



# Project Inshore

Working toward an environmentally sustainable future for English Inshore fisheries

Stage Three  
project update  
March 2015



## Acknowledgements

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Shellfish  
Association of Great Britain



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*Port to plate in 24 hours*

Sustainable Fisheries Fund  
Melanie Siggs



Working in association with:

Cornwall IFCA  
Devon & Severn IFCA  
Eastern IFCA  
Isles of Scilly IFCA  
Kent & Essex IFCA  
North Eastern IFCA  
Northumberland IFCA  
North Western IFCA  
Southern IFCA  
Sussex IFCA

Below is a link to the Project Inshore database:  
<http://msc.solidproject.co.uk/msc-project-inshore>



# Executive Report

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Shellfish  
Association of Great Britain

## About Seafish

Seafish was founded in 1981 by an Act of Parliament and supports all sectors of the seafood industry for a sustainable, profitable future.

Seafish is committed to the sustainable and efficient harvesting of those resources on which the UK seafood industry depends, the protection of marine ecosystems, and the development of marine aquaculture based on sustainable resource utilisation and best environmental practice.



## About MSC

Set up in 1997 to recognise and reward sustainable fishing, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an independent, market-based fishery certification and ecolabelling programme based on collaboration, credibility and rigour.

The MSC's distinctive blue fish tick ecolabel and fishery certification programme contribute to the health of the world's oceans. It does this by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood. The MSC works with its partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

## About SAGB

The Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) assists and promotes the sustainable development of the shellfish industry in the UK. The SAGB, a membership organisation, represents the view of the shellfisheries, both wild-caught and cultivated, in debates with Government, other users of the sea and environmental organisations. SAGB is striving to ensure a more viable and sustainable future for UK shellfish operations. With the increasing legislation and financial constraints facing the industry, their role is more vital than ever.

Alongside their lobbying activities, the SAGB also promotes the sustainability of UK shellfish, the health benefits of eating shellfish, brings together buyers and sellers of shellfish and promotes the story of this magnificent industry to the public.





## Foreword





## Introduction

Project Inshore is an ambitious initiative led by Seafish, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) which seeks to work towards an environmentally sustainable future for English inshore fisheries. It was officially launched on 8th June 2012 coinciding with World Oceans Day. The then UK Fisheries Minister, Richard Benyon, noted at the time that Project Inshore “... should help to ensure that our inshore fleet can continue to flourish, that fish stocks are managed sustainably and our marine environment is given the protection it needs”. This project carried out MSC pre-assessments for an extensive range of fisheries around the English coast. The results of these assessments have formed the basis for Strategic Sustainability Reviews for English inshore fisheries to provide a road map to guide future management decisions.

Project Inshore uses the MSC pre assessment process strategically as a gap analysis framework to review the current status and management within a fishery. The MSC standard for sustainable fisheries provides a useful indicator of where a fishery is in relation to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. It also provides a structure to guide the development of future management action, which should lead to a fishery that is well managed.

The funding for the project comes from a diverse range of sources including the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), the Sustainable Fisheries Fund and industry (Seafish, UK retailers and processors). Other partners in the project include the Marine Stewardship Council, Shellfish Association of Great Britain and Seaweb’s Seafood Choices. Acoura was appointed to undertake Project Inshore.

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) (previously the Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee) piloted a multi species fishery methodology in 2010 with its ‘Navigating the Future’ Inshore Fisheries Sustainability Pilot (Dapling et al., 2010). Navigating the Future utilised the MSC pre-assessment criteria to evaluate the performance of 26 local inshore fisheries.. Project Inshore has carried this model forward on a nationwide scale for key commercial fisheries operating within the remaining IFCA districts.







## Approach to Project Inshore - Stage 1 & 2 recap

Project Inshore consists of four stages which progress from a broad overview of English inshore fisheries to strategic targeted action plans as follows:

**Stage 1:** Stage One involved collecting available fisheries data to profile the English inshore fishing sector and enable some preliminary analysis. This stage of the study formed the foundation to inform subsequent considerations such as the selection of the fisheries to be pre-assessed. Species-specific profiles were produced based on published information and data obtained primarily from MMO and the IFCAs.

