

# Key milestones The Sussex IFCA Nearshore Trawling Byelaw 2019

## 1959 1987 1990 1995-98 2001-03 2005 2010

### Background

Evidence of expansive kelp forests from historical diver surveys and anecdotal stories. Anglers become interested in netting and trawling restrictions. Highly productive static gear commercial fisheries associated with kelp. Anglers become interested in netting restrictions.



### Baseline shift

Council reports expansive kelp across West Sussex and a large storm washes kelp ashore making local people unhappy, the issue is discussed in parliament.

### Increased fishing inshore

Advances in fishing technology and changes in Sea Fisheries Committee (SFC) legislation lead to increased inshore trawling with larger trawlers allowed inside the 3 mile limit. Divers record decline in kelp across the Sussex district and static gear fishermen observe a decline in commercial species off west Sussex.

### Changes for trawling

Inshore pair trawlers allowed to target bass and bream west of Shoreham-by-Sea in the late spring and early summer. SFC District extended out to the 6 mile limit and a New Vessel Length Byelaw prohibits boats over 14m in the District\*. In 1998 a trawling exclusion byelaw that prohibits trawling from 58 km<sup>2</sup> of the District between May and October is introduced recognising presence of juvenile flatfish species.

\*Grandfather rights were given to vessels over 14m already operating in the area

### Monitoring & Enforcement

Significant changes in SFC management & leadership result in a strategic approach to the collection of marine habitat and fishing activity data to inform future management. Local fishermen and divers go to parliament to raise concerns about trawling.

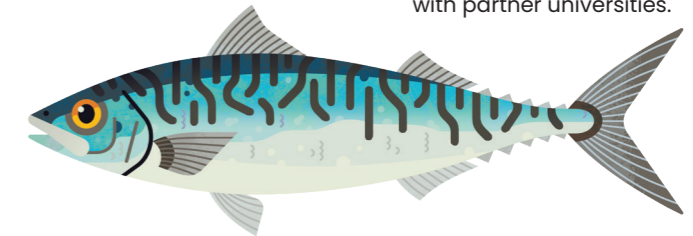
In 2003 the new Patrol Vessel 'Watchful' becomes operational. Patrol & enforcement increased and there are prosecutions for vessels over 14m found fishing in the District.

### Policy shift

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment values ecosystems and the services they provide to human well-being. As a result, ecosystem services were increasingly considered within environmental management.

### Sussex IFCA steps up Research

Sussex IFCA is formed and continues habitat & fishing effort research alongside development of long term juvenile fish survey. Habitat mapping projects undertaken with partner universities.



## October 2018 July 2018 December 2017 January 2017 2016 2012 2012

### Final management options

Draft final management options are considered by the Authority. Towed camera surveys carried out to determine baseline seabed quality before restrictions. A natural capital approach was applied, and a condition assessment model was utilised.

### Management options

Analysis of the informal consultation is prepared and shared with Sussex IFCA members through the Committee structure and further evidence is provided alongside the draft management options.

### Informal consultation

Information about potential management interventions were shared online and stakeholders were consulted. Feedback was collected through online and paper surveys, seven public drop-in sessions and targeted communication. Stakeholders responded through email and letters and a report collated and analysed these responses.

### Collating Evidence

Evidence to support the need for management intervention on trawling is collated. This includes data about fishing activity, marine habitats and available evidence about potential future recovery. Information Sheets produced to support informal consultation.

### Byelaw review phase

Sussex IFCA reviews towed gear management and proposes new trawling restrictions with the aim to allow the natural capital of valuable sensitive sites inshore to reach its full potential and deliver improved ecosystem services. Particular emphasis is placed on recovering productive static gear fisheries that have declined. New netting management restrictions are considered in parallel.

### Management approach

Using extensive inshore habitat data, Sussex IFCA systematically examine the type and extent of natural capital assets within the District, their sensitivity, diversity, associated ecosystem services and value. The angling community begin a three-year survey looking at juvenile fish along the Sussex coast.

### Management review

Sussex IFCA carry out a public consultation to help identify management priorities alongside their statutory duties to introduce management on MPAs and review byelaws. Local anglers and some commercial fishers identified in this consultation that nearshore trawling was an issue in the west.

## March 2019 September 2019 September 2019 2020 March 2021

### Draft byelaw

Management option and draft byelaw text options presented to the Authority members by officers. Members of commercial industry present at the meeting. Independent economic analysis of two pair trawler teams carried out. Only small remnants of kelp remains, and the owner Big Wave productions offers to make a film about it.

### Byelaw made

Quarterly authority meeting the byelaw was MADE with commercial industry present. Big Wave productions makes a film about the kelp in Sussex which is narrated by Sir David Attenborough. It is shared with the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Marine Conservation Society, Blue Marine Foundation and the IFCA.

### Formal consultation

Launched on the 12th September 2019 and closed on 10th October as outlined by Defra. Sussex IFCA provide information online, post (on request) and at seven drop-in sessions. 'Help Our Kelp' campaigns for the byelaw involving media and lobbying the government. Sussex Wildlife Trust sets up a web page linking to the consultation. There are 2,500 responses.

### Quality assurance & Confirmation

In January the Authority approve the final text of the Byelaw following examination and consideration of consultation responses. In February, the Byelaw and impact assessment sent to Defra and MMO for quality Assurance. Background research about seabed quality continues. The 'Help Our Kelp' campaign continues through school engagement, talking with local fishermen and helping anglers write letters of support. Local MPs receive letters of support and check on the progress of the byelaw within government.

### Implementation

The Secretary of State signs off the byelaw making it enforceable in law. The Authority immediately issues comprehensive guidance to fishers on the new Byelaw for enforcement purposes.

Compliance response is excellent with no infringements detected to date (Jan 2023).

## Future

There are several future plans as a result of the byelaw including monitoring and enforcement by the IFCA. The formation of the Sussex Kelp Restoration Project who will fund additional social and environmental research. Big Wave productions will produce further films about kelp. A citizen's charity is aiming to use volunteers to replant kelp along the coast.

Local authorities are interested in a Sussex Bay Marine Park used to engage local people with the ocean and investigate carbon storage of kelp. It has also been a catalyst for looking into other marine management issues such as sedimentation and national authorities are keen to observe the recovery of the trawling ban area compared to MPAs.

