

Fishing Futures. Challenges Opportunities and Local Insight

Association of Inshore Fisheries and
Conservation Authorities

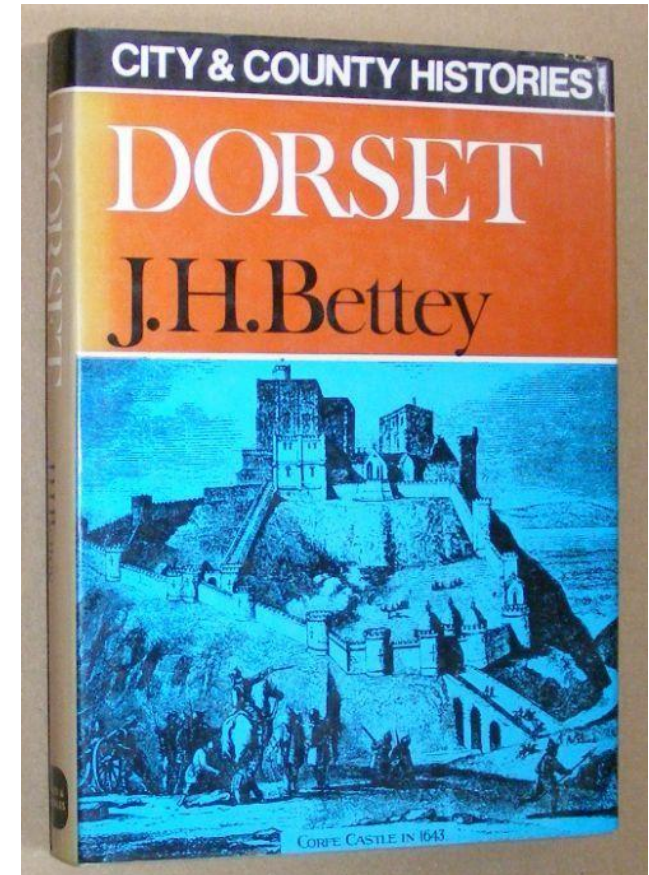


Robert Clark MSc MBA FMBA
Chief Officer



Early origins

- It may be expected that near the sea early man, the hunter-gatherer, would collect shellfish and spear fish in shallows, much easier than chasing animals.
- Later when the Romans arrived here we have been told of many finds of oyster shells where they camped.
- In his book Dorset J.H. Bettey found records of fishing and finding shellfish in the Mesolithic period.
- Much later in 1086 the Domesday Book records fishermen at Lyme Regis and Brige (Bridge) near Weymouth and many families fishing.
- By 1340 all the coastal inlets from Studland and Swanage to Weymouth were noted as important for fishing. Tithes were paid for fishing in many coastal parishes in the Middle Ages.



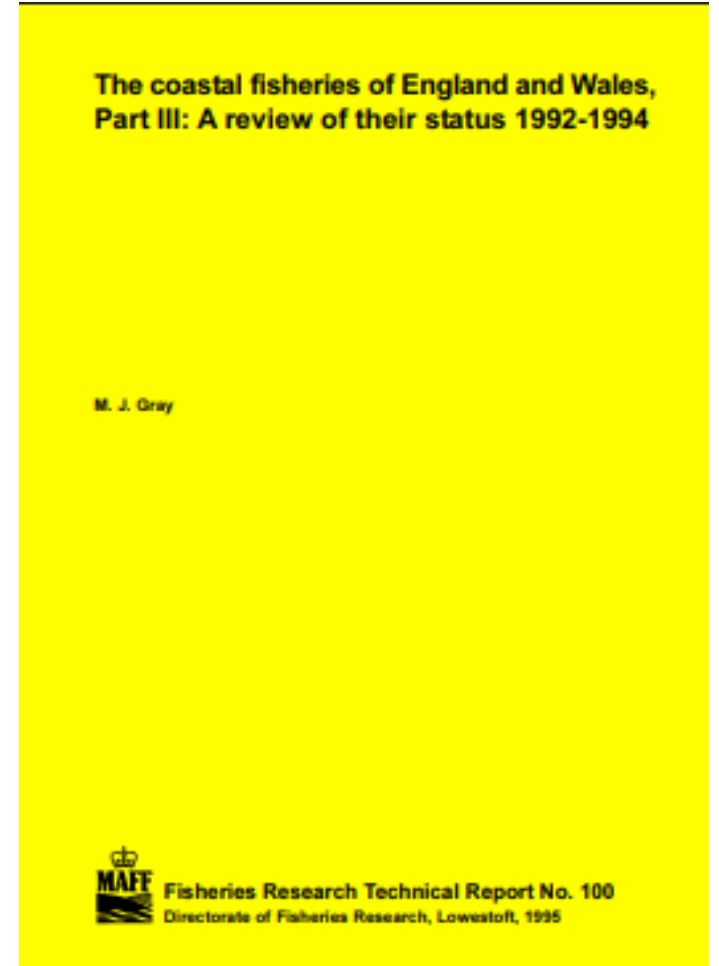


- Herring, hake, pilchards, ling and mackerel were all mentioned, as well as salt fish from Brittany and Normandy.
- By the 16th century, in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I, Poole had a fleet fishing off Newfoundland for cod.
- Celia Fiennes in the late 17th century wrote of excellent fish in Dorset, including Purbeck oysters, crab and shrimps.
- Daniel Defoe, in his 1724-1727 travelogue, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, also said Dorset fish was “the best in England” and barrelled up for London, West Indies, Spain and Italy.

Weymouth and Portland – 1990's

“The pot fishery provides the principal source of revenue from these 2 ports, and has developed rapidly since the 1970s and now supports over 40 boats, of which 20-25 are over 8 m.

These boats set between 400 and 1,000 pots each, in fleets of 20-100 pots out to 30 miles offshore, principally for brown and spider crabs, and many are equipped with vivier tanks to keep the crabs alive thus enabling them to sell directly to buyers.”



West Bay and Lyme Regis – 1990's

West Bay

- Supports a few otter trawlers of 9-11m that take demersal fish within Lyme Bay all year. During the summer, landings comprise mainly sole, plaice, rays, brill and whiting, and in winter rays, cod, whiting and some flatfish. They sometimes target queen scallops after Christmas when, if the weather is bad, they may work from Brixham. Activity increased here during the 1980s and there are now 10 boats of 6-8 m using pots seasonally for crabs and lobsters or taking out angling parties to wrecks or rough ground. There are 15-20 small (4 m) boats setting nets or 2-10 pots during the summer with about 6 working throughout the year.

Lyme Regis

- Three boats otter trawl for white fish and take by-catches of queen scallops and scallops, and occasionally sprats are taken in pair trawls, although low demand restricts effort. Between 6 and 8 boats set pots for brown crabs and lobsters out to 6 miles offshore and as far east as Portland Bill, with velvet crabs taken as a by-catch. A few of these boats also set nets around wrecks for cod, pollack and ling. A further 10 or so small boats are used casually for potting from many of the neighbouring coves in season, and catches are sold locally or to Portland. Angling charter boats operate during the summer.