Fisheries were selected for further investigation and pre-assessment during Stage 2 of the project using the following criteria:

- Importance of the fishery based on volume and value of national and inshore landings
- Whether part of the fishery already certified

- Whether the species is an important retained species in certain target fisheries
- Whether the fishery has been important during the past five consecutive years
- Whether the fishery is important to specific IFCAs
- Whether there is potential for future fisheries to be developed for this species

In terms of value, species with landings worth less than £100,000 were not selected, with the following exceptions:

- The fishery is locally important (i.e. concentrated in only one or two areas)
- The species is nationally important
- The species is an important retained species in other target fisheries; or
- Landings of the species have had significant growth in recent years i.e. it is an emerging or important future fishery

**Stage 2:** Pre-assessment was carried out of English fisheries against the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard. The key output of Stage 2 provided a preliminary indication of the state of readiness for each fishery under the MSC programme (involving over 400 different species, stock and gear combinations).

**With Stage Two complete, a comprehensive online database of Project Inshore Results is now available. This database contains a wealth of information and is freely available for use with the aim to be used as a tool by fishery managers.**

The database can be searched by species, area or gear type of interest. It can be further refined to any combination of these variables simply by ticking the boxes. The results of over 400 pre-assessments are readily available for any interested party. The Pre-assessments were carried out in 2013 with a view to be updated in the near future.







The database is available at: <http://msc.solidproject.co.uk/msc-project-inshore.aspx>

In total, around 50 fisheries (or ‘Units of Certification’) were highlighted as having short and medium term opportunities to move forward to full MSC assessment. However, the majority of remaining English inshore fisheries considered in this pre-assessment would not be currently expected to meet the MSC standard. The implementation of management sufficient to demonstrate the sustainability required of an MSC assessment requires a more long term programme of work.

Where a fishery is shown not to be recommended for full assessment, this does not necessarily mean that the fishery is unsustainable. In many cases there is simply insufficient information about the stock to determine its status and the management process is not currently structured to allow informed and adaptive sustainable stock exploitation.

The stocks currently assessed as being best placed to move forward for MSC full assessment are generally EU pressure stocks, managed

by means of a Long Term Management Plan. Of the resources managed at a more local or inshore level, those where management is clearly devolved to a local level by means of a Regulating or Hybrid Order are most likely to meet the requirements for informed precautionary adaptive management.

Where perceived gaps in management occurs within IFCA waters, this does not mean that the IFCA are failing to manage the stocks. In most cases resolving the gaps in management will require a more multidimensional approach, recognising that fish cross jurisdictional boundaries. A significant initial challenge for the management for English inshore resources (in particular for non-pressure stocks) is the definition of stock boundaries. Once determined at a national level these will in turn inform the most appropriate jurisdictional scale at which to manage stocks. IFCA stock management priorities would then be expected to focus on the more local stocks. Where stocks are considered more ‘national’ or cross boundary it may be expected that stock management science might be provided at a national level.

## Project Inshore MSC Pre-Assessment Database

For more information about MSC Certification Requirements please refer to the MSC website - <http://www.msc.org/about-us/standards/methodologies/fam>

SG 60: The sustainable level and minimum criterion-level benchmark score for a fishery achieving certification MSC criteria for sustainable fisheries. Note, the aggregate scores for a Principle must be over 80 for a fishery to be certified. Conditions of certification would be applied to improve scores.

SG 80: The benchmark score above which a fishery would expect no conditions upon certification. Equivalent to industry best practice.

SG 100: A fishery that is theoretically perfect.

The full Project Inshore reports are available from the Seafish website - <http://www.seafish.org/fishermen/fishing/project-inshore/project-reports>

