



British Spearfishing Association

**An introduction and update for
spearfishers**

July 2025

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Current status, and future plans

What is the British Spearfishing Association?

The British Spearfishing Association (BSA) is the primary organisational body for spearfishing in the UK. Its core objectives are to:

- Provide a unified voice for spearfishing in the UK.
- Help grow the sport at grassroots and club levels.
- Protect the interests of all spearfishers.
- Actively promote safe, ethical, and sustainable spearfishing practices.
- Foster community among spearfishers, and support national and local events.

The BSA is made up of local clubs and overseen by a national committee.

As a not-for-profit, volunteer-run association, all funds are used directly to support its objectives.

More details available in the [constitution](#)

What does the British Spearfishing Association do?

National:	Local:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Lobbying➤ Resources➤ Insurance➤ Records➤ AGM & National Events➤ International Comps➤ Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Club events➤ Open events➤ Socials➤ Local information and advice➤ Local dive buddies
National Competitions	

Why join the BSA:

- Improve your experience: Attend more local events, access knowledge from your local club, and find new dive buddies and experiences.
- Help protect spearfishing: The BSA was formed in 1980 in response to an uneducated push to ban spearfishing in the UK. Since then, there have been multiple regional issues, and an increasing amount of legislation which impacts us indirectly. The BSA continues to advocate for spearfishing rights and fishery sustainability across many platforms and topics.

BSA insurance: coverage for the BSA to hold events, and civil liability insurance for all members

Personal:

Third party civil liability insurance for all BSA members, covering £2m in compensation, and unlimited defence costs. Worldwide coverage apart from North America.

(Insurance not applicable to Gibraltar-based members).

Events:

Local club committee members and national committee members have additional coverage which covers them when holding spearfishing events.

Organisation:

Coverage if the BSA is sued as an organisation.



Insurance documents are complicated: contact us with any questions!

Resources: An essential starting point for new spearfishers, and a quick-reference for all Spearfishers

Safety guide:

Raise awareness of the safety aspects of spearfishing and freediving. Based on the advice and recommendations of both spearfishing and freediving experts.

UK spearfishing legislation, regulation, and minimum sizes:

UK spearfishing regulations are complex: With national, regional, and local rules for fishing, diving, and swimming – all of which impact us. Annually updated document to give a solid starting point to the current legislation affecting spearfishing.

BSA Constitution:

How the BSA operates.

All at: <https://www.underwaterfishing.co.uk/resources/>

Records:

The BSA also maintains records of UK spearfishing champions, and species records, available at: <https://www.underwaterfishing.co.uk/records/>

BSA sponsors (2025): BSA sponsorship and discounts for BSA members



2025
SPONSORS



We are always keen for new sponsors, get in touch!