Rising Tensions

 UK Parliament

Hansard

[UK Parliament](#) > [Hansard](#) > [Commons: 5 December 2007](#) > [Commons Chamber](#) > [Scallop Dredging \(Lyme Bay\)](#)

Scallop Dredging (Lyme Bay)

Volume 468: debated on Wednesday 5 December 2007

 [Download text](#)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[Mr. Michael Foster.]

🕒 7.05pm

Mr. Oliver Letwin >

(West Dorset) (Con)

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I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the question of scallop dredging in Lyme bay. I am sure that the Minister needs no reminding that the part of Lyme bay I am describing, which stretches from Beer to West Bay, is mainly though not wholly in the West Dorset constituency that I represent. I thus have a strong constituency interest.

Before I dwell on the detail, I want to talk about our attitude as a nation to what is usually called biodiversity—an important test of the Government's will to concern themselves seriously with the issue. I hope that in time that technocratic word—biodiversity—will be less and less used, and that people will

Press
Office

BBC




Press Releases

Inside Out South uncovers illegal fishing in Poole Harbour

Category: [South TV](#)

Date: 24.09.2008

 [Printable version](#)

A BBC investigation by **Inside Out South** will show how some fishermen have been catching potentially poisonous shellfish in Poole Harbour.

The Inside Out programme secretly filmed 13 boats illegally fishing for clams in a prohibited part of the harbour.

Taking shellfish from the Wareham Channel was banned in 2006 because of concerns about the cleanliness of the water.

Inside Out presenter **Joe Crowley** and his team tracked several licensed fishing boats as they headed from Fisherman's Dock to the prohibited area.

They also filmed unlicensed fishermen from Lytchett Bay taking shellfish from the channel.

Joe Crowley said he was shocked by what he saw: "It was happening in broad daylight and it was so blatant. We have been told that they can make up to £2,000 per day from the clams, so that probably explains why so many fishermen are prepared to flout the law."

Fisheries officer **Ian Carrier** tells the programme how policing the shellfish ban has led to regular clashes with some fishermen: "The building has been attacked, we have had bricks through the window, the boats have been sabotaged and our officers have been threatened."

A history of being at the forefront – Lyme Bay

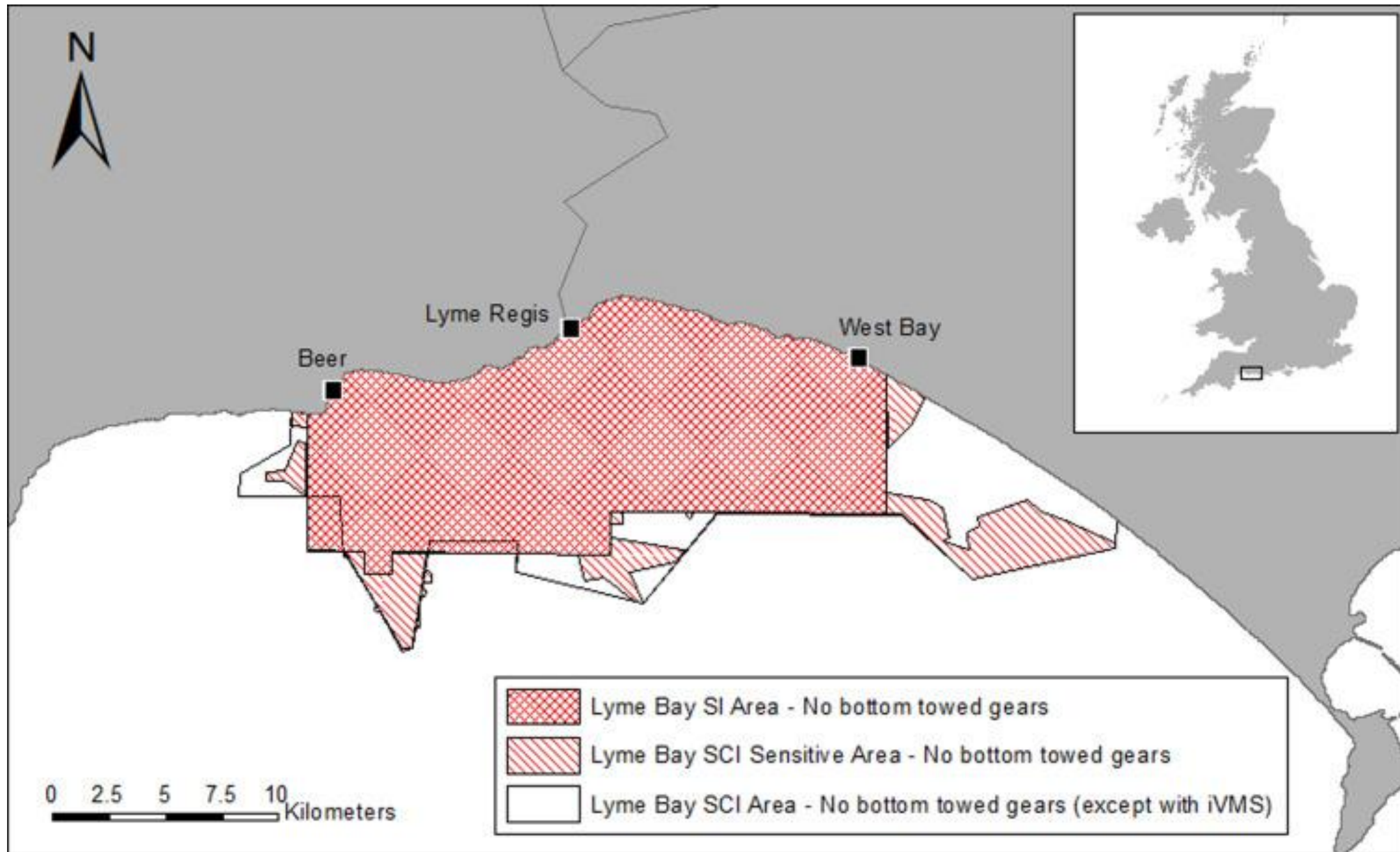
- In the 1980s mounting concerns about the impacts of bottom trawling led to conservationists, fishermen, and regulators coming together to find a way to protect the precious reef habitats in Lyme Bay, while maintaining fishermen's livelihoods.
- At the heart of the campaign was local fisherman, Dave Sales. In 2008 an announcement was made, protecting 60 square miles of Lyme Bay from towed fishing gear. Dave Sales work in protecting marine life was recognised by the award of the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2020. Sadly, he passed away in 2022.



