

Consultation on a Recreational Sea Angling Strategy for England

Inshore Fisheries Working Group
Recreational Sea Angling Subgroup

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Contents

Section 1 – Introduction	4
Section 2 - Strategy Goals	5
Section 3 - Fisheries Management	7
Section 4 - Species, Stock Impact And Habitat Management	8
Section 5 - RSA Management	12
Section 6 - Voluntary Measures: Codes of Conduct and Best Practice	15
Section 7 - Access And Development	16
Section 8 - Communication	17
Section 9 - Information and Measurement	18
Section 10 - Implementation and Success Criteria	19
Section 11 - Contact Details	21

Annexes

Annex A – Inshore Fisheries Working Group RSA Subgroup Membership	22
Annex B – Inshore Fisheries Working Group Membership	23
Annex C – RSA SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis	24
Annex D - Consultation Criteria	25

1. Introduction

Summary

- Why a Recreational Sea Angling Strategy is important, its scope and responsibilities for implementation

Detail

Background

- 1.1 In 2004, the Drew Report into the economic impact of recreational sea angling reported that 1.1 million households contained at least one member who had been sea angling over the past year in England and Wales. The total expenditure by sea anglers resident in England and Wales on their sport has been estimated at £538m from 12.7m anglers' days annually.¹ The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, "Net Benefits"² and the Bradley "Review of Marine Fisheries and Enforcement"³ also noted the importance of Recreational Sea Angling (RSA) and made a number of recommendations.
- 1.2 This Strategy represents the culmination of work to provide a co-ordinated direction for RSA by identifying the key elements that are likely to play a significant part in the future of the sport. It sets out the framework under which specific actions will be taken and ensures that links are made with other key drivers in fisheries management, such as Fisheries 2027⁴. It has been developed by a subgroup (at **Annex A**) of Defra's Inshore Fisheries Working Group during 2006/07 (at **Annex B**). It is not owned by any one organisation, but is an example of positive stakeholder collaboration and it will be the responsibility of all stakeholders to implement the Strategy.

Scope and Definition

- 1.3 The Strategy is primarily concerned with issues of relevance to recreational sea anglers in England. Recreational Sea Angling can be defined as
- “A leisure activity in which an individual uses a rod, line and hook or line and hook to catch fish on a non-commercial basis”**
- 1.4 The Strategy does not consider other recreational forms of fishing, such as recreational or artisanal potting and netting, or commercial forms of line fishing, but there will be many relevant links and some strategy objectives will provide benefits to a wider range of stakeholders.

¹ <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/SeaAngling/default.asp>

² <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/fish/pdf/NetBenefits.pdf>

³ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/fish-env/consultation.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/fish/sea/pdf/fish2027vision.pdf>

- 1.5 There is a diverse range of recreational sea angling activities and users with varying requirements. It is not possible to consider in detail the specific preferences, objectives or approaches taken by each. Instead, this Strategy sets out a framework to enable more detailed measures to be taken forward by the appropriate, identified bodies.
- 1.6 An RSA SWOT analysis is at Annex C, which highlights the areas this Strategy will address and build on.

Development and Implementation

- 1.7 The Strategy should be progressed at the most appropriate level for the issue. One key organisation will be identified as the lead in each case, but there must be a shared responsibility by all stakeholders to make progress. Although as a document alone the Strategy may not itself deliver all the objectives, it can act as a driver to ensure policies and measures being taken forward through other routes adequately take into account RSA interests, and stimulate funding, focus or prioritisation. In cases where there are conflicts or the action and owner is unclear, Defra will act as broker to facilitate progress. To monitor success and assist with the implementation of the Strategy, the RSA subgroup will be the key forum, sharing information, continuing stakeholder dialogue and resolving areas of conflict, in line with communications objectives.

2. Strategy Goals

Summary

- Defining the key aim and objectives of the Strategy

Detail

- 2.1 The aim of the Strategy is:

“To enhance the recreational sea angling experience in England in a holistic and environmentally responsible way whilst following the principles of sustainable⁵ fisheries management.”

⁵ Definitions of ‘sustainable’ and sustainable development’ can be found at <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/index.htm>.

