. Sam is trying to raise funds for a volunteer co-ordinator for the Litter Free Coast and Sea campaign. Tammy will contact the Head of Waste at the council to co-ordinate with the litter picks to ensure the council accepts the waste.

### **1.2 Recreational disturbance**

The recording system was initially set up by Peter Rushmer. Sam is now planning to add a simple reporting tool to the WNNMP website, which will provide the opportunity to record the date, location, time and the incident with opportunity to upload photos. They have approached the King's Lynn Housing Levy scheme to assist with funding for the system, and this will be confirmed within the next couple of weeks if successful. It will then take a month to turn the project around and get the new system set up.

RSPB Frampton and Freiston have been sending in data for 2016 and 2017 on the old system, and Titchwell also has the raw data available. At a site level, they keep a hard copy of a spreadsheet in the office so that volunteers can add information, and it is the responsibility of the staff to upload this data. Kev added that Gibraltar Point also keeps a record of disturbances.

The new system will be password protected, and when the data is added a PDF of the records can be created.

Sam is also updating the Best Practice guide, and a pilot dog behaviour campaign is being planned at Holkham and Gibraltar Point.

### **1.3 Research: the benefits of the Wash saltmarshes**

A study is underway at Gibraltar Point, Wrangle, Wainfleet and Friskney salt marshes to map the uses of The Wash. Visual maps of the area are beneficial. Salt marshes have been found to have a diverse range of benefits to society. The results of the study, along with interactive maps will be available on the Partnership's website.

### **1.4 Annual Management Plan 2018/19**

Sam is currently updating the annual management plan, which provides an annual synthesis of Relevant Authority activities within The Wash. It monitors species that need to be protected and assesses whether activities affect their habitats.

## **2.0 EIFCA**

### **2.1 Development of fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas**

The formal document wasn't ready to accompany the agenda, but will be sent out with the minutes (please see Appendix 1)

The Wash Shrimp fisheries have marine accreditation for the protection of the species. EIFCA are looking at mitigation measures and considering the closure of some areas and control on the type of gear being used. All vessels in The Wash are UK vessels and are mainly from Boston.

At the Cromer Shoal MCZ they are assessing crab and lobster fisheries. 95% of The Wash is under protection, but this is dependent on the feature being protected rather than the species. EIFCA are looking at the sustainability measures of the actual fisheries. A Habitats Regulation Assessment is needed for the EIFCA survey.

Mussel fishing has been authorised this year but there hasn't been much take up.

There are good stocks of cockles in The Wash, but they are down on the previous year. There is still no conclusion to the low meat yields in cockles seen in 2017, but so far this year meat yields seem higher – this will be evidenced more when they start to be landed. There have been no reports of such clear water so far this year. They are, however, seeing lots of dead cockle shells, but this is not surprising after seeing such high numbers of cockles in the sea over the last few

years. The high cockle yield has been seen around the country, and natural variance is to be expected. It is likely that the storms seen last winter had an impact on the number of dead cockles seen.

## **2.2 Community Voice Method project update**

Rebecca is hoping to engage people more through social media, using the hashtag #ifcacvm on twitter alongside images. Sam Hornby's mapping is now available on the Community Voice website and there will be a live feed available. The MMO recently advertised for new board members, of which there are two positions available. The decision on the selection will be released soon.

## **2.3 Paralytic shellfish poisoning**

EIFCA continue to advise people not to pick up dead organisms, in particular starfish, due to incidents of paralytic shellfish poisoning, resulting in the death of at least two dogs. This impacted a wide area, not just the EIFCA region. There has not been as much concern about the issue lately.

## **3.0 Natural England**

### **3.1 Conservation advice package**

Condition assessments for The Wash and North Norfolk coast have now been completed and the results will be distributed to the advisory groups.

### **3.2 English Coastal Path**

The Skegness to Mablethorpe section of the coastal path should hopefully be open this autumn. Gates will need to be installed along the route along with a board walk at Saltfleet.

The Sutton Bridge to Skegness section of the coastal path is currently with the Secretary of State and is still in the decision process. There have been 6 representations and two objections. It will be approximately six months before we learn if it has been approved, and then Natural England will assist landowners and the council in implementing the path. £50k is required for the upgrade of the bridge across the River Steeping. The earliest completion date is summer 2019, but this is ambitious.

### **3.3 Offshore windfarms**

The Hornsea Project 3 windfarm planning application has now been submitted and the consultation is now open if you wish to comment. Lou Burton adds that the majority of the Cromer Shoal MCZ has now been avoided in the plans but it still goes through the SAC. The data available is poor and there is not enough seabed evidence to determine if the pipes should go through the seabed at a greater distance from the MCZ. By avoiding the MCZ it is disturbing a much greater area of the seabed. It will hit land at Weybourne, west of Sheringham.