Lyme Bay Fisherman's CIC

- In 2022, a group of 50 fishermen, scallop divers, potters, trawlermen, anglers and netters from across the four ports of Axmouth, Beer, Lyme Regis and West Bay came together in a workshop to plan the UK's first grassroots, fishermen-led, fishermen governed Community Interest Company (CIC). The Lyme Bay Fisherman's CIC is a not-for-profit created to help support coastal communities and the fishing industry across Lyme Bay.
- These Fishermen are passionate about their trade, the sea they work in, and the communities where they live.
- For too long, small-scale fleets, mostly owners/operators and micro businesses have suffered from little or no representation despite being the iconic heart of many coastal communities. Individuals can find it difficult to engage with multiple workstreams and consultations in this highly regulated space controlled by Government departments, agencies, and non-departmental public bodies.










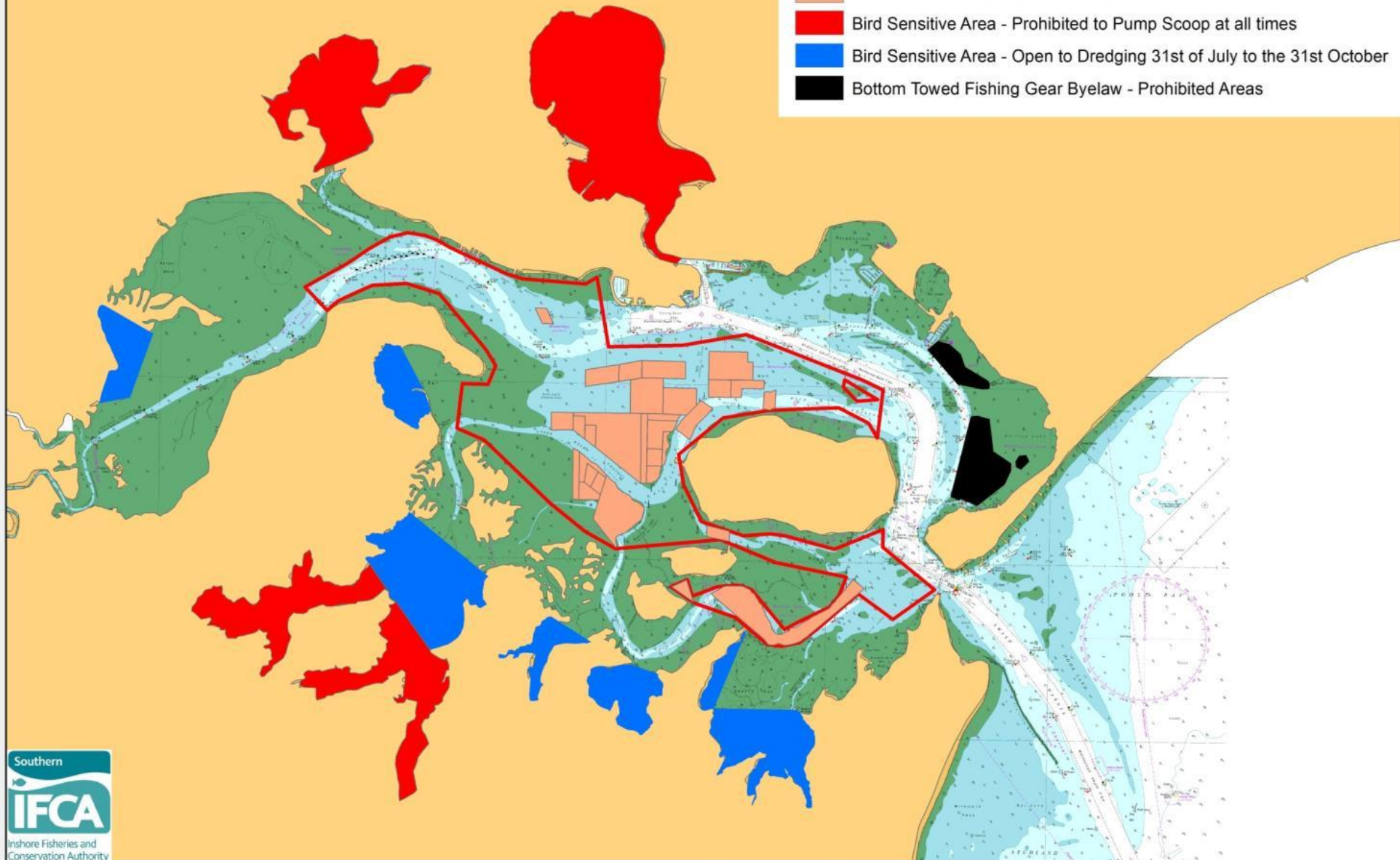


Poole Harbour

- In March 2018 the **Poole Harbour Clam and Cockle Fishery** was certified under the **Marine Stewardship Council Certificate** as a sustainable fishery.
- Simultaneously, fishers within the fishery were certified under the **Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme** for responsible fishing practices and social ethics.
- The fishery was the first globally to achieve both certifications at the same time.
- This was a collaborative effort between the **Poole & District Fishermen's Association & the SIFCA**.
- The MSC certification allows the fishers to sell their produce under the MSC blue label, introducing the potential for new market opportunities.
- The certification is an independent verification of the hard work by both fishers and managers to ensure that the fishery can operate sustainably and in a way which is compatible with the conservation objectives of Poole Harbour MPA.

Poole Harbour

-  Poole Several Order 2015 - Full Extent of Several Order
-  Poole Several Order 2015 - Current Lease Beds 2016
-  Bird Sensitive Area - Prohibited to Pump Scoop at all times
-  Bird Sensitive Area - Open to Dredging 31st of July to the 31st October
-  Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw - Prohibited Areas