The UK also set out how the fisheries commitments made at The World Summit on Sustainable Development would be delivered: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/international/wssd/documents/fisheries-2006.pdf>

Article 3 of the Common Fisheries Policy defines “sustainable exploitation” as “the exploitation of a stock in such a way that the future exploitation of the stock will not be prejudiced and that it does not have a negative impact on the marine eco-systems”.

The 'sea angling experience' is everything that makes sea angling an enjoyable activity. The primary desire on the part of anglers is to catch more and bigger fish. In addition, the 'experience' includes un-measurable elements such as the quality and accessibility of angling sites, degree of angling knowledge and skill required to catch particular species, the belief that desirable fish are in the fishing area and potentially 'catchable', and other social aspects valued by the sea angling community.

2.2 The Strategy aims and objectives are based around the concept that angling should be conducted in a way that takes account of its impacts on the environment, as well as the environment's impacts on angling. The RSA sector should engage in ongoing discussions towards the adoption of an 'ecosystem based approach' and the implementation of the Strategy should reflect wider developments within the marine environment. Adopting an 'ecosystem based approach'⁶ will therefore be the key aspiration for RSA.

There are 4 objectives to the Strategy:

- To provide more and bigger fish within a healthy and sustainable ecosystem and environment
- To capitalise on the economic potential of the sport to optimise the economic and social return to coastal economies and society and identify ways to re-invest expenditure to provide further benefits
- To maintain and increase participation in RSA on a sustainable basis, (promoting best environmental practice) across all groups in society to provide socio – economic benefits
- To increase awareness and understanding of RSA, both within and outside the sector, through improved communication, education and increased participation in fisheries management

⁶ Links to various definitions of 'Ecosystem Based Approach"; <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2518>
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/mafacc/meetings/2003_05/mafacc_rev_5th_7Finalwref.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/consult_marine.htm
http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_6056_en.htm

3. Fisheries Management

Summary

- Ensure there is a flexible management framework that enables all those with a stake in the marine environment, including the RSA sector, to be involved in decision making
- Fisheries management decisions will be taken at the appropriate level
- The framework will enable managers to anticipate and take action quickly using a range of tools

Detail

Overview

- 3.1 Fisheries management is being modernised, and is reflecting the growing need for it to be inclusive of a diverse range of interests, including RSA. The principles of good governance, effective management and best practice are supported by all users of the marine environment. There are many objectives that will be common to all users, who would see benefits from diverse and plentiful fish stocks and from an environment that supports a healthy ecosystem. Marine resources should be managed holistically and the needs of all stakeholders should be assessed against this approach.
- 3.2 Whilst historically the RSA sector has been under-represented in fisheries management discussions, angling is increasingly recognised as a significant activity contributing both socially and economically to national and coastal economies. A management framework that can adequately reflect the needs of the RSA sector alongside other stakeholders at national, regional and local levels is needed.

Management framework

- 3.3 The framework should be flexible and enable management responsibility to be clearly delegated to the most appropriate level for the issue. Whilst the European Community is a key driver in fisheries management, the majority of RSA takes place within inshore waters. In line with other fisheries responsibilities at this level, Sea Fisheries Committees (SFCs) are well placed to manage local fisheries, respond quickly when required and introduce measures relevant to angling. There is also a case for national action when the same issue is identified across a number of SFC districts or regions. Defra also has an important role to play in ensuring inshore management needs are taken into account in offshore and wider Community fisheries management.

Management tools

3.4 To deliver their objectives, inshore managers must be equipped with the appropriate set of management tools. These tools must be comprehensive, clearly recognising responsibilities and duties and covering decision-making processes, powers with which to legislate and provide for effective enforcement. Enforcement bodies such as SFCs, the MFA and EA must also take more co-ordinated action to ensure measures are implemented effectively.

Decision making

3.5 Fisheries management decisions are based on the costs and benefits (environmental, social, and economic) of the options available, but driven by conservation principles. The value placed on a single fish changes depending on whether it is being targeted commercially or recreationally, although the two values are difficult to compare. The characteristics of each stock are, in part, dependent on how it is being targeted – the number, size and age of fish being removed. Fisheries management decisions need to take account of all these factors, and more emphasis should be placed on socio-economic factors in management decisions. The ability to take account of socio-economic factors will therefore need to be built into the management framework.