IFCA Management Authorities	Species [Select All]	Stock	Gear Types
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchovy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bass <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black Sea bream <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blonde ray <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown crab <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown shrimp <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carpet shell clam <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cockle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cod <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crawfish <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cuckoo ray	<input type="checkbox"/> Bay of Biscay <input type="checkbox"/> Bristol Channel <input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Sea <input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Sea (VII e-k) <input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Sea (VII f/g) <input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Sea and West of Scotland (VI VII a-c, e-k) <input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Sea and West of Scotland (VIIb-k and VIIIa,b,d) <input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Sea and Western Channel (VII e-g) <input type="checkbox"/> Central North Sea <input type="checkbox"/> Channel	<input type="checkbox"/> Beam trawl <input type="checkbox"/> Demersal trawl (TR1: >100mm) <input type="checkbox"/> Demersal trawl (TR2: 80-100mm) <input type="checkbox"/> Drift net <input type="checkbox"/> Encircling net <input type="checkbox"/> Gill net <input type="checkbox"/> Hand collection <input type="checkbox"/> Hand raking <input type="checkbox"/> Hand, rod and line <input type="checkbox"/> Hooks & line (trolling)



### Stage 3: Strategic Sustainability Reviews

Stage 3 involved the development of bespoke Strategic Sustainability Reviews for each English Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority. On writing the IFCA specific reports, it became clear that there were some stocks which were not covered by management at an IFCA level. These were usually migratory species or stocks that straddled the boundary between inshore and offshore (6nm). When a species is not part of an ICES assessment and therefore managed under the EU quota system, and it is often caught outside of the inshore boundary, Project Inshore identified that management responsibility is unclear. We therefore needed a national report to cover the sustainability of these stocks and highlight the necessity for defining the responsibility. The scientists involved also created a Guide to Stock Assessment and Setting Harvest Control Rules.

*This suite of reports can be used as a tool to facilitate English inshore fisheries moving towards a sustainable level and will help national bodies identify management gaps.*





## Stage 3: National Results

### Addressing management gaps:

Stage 3 first considers the question of where responsibility lies for addressing gaps in stock status, management or information. It highlighted that, in many cases, the exact responsibility for management is poorly defined and open to different interpretation.

Where indicators of EU management are absent (i.e. ICES advice and EU quota), there is an important task to identify who should lead on addressing management gaps. In some cases this may necessitate a bilateral agreement between member states, in other cases this may require the lead of a single member state (i.e. DEFRA) and in yet other cases it may be possible to develop meaningful adaptive management at a more local scale (i.e. IFCA). Many species are in need of boundary definitions in order to disseminate management responsibility.

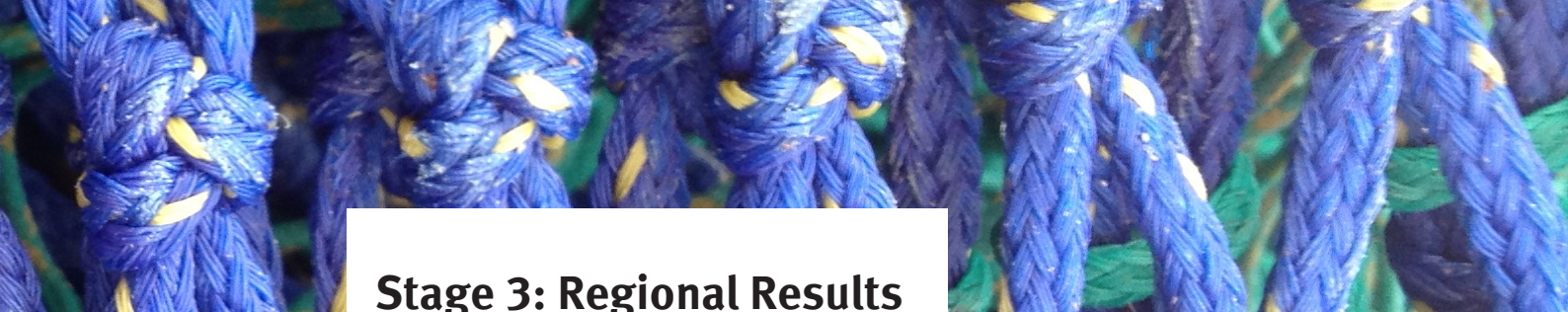
For stocks that straddle boundaries, the IFCA still clearly plays an important role both as a key stakeholder and as a partner in management and remains responsible for enforcement within their jurisdiction. Additionally the IFCAs have the power to act to further safeguard the resource, should they wish, such as through the introduction of technical measures. However, it should be recognised that the overall success of stock management – namely whether or not the stock is overexploited – is beyond the IFCA's control. It should be noted that local measures that apply disproportionately to local inshore vessels and do not result in overall stock benefits, are likely to be unpopular and may even be counter-productive, in particular in reducing support for management measures on other stocks where the IFCA is best placed to lead on stock level management.

