



# INSTITUTE OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGISTS

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30<sup>th</sup> September, 2008

Dear Sir / Madam,

## **Consultation response: 'Our Seas – A Shared Resource'**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the high level marine objectives set out in '*Our Seas – A Shared Resource*'.

### **The Institute of Field Archaeologists**

The Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) is the professional body for archaeologists. It promotes best practice in archaeology and has over 2,600 members across the UK and abroad. Archaeologists who are members of the IFA work in all branches of the discipline: heritage management, excavation, finds and environmental study, buildings recording, underwater and aerial archaeology, museums, conservation, survey, research and development, teaching, and liaison with the community, industry and the commercial and financial sectors.

This response has been compiled with the assistance of the IFA's Maritime Affairs Group (MAG), to which most professional maritime archaeologists belong. The Group exists to:

- advance the practice of maritime archaeology by promoting professional standards for the management, conservation, understanding and enjoyment of the maritime archaeological resource;
- provide advice and commentary to the IFA on matters relating to maritime archaeology;
- aid in the development of professional guidelines and standards for the execution of maritime archaeological work;
- promote the training of archaeologists and others in maritime archaeological practice; and,
- facilitate the exchange of information and ideas about maritime archaeological and to communicate these to the wider profession.

## General Comments

The IFA Maritime Affairs Group (MAG) supports the objective of providing a cohesive, long-term and sustainable system for managing our marine environment. However, we have already registered our serious concerns with regard to the provisions of the draft Marine Bill insofar as they relate to the marine historic environment. As a result, though IFA MAG supports the overarching vision articulated in the 'Our Seas – a shared resource' consultation document, we remain concerned about the level of integration of the marine historic environment into *each* objective and uncertain how they will be delivered. We recognize that these are high-level policy objectives, and therefore necessarily broad. However, there are no indications in this document that the grave problems with the Marine Bill's treatment of our underwater cultural heritage are being addressed.

## Specific Comments

### What success would look like...

IFA MAG supports the vision of the future set out in 'What success would look like...' which clearly incorporates underwater cultural heritage, making reference to '*effective, integrated and strategic management of human activities in the marine environment*' ensuring that '*its rich natural and cultural heritage are better protected as well as referring to 'appropriate protection for, and access to, our marine historic assets*' (p3). Protection/conservation of the marine historic environment is certainly important to the '*effective, integrated and strategic management of human activities in the marine environment*' envisioned here.

### Marine Objectives

IFA MAG agrees with the two references to underwater cultural heritage and/or the marine historic environment made within the five marine objectives, namely:

- **Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society**

*People appreciate the value of the marine environment, its natural and cultural heritage and its resources and act responsibly.*

- **Promoting Good governance**

*The use of the marine environment is spatially planned and based on an ecosystems approach which takes account of climate change and recognises the protection needs of individual historic assets.*

These are positive contributions to policy. Yet, overall the document refers only to issues of protection or public appreciation, rather than the need for, and potential of, integrated management (particularly in relation to marine ecology, combined monitoring programmes or even the economic and cultural potential of our underwater heritage).

So, given that

*'... articulation of these high level objectives for consultation starts the process of the preparation of integrated marine policy statements by Administrations across the UK. These policy*

*statements will prioritise different policies and objectives where required. They will provide a practical tool for organisations that make decisions in the marine area and therefore a framework for achieving sustainable marine development' (p2),*

IFA MAG remains concerned that the marine historic environment is not more explicitly recognised in the other marine objectives (particularly in the context of 'Achieving a sustainable economy'). Each objective and sub-objective clearly has implications and knock-on effects for the others. However, the marine historic environment still does not appear to be fully integrated, and it is not clear that the effects on the marine historic environment are properly recognised.

### **Delivering the objectives**

As a consequence of this last concern, as well as the Draft Marine Bill itself, IFA MAG are gravely concerned as to how these positive but broad references to our underwater cultural heritage will be delivered within any future marine management system.

If I can assist in any other way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Peter Hinton, BA FSA FRSA MIFA MIAM  
Chief Executive