Key mechanisms and actions

3.6 Changes in fisheries management to deliver improved management at both local and national levels will be made through the Marine Bill. Defra's Coastal Waters team also provides a central contact for recreational sea angling, and will ensure that angling interests are considered in national fisheries decisions.

4. Species, Stock Impact and Habitat Management

Summary

- Providing more and bigger fish using a variety of tools and mechanisms
- Species management plans for key species of importance to anglers – including consideration of recreational only species
- Measures that promote fish production (such as minimum and maximum landing sizes, nursery areas or protection of spawning aggregations) to be considered

- Exploring specific areas with a view to limiting commercial activity, establishing areas for RSA use only. The potential benefits of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), nursery areas and fixed engine byelaws to be investigated.

Detail

4.1 Fish stocks are a shared resource, and should be managed in a way that takes into account the needs of all with an interest. Management that improves fish stocks and habitat can provide benefits to all sectors. Management measures will need to be flexible to take account of the impacts of Climate Change and must take account of - and complement - existing measures and current fishing practices. Some species are valued equally by both the commercial and recreational sector, whilst others are of value to only one sector and relative values may also vary by geographical area (for example, bass is highly valued in the south, whilst cod is more valued in the north). The RSA sector also values the 'expectation of catching a specimen fish' as part of the whole "angling experience", as well as the actual reward in capturing a particular species or specimen. This value can be enhanced by development in three key areas, outlined below.

Species Management Plans

- 4.2 There are a number of species that are particularly prized by anglers because of their biological or geographical 'rarity', 'catchability/sporting prowess' and potentially large size. Management plans could set specific measures to enhance the stock to maximise angling opportunities. Some work has already been carried out to develop management measures or plans for certain species, such as some elasmobranchs, bass and mullet. Work done to date on individual species should help to inform future proposals and lessons learned from establishing and implementing any measures drawn upon. Commercial bycatch could be an important issue for any species specific measures, and should be considered in management plans.
- 4.3 Plans should set clear objectives for each species and consider the full range of management tools available to achieve those objectives. Choice of tools will be dependent on species, objectives and the practicability of implementation and are likely to differ in each management plan and, for some species, may even differ in terms of coastal or regional location. Legislation is not always appropriate, and in some circumstances, voluntary agreements or education may also prove an effective management tool.
- 4.4 Management plans should be informed as much as possible by current and ongoing scientific advice. Where there is a lack of data, all interested stakeholders should share the responsibility and cost (in both time and financial terms) in providing the evidence required to make informed

decisions, and management will be in line with a precautionary approach. There would also be value in gathering information about the early life-histories of species of high shared value, (such as cod) which would provide benefits for all stakeholders in the provision of more and bigger fish as well as improvement and protection of habitats. Organisations such as the EA and Defra should work together to share resources, especially where there are fresh water/marine links.

- 4.5 On the basis of a list of key species identified on a regional and national basis and agreed by stakeholders, plans would be drawn up beginning with those species that are of more value to the recreational sector than commercial sector. Different management tools would be used and tested in their ability to meet the objectives of measures. This would provide an opportunity to demonstrate and promote the wider benefits of taking action before considering other more commercially valuable species for action. The value in reserving some species for recreational use only should also be considered. Plans should clearly state the most appropriate level to take action.

General management measures that promote fish production

- 4.6 When considering with stakeholders which species are put forward for Species Management Plans, other species that could benefit from measures simply to promote production alone should also be evaluated. Fish production is a term that encompasses breeding success, growth and population size, as well as other parameters such as habitat and climate effects and exploitation. The principles of sustainable fisheries management, and the need to ensure diverse fish populations, would drive the introduction of any such measures.
- 4.7 There are a range of management tools that would promote fish production. The concept of a minimum landing size (MLS) that is above the size at first maturity for each species is broadly promoted, but may not be the most effective or appropriate tool to meet management objectives in all cases. This will need to be clearly communicated to stakeholders.
- 4.8 Other measures such as protecting nursery or brood stock aggregating areas, for example, could provide benefits through increasing recruitment or protecting fish when they are most vulnerable to exploitation. A Maximum Landing Size (MaxLS) is also being considered for some species, such as skates and rays, at all levels of management. The RSA sector will need to be engaged in the debate on MaxLSs as proposals develop. All stakeholders should be involved in the discussion to ensure there is a clear understanding of the practicalities and consequences involved in delivering any measures, and consensus should be reached where possible.