### Centralised data management:

Knowledge of stock status may require time-series data and therefore require a long-term plan to develop an information base before the MSC standard can be met. There is no centralised data management for inshore fisheries, accessible to all relevant agencies, which undermines effort at management.







## Stage 3: Regional Results

The stage 2 pre-assessment found that some stocks fished in the English Inshore are already 'well managed' and fished sustainably, indicating that they could proceed with full MSC assessment. For these fisheries, the reports highlight who should lead on management, the steps needed in preparation for full assessment and the benefits of increasing the size of the client group.

Most of the stocks recommended for full MSC assessment are managed under EU quotas, with regular and routine scientific advice (as provided by ICES) and ideally managed under a Long Term Management Plan. Other fisheries considered to be at or close to the MSC standard are some spatially restricted inshore bivalve fisheries (e.g. cockle or mussel fisheries). IFCA's are best placed to lead on management of these through mechanisms such as regulating orders. Some shellfish however, are already subject to national or EU level management such as scallops and Nephrops.



### Delivering efficiencies in certification:

If there is a decision to proceed to full MSC assessment there are benefits to the fisheries to increase the size of the client group and Unit of Certification (UoC). The proposed Unit of Certification (UoC) for full assessment should seek to be as big as possible – to include all fishing within a stock boundary using a specified gear. As such, in most cases IFCA's (or local fishery clients) which share a stock would benefit from pursuing MSC certification collectively. It is also worth noting that although different gears must be treated as different UoCs, these can be combined into a single assessment report – thus saving costs on site visits and surveillance.

**Increasing the certification so that it covers a number of fisheries can make MSC assessment more affordable for inshore fleets. The stage three reports have highlighted some examples of where this is a possibility:**

- For brown crab and lobster, CEFAS has recently defined stocks and provided stock assessment and it is appropriate to manage as joint management units with other IFCA's; one recommendation is for the SW England IFCA's (Southern, Devon and Severn, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly) to collaborate.
- All English demersal static gears in Celtic Sea and Western Channel that are in a position to meet the standard, including sole (trammel & drift net) and plaice (trammel), could be one certification.
- North Sea sole, plaice and haddock with static gear is another possible certification group (involving the Eastern, Kent & Essex, North Eastern and Northumberland).





	SO	DV	CO	SC	NW	NO	NE	EA	KE
Lobster	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	X
Whelk	x	x					x		X
Cockle					x			x	X
Oyster			x					x	X
Spider Crab			x	x					
Cuttlefish	x	x							
Mussel					x				X
Clam	X								
Crawfish				X					
Shrimp								x	

### Scoping exercise:

IFCAs are facing increasing demands on their time and resources with the management of European Marine Sites (EMS). IFCA-led fisheries management is therefore only likely to occur for priority species in the short to mid-term.

In order to inform this question, Project Inshore has worked with IFCAs in order to identify those fisheries in their region which are locally important, where there are management gaps, where management is not being addressed at a higher jurisdiction (i.e. DEFRA / EU) and finally, but importantly where fishery patterns or life history characteristics support a rationale to justify inshore management.