MARINE PROTECTED AREAS OF DORSET

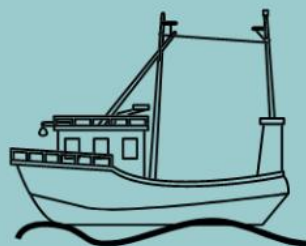
10

**MARINE PROTECTED AREAS
ARE LOCATED ALONG THE
DORSET COASTLINE**

6 MARINE CONSERVATION ZONES

3 SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION

1 SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS



196

**SOUTHERN IFCA
PERMITTED FISHING
VESSELS OPERATE OUT OF
DORSET**

167 KM²

**OF MPAS ALONG THE
DORSET COAST ARE
DESIGNATED TO PROTECT
REEFS**



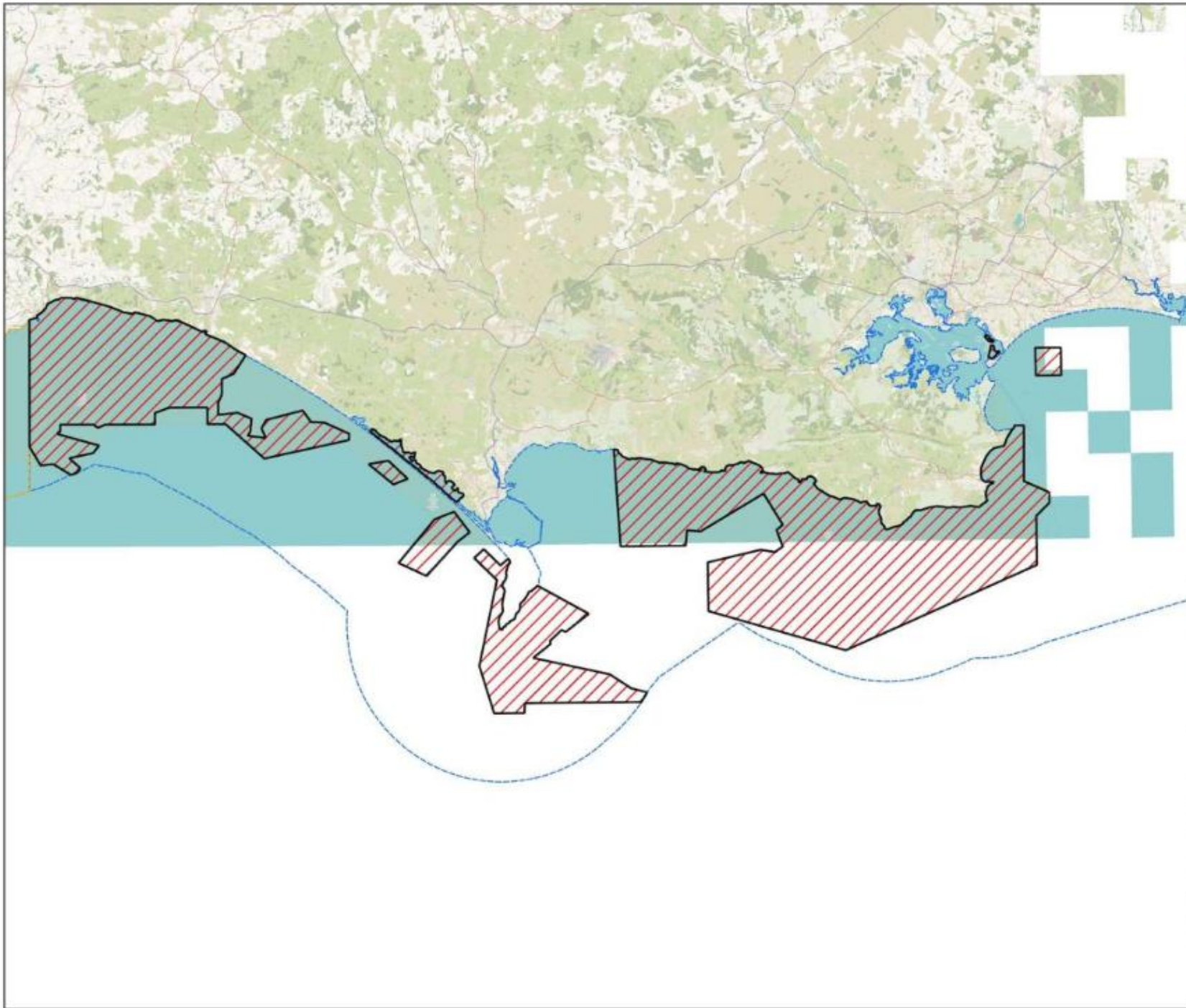
71
TONNES

**OF LOBSTER WAS LANDED
INTO DORSET PORTS IN
2019**

6

**MARINE SPECIES ARE
PROTECTED BY MPAS IN
DORSET INCLUDING PINK
SEA FANS, BLACK SEA
BREAM & THE LONG
SNOUTED SEAHORSE**





Southern
IFCA
Inshore Fisheries and
Conservation Authority



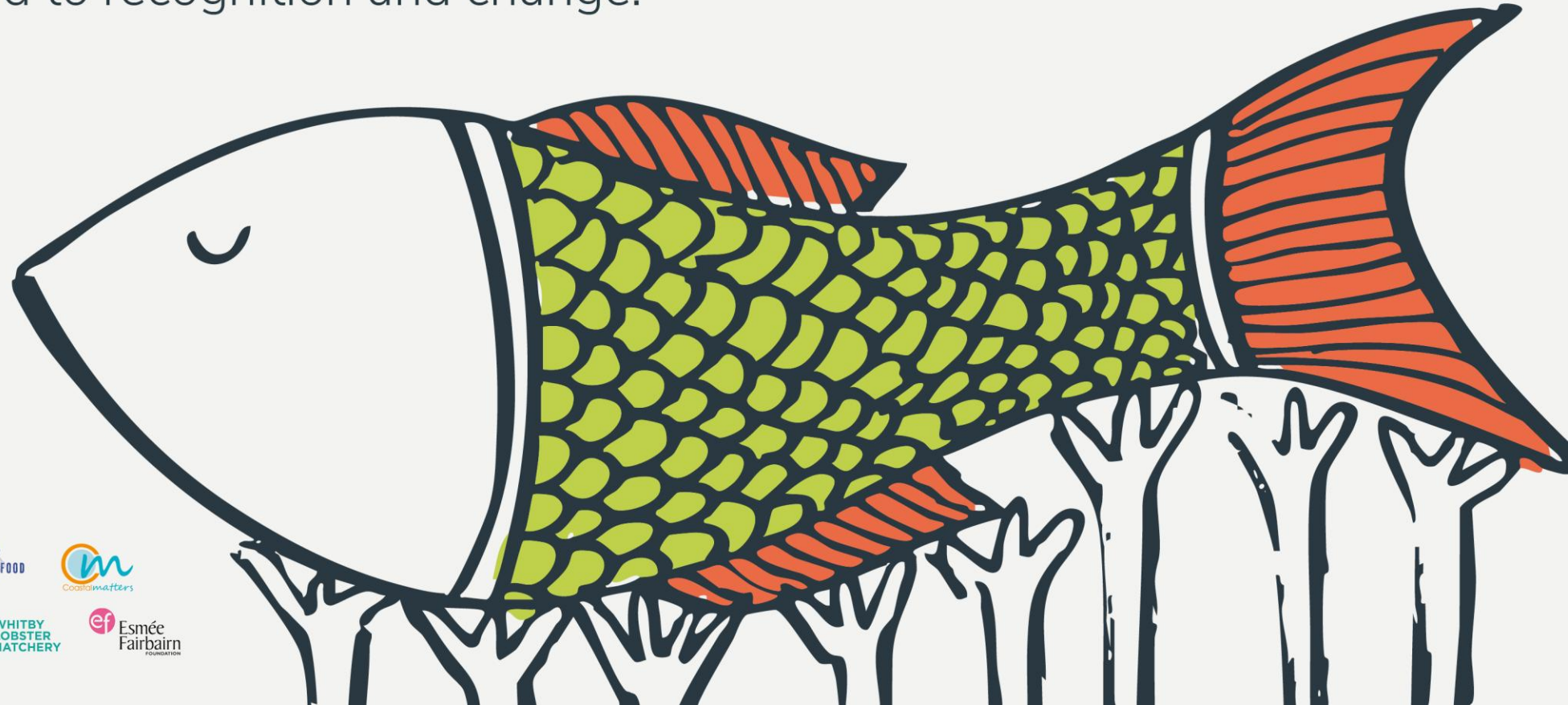
-  Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Closures
-  Southern IFCA District

Map is for illustration only, not to be used for navigation. For more information on measures please visit the Southern IFCA website - www.southern-ifca.gov.uk.

