

Government Response to Consultation

Ascension Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy and Implementation Policies

March 2023

Ascension Island Government



Introduction

The Ascension Island Government (AIG) is proposing to introduce a system for managing inshore fisheries around the island. Inshore fisheries are defined as those operating within 12NM of the island. No large-scale commercial fishing is permitted within any part of Ascension’s Marine Protected Area (MPA), but recreational, sports and small-scale extractive fisheries can take place within 12NM of the island. It is these fisheries that the Inshore Fisheries Management Strategy and associated implementation policies seek to manage to secure social, economic and environmental objectives for the whole island.

Context

The marine environment and fishing are highly valued and culturally important to the people living on Ascension. The ocean provides an important source of food and recreation for people living on the island and, once the runway is repaired, sports fishing could be a valuable source of income for the island.

Ascension currently has no management system in place to ensure that the island’s inshore marine resources are managed sustainably and that the benefits are shared equitably by those living on the island. This risks damage to a key island resource and means Ascension is not yet fully compliant with some of our obligations under the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

The purpose of the Inshore Fisheries Strategy is to ensure that fishing on Ascension is carried out sustainably such that current and future generations of people living on the island are able to enjoy good fishing opportunities.

Fishermen need to be at the heart of developing the Strategy and the current draft is based on recommendations produced by the Inshore Fisheries Advisory Committee, which was made up of volunteers from the fishing community and members of the AIG Conservation Marine Team between September 2018 and March 2020.

A public consultation on the initial draft Inshore Fisheries Strategy took place between April and May 2021 and engaged with over 200 people living on Ascension. An Inshore Fisheries Working Group of the Ascension Island Council was established to discuss and develop the Strategy and detailed implementation policies that would go alongside it. This Group met four times between June 2021 and March 2022 to update the Strategy and produce policy recommendations.

This document summarises the results of a further public consultation on the updated draft of the Inshore Fisheries Strategy and two implementation policies covering 1) Registration and Licencing and 2) Stock Assessment and Management Measures.

Consultation process

The public consultation period ran from 5th December 2022 to 12th February 2023. It included the following activities:

Date	Activity
5 th Dec	Public notice (including public meeting dates)
	Islander article

	Infographic poster for Pierhead
	Social media post
10 th Dec	Display at table top sale, Saints Club
13 th Dec	Public meeting, Courthouse
10 th Jan	AIG employees meeting, Saints Club
11 th Jan	Ascension Fishers Association meeting, Two Boats Club
12 th Jan	US Base meeting, Volcano Club
12 th Jan	Public meeting, Two Boats Club
17 th Jan	Drop in session, Two Boats Club
18 th Jan	RAF meeting, Briefing room
18 th Jan	Drop in session, Saints Club

The following responses were received:

Source	Type of response	Number
Ascension-based individuals	Written	1
	Oral (meetings and drop in sessions)	18
	Through Councillors	Unknown
Ascension-based organisations	Written	2
International individuals	Written	1

Format of Response

Equal weight has been given to all responses from Ascension regardless of their source or type. All responses have been anonymised to respect the privacy of the consultees. Where respondents expressed similar views or covered similar ground, these have been grouped together and addressed collectively.

Responses

The table below summarises the consultation responses received from people or organisations based on Ascension and the action taken to address them.

Suggestion/question	Incorporated	Detail
Overall Strategy		
Concern that provision for management measures to be brought in on a precautionary approach if good data are not available could be used by AIG Conservation to push through unnecessarily restrictive measures.	Wording changed to address concern	Wording has been amended (Strategy p. 6 & 14) to make clear that it is not anticipated that this approach will be taken often and will not be within AIG Conservation and Fisheries Directorate (AIGCFD)'s power to pursue alone. Any precautionary measures would still have to go through the decision-making process so the Administrator's decision would take into account recommendations from the Group Representing the Fishing Community and the Ascension Island Council as well as AIGCFD. However, it is felt necessary to keep this provision in the Strategy as there could well be times when there is a