- 4.9 With regard to ensuring that discards are kept to a minimum and noting the complexities of impacts in mixed fisheries, the ultimate choice of management tool would be dependent on fish species and be informed by scientific advice. The introduction of any relevant management tools, such as a MLS, should be widely publicised (through signage and fisheries publications) and effectively enforced.

Protection of habitats and introduction of angling-only areas

- 4.10 Within the RSA sector there is strong support for a 'Golden Mile'. This is defined as an area within 1nm of the shoreline that is of significant importance to anglers – it does not infer a 'blanket ban' on other fishing activities. Although the RSA sector acknowledges the impact such a measure would have on the commercial sector, there is considerable strength of feeling on this issue from anglers, who perceive that inshore netting and trawling reduces the likelihood of catching a fish, so diminishing the 'angling experience', within an area where a significant amount of sea angling takes place.
- 4.11 It is acknowledged that, to some extent, there may be misconceptions about the extent and impact of netting and trawling inshore. Much of this misconception could be remedied through improved marking of fishing gear, education about fishing practices and clear signage via a national code.
- 4.12 Blanket measures such as a complete ban on netting and trawling or other forms of fishing within one mile of the shore could only be introduced after the costs and benefits have been fully evaluated and are likely to be extremely contentious. Such areas can also be difficult to define, legislate for and enforce effectively. The inshore zone is important to a number of small scale commercial fishing operators and displacement of their activities would have a number of consequences, whilst the issue of compensation may also arise if management measures are taken on any basis other than for conservation reasons. The first step to moving this forward would be to collate the necessary evidence at the local or regional level, firstly to demonstrate whether there is an issue from interactions within the 1nm zone and secondly to provide the data to enable any measures to be approached on a scientific, rather than ad-hoc basis. Such evidence would also facilitate dialogue between sectors.
- 4.13 A practicable approach to the issue of establishing areas for RSA would be to identify specific areas (not just within 1nm) for special consideration, and limit commercial activity or reserve them for angling use only. Other areas could be managed more sensitively for multifunctional use. This might include peninsulas, estuaries, wrecks or beach marks, for example. Other areas could be managed more effectively to improve the habitat and ecosystem, such as protecting the sea bed and increasing species richness and abundance.

- 4.14 There is a range of tools already in existence that can be used to designate areas for specific uses, and the Marine Bill should include provisions to broaden management measures. However, there is a communications gap in terms of awareness of the associated benefits of existing areas where commercial activity is limited already. The relevant fisheries managers should work to ensure such benefits are identified and widely publicised.
- 4.15 Currently the main measures inshore that have the potential to provide benefits for anglers are fixed engine byelaws and bass nursery areas. Some limited access areas, such as off the South Devon coast, also appear to have provided benefits to anglers. As a starting point, there should therefore be a review of the extent and effectiveness of these measures, with a view to improving or widening their application. Management bodies, such as Defra, SFCs and the EA should work together closely to identify where synergies might exist.
- 4.16 The RSA sector should be involved in Defra plans to introduce Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including the delivery of the Natura 2000 network and plans to introduce Marine Conservation Zones by 2012, to ensure that their interests are fully represented in the design and designation of these areas. Depending on the management objectives for each MPA, there is scope for some areas to effectively become 'angling only'. Where 'No Take Zones' (NTZs) are considered, anglers practising 'catch and release' could be considered for inclusion as low-impact users in surrounding buffer zones. Again, education and promotion of the benefits should underpin such measures.
- 4.17 Anglers should also work with local and national fisheries managers and scientists to identify the current 'angling hot-spots' and areas where there is limited commercial fishing, but excellent angling potential. Such areas could be used for pilot studies, restricting use for sea-anglers only. Monitored closely, evidence built from such areas would then provide the basis for further action elsewhere.

