

Fisheries in a Changing Climate



Adapting inshore fisheries to changing seas using responsive, flexible management at the local level

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Overview

1

Changing seas

Fisher anecdotes from Kent and Essex as early-warning signals.

2

The IFCA response

Local evidence, monitoring, proportionate rules and review.

3

Manila clam case study

How a new fishery moved from risk and illegality to managed opportunity.

4

Flexible management tools

Byelaws, permits and permit conditions that can adapt operationally.

5

Stable institutions

Why continuity, trust and Coastal Health partnerships matter for resilience.

From changing seas to adaptive institutions: learning fast, acting locally, reviewing openly.



Changing seas are already being described from the deck

The Changing Seas project

“Cod was caught in tonnes. I’ve not caught a cod inside the estuary in 10 years.”

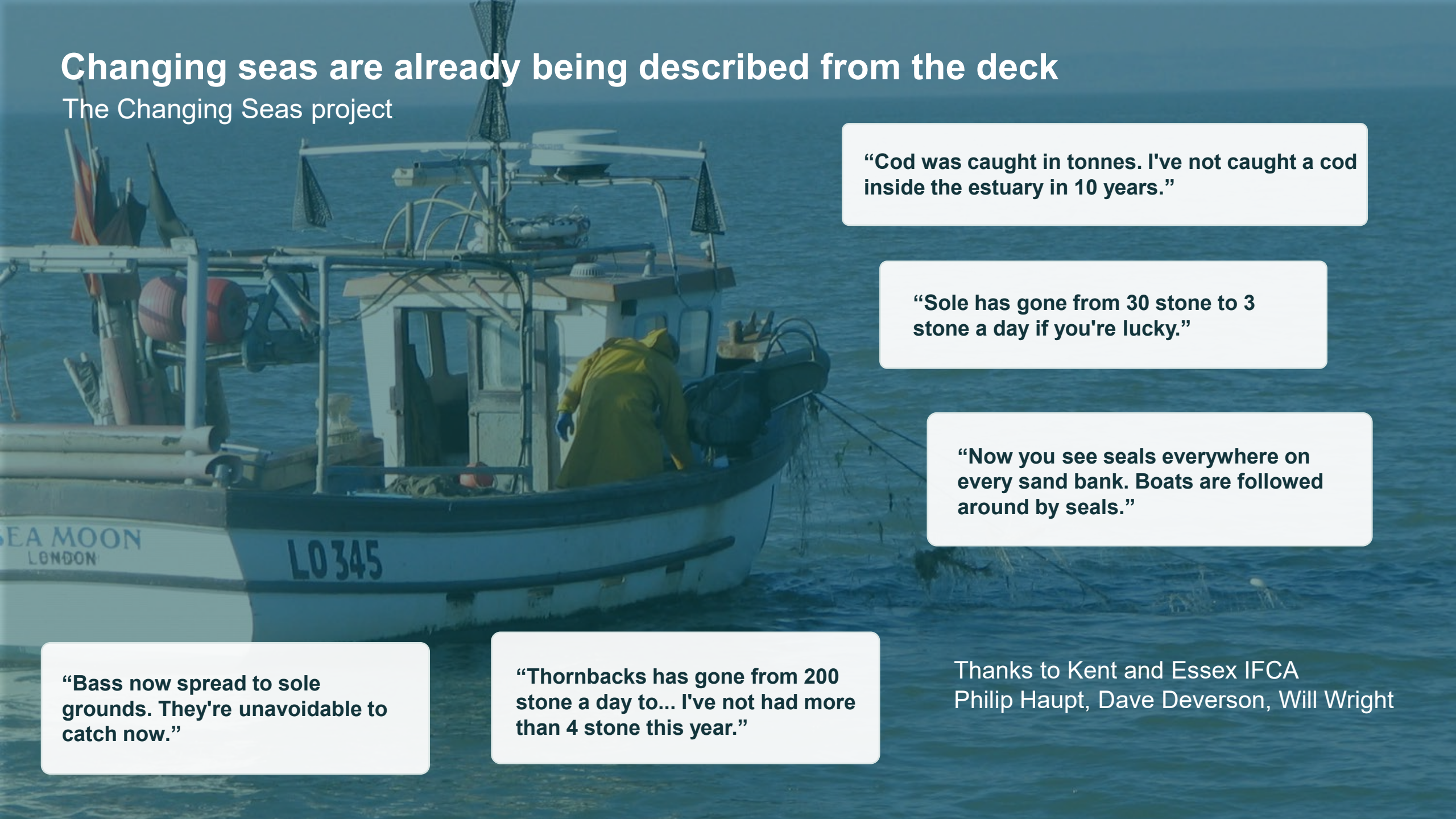
“Sole has gone from 30 stone to 3 stone a day if you’re lucky.”