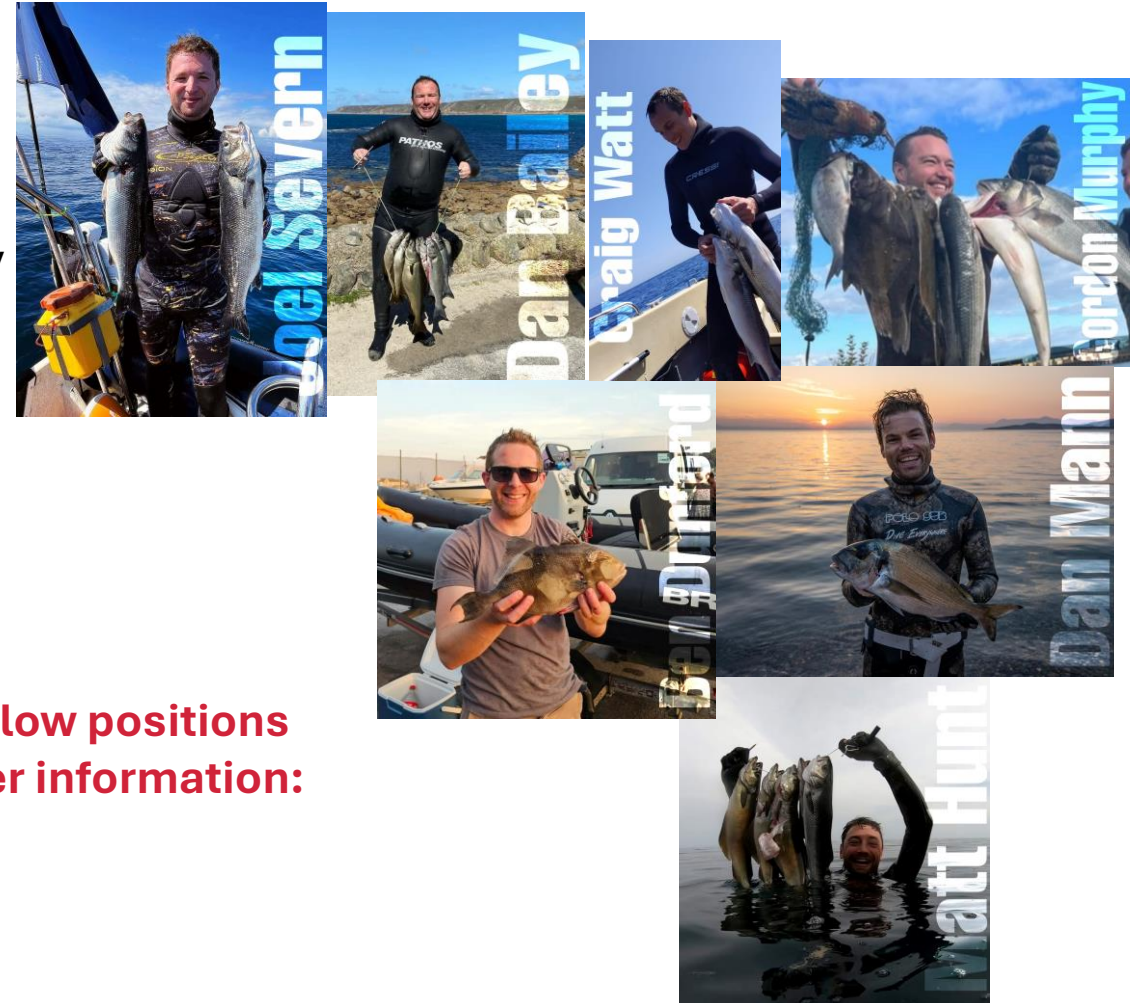
BSA National Committee members: New Chairman Joel Severn, and an overhauled committee.

2025 BSA committee:

- Chairman - Joel Severn
- Treasurer - Gordon Murphy
- Lobby & Sustainability Representative - Gordon Murphy
- Records Officer- David Stephens
- Vice Chairman - Dan Bailey
- Membership Secretary - Matthew Hunt
- Team GBR Manager - Daniel Mann
- Social Media Manager - Craig Watt
- Website Manager - Ben Dunford

We are currently on the look out for people to fill the below positions so if one is of interest please reach out to Joel for further information:

