

A forward-thinking approach to fisheries science will begin this spring around the East Anglian coast, with the launch of the CEFAS project, Shark By-Watch UK.

Shark By-Watch UK hopes to harness the expertise and knowledge of southern North Sea fishermen from the under 10m fleet.

They have been selected due to their historically important shark and ray inshore fisheries.

Funded by the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and run by CEFAS, the project aims to improve the awareness of shark and ray by-catch in the inshore fisheries of the southern North Sea (ICES division IVc).

It will also demonstrate local stock status and better inform policy decisions. Fishermen and scientists will work together to improve fishing and handling practices, whilst collecting data and information, to help support a more sustainable, long-term shark and ray fishery.

This pilot project will involve 4-10 fishing vessels and begin work at sea (ICES division IVc) in April 2012. Vessels will be selected by tender, with the tendering process running between 23 March and 6 April (the final closing date).

Project co-ordinator, Victoria Bendall, a specialist in fish behaviour at CEFAS, says that this is an exciting new programme with a refreshing approach.

"We aim to develop partnerships between fishermen and scientists to promote greater awareness of local shark and ray stocks and conservation issues.

"It is hoped that outcomes from the project will put fishermen right at the heart of fisheries management and encourage greater long-term sustainability of local shark and ray fisheries, helping to maintain their future.

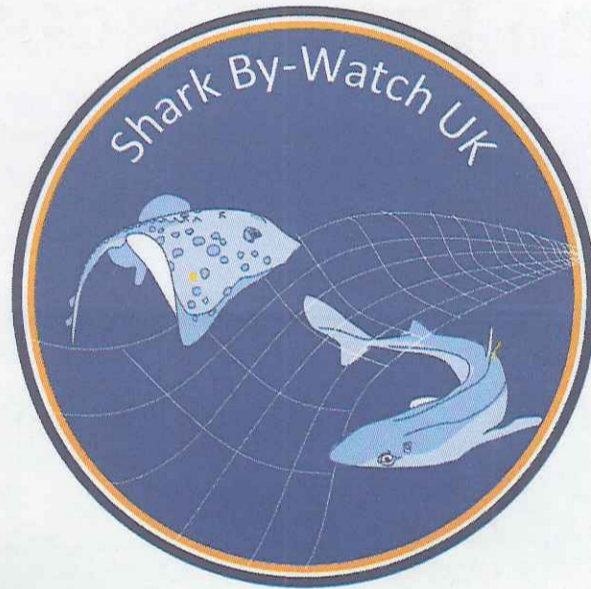
"We will work directly with fishermen through workshops, meetings, one-to-one discussions, field surveys and co-operative tagging programmes.

"We hope that fishermen,



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Cefas 'Shark By-Watch UK' project



themselves, will guide the direction of the project, identifying the important issues that most affect them," she said.

PROJECT LAUNCH

A series of "kick-off" meetings in Aldeburgh, Colchester and Lowestoft will introduce the

project. Fishermen attending will receive a welcome pack – including a t-shirt, project and tender information – together with refreshments throughout the afternoon.

Times and venues are as follows:

■ **ALDEBURGH:**

14 March, 2:00pm, at the White Lion Hotel, Market Cross Place, Aldeburgh, Suffolk IP15 5BJ

■ **LOWESTOFT:**

15 March, 2:00pm, at the Hotel Victoria, Kirkley Cliff, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0BZ

■ **COLCHESTER:**

16 March, 2:00pm, at the Ramada Hotel, A12/A120 Ardleigh Junction, Colchester, Essex CO7 7QY.

Those unable to attend any of the meetings but interested in working on the project are invited to get in touch. CEFAS is offering a variety of ways for fishermen to keep up to date with the project, including a

dedicated website and the use of social media channels.

Victoria Bendall added that she hopes that fishermen will use Facebook and Twitter to constructively share their views.

"Ultimately, we hope that the outcomes from the project will give fishermen a true voice and encourage greater long-term sustainability of local shark and ray fisheries."

Tender documents and more information about the project can be obtained via:

Post: Shark By-Watch UK, CEFAS, Pakefield Road, Lowestoft NR33 0HT
www.Sharkbywatch.org
 or by email to victoria.bendall@cefass.co.uk
 Phone: 01502 527773

Keep in touch with this project on:

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/sharkbywatchuk>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Sharkbywatchuk>



The aim of the project is to help support a more sustainable, long-term shark and ray fisheries