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The Priorities of Inshore & Small-Scale fisheries in England

Shaping the road to recognition and change.



Newcastle University



SCFF



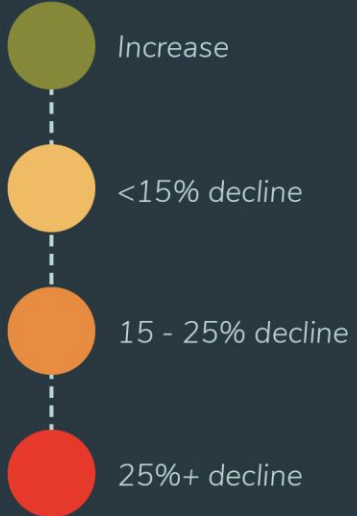
*Inc. West Scotland,
Orkney & Shetland



A Fleet in Decline

Active Fishing Vessels
NUTS2 Regions
2008 - 2022

Circle colour represents the %
change of vessel counts from
2008 to 2022.



Circle size represents vessel
numbers in the region.



A Platform for Common Ground

Poole Workshop

23/09/24 - 25/09/24

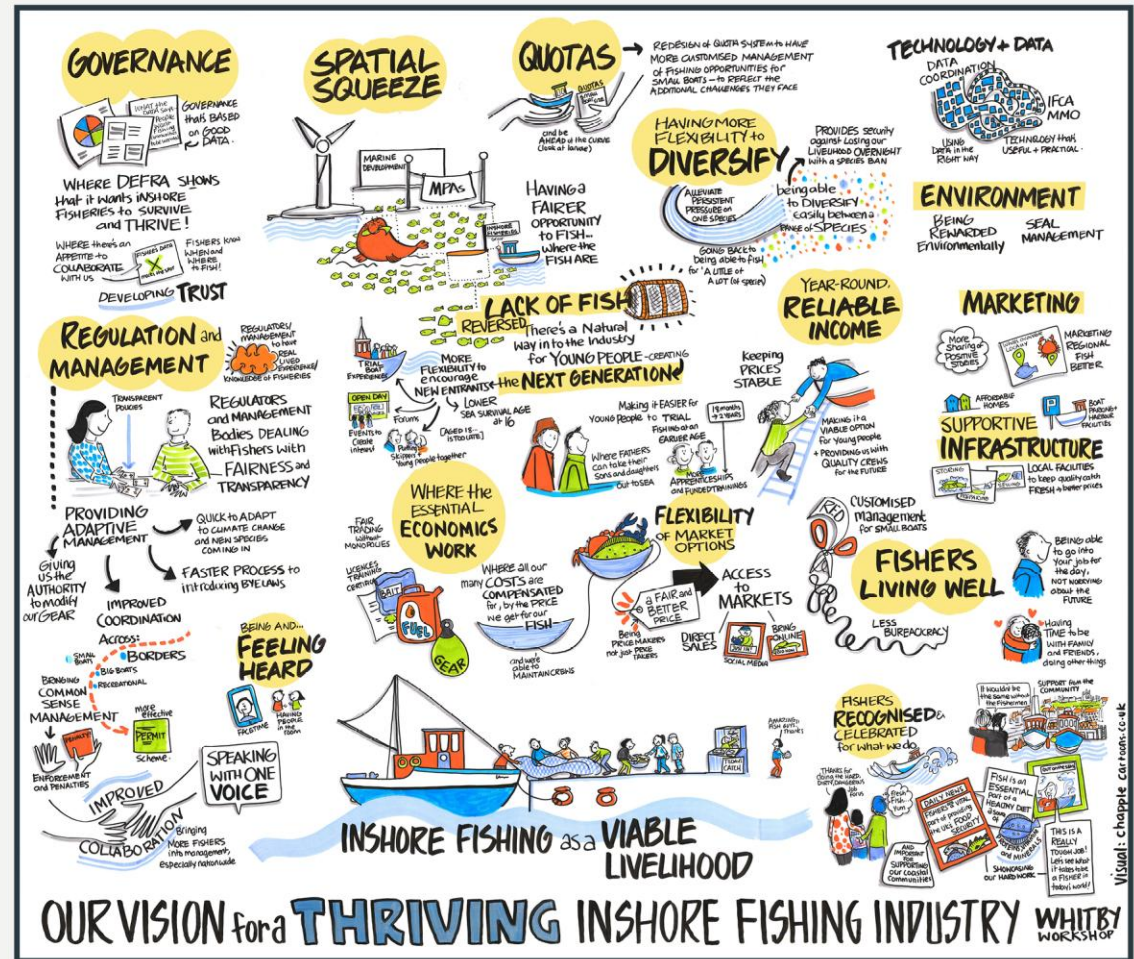
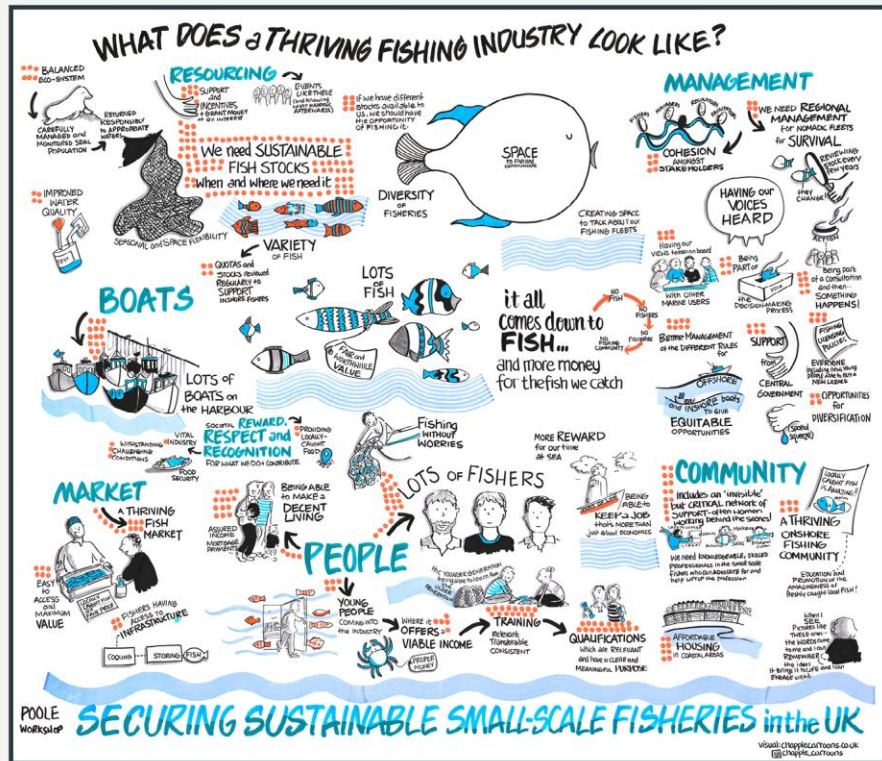
Whitby Workshop

21/10/24 - 23/10/24



120 participants across two workshops in Poole and Whitby came together to understand and address the decline in the fishing fleet, with emphasis on accentuated decline in the under 10m sector.