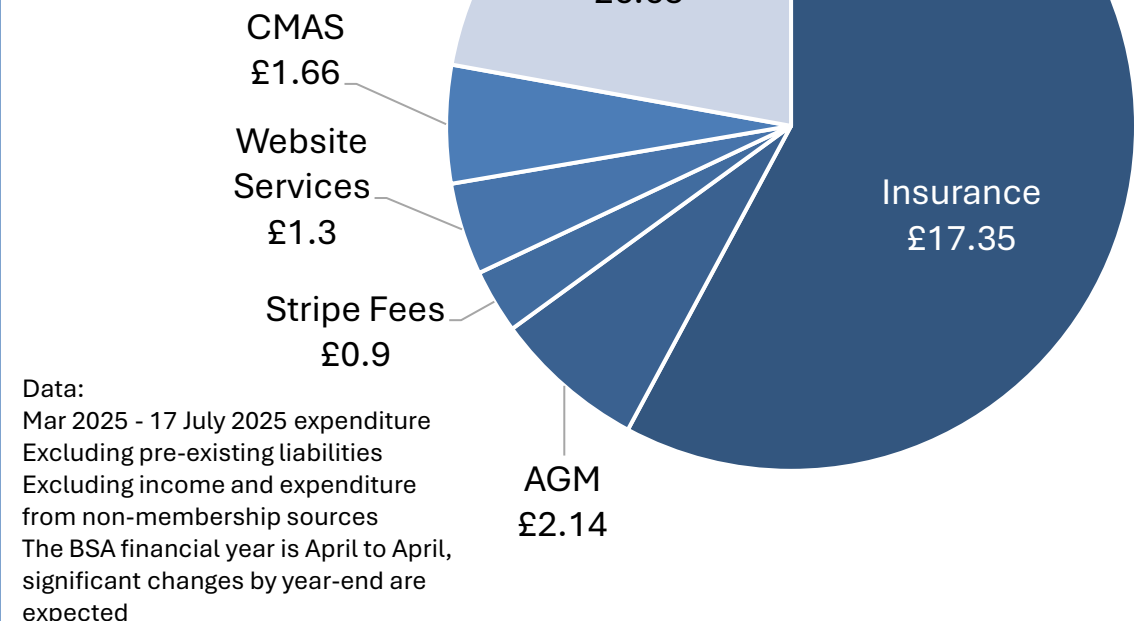
- Secretary - Open
- Safety Officer - Open
- Safeguarding Officer - Open



BSA National Expenditure: Insurance, as usual, is the largest expenditure so far in 2025.

- The majority of expenditure so far is for insurance. Higher insurance costs, and fewer members YTD has increased this proportion – however it is likely to decrease by EOY
- AGM expenditure YTD is venue and band deposits, this is expected to be recouped from ticket sales
- Banking fees have increased for 2025
- No lobbying expenditure YTD 2025, lobbying costs are infrequent but a high priority
- Some safety expenditure is expected later this year
- Team GB contribution is no longer present as member funds now do not fund competitions
- See 2024 AGM minutes for the 2024 breakdown: 2025 finances will be presented at the 2025 AGM
- Club finances are passed through and managed independently for local events and expenditure

Per person equivalent expenditure from £30 BSA (non-club) membership fee:



Future: Plans for 2026 and beyond:

Chairman's Plans:

- Creation of the BSA WhatsApp community.
- A continued pro-active committee, with no open positions.
- More unity across the BSA and its clubs.
- A social events schedule, in collaboration with the clubs.
- An interclub annual event: concept and idea already created with a plan to launch in 2026.
- Clearer communication with our members about all things BSA.
- Continued lobbying to ensure we have a voice at the table of any discussions regarding recreational fishing, and wider sustainability.
- National competitions to more frequently include a social element after the weigh-in where catches are cooked for competitors and guests.
- National competitions to have ice to make caring for catches easier.
- AGM Event to continue to grow and have a larger events format alongside the AGM section.
- Continue growth of sponsorship opportunities for the BSA.
- Look at ideas and plans to fundraise for increased lobbying efforts, international competitions and growth of the association.
- Look to show support for any positive and proactive spearfishing events.

SMUGGLERS ENTRANCE

MIND THE STEP

Events and AGMs



Events: What types of events we do:

Club Events

- Each club sets their event schedule for each year
- It normally consists of:
 - ✓ Regular Shore Dives
 - ✓ Club Competitions
 - ✓ Social Gatherings
 - ✓ Gear Demonstrations and advice
 - ✓ Conservation/clean ups
 - ✓ Catch and cooks

National Events

- The AGM is a major national event: providing an opportunity to meet, socialise, and recognise achievements over the year
- Open events, and cross club events are a great way to interact in a non-competition setting, and are set to be an increasing part of the BSA calendar

National Competitions

- National Competitions are hosted by Local Clubs
- Typically 2-5 per year
- Shore-dive based, so no need for private boats – competitors have a fair chance
- Strict rules and conservation
- Social and strategic hub events for networking and knowledge sharing
- Pathway to Team GB

2025 AGM: At the National Marine Aquarium

The BSA has gone to great lengths to make an exciting, interesting and inclusive socially-focussed AGM this year:

- Held at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth
- A shortened discussion, with most of the proposal management outside the event
- Explore the aquarium
- Food included
- Eating and Awards in the Eddystone reef exhibit room
- Live music

- Non-members can come and see what it's all about (extra cost, non-member tickets released near the time).