“Now you see seals everywhere on every sand bank. Boats are followed around by seals.”

“Bass now spread to sole grounds. They’re unavoidable to catch now.”

“Thornbacks has gone from 200 stone a day to... I’ve not had more than 4 stone this year.”

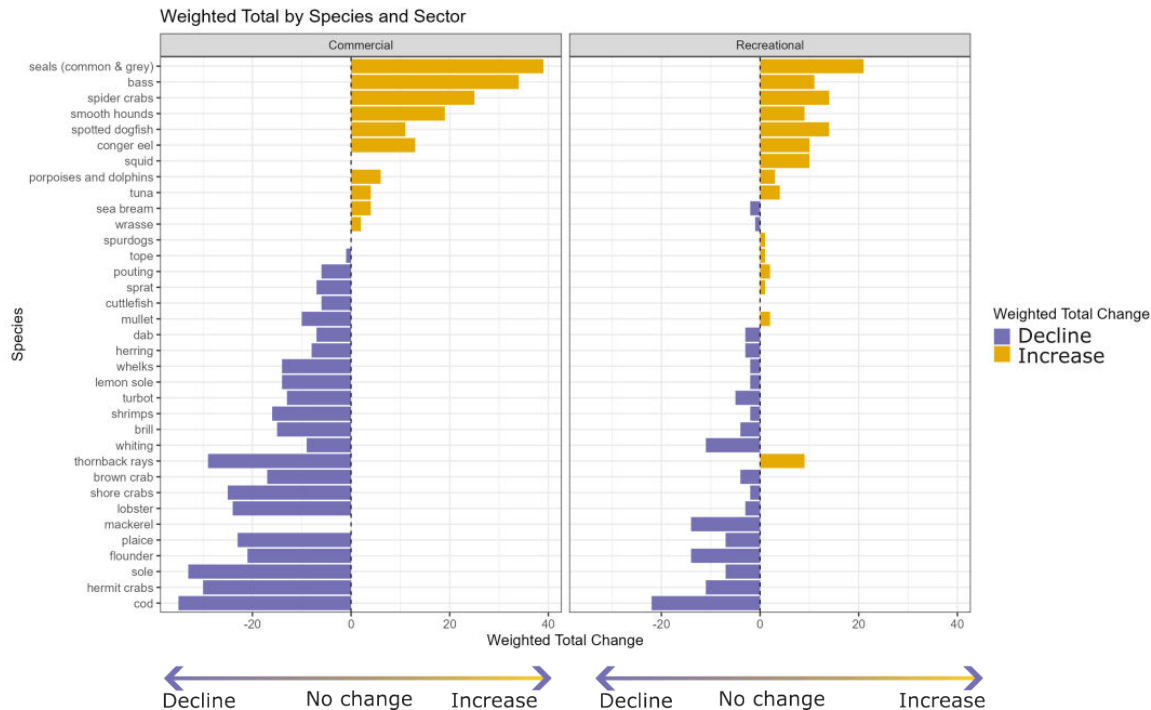
Thanks to Kent and Essex IFCA
Philip Haupt, Dave Deverson, Will Wright



The survey gives a consistent message

Commercial and recreational responses broadly agree on winners and losers

Changing Seas Fisher survey results



- Good agreement between commercial and recreational results
- Similar species winners and losers across the district
- More losers than winners in fisher-reported experience
- Local knowledge helps target monitoring and proportionate action

Adaptation starts with listening - then testing, monitoring and responding.

Flexible permit conditions: adapting operating rules

Devon & Severn IFCA example: potting permit conditions

What the tool allows

- Permit conditions can be introduced, removed or varied after review
- Conditions can address catch, gear, spatial and time restrictions
- The byelaw provides the legal frame; the conditions provide operational responsiveness

Flexibility is procedural - not ad hoc.

1

Evidence and concern

Officers, members and fishers identify a management issue.