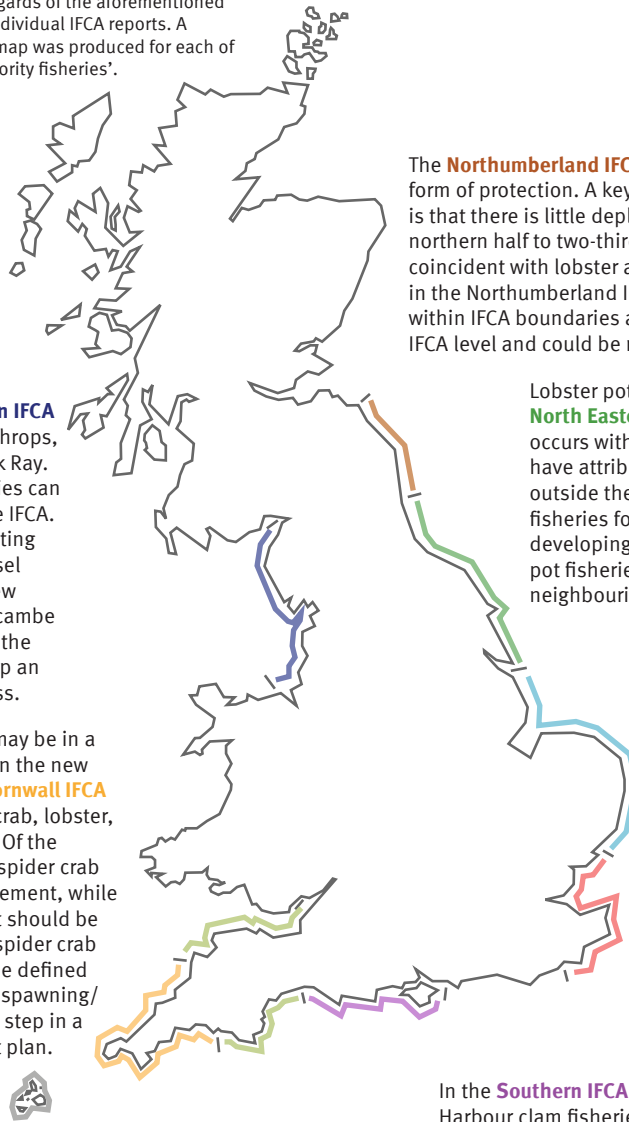
This diagram shows the species that were defined as priority for the IFCAs from the scoping exercise.





Each report is very detailed and area specific and all are available individually on the Project Inshore website. Here are some highlights from the regional reports:

For more information on the exact management measures recommended to IFCAs in regards of the aforementioned stocks, please refer to the individual IFCA reports. A detailed sustainability roadmap was produced for each of these 'high management priority fisheries'.



The most important inshore fisheries in The **North Western IFCA** are for cockles, mussels, Nephrops, Plaice, Lobster and Thornback Ray. Many of the significant fisheries can be effectively managed by the IFCA. In the NWIFCA, limited permitting is in place in cockle and mussel fisheries and the expected new regulating order for the Morecambe Bay area will further enhance the capacity of the IFCA to develop an inclusive management process.

In Cornwall the Fal Oyster Fishery may be in a good position for assessment when the new Regulating Order is in place. For **Cornwall IFCA** the priority species identified are crab, lobster, sea bass, scallop and spider crab. Of the priority species, crab, lobster and spider crab are more suited to IFCA-led management, while sea bass and scallop management should be developed at a national level. For spider crab stock management units need to be defined (including extent of migration and spawning/settlement behaviour) as an initial step in a stock specific fishery management plan.

The fisheries targeted by the **Isles of Scilly** fleet are recommended to join with others in the South West region for management. Priority species are the same as Cornwall, crab, lobster, sea bass, scallop and spider crab and a spider crab improvement project could be a collaborative effort.

The **Northumberland IFCA** has over half of its space under some form of protection. A key impact of conservation designations is that there is little deployment of mobile fishing gears in this northern half to two-thirds of the IFCA area – areas that are coincident with lobster and brown crab which are key fisheries in the Northumberland IFCA. These fisheries are almost totally within IFCA boundaries and hence management should be at the IFCA level and could be more adaptive than it currently is.

Lobster pot fisheries are of major importance within the **North Eastern IFCA** area. Most fishing targeting lobster occurs within 6nm of the coast. Other fisheries, which have attributes suitable for local management, extend outside the IFCA jurisdiction. These include large pot fisheries for brown crab, a small pot fishery for whelks. In developing a management regime for the NEIFCA lobster pot fisheries, NEIFCA should co-ordinate efforts with the neighbouring IFCAs (Northumberland and Eastern IFCA).

The **Eastern IFCA** is the appropriate body to manage the cockle, mussel, whelk, lobster and brown and pink shrimp fisheries in its district. There is already a regulating order for the cockles which could be joined with the mussel fishery for certification.