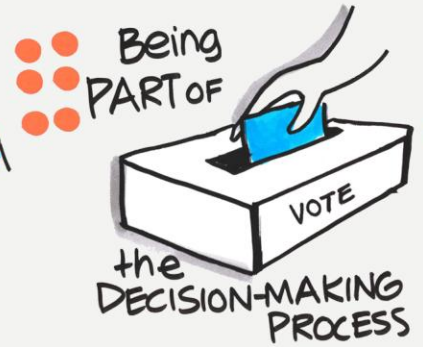
Workshop Approach



The Top Priorities: Being Heard



HAVING our
VOICES
HEARD



Have MEETINGS
in the WINTER
(so fishers
less likely to
lose a 'SEA DAY')

HAVE EVERYONE in
the room at one time

- MMO
- DEFRA
- Cefas
- IFCA's

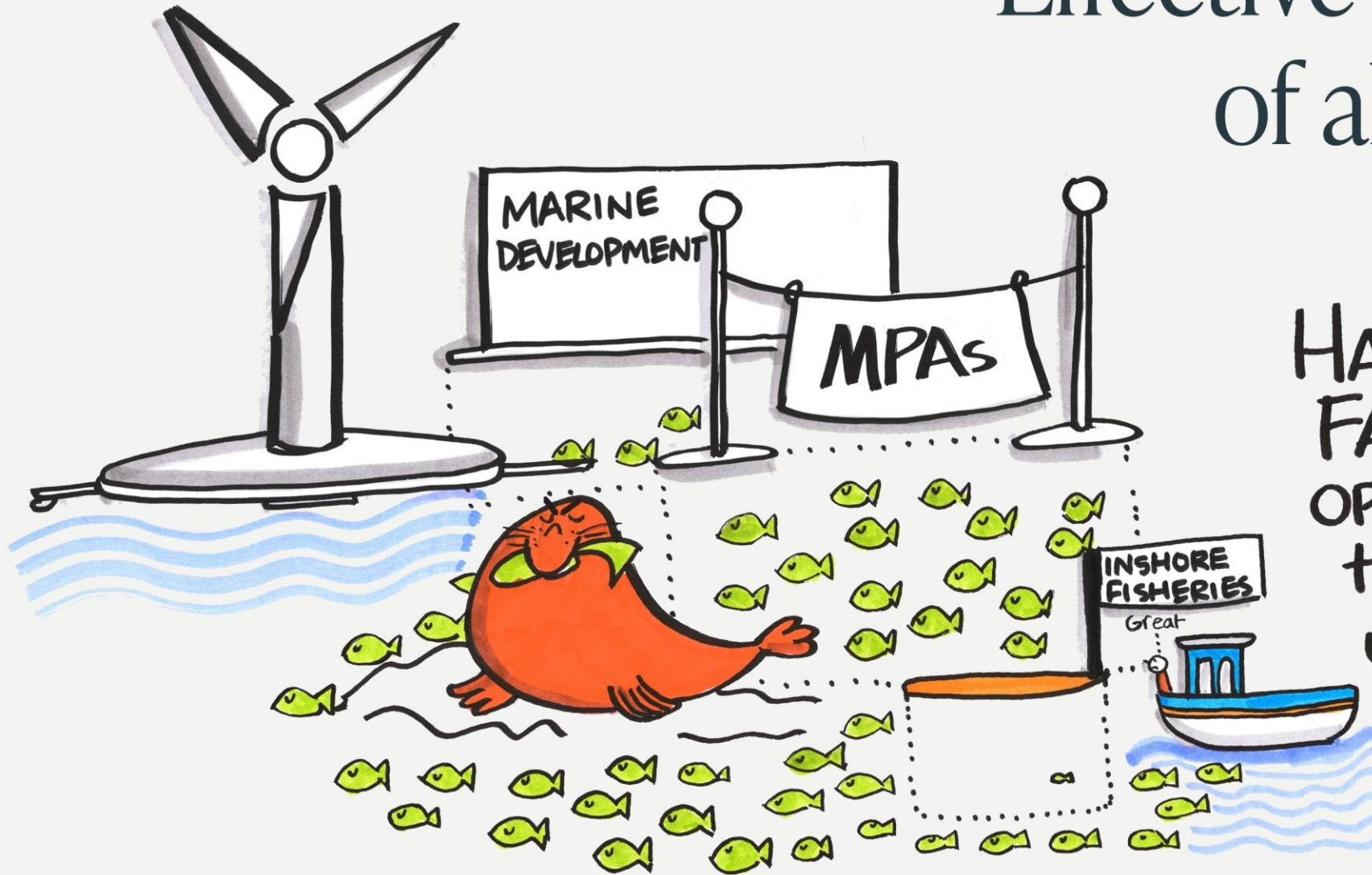
ANNUAL mtg
to discuss
POLICY + ISSUES

REGIONAL