5. RSA Management

Summary

- A sea angling licence will be considered. Costs and benefits will be clear and transparent, and additional revenue returned to the angling sector to provide benefits.
- As part of a balanced package of conservation measures, effort control (such as increased MLS, voluntary codes of conduct, bag limits or log

books) should be considered on a species by species basis. Objectives for such measures must be clearly defined.

Detail

- 5.1 There is relatively little management of sea angling activity in comparison with the commercial sector, with SFCs and the EA being the main bodies taking action. This may be a contributing factor to the broad appeal of the sport. However, with relatively high angling participation levels, and a possibility that this could increase in future, anglers have the potential to have an impact on some stocks. Everyone who catches fish has a responsibility to respond to changing stock levels to prevent over-exploitation.
- 5.2 The potential benefits that might result from taking a more active approach to RSA management would include ensuring that RSA needs are identified and accounted for; preventing some participants from significantly impacting upon the 'angling experience' of others; and maximising the overall socio-economic value of the activity. However, the success and potential benefits of any measures will be dependent on anglers being actively involved in the development process, and ensuring the objectives are communicated effectively to generate interest and participation from anglers. Management measures, such as a sea angling licence or bag limits, are not widely supported by the angling sector at present. Anglers want to see clear improvements in the sea angling experience before such measures are introduced.
- 5.3 Any measures should be part of an overall package that aims to benefit anglers and society as a whole. Responsibility would fall both to anglers, who should be willing to contribute constructively to the debate, and management bodies, who should ensure there is a clear, participative and extensive consultation process. Enforcement bodies should be actively involved in the development of proposals to ensure that any management measures can be enforced effectively.

Recreational Sea Angling Licence

- 5.4 All fisheries stakeholders have a responsibility to share the cost of science and fisheries management. A combined mechanism that would raise money for the benefit of sea anglers, provide an effective communication tool, gather information to better understand anglers' needs, promote fuller participation in management fora, and enable effective monitoring and enforcement would underpin other elements of the RSA Strategy. A sea angling licence (operating in a similar way to the freshwater angling licence) could meet these needs. The costs and benefits must be transparent, justifiable and clearly understood. Additional revenue would need to be

returned to the angling sector through a range of projects and programmes that would enhance the angling experience.

Recreational Sea Angling Management tools

- 5.5 Other tools to manage the potential impact anglers and other sectors have on stocks should be considered as part of an overall package of measures designed to manage and improve stocks. These tools should be flexible, enable action to be taken quickly if necessary to protect vulnerable stocks as well as look to the longer term, and be driven by clear scientific evidence or the precautionary approach. The conservation benefits of taking any action would need to be balanced and proportionate to the potential impact anglers have on stocks. Possible management tools include voluntary codes of conduct, log books, closed areas or seasons and 'bag limits'.
- 5.6 The objectives should clearly state whether measures are being taken for conservation or enforcement purposes, or both. Action should be taken at the most appropriate level for any species, but should be primarily driven by SFCs and the EA so that measures can be designed to take account of particular local circumstances.

Key mechanisms and actions

- 5.7 Defra should take the opportunity of the Marine Bill to provide the necessary powers to introduce appropriate management measures. Consultation processes involved in introducing enabling powers or any resulting measures will enable anglers to provide evidence and express their views on proposals. Translating any powers into practical legislation will take some years and involve further consultation on specific details. This period of time would enable other measures in the Strategy to be progressed and realise improvements in the angling experience before the introduction of any control measures.
- 5.8 SFCs already have powers that would enable the introduction of some local management measures, such as bag limits and fixed engine byelaws. Where measures are justified, pilot schemes could be considered by SFCs, working with local anglers and scientists to introduce, test and monitor the impact of the measures. SFCs should work together to ensure measures cover a full range of situations and locations. This would build evidence to inform decisions about using such measures on a wider and national basis.

6. Voluntary Measures: Codes of Conduct and Best Practice

Summary

- Develop a national Code of Conduct that promotes best practice for Recreational Sea Anglers

Detail

Overview

6.1 The RSA sector recognises that it has a responsibility for promoting and developing the sector. In particular, the sector should build upon the work done to date to establish codes of conduct and encourage best practice. The underpinning elements should be environmental protection, stock sustainability, safety and personal responsibility. The sector should work with environmental bodies, local authorities and other relevant organisations to identify where action is needed to improve the way in which anglers carry out their fishing activities.