2

Consult and decide

Informal and formal consultation inform the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee.

3

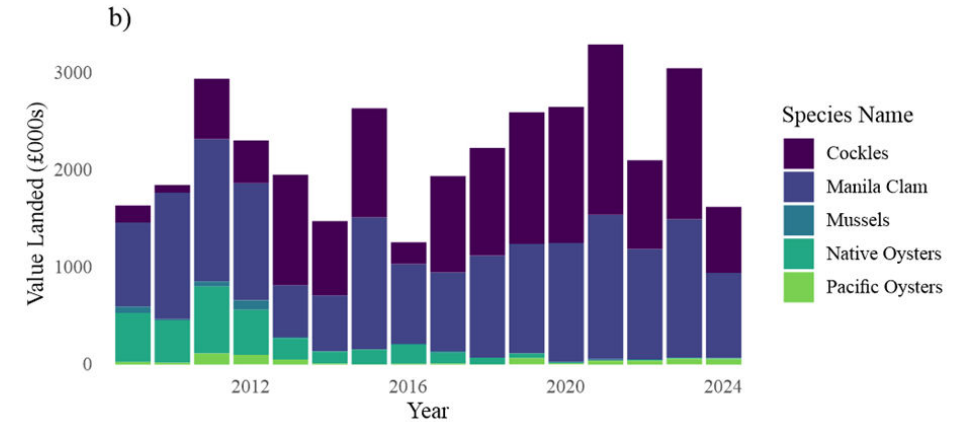
Amend conditions

Conditions are changed without rebuilding the whole byelaw.

Takeaway: IFCA's can adjust the operating rules around a fishery while preserving transparency, consultation and enforceability.

Case study: the Manila clam fishery

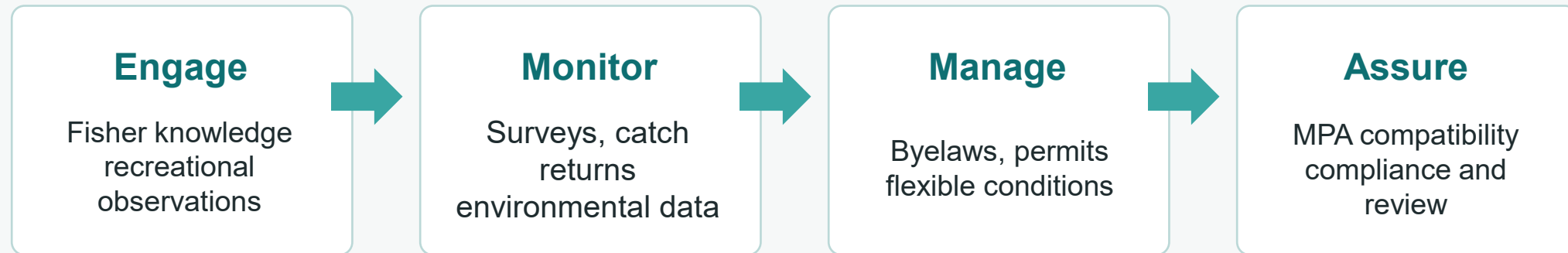
Change can create risks - but also new local opportunities



- Non-native Manila clams naturalised and became a wild capture fishery
- A near-shore resource accessible to under-10m day boats
- Value became important to small-scale inshore fishing communities
- The task was to manage both opportunity and risk

What IFCAs can do when change is local

A local adaptive cycle: evidence, rules, enforcement, review



The value of IFCAs is the ability to connect place-based evidence with statutory action.

Flexible management still needs clear duties, transparent decisions and accountability.

Institutional sustainability

Responsive management depends on relationships that survive beyond a single event

Local presence

Authorities understand fleets, habitats and places.