Tickets are available now: [Link](#)

(or check our facebook if your device doesn't display links)



BRITISH SPEARFISHING ASSOCIATION 2025 AGM
AGM/SOCIAL EVENT/EVENING
MEAL/DRINKS/EXPLORE THE AQUARIUM

NMA NATIONAL MARINE AQUARIUM **ocean conservation trust**

PLYMOUTH PL4 0LF
18TH OF OCTOBER 2025

AGM ARRIVAL 16:30
AGM START 17:00
EVENING EVENT 19:00 - 00:30

EVENING EVENT PARTNERS & FAMILIES WELCOME
SPONSORS WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE WITH PRODUCTS ON OFFER

BSA MEMBERS & SPOUSES £35
CHILDREN £10
NON BSA MEMBERS: £45

TICKETS TO NON MEMBERS WILL BE RELEASED AT A LATER DATE AND ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

FURTHER INFORMATION WILL BE ADDED TO OUR SOCIALS
BSA 2025 SPONSORS

THE WAVES COLLECTIVE
LIVE MUSIC BY

BSA 2025 SPONSORS: FUJIFILM, WATERHAUS, UNDERWATER FORAGING UK, ns4u, PISCADOR, XTAR, Frontiers Co.

Competitions



National Competitions

National competitions:

- BSA local clubs hold a total of 2-5 competitions per year arranged with the central committee.
- Structured to have a broad geographical spread.
- These are usually shoredive-based competitions.
- Competitions are arranged well in advance where possible.
- Competitions have strict safety protocols.
- Top twenty divers over two years also become eligible for Team GB selection.

Competition funding:

Competitions are funded through entry fees. BSA memberships are not used to run competitions.

There is no prequalification for joining a competition, anyone can attend: it is simultaneously a social and educational event, you can meet people, discuss techniques, and dive - even if you aren't trying to win.

BSA National Competitions are sustainability focused as a matter of principle

Spearfishing catches are insignificantly small in the context of the UK recreational fishery (<1%), and even more so compared to the total fishery.

Despite the lack of impact, we adhere to ethical and sustainable practices in our competitions as a matter of principle:

Minimum Fish Sizes:

For national competitions, the BSA sets minimum sizes above the legal minimum sizes required by the national and local regulations, to promote responsible harvesting, and decrease total catch.

Catch Limits:

Competition catch limits are set for all species, and are set based on sustainability concerns and local factors

Species Selection:

The species selection for competitions is based on national regulations, with other species excluded for safety or sustainability concerns.

Zero waste policy:

All fish caught in competitions are used, waste is strictly prohibited. All catches are eaten or donated to benefit charity.

Analysis:

Our analysis of competition site catches shown no impact of spearfishing events on future site productivity

BSA National Competitions: Bass and Pollack Sustainability

BASS

European Bass have been overexploited, reaching a critical level. National restrictions brought in to improve the stock shown some success, however Bass stocks are still in a poor state.

- In compliance with national regulations, bass catches in competitions are set to a maximum of two per person (zero in the off-season).
- Exceeding national regulations, bass minimum sizes in competitions are increased to 45cm: increasing difficulty and decreasing catch.
- The BSA also recognises that bass fecundity is proportional to length. The BSA has therefore made all bass above the minimum competition size of 45cm score the same (you don't score more for big bass).

POLLACK

Following a change in ICES model type, Pollack was suddenly switched from being considered sustainable, to unsustainable.