REPRESENTATION

SUBSIDISED
ATTENDANCE
is
IMPORTANT

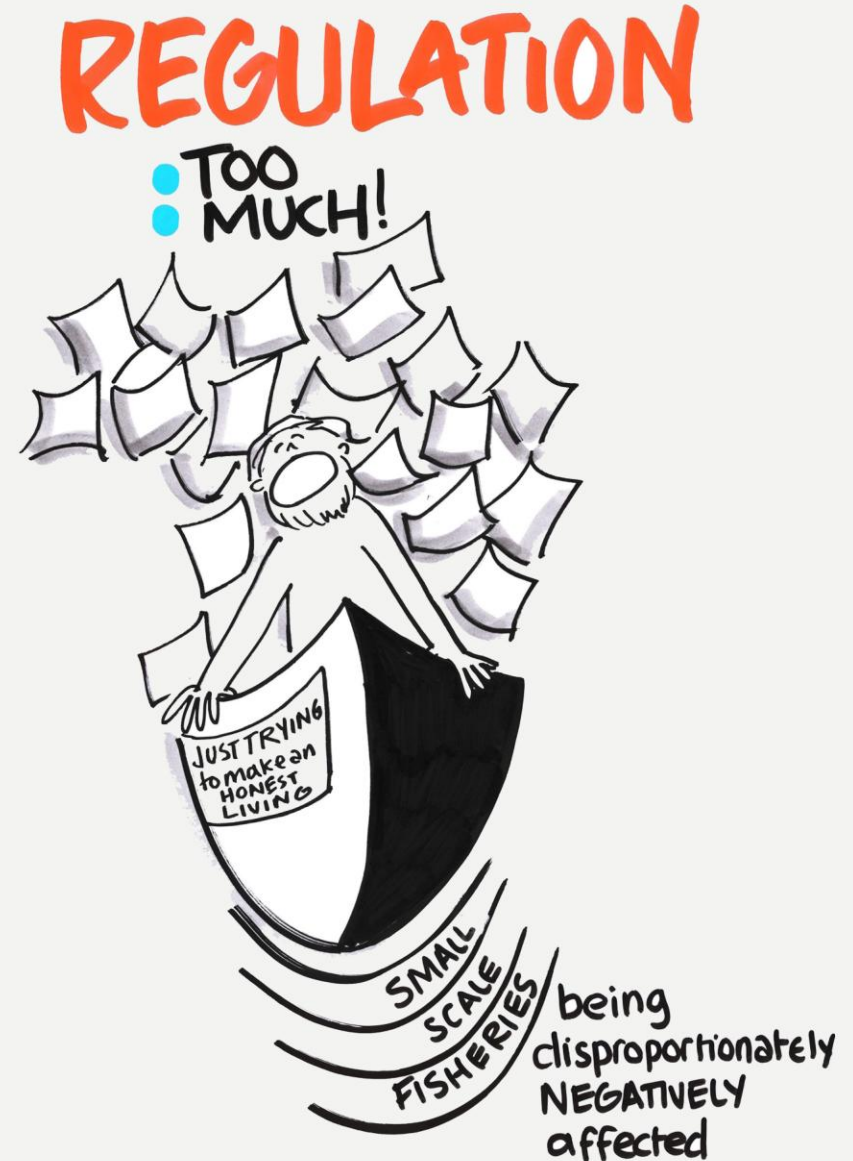
**FISHER
REPRESENTATION**

Effective Regulation of all Sea Users

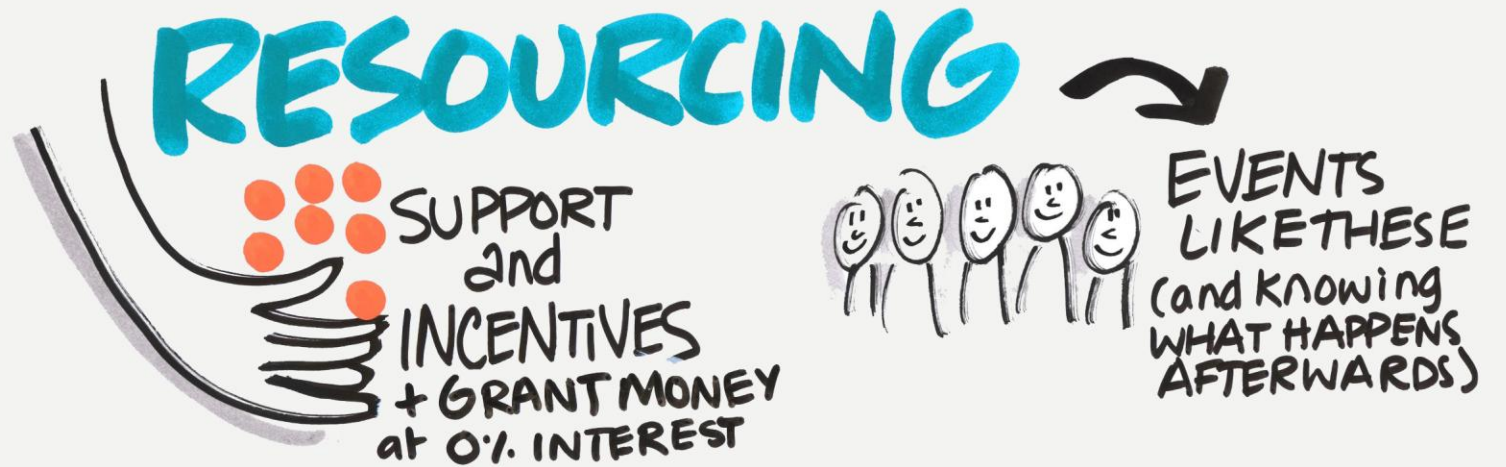


HAVING A
FAIRER
OPPORTUNITY
TO FISH...
WHERE THE
FISH ARE

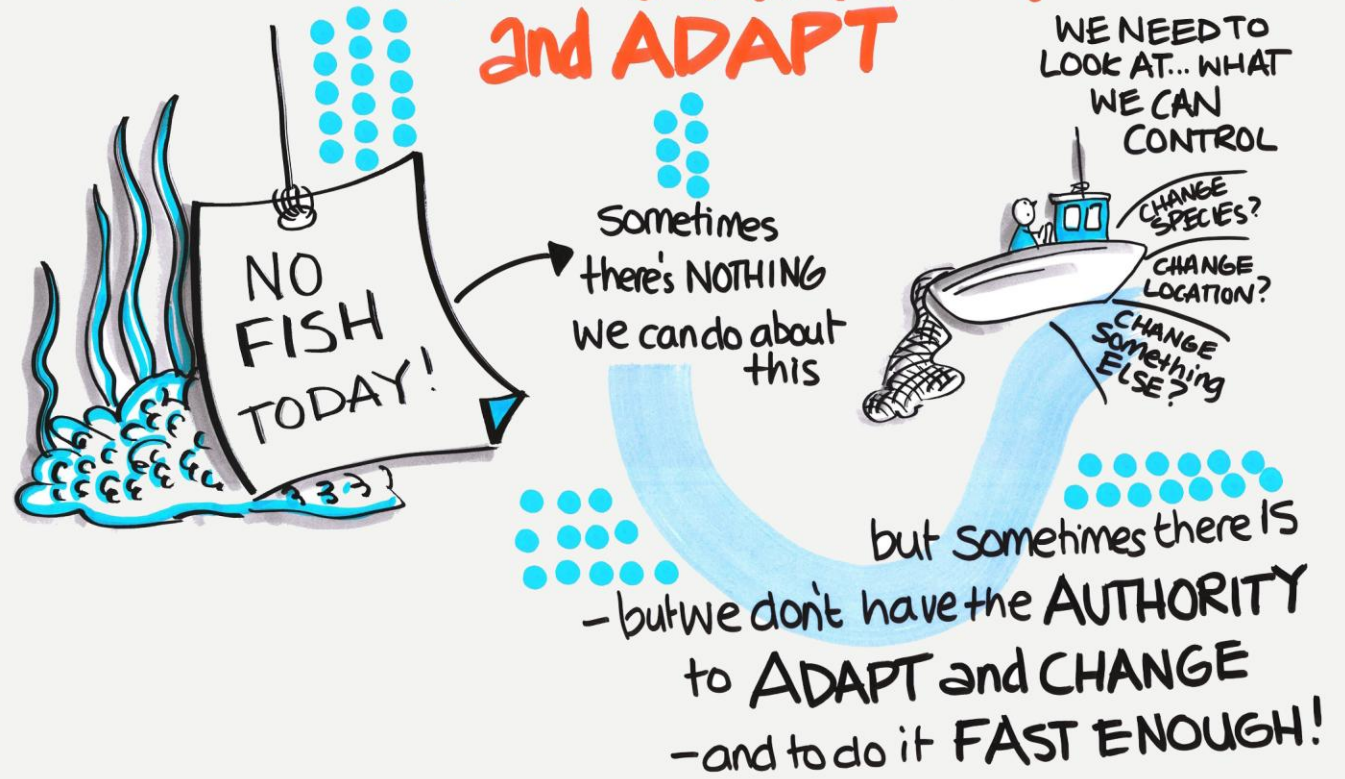
Health and Safety Regulations that Match Vessel Type and Size