Detail

6.2 Elements that could be considered include:

- Marine finfish handling and return from both boat and shore
- Sustainable angling practices ('catch and release' through to 'catching sufficient for the table')
- Adoption of measures associated with NTZ or MPA designations
- Bait collection techniques or practices
- Appropriate hook selection for size and species of targeted fish
- Appropriate terminal tackle selection to minimise tackle losses
- Disposal of waste and marine litter
- Safety for the public and fishers from the shore and boats
- Liability insurance
- Knowledge of finfish regulations, both commercial and recreational

Key mechanisms and action

6.3 Existing case studies (such as the use of litter bins and discarded tackle clean-up operations) should be researched to identify the actions needed to deliver the benefits, and good practice examples replicated. The self-regulation mechanism should be actively publicised and promoted throughout the angling community and beyond, to improve general perceptions and knowledge amongst other sectors and the public. The RSA sector should work with SFCs, the EA, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Local Authorities in promoting codes of conduct.

7. Access and Development

Summary

- Providing support elements to improve the angling experience by building relationships with key organisations, accessing funding sources or self-funding.

Detail

Overview

- 7.1 The availability of large and sustainable fish stocks and a healthy marine environment are the primary elements that affect the angling experience. Secondary elements provide the less obvious but still critical 'support system' that underpins this. It is important that these secondary elements are developed in conjunction with any changes to fisheries management to deliver increased benefits to anglers.
- 7.2 Support system elements, (such as access to fishing sites, development of angling structures, boat launch and charter boat access facilities) make it easier for anglers to carry out the key activity (fishing). This is especially critical when considering how to broaden and increase participation in RSA by reducing the additional effort potentially new or less able bodied anglers would need to expend to go sea angling.
- 7.3 There would also be benefits for other users sharing and accessing the same facilities, whilst structural developments might provide fish aggregation areas and habitat replacements for juvenile and adult fish. There are links with other elements of the Strategy, such as MPAs. Access opportunities also need to be considered in relation to other Marine developments, such as the introduction of offshore wind farms.

Detail

7.4 Key elements of access and development could include:

- Protection and improvement of shore access and parking
- Provision of more small boat launching facilities
- Access to existing and new shore structures
- Clear displays of relevant rules (MLS etc), codes of conduct and other useful data at every popular shore venue, on websites, boat launch site and aboard charter boats
- Provision of amenities for anglers at popular venues, such as bins and toilets

- A planning system that would protect access and use for RSA on existing structures and new developments, particularly for wheelchair users, young and elderly fishers.

Key mechanisms and actions

- 7.5 Development of these secondary elements would require funding which could be achieved through a chargeable angling licence. However, there are a number of other possible sources that should also be considered, especially when facilities that benefit multiple users or provide additional environmental benefits are being considered. Potential funding sources could include grants for environmental, social, tourism, sports or regeneration projects. A study to identify possible funding sources should be conducted in the first instance.
- 7.6 Establishing partnerships between key angling and non-angling organisations would provide the basis for accessing available funds. The EA, Natural England and other management bodies also have a role in developing access to fishing sites. The RSA sector could raise its profile through the promotion of the value of the sector to regional or local bodies that are involved in planning and development, such as Local Authorities and RDAs and ensure the sector is included within social and economic strategies for the areas.

8. Communication

Summary

- Improving internal and external communications to ensure the sector is co-ordinated and represents a balanced view in multi-stakeholder discussions.
- Management bodies to ensure RSA has a legitimate place in stakeholder discussions and decision-making processes.

Detail

- 8.1 Improving communication between fisheries managers and anglers and other sectors is critical in achieving many of the Strategy objectives and to help establish the RSA sector as a legitimate stakeholder in fisheries and environmental management. Further, there are a number of misconceptions that could be addressed through improved communications. It is recognised that anglers have achieved much in a relatively short space of time to become established as a stakeholder in the

marine environment, and in part this has been due to better, more co-ordinated representation. This foundation can be built on.