Commercial Pollack fishing became bycatch only, and recreational Pollack fishing became subjected to recreational voluntary guidelines.

As we are a sustainability-focussed organisation, we implemented the voluntary guidelines in our competitions:

- Maximum five Pollack per person
- Minimum length of 50cm
- No Pollack during breeding season

(you can read more about Pollack in the Lobbying section)

BSA National Competitions: Wrasse and Ray Sustainability

BALLAN WRASSE

There is a UK live wrasse fishery used to supply (mainly Scottish) fish farms, and in some parts of Scotland demand has impacted local areas. This led to a small live wrasse fishery in the southwest, subject to continuous monitoring. Although some species (rock cook) have been affected, ballan wrasse populations have remained stable, and currently there are no sustainability concerns with ballan wrasse outside of Scotland.

As the skills involved in finding wrasse are very location dependant, some people don't eat wrasse, and the BSA insists on a zero-waste policy, we add limits effectively manage catch:

- The local club decides on inclusion/exclusion
- Maximum two per diver per day (if included)
- Increased minimum sizes to 40cm (or higher)

RAYS, CONGER, DOGFISH

Two thousand tonne of ray was commercially landed in 2023 (RBS), However, some species of ray have sustainability concerns, due to their slow growth rate. However, in some locations, rays can be abundant. **The BSA limits rays to two (with stingrays excluded).**

As conger eels are reef-associated species, they may be vulnerable to local overfishing in some locations, and are in high abundance in other locations.

The local club decides on inclusion or exclusion of conger eels, based on their local knowledge.

Lesser spotted dogfish, and bull huss are also limited to two in BSA competitions. Bull huss populations are growing slowly, dogfish are now considered sustainable.

Team GB: International competitions

International competitions:

The BSA Team GB manager selects the international team from the top 20 spearfishers over the last two years with the goal of putting forward the strongest possible team for the competition, which is then approved by the wider committee. Competitions are generally boat-based competitions, based over two days.

As well as allowing Team GB athletes to test their skills against the world's best, international competitions contribute to UK spearfishing through social and learning elements:

- Sharing knowledge about how to hunt different fish, in different environments.
- Fostering a worldwide community, building an international network of spearfishers.
- Bringing back best practices, and learnings on how other countries manage spearfishing, and their wider fisheries.
- Raising the profile of British Spearfishing internationally.

Among other things, the detailed competition reports and Team GB manager reports help share these insights with the community.

Team GB: International competition funding and fundraising.

Competition funding:

- BSA central membership funds are explicitly not used to fund international competitions. Core membership fees are allocated to the broader objectives of the association, such as advocacy, grassroots development, and general administration.
- Athletes are entirely responsible for their own costs, including entry fees, travel, boat expenses, and accommodation.
- A small contribution is generated via the competition levy, a fee added on to local UK BSA competitions in a pay-it-forward model.
- Some fundraising is usually possible with support of third parties. The BSA can help to find sponsors willing to work with athletes.
- Unfortunately, this means that international competitions are mostly self funded by attending athletes.

A large fleet of industrial ships, likely oil tankers or offshore supply vessels, is visible on the horizon of a dark, choppy ocean. In the foreground, three divers in black wetsuits and masks are swimming away from the viewer. The scene is set against a cloudy, overcast sky. The overall mood is somber and industrial.

Lobbying and Sustainability

Spearfishing is the most sustainable method of fishing, but as a small sport, most people have no idea what we do

Spearfishing is by far the most sustainable, selective, and environmentally friendly method of catching fish in the UK.

However, with spearfishers being less than 1% of recreational sea fishers, many people do not know much about it. Worse still, a person exiting the water with a couple of fish is visible, whereas industrial scale trawling landed at a port is seldom seen by the general public.

This lack of knowledge is dangerous to our sport, and was the very reason that the British Spearfishing Association was formed in 1980 in response to an uneducated push to ban spearfishing in the UK. Since then, there have been local attempts, and an increasing amount of legislation which impacts us indirectly.