		broad consensus for acting ahead of very detailed data.
Strategy currently says if changes in policy required, AIG will consult Council. Should also consult the Group Representing the Fishing Community.	Wording added to Strategy.	The Strategy now states that AIG will consult both the Island Council and representatives of the fishing community on any proposed changes to the implementation policies. Following comments from the Council, the Strategy and Policies now also state that all proposed major changes to the policies are circulated to registered fishers so they can provide feedback via their Councillors. (Strategy p. 12, Management Measures Policy p. 8)
Current wording of the Strategy implies retail fish businesses would be fishing irresponsibly.	Wording in the Strategy has been changed.	It was never the intention to imply that retail fish businesses fish irresponsibly and the wording has been amended to ensure there is no suggestion of this (Strategy p. 9).
US Base personnel should not be exempt from the need to register or obtain a licence.	No change to Strategy or policies as no exemption is included.	The Strategy and the policies have been drafted on the basis they will apply to everyone on Ascension, including US Base personnel. This will extend to the legislation and the default position is that everyone is included.
The Reeves and Armstrong 2015 report had an aim to 'maximise revenue potential.' Is this an indication of AIG's priorities and is the policy about data or money?	No change to Strategy	The Reeves and Armstrong report is referenced in the Strategy to demonstrate there has been a long lead up to the drafting of the Strategy and that the isolation and small area of shallow water habitat make Ascension's inshore fish stocks vulnerable to even small pressures. The objectives of the Strategy are clearly stated on p.4 and do not include any aim to maximise revenue, rather that any financial benefit from sports fishing is shared across the island. In 2015 AIG was conducting a major review of fisheries and the Reeves and Armstrong report ran parallel to another Cefas report commissioned to look at offshore fisheries, which were still operating at the time. They shared a remit to look at revenue maximisation. The situation on Ascension has changed since then. The Reeves and Armstrong report was used alongside other sources of information to design the current strategy. Some of the recommendations in the report have been followed, but many others have not in the desire to create a strategy that meets Ascension's current needs. The objectives of the Strategy should be judged from what is written in the Strategy not from one particular source of information used to compile it.
Registration		
The threshold for registration should be	Strategy (p. 7) and Registration	The RAF has a long-term interest in the health of Ascension's fish stocks and so their detachments

reduced to a 4-month contract so that the RAF detachments do not need licences.	and Licencing Policy (p. 4) changed so that people with contracts or tours of 4 months or more qualify for registration.	should be eligible for registration. The number of contractors with 4- or 5-month contracts to work on Ascension that would also now not need a licence based on this change is likely to be extremely small and not pose a great risk.
Could registration also occur at workplaces in addition to the Post Office and annual event?	No change to Strategy or Policies	Registration in work places would place too great an administrative burden on employing organisations and create difficulties with collating a single register. The ability to register at sign up events and the Post Office coupled with a two-month grace period should give people sufficient opportunity to register without inconvenience.
Will assistance be provided to help people who struggle with literacy to register?	Yes	The registration form will be very simple requiring only people's name, address, email (if available) and signature to indicate they are eligible for registration. We will allow people to be assisted to fill out the register if necessary as long as the person registering provides the signature. There will be people on hand at the annual event and Post Office to explain the information needed and provide guidance.
Clarification on length of grace period as inconsistency between 1 and 2 months.	No change to Strategy or policies.	The only mention of a one month grace period is in the appendix listing the original IFAC recommendations. The current Strategy (p. 7) and Registration and Licencing Policies (p. 5) both state a two-month period, which is designed to give people sufficient time to register if they have been on leave.
Licences		
In previous consultations the Ascension community were told that only large incoming businesses would require a licence. What is the justification for the change?	No change to Strategy or policies.	The previous public consultation in April 2021 included licencing for retail fish businesses and low fees to reflect the fact that these are likely to be operated by people living on Ascension. The Strategy also included wording that allows for the potential for local people to establish sports fishing businesses. There has not been a change to the Strategy on this.
The Director of Fisheries should not have sole responsibility for determining licence applications.	No change to Strategy or policies.	It is common across Ascension law that one role has responsibility for issuing permits or licences. The Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance, 2015, already gives the Director of Fisheries power to issue fishing licences. The policies constrain the reasons for which the Director of Fisheries can refuse to issue a licence and there is an appeal mechanism to review decisions.