Race Bank has entered the operational phase and they have applied for a marine application for access and maintenance, which is a 100% greater than the previous application submitted. Natural England cannot support this. Due to running silt issues that cables are no longer buried

to a sufficient depth. They are waiting for post construction survey results. Graham commented that this will always be a problem due to the underlying geology.

Stephen asked if the 2000 to 14000m of remedial work is full or partial repair? And is it a one-off activity or an ongoing activity which could have an impact on EIFCA fisheries.

### **3.4 Wildfowling**

The wildfowling consent licenses are up for renewal. Natural England are trying to move towards a more long-term way of working. Gillian would like to know if clubs are supportive of this? Natural England would like to emphasise that they recognise the importance of wildfowling and have no intention of stopping it.

On 26 April there was a workshop/consultation led by Time consultants. Five main areas were covered, including the legal framework and looking at 5-10 year plans. The draft legislation is due by the end of July along with revised guidance documents. Information will be shared with the minutes alongside Gillian's contact details. The wildfowling commented that nothing has been shared at a local level yet as all contact is being carried out at a national level, which they are happy with. However, their license (South Lincs wildfowling) is due on 10 July, and there is no way that the national framework is going to be completed by then. BASC have negotiated a short-term mechanism with agreement based on the old licence terms to cover the interim.

Trevor commented that the Gedney Drove End wildfowling have been granted a five-year extension on their license. John added that the RSPB are concerned as they are very close to their September deadline. The number of birds shot at Frampton and Freiston has increased, but so has the bird population. What is the wider context of this population increase? John asked if there can be a one-year extension from Gillian to cover them? Natural England confirmed that yes there can be. John doesn't want to be in a position where an agreement hasn't been reached by the September deadline, but would like to continue to maintain a good relationship between the RSPB and wildfowling, and Natural England and LWT. Trevor said that he had been informed that if you didn't want any alterations to the existing license, Natural England would extend by up to five years. There is some concern in the room that the new agreements won't be ready in time. John wants to see a contingency plan in place.

The Wash Wader ringing group's consent to carry out surveys is also up for renewal. They target 11 species and consent letters have already been sent out to land owners. Bryan asked why do we need to go through consent for bird ringing as he feels it is a waste of time. Farmers would be happy just to consult with the bird ringers themselves.

Kev asked if there was any feedback on the WEBS counts? Natural England will find out. Kev added that the Wash Wader ringing group do an excellent job, but it would be great if Jim, the WEBS count co-ordinator, could send the WEBS count date to the ringing group to avoid clashing/disturbance prior to the count.

## 4.0 Witham Fourth IDB

### 4.1 Wrangle Sea Banks

Ed Johnson, Assistant Engineer with the Witham Fourth IDB, gave a presentation and update on the Wrangle Sea Banks works.

Bryan and the wildfowling have been affected by the sea banks works, which are a response to the damage caused by the tidal surge of 2013. There was a risk to the wider public, and the bank in some places was the lowest in the country. The Wash Frontages group, a farming lobby, highlighted the risk to the local area following the surge. Historically there have been several problems caused by tidal surges, most notably in 1978 and 1982. However, there were three major breaches in 2013. One was at Slippery Gowt, Boston and two were at Jubilee Bank, Friskney, where 1000 acres of farmland were affected.

Three options were considered: leave the banks as they improve the banks by raising and widening to a height of wither 6.5m ODN or 7.0m ODN. The preferred option was option 3, raising and widening the bank to 7.0m ODN, from Wrangle pumping station south towards Leverton. There is no encroachment into the Wash due to the number of designations in place, instead the borrow area is on the landward side contributed by the local farmers and landowners. Without this contribution, the business case would not have got off the ground. It has been a partnership approach from the beginning, with EU funding received in time thanks to Peter Bates' work.

The work will have a significant benefit - 450 residential properties were affected, and 3400 hectares of Grade 1 agricultural land was damaged by the breach. There is a £27m benefit to the area.

The project has a cost of £1.6m. £200k worth of land was contributed by landowners to provide the spoil. The Environment Agency provided £900k to raise the bank to 6m, with the EU providing an additional £500k to raise it to 7m. The Witham Fourth IDB are the lead risk management authority for the project and delivered the business case.