Some stocks fished by Kent & Essex inshore fishermen are already in a position to proceed with full MSC assessment for example the Thames cockle fishery where management responsibility is clearly devolved to **Kent & Essex IFCA**. The locally important fisheries which Kent & Essex IFCA are best placed to lead on stock management are Mussel, Whelk, Lobster and Native Oyster, as well as the aforementioned cockle.

In the **Southern IFCA** some fisheries, such as the Poole Harbour clam fisheries that are covered by licenses as part of the hybrid Several/Regulating Order have the potential to achieve MSC certification with some improvements. Priority species for management by the IFCA are clams, whelks, lobster, native oysters, grey mullet and cockles.

For **Devon and Severn IFCA** the priority species identified are brown crab, lobsters and whelks. There are some EU-managed, locally important fisheries such as scallops, sole, plaice and cuttlefish where the IFCA still plays an important role as key stakeholder and a partner in management.





## A Guide to Stock Assessment & Setting Harvest Control Rules

The Guide to Stock Assessment and Setting Harvest Control Rules provides a detailed guide to assessing inshore fisheries, showing how to set adaptable harvest control rules in fisheries which are often data deficient.

The guide makes a series of recommendations on how English inshore fisheries might apply adaptive management techniques without an unrealistic demand on the resources at the disposal of IFCAs.



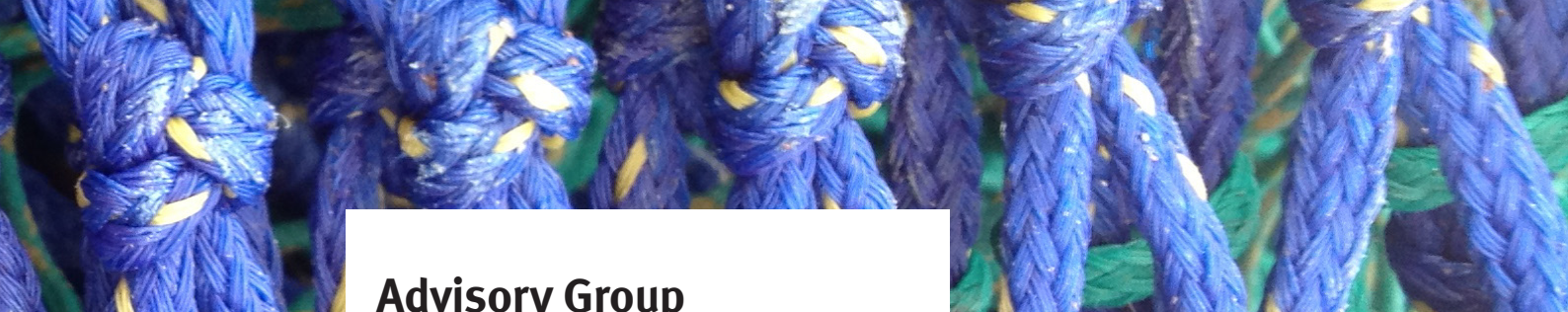
### Looking to the Future: Stage 4

Moving forward Project Inshore will use all the information gathered so far to inform and develop improvement projects working with IFCAs, industry and stakeholders interested in developing Stage 4 projects to start implementing change on the water.

Several Stage 4 projects are already in development including exploring improvement work on brown crab in the South West and moving a fishery forward into both RFS and MSC certification. Keep an eye out on the Project Inshore website for more details and future projects and get in touch to discuss possible projects.







## Advisory Group

The MSC established a multi-stakeholder Advisory Group made up of key organisations from within the sector to feed into the work of Project Inshore and help disseminate information about the project. The Advisory Group represents diverse experiences, geographies and interests in relation to the English inshore industry. The Advisory Group meets twice a year in London.

The Advisory Group is formed from the following organisations:

Stephen Bolt	Association of IFCAs
Sarah Clark	Representing IFCAs
Andy Carroll	Defra
Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafood
Hannah Macintyre	Marks & Spencer's
Claire Pescod & Chloe North	Marine Stewardship Council
Rob Whiteley	Natural England
Anthony Delahunty	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
Jerry Percy	New Under Ten Fishermen's Association
Tom Pickerel & Richard Caslake	Seafish
David Jarrad	Shellfish Association of Great Britain
Tracey Cambridge	WWF



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