<p>The need for a licence to operate a retail fish business is a deterrent and AIG should not be deterring such businesses and potentially creating a black market.</p>	<p>Clarification in Strategy (p. 8-9, 29) about who needs a retail fish business licence and what this entails.</p>	<p>AIG are updating their Business Policy and this will provide the framework for decisions on what constitutes a business, including those selling fish. A business will need to file a return to AIG and meet any other legal obligations that apply to such businesses in other parts of Ascension law. The Inshore Fishery Strategy has no bearing on this. The additional requirements placed on a retail fish business through the Strategy would be the need for a licence and to abide by a small list of licence conditions. This does not seem disproportionate given the businesses are harvesting a natural resource shared by the whole island. AIG is supportive of small businesses and the administrative and financial burden on businesses on Ascension is very low relative to most countries.</p>
<p>What type of businesses are required to meet safety requirements and need a Coxswain licence, and why do AIG think this is necessary?</p>	<p>Clarification will be provided on this once the Harbour Board has met to consider an updated policy.</p>	<p>The likely outcome is that businesses that take paying passengers on a boat (Sports fishing businesses, Registered Chartered Vessels and any other boat tour businesses) will be required to meet the safety requirements of the Harbours Regulations and Policy. AIG has a duty of care to members of the public to ensure commercial vessels have minimum safety requirements for passengers. The safety requirements have been drawn up by the Sea Rescue Coordinator with the Ascension context in mind. Retail fishing businesses would not be required to meet the Harbours Regulations because their businesses do not involve taking paying passengers on boats.</p>
<p>Would AIG provide training for boats and coxswains to meet the safety requirements and would external funding be available to support this?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This would be a requirement and potential expense for any business taking paid passengers on vessels. It is for an individual to decide if such a business would be viable.</p>
<p>Licence categories</p>		
<p>A list of all licenced sports fishing and retail fishing businesses should be made public.</p>	<p>Added to Registration and Licencing policy.</p>	<p>An undertaking to publish a list of fishing business licences added to the Registration and Licencing policy (p. 6).</p>
<p>Need to define what constitutes a retail fish business. Concern that anyone selling a fish they caught would be classed as a business.</p>	<p>Clarification added to Strategy (p. 8) and Registration and Licencing Policy (p. 5).</p>	<p>Definition of what constitutes a business has been changed and makes reference to the AIG Business Policy that is in development. If anyone is unsure whether they would qualify as a business, they could seek an opinion from AIG. The Enforcement Guidelines will clearly state that if anyone is found to be operating as a business without a licence, the first</p>