RSA sector actions

8.2 A key issue is improving internal communications to ensure anglers are united in presenting their case and have clear evidence for action. It is recognised that a key attraction of RSA is independence, which may mean many anglers prefer not to become involved in increased stakeholder participation. Nevertheless, there would be benefits to the sector through increased participation and co-ordination among angling representative bodies. RSA organisations should work together to achieve their objectives and ensure their voice is representative of their membership, and provide clear, unfiltered information for their members in return. The RSA sector should also look for opportunities to work with other key stakeholders to achieve joint objectives.

Marine Managers actions

8.3 Defra, SFCs, the EA and Natural England should ensure that there is good communication of management measures to anglers, particularly where these measures provide benefits. Government, management bodies, Agencies and key organisations are already engaging with anglers and should continue to extend these opportunities to anglers to participate in decision-making fora and balance the needs of anglers alongside other key stakeholders. Consideration should be given to communicating effectively with both RSA organisations as well as individuals. The need for regular continuing dialogue between angling and the commercial sector, locally and nationally, is essential. Wider consultation on this Strategy will provide a firm basis to co-ordinate and improve all aspects of communication.

9. Information and Measurement

Summary

- Gathering data and building a reliable evidence base to inform management decisions and monitor their impact

Detail

Overview

9.1 It is widely acknowledged that at present there is limited social, economic and scientific data and information on RSA. It will be critical to gather sufficient information to establish a baseline, and continue to collect data in future to measure the success of the Strategy objectives.

9.2 Current sources include publications such as the Drew and Nautilus Reports, historical angling data (competitions, NFSA specimen records etc) and voluntary tagging schemes for some species. Data are not centrally co-ordinated or always fully accessible and significant gaps remain. Further, although there is much scientific understanding and commercial catch data about some species little is known about many species of relatively little commercial interest that have a high angling value.

Key mechanisms and actions

9.3 Existing sources of information should be collated to inform the present and past pictures and establish a baseline. In the commissioning of relevant science, Defra will need to ensure a balanced application of funds is available for research across marine fisheries, including RSA interests. New science and data collection programmes should be established for species identified for action to ensure management decisions can be evidence-based and monitored for impact. Although studies would require funding, much could be achieved by establishing new Science Partnerships between Cefas & other Defra Agencies, environmental organisations, educational establishments and key angling organisations. The RSA sector also has a responsibility to provide data, and voluntary logbook and catch-return schemes should be established. The possible introduction of a licensing scheme or bag-limits would also provide opportunities for more formal catch-return mechanisms and species specific data.

10. Implementation and Success Criteria

Summary

- Monitoring the success of the Strategy and ensuring it remains a useable document

Detail

10.1 This Strategy should be viewed as a long-term plan to achieve the objectives outlined in section 2. Many of the management tools that could be used to progress each Strategy element will take time to implement fully and so it may take some time for visible progress to be demonstrated. It will therefore be important to put in place measures in the short term to prepare the path for longer term measures. This Strategy should be iterative, remaining open for review to ensure RSA evolves alongside other changing or new marine priorities. There should be a formal review of the Strategy after three years.

10.2 The ‘angling experience’ is inherently personal and dependent on a number of qualitative elements and therefore difficult to measure. However, it is possible to identify quantitative measurables that contribute to the overall angling experience, by which success could be judged over a timescale. The chosen measurables must therefore reflect and be assessed against the appropriate timescale. Key measurables are identified in table 1 below. The RSA SWOT analysis (**Annex C**) may also be a useful measurement of success, in assessing how the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats change over time.