Better Access to Grants for Small Fishing Businesses

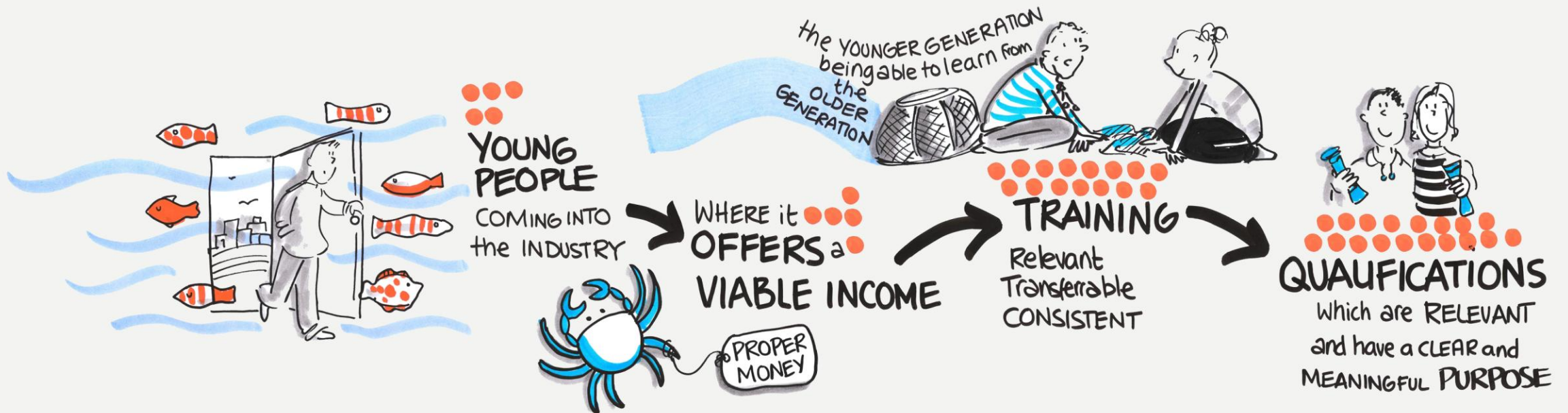


LACK of CONTROL OF HOW WE DIVERSIFY and ADAPT



Support for and Facilitation of Diversification

Invest in Training and Recruitment into Fishing Careers



Improved Public Awareness and Positive Perception of the Fishing Industry

●● NEGATIVE
●● PRESS



Moving forward – national focus

National Symposium

- **4-5th February 2026** Inshore and small-scale fisheries symposium (2 day residential workshop in Newcastle)
- Almost 100 participants, almost half inshore fishermen.
- Purpose - to discuss the 7 priority challenges (framework) and establish what can, and what cannot, be done to improve viability of inshore fishing livelihoods as a pillar of sustainable fisheries.
- Evolve a roadmap to securing the inshore and small-scale fleet.
- Funded by Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, AIFCA and Fishmongers

Participants: Head of fishermen's organisations, IFCA committees, networks such as WiF, fishermen previously involved (building up relationships, capacity for collective action, sense of ownership), and allocation of new places to fishermen who have not yet contributed (expansion).

Aim: ensure that each IFCA region is represented, including at least 1 commercial fisherman member from each IFCA committee .

We are conducting phone interviews (between now and February) – please email Sarah.coulthard@ncl.ac.uk if you'd like to be contacted by our research team at Newcastle. Phone calls will discuss your experience of the 7 priorities and suggestions for solutions (funded by AIFCA).

Building a picture of how fishery and regional contexts shape the 7 priorities

What do the Public think?

In summer 2024 public surveys conducted in North Shields, Cromer & Whitby.

Total: 510
Tourists: 276
Residents: 234



83%

of people surveyed said that they would be **very concerned** if the **fishing fleet no longer existed** in this area.

99%

of people surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the UK should produce its own seafood and **reduce reliance on imports**.

91%

of tourists surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that locally sourced seafood is an **important** part of their **coastal holiday**.

99%

of people surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the local fishing industry and related infrastructure are important to the **cultural heritage** and **identity** of the area.

84%

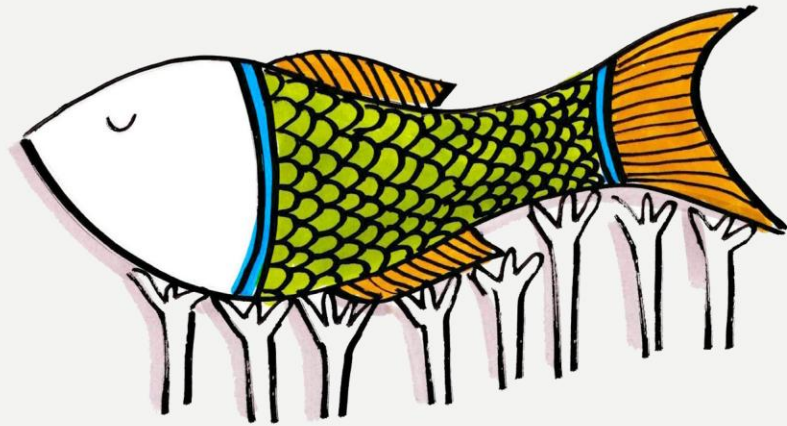
of residents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that more should be done by the **government** to **protect** the **fishing industry in their area**.

90%

of people surveyed who had interacted* with the local industry said that their interactions **positively impacted their day**.

WORKING TOGETHER

as a COLLECTIVE



Find out more
information here:



In Conclusion

- The **inshore fishing fleet** has a long and important tradition; it has shaped our **culture and the identity**. It provides valuable sources of food, provides local employment, contributes to a sense of place and sense of community.
- Inshore, we have a **well-developed management systems and governance**, it has proven capable of reconciling competing demands.
- This alone cannot secure **sustainable inshore fisheries**, and in a time of change **we need better integration of wider policy**.
- The tradition of **collaboration and leadership** shown by the fishing fleets of Dorset, local management and the network and community represented here by Dorset Coast Forum is a credit to all the County.

- Thank you, Dorset Coast Forum, and all those who have worked tirelessly to achieve what is a nationally exemplar of inshore fisheries management
- Finally, to pay credit to the fisheries leaders who have spent countless meetings working to reconcile the competing demands on the marine environment.



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