		response from AIG will be to provide guidance. This means that nobody will face a penalty if they inadvertently cross the threshold for what qualifies as a business under the new Business Policy.
People living on Ascension should not be required to get a licence even if they are operating a business.	Introduction of additional licence category to Strategy (p. 8-9, 29) and Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 5).	<p>People living on Ascension will only need a licence if they are operating a business. Businesses are harvesting a resource shared by the island and are likely to take more fish than individuals. The need for licences is felt to be reasonable in these circumstances and the additional requirements placed on businesses proportionate.</p> <p>A third category of business 'Registered Chartered Vessel' has been created for boat operators who only charge registered fishers for sports fishing trips. Visitors with licences could go on the vessel, but could not be charged a fee. This category would have a licence fee of £50 per year in recognition that they are providing a service for people living on Ascension. They would still be required to meet safety requirements set out in the Harbours Regulations.</p>
How will the need to have a retail fish business licence be applied fairly?	Clarification added to Strategy (p. 8, 9) and Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 5, 6, 10).	The need for a retail fish business licence will be based on the definition of a business included in the new AIG Business Policy. All operations that meet those criteria will be classed as a business for the purposes of the Business Policy and the need for a licence under this Strategy. Decisions about what constitutes a business will be made by AIG.
Need to define what constitutes a sports fishing business.	Clarification added to Strategy (p. 8) and policies (Registration and Licencing p. 2, 5).	The need for a sports fishing business licence will be based on the definition of a business included in the new AIG Business Policy. All operations that meet those criteria will be classed as a business for the purposes of the Business Policy and the need for a licence under this Strategy. Decisions about what constitutes a business will be made by AIG.
The Strategy states that no sports fishing businesses have operated on Ascension since 2017, so can it be assumed that no boats currently operating would be classed as sports fishing businesses.	No change to wording in Strategy	The new AIG Business Policy will determine what operations are classed as businesses. No business permits have been issued for sports fishing businesses since 2017.
Need a clearer distinction between what is a sports fishing business and	Wording in Strategy amended	Wording in the Strategy (p. 8) has been amended to make a clear distinction between a sports fishing business that earns income from charging people for the experience of fishing and a retail fish business that earns income from selling fish.

what is a retail fish business.		
Would Range Rider be considered a sports fishing business	Introduction of additional licence category to Strategy and Registration and Licensing Policy.	Whether Range Rider qualifies as a business would be judged based on criteria in the AIG Business Policy. It is likely that it may come under the licence category of a Registered Chartered Vessel. An existing exemption would mean that the Harbours Regulations would not apply to Range Rider.
Distinguish between visitors who are friends and family of people living on Ascension and those with no connection. All need a licence but first group should not be charged.	No change to Strategy or Policies	This was considered, but would have too high an administrative burden and be open to loopholes. The fee of £10 for a licence was deliberately set at a low level to reflect the fact that many visitors would be friends and family.
Can the same person have a sports fishing and retail fishing business and could this allow a loophole to get around the quotas in the sports fishing licence?	Wording added to the Strategy (p. 9) and the Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 5).	To prevent this loophole, new wording has been added stating it would not be possible to hold both a sports fishing licence and a retail fishing business licence, but it would be possible to combine the new Registered Chartered Vessel licence category and a retail fishing business licence.
Licence fees		
Clarity is needed on the fee for a retail fish business licence as there is contradiction between what is stated in the Policy and the Islander article.	No change to Strategy or policies	The fee stated in the Islander article was an error. The proposed fee of £50 per year is correct in the Strategy and the Registration and Licencing policy.
Do the licence fees justify the administrative burden?	No change to Strategy or policies	The licence fees are sufficient to cover the cost of issuing a photocard licence. The purpose of licences is to ensure sustainable fishing and so the resource required to administer them is justified for this purpose. Administration of the system will largely be done by the AIGCFD Marine Team, which is supported by external funding not AIG central funds.
Licence fees for visitors should be scaled to the length of their stay.	No change to Strategy or policies.	This has been considered, but the proposed £10 is the minimum required to cover the cost of producing the licence. Short term visitors are most likely to have little connection to Ascension and so charging them less than the cost of issuing the licence would not be a good use of AIG resources. Visitors staying for longer periods are most likely to be friends or family of people living on Ascension and so it was not considered desirable to charge more than £10 for