Table 1: Success criteria

	Measurable	Assessment & timescale	Responsible organisations
1	Angling participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number • Social structure 	Formally assessed every 5 years through survey. Anecdotally assessed annually through NFSA and other organisation membership numbers.	RSA sector (Annual Lead) Government (Formal review lead)
2	Number of RSA target species managed and their associated stock and fishery trends and demographic structures	Overall assessment every 5 years, using a range of data types as appropriate Individually assessed on timescales appropriate for each species	Defra & Cefas (Lead) RSA Sector SFCs
3	Angling expenditure and contribution to UK economy	Formally assessed every 5 years. Anecdotally assessed annually through angling surveys	Government (Lead) RSA sector
4	Site access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number accessible • Access improved 	Assessed every 3 years	Local Authorities RDAs (Lead) RSA Sector Defra
5	Number and location of facilities for anglers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat launches • Amenities • Information displays 	Assessed every 5 years	Local Authorities RSA sector DCMS/Sport England SFCs EA
6	Number, location and extent of areas for special angling consideration	Assessed every 5 years	SFCs (lead) Natural England Defra EA

11. Contact Details

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Annex A – Inshore Fisheries Working Group RSA Subgroup Membership

Member	Organisation
Chris Venmore	Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB)/Devon SFC
Doug Beveridge	National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (NFFO)
Graham Catt	Department of Culture Media & Sports (DCMS)
John Leballeur	Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society (BASS)
Leon Roskilly	Sea Anglers Conservation Network (SACN)
Mat Mander	Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee
Nigel Proctor	National Federation of Sea Anglers (NFSA)
Richard Ferre	National Federation of Sea Anglers (NFSA)
Rob Blyth-Skyrme	Natural England (NE)
Tim Dapling	Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee
Steve Colclough	Environment Agency
Mike Pawson	Cefas
Mike Smith	Cefas
Alistair McDonnell	Marine Fisheries Agency

Defra

Anthony Hynes	Coastal Waters Policy (Chair)
Nicola Clarke	Coastal Waters Policy
Erin Priddle	Coastal Waters Policy
Simon Mundy	Defra Legal

Annex B – Inshore Fisheries Working Group Membership

Organisation

Defra (Chair) + Secretariat

National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) +1

Sea Fisheries Committees

Regional Development Agencies

Environment Agency (EA)

LINK +1

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)

Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) +1

Association of Sea Fisheries Committees (ASFC)

National Federation of Sea Anglers (NFSA)

Seafish Industry Authority (SFIA)

World Wildlife Fund UK

Natural England (NE)

Marine Fisheries Agency

Annex C – RSA SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <p>High participation levels. Large and varied coastline. Wide range of fish species. Large economic activity. Popular leisure activity. Low environmental impact. Healthy outdoor activity. Brings one close to the environment. Attractive to youngsters. May reduce youth crime through participation and awareness Free access for most. Supports boat/tackle/charter/hotel trades. Successful track record in International Shore and boat competitions. Increasing awareness within the sector of the benefit of conservation measures and successful catch and release. Integral part of the coastal tourist industry.</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Fragmented nature of the participants has meant that Recreational Sea Angling voice has not been listened to in the past. Often solitary participants difficult to engage. Activity is dependent on fish stocks. Seen by some competing sectors and a few resource managers as a “Frivolous” activity. RSA could have a better conservation image, given its low environmental impact. The legal position of RSA is confused. There is uncertainty what rules apply and who can enforce them. Lack of detailed catch and commercial data hampers decision making. Communication processes are difficult because of the make up of the participants. Is not fully engaged within the resource management system.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>RSA is the only English fin fishing based activity with real growth potential, based on results from other countries. Increasing levels of personal wealth mean that expenditure levels grow faster than catch rates. Opportunity to increase tourism by both attracting external visitors and keeping our travellers at home. Opportunity for existing commercial fishers to diversify as activity increases. Opportunities to increase participation through education and training. Clear evidence from other countries of successful programmes. Creation of artificial reefs, inshore and offshore RSA only zones and more shore based fishing structures.</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Reducing fish stocks will deter anglers from participating. Increased difficulties over access to shore, piers and docks are reducing fishing venues. Lack of information on RSA impact means that conservation measures could needlessly limit RSA activity. Historic non-involvement in fishery decision making will continue to hamper best value decisions on access to fish stocks. Perception of anglers selling fish is damaging RSA and threatening beneficial decisions. CFP decisions are often at odds with what is needed to improve English inshore fish stocks. Misinformation from protagonists to deflect scrutiny of their own activities.</p>

Annex D - Consultation criteria

The Cabinet Office Code of practice on consultations is available at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform website: <http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/>. The criteria for consultations, listed on this website are reproduced below:

The six consultation criteria

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.