The project is being managed by Peter Brett Ass. And onsite construction is being carried out by D. Morgan contractors. The establishment of the banks will be carried out by the contractors, and in the long term, maintenance will be the landowners' responsibility. Work started on 16 April and involved an unexploded ordnance survey and the stripping of the soil. 9800m<sup>3</sup> of soil were required to improve the bank. The completion date is 31 August, a constraint provided by the EU funding, and so far, the project is on target.

What level of protection does this offer in Environment Agency terms? 6m will offer a 1 in 200 year flood protection. 7m allows for climate change over the next 50 years. In 2013, the water was at 5.8m (it was fortunate the wind changed direction when it did). In 1953 it was at 5.2m and in 1978 it was at 5.6m.

## **5.0 Environment Agency**

### **5.1 Boston Barrier**

The Environment Agency were unable to send anyone to provide an update. If they send a report electronically it will be added to the minutes.

## **6.0 Coastal site manager's updates**

### **6.1 Gibraltar Point**

The Bulldog Bank was breached significantly during the 2013 tidal surge. HR Walford are carrying out a feasibility study of what would happen if there was no bank in place. The results of this study will help to shape the shoreline management plan for the Skegness area for the Environment Agency. Until they have the results of the survey, the LWT can't put a significant part of the reserve back into a stewardship scheme, so the funding for that is on hold.

Before the flood, the freshwater marsh was a humid dune slack with over 30,000 southern marsh orchids. Post-flood, the orchids are still present but in significantly lower numbers. The question is how do they mitigate for the habitat loss if they don't replace the bank.

There have been a number of incidents of recreational disturbance, particularly by quad bikes and motorbikes throughout the months of May and June. There were six police call out incidents over a period of ten days. It is getting worse and is a problem throughout Lincolnshire.

They also have a problem with badgers on the bank – they would need to be excluded from an area of the bank while important work was carried out, but to do this would involve ripping out an ancient hedgerow which supports little egret and heron.

### **6.2 Frampton and Freiston**

So far they have had 54,000 visitors at Frampton, up 10% on previous year, and is their busiest year yet. This year from 1 April they introduced an entrance charge at Frampton. Previously there was a voluntary car park charge which generated approximately £2k per year, but with the new charge they hope to generate between £8-10k. It is now £2 per adult, and members have free admission. They will be introducing a car park charge at Freiston. The RSPB have 70% member visits at Frampton/Freiston, with seasonal variations showing more family payers during the summer months.

Numbers of breeding redshanks are declining but they're doing well on the wet grassland. They have been affected by predators. Fox management is very carefully done.

John is now covering Snettisham and Titchwell, and has been since October. The RSPB are just starting the recruitment process there for a senior warden. There is a new hide going in at Snettisham, designed by a Norwegian architect. It has been crowd-funded and seats 80 people.

The RSPB have been working with Boston College and their catering department. They would like to do a Wash Seafood event and produce a recipe book to go with it. 98% of Wash shellfish

is exported – shocking figures as local usage and appreciation is exceptionally low. This is a multi-organisational project, with RSPB, NE, EIFCA and LWT on board. The course will start at Boston College in September 2018. They hope to host events to celebrate sustainable seafood at Frampton and Gibraltar Point.

## **7.0 A.O.B.**

### **7.1 Tranche 3 MCZ consultation**

Tammy would like to make the group aware that the consultation for Tranche 3 of the MCZs has now been launched. There are 41 proposed sites around the UK, none of which are in Lincolnshire waters, even though Silver Pit is unique within the UK.

### **7.2 Future agenda item**

Hull, Leeds and York Universities have invited the LWT to go into a project bid to fund three PHD placements. A list of potential marine research projects is required.

### **7.3 Windfarms**

If any of the group would like to know more about the noise impact of windfarms on marine animals, please let Tammy know. The effect on cetaceans in the North Sea is of high concern.

### **7.4 Grazing on the sea banks**

Andrew asked why does NE allow the Environment Agency to mow the grass on the sea banks, doesn't this have a negative effect on wildlife? The EA are running their own pollinator project, which includes looking at the frequency at which it is being mown. When the grass is cut, it helps maintain the root thickness which keeps the asset in good condition as they don't want scrub to develop or animal to burrow. They have had fatalities in the past when managing the banks so it needs to be mown frequently to keep visibility good. The EA are keen to see grazing on the banks. Tim commented that it is unfortunate that they mow the banks during peak nesting time. At Gibraltar Point they asked for the mowing scheme to be relaxed for this reason, but they need to be able to show they are monitoring the condition of the banks. There was a lengthy discussion on the effects of cattle trampling nesting birds.

## **8.0 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15 November 2018, at 7pm at the Boston Witham Sailing Club.