		people in this group even if they stay and fish for a number of months.
Licence conditions		
Quotas in licence conditions are too low and some boat owners are concerned.	Wording of this licence condition has been amended. Quotas are now set at one fish/species/person/day	It is important to note that the quotas would only apply to sports fishing businesses not people living on Ascension who register and do not need a licence. The numbers quoted in the licence condition are per person fishing per week, so a boat of five people fishing could catch 10 yellowfin tuna per week. The numbers are not based on a fish stock assessment or estimation of sustainable yield. Fishing on Ascension is very unlikely to impact the overall population of pelagic species. Rather the quotas were introduced following feedback from members of the fishing community and Island Council and are designed to prevent catches exceeding the capacity of the island to use the fish and the waste that was seen when sports fishing businesses operated prior to 2017.
Quotas in sports fishing business licences should be expressed per head, not per rod.	Wording of this licence condition has been amended.	The term 'rod' is used in the sports fishing sector to refer to a person who is fishing (as distinct from skippers and deckhands), so the intention of the condition was that the quota applied to a person. Since this term is not widely understood, the wording in the Strategy (p. 28) and Registration and Licencing Policy (p. 11) has been amended to make it clear that the quota applies per person fishing.
If sports fishing client reaches limit of licence quota for a species, can the individual go to another business or get a visitor licence to catch more	Wording in Registration and Licencing Policy changed (p. 5).	To close this loophole wording in the Registration and Licencing Policy has been changed so that a sports fishing client can only book with a single sports fishing business in a single trip. They can also obtain a visitor licence, but this would only allow them to fish from the rocks or noncommercial vessels not with other sports fishing businesses.
Quotas for pelagic fish should be removed from sports fishing business licence conditions	Quotas changed to one fish/species/person/day	There were a range of views about the inclusion of quotas in sports fishing business licences, but on balance the feeling seemed to be that some limits should be in place.
Quotas in sports fishing licence conditions should be raised to 1 fish/rod/day	Quotas changed to one fish/species/person/day	Quotas have been increased to one fish per person per day for each of yellowfin, wahoo, dorado, grouper and eel. This seemed to be closest to the balance of views expressed during the consultation and will provide some limit on the number that can be caught to avoid excessive waste.
Should include a minimum landing size of 50-60lbs for	Wording of Strategy (p. 28) and Registration	Landing of small fish should be discouraged so a new condition has been added to sports fishing licences.

yellowfin, 30lb for wahoo and 15lb dorado in sports fishing vessel licence conditions.	and Licensing Policy (p. 11) amended to include size limits as an additional condition for sports fishing business licences.	The actual weights will be set in consultation with Cefas.
Quotas in sports fishing licences should also include bigeye tuna, barracuda, jacks and bullseye.	Strategy (p. 28) and Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 11) changed to include bullseye.	The species included in the quota are those that were fished by sports fishing companies based on records from when they were operating prior to 2017. None of the suggested species appeared in these records so there was not a strong case to include them. However, bullseye were felt to be a special case because of their vulnerability to intensive fishing pressure and so a quota of one bullseye/person/day will be included in the licence conditions for sports fishing businesses. The inclusion of quotas for the other species could be reviewed if the quotas or other factors cause sports fishers to switch attention to these species
Requirement for sports fishing vessels to fillet onshore needs to be checked with AIG Ops as potential difficulty during ship work.	Change to Strategy (p. 29) and Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 12)	Licence condition has been changed to allow for fish to be filleted somewhere other than the Pier if they are directed to do so by the AIG Marine team because of, for example, safety concerns during ship unloading. The condition now reads that 'all fish retained must be filleted onshore and the fish waste disposed of through island waste collection services unless directed otherwise by the AIG Marine Team.'
Requirement for retail fishing businesses to fillet onshore needs to be reconsidered.	Change to Strategy (p. 29) and Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 12)	The condition for retail fishing businesses to fillet onshore has been removed from the Strategy and policy as it could be difficult for small boats to comply with at all times. The provision of catch data will still be included as a condition to ensure information is obtained from retail fishing businesses.
Retail fish businesses and visitors should be allowed to chum and not be restricted more tightly than sports fishing businesses.	Change to Strategy (p. 28) and Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 12)	The condition prohibiting chumming by retail fish businesses and visitors was included in error and should have been updated from the previous consultation. The proposed new condition states that: <i>Chumming can only be carried out using chum sourced from Ascension Island. Chumming is defined as: The release of chum (dead fish, fish parts or blood) into the water with the intention of attracting fish in order to aid fishing. The chum is not attached to fishing gear such as hooks or traps.</i>
Map showing areas where sports fishing businesses cannot	Map added to Strategy (p. 28) and Registration	Map has been added to the Strategy and policy showing where sports fishing businesses are not