One of the most important things the BSA does, is to represent the interests of all spearfishers in the UK, to get involved in conversation, and to support fishing sustainability in the wider sector.



Our advocacy considers direct issues, wider issues, and internal issues, all pushing for the best future possible for spearfishing

Engagement

- Engaging with authorities to stand up for spearfishing interests

Sustainability

- Pushing for sustainability across the wider UK fisheries

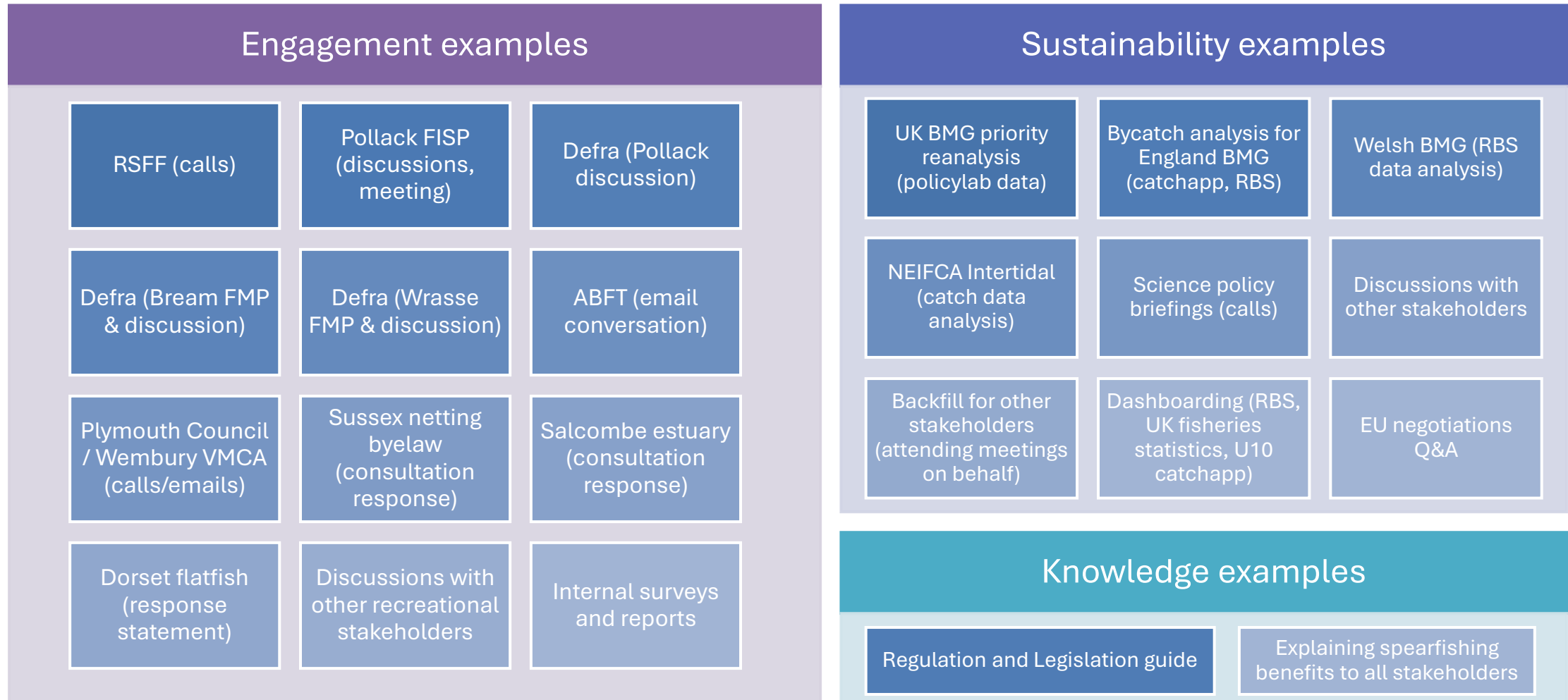
Knowledge

- Educating spearfishers, fisheries, and the general public