Continuity

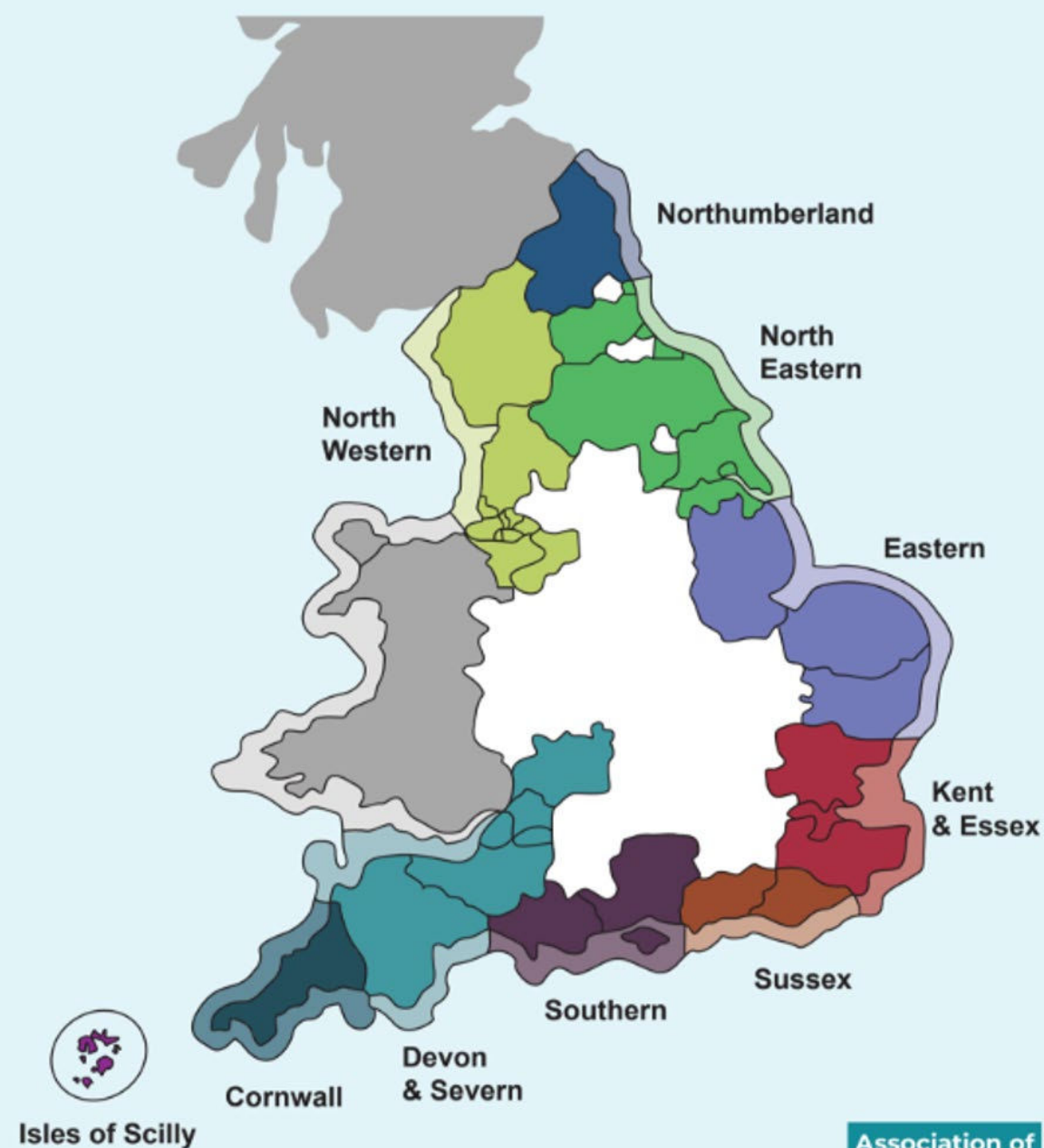
Byelaws, permits and duties provide a stable basis for action.

Trusted relationships

Fishers, regulators and scientists can share evidence early.

Memory and learning

Institutions carry lessons from one event or fishery to the next.



Coastal Health Programme: Preparedness for adverse events

Cefas and AIFCA partnership supporting IFCA response to coastal environmental change

- Supports preparedness for adverse events of unknown cause
- Focuses on events affecting wild organisms, including shellfish and finfish
- Regional workshops use IFCA knowledge and past experience
- Develops protocols and procedures for future events



Find out more about the Coastal Health programme

Preparedness is adaptation: we need shared protocols before the next event.

Key Messages

Responsive local management in a changing climate



1

Treat local knowledge as an early-warning system

Use it to target monitoring, to build for evidence.

2

Keep management tools flexible and accountable

Permits, byelaws and conditions can adapt without losing transparency.

3

Invest in stable local institutions

Adaptation depends on continuity, trust and capability at the coast.

The aim is not to predict every change - it is to build a system capable of learning and responding.



Any questions, please contact:
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