chum needs to be added.	and Licensing Policy (p. 11)	allowed to chum between Catherine Point and the east side of English Bay.
What limits would there be on future changes to licence conditions	Addition to Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 27)	A list of purposes for which Director of Fisheries can include licence conditions has been added to the Policy. All conditions must be necessary and proportionate to meet the Strategy objectives.
Revenue from licences		
All or a proportion of the money from licence fees should be ring-fenced to benefit fishing community	No change to Strategy or policies.	As a general principle, AIG does not want to introduce any direct link between taxes/permit fees and expenditure. Instead AIG will prioritise expenditure based on need. It is a principle of the Strategy that the whole Ascension community should benefit from the fishing resource around the island. The fishing community will be able to bid for and benefit from the MPA Endowment Fund.
Fees for visiting sports fishing vessels should be higher	Change to Strategy (p. 8) and Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 7)	Fees for visiting sports fishing vessels increased from £2,500 to £5,000 per month
Can AIG commit to assisting with community projects? Does it have the capacity to do this?	No change to Strategy or policies	AIG will need to decide support on a case by case basis. AIG support may be possible, but it may be necessary to increase capacity through contractors, overtime or volunteers.
Enforcement		
What are the consequences if someone doesn't register	Further clarification added in Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 6)	Additional wording has been added to the policy to indicate that an escalating response will apply to people who do not register with information and notices provided before any prosecution is considered. Enforcement Guidelines are being drafted alongside legislation.
What will be the penalties for all types of breaches of the legislation?	Penalties will be added in draft legislation	Draft legislation will include penalties for offences and Enforcement Guidelines will describe how these should be applied. These are currently being drafted and will be presented to Council for discussion.
Who is responsible if someone fishing on a non-business boat does not have correct registration or licence?	Wording added to Registration and Licensing Policy to clarify this (p. 5)	Person without the correct licence or registration is responsible not the boat owner.
Who is responsible if someone is fishing on a sports fishing vessel without the correct licence?	Wording added to Registration and Licensing Policy to clarify this (p. 5)	The person operating the sports fishing business is responsible if clients do not have the correct licence.
What is the purpose of remote electronic monitoring camera	Wording added to the Strategy (p. 29) and	Remote electronic monitoring cameras are proposed for sports fishing vessels to ensure licence conditions are being met at all times. They are a routine part of

equipment on sports fishing vessels? Is it an invasion of privacy and would it ever be applied to retail fish businesses?	Registration and Licensing Policy (p. 12) to provide more information.	commercial fishing management and are increasingly used for sports fishing vessels in other countries. It will be a requirement of a sports fishing vessel licence to have the equipment fitted and so is a choice an operator makes when deciding whether to establish a business on Ascension. As stated in the Strategy, the requirement is only for sports fishing vessels and will not be applied to retail fishing businesses.
Replace need for photo licence with paper licence and passport	No change to Strategy or policies	For effective enforcement a photo licence is needed because many visitors will not be known to people on Ascension. People are unlikely to take any other form of photo id with them while fishing, so a photo licence is the best option.
More information needed on what is meant by fishery patrols	Wording added to Stock Assessment and Management Measures Policy (p. 7-8).	If in the future management measures are brought in that see closed areas or seasons for fishing, then warranted Fishery Protection Officers and Police Officers may undertake patrols of the area to ensure nobody is fishing in breach of the measures.
Who will be policing the selling of fish?	No change to Strategy or policies.	There are no restrictions relating to the actual selling of fish and so nothing to enforce. Whether the sale of fish constitutes a business will be determined by AIG based on the new Business Policy in the same way that would apply to any type of business.
Data collection		
Will it ever become mandatory for registered fishers to return logbooks?	No change to Strategy or policies	It is stated in the Strategy and policies that logbooks will be voluntary and incentives will be used to try to increase engagement. There is no intention to change this since mandating the sharing of data is likely to lead to a reduction in its accuracy and damage trust between AIG and the fishing community.
ICCAT require data from all tuna fisheries. If logbooks are voluntary would Ascension breach ICCAT regulations.	No change to Strategy or policies	ICCAT require data from commercial fisheries hence the requirement for data from sports fishing and retail fishing businesses. They ask that contracting parties provide any data available from the recreational fishery, but accept that this will not be comprehensive. The Marine Management Organisation (UK Government Agency that advises the UK delegation to ICCAT) have been consulted on the proposed Strategy (including the voluntary nature of logbooks) and are happy that it meets ICCAT requirements.
How will AIGCFD interpret the data?	No change to Strategy or policies	The data will be interpreted by AIGCFD in collaboration with the group representing the fishing community. It is not possible to state how the data will be interpreted as it depends on what the data look like.
Further information on AIGCFD grouper transects and other surveys requested.	Link to the MPA Monitoring Evaluation and Research Strategy	The monitoring being undertaken or developed by AIGCFD is described in the MPA Monitoring, Evaluation and Monitoring Strategy, which is published on the AIG website. A link to this

	added to the Strategy (p. 30)	publication has been provided in the Strategy. Further information about AIGCFD's inshore monitoring and research work will be published in the Islander, social media and Pierhead noticeboard.
Management measures decision making mechanism		
How long will it take to amass good data and when might management measures be introduced	Additional wording added to Strategy (p. 14)	It will take time to collect sufficient data to identify any clear trends in fish numbers. It is envisaged that management measures will probably not be introduced for at least five years, but this will depend on the data and the recommendations put forward by the group representing the fishing community and AIGCFD. If there is a catastrophic decline caused by, for example, a pollution incident or disease, then it is possible management measures will be recommended more quickly.
How will it be determined if management measures are no longer needed?	No change to Strategy and policies	The Strategy and policy state that management measures will be reviewed every six months by the group representing the fishing community and AIGCFD to ensure they are working and still required. The same mechanism for decision making will determine if measures remain in place.
Prohibited fishing methods		
Spearfishing on SCUBA should be included in the list of prohibited fishing methods.	No change to Strategy and policies	The fishing methods proposed for prohibition in the Strategy (e.g. longlining and dynamite fishing) cannot be used without causing damage to ecosystems or habitats. Spearfishing on SCUBA can be very damaging, but can also be used very responsibly to target individual fish. The proposed condition on sportsfishing companies would prevent them from spearfishing on SCUBA. Future restrictions on the wider fishing community could be introduced through proposed decision making process involving the fishing community if there is wide support.
If none of the methods that will be prohibited are happening, why prohibit them?	No change to Strategy and policies	These methods could be used in the future and would be very destructive. It would take time to introduce legislation to stop them if they do occur and a large amount of damage could be caused in the meantime.
Other		
In the Strategy monitoring framework, the sample size for fishermen satisfaction surveys is too small	Wording changed in Strategy (p. 20).	Sample size increased to 50 fishermen or 25 % of registered fishers (whichever number is higher).
Where can the Ascension Island Guidelines on Wildlife Watching	No change to Strategy and policies	Guidelines are still being drafted and will be consulted on before they are finalised.

and Diving be accessed?		
Have the documents been assessed by a policy officer?	No change to Strategy and policies	The documents were produced with input from FCDO colleagues with policy-making experience. Policy Officers are not subject matters experts, and while they may be useful for drafting documents in a consistent matter, are not necessarily best placed to give advice on substantive contents of a specialised policy are such as this. Advice has been taken to ensure that the consultation process complies with all legal requirements throughout.

Next steps

- After discussion with the Ascension Island Council, final versions of the Strategy and Policies will be published alongside this document showing how consultation responses have been addressed.
- Draft legislation and Enforcement Guidance will be presented to the Council for consideration alongside the Strategy and Policies.
- The Fishers Association and other key stakeholders will be consulted on the draft legislation and Enforcement Guidelines alongside the Council.
- Final versions of the Strategy, implementation policies, legislation and Enforcement Guidelines will be presented to the Council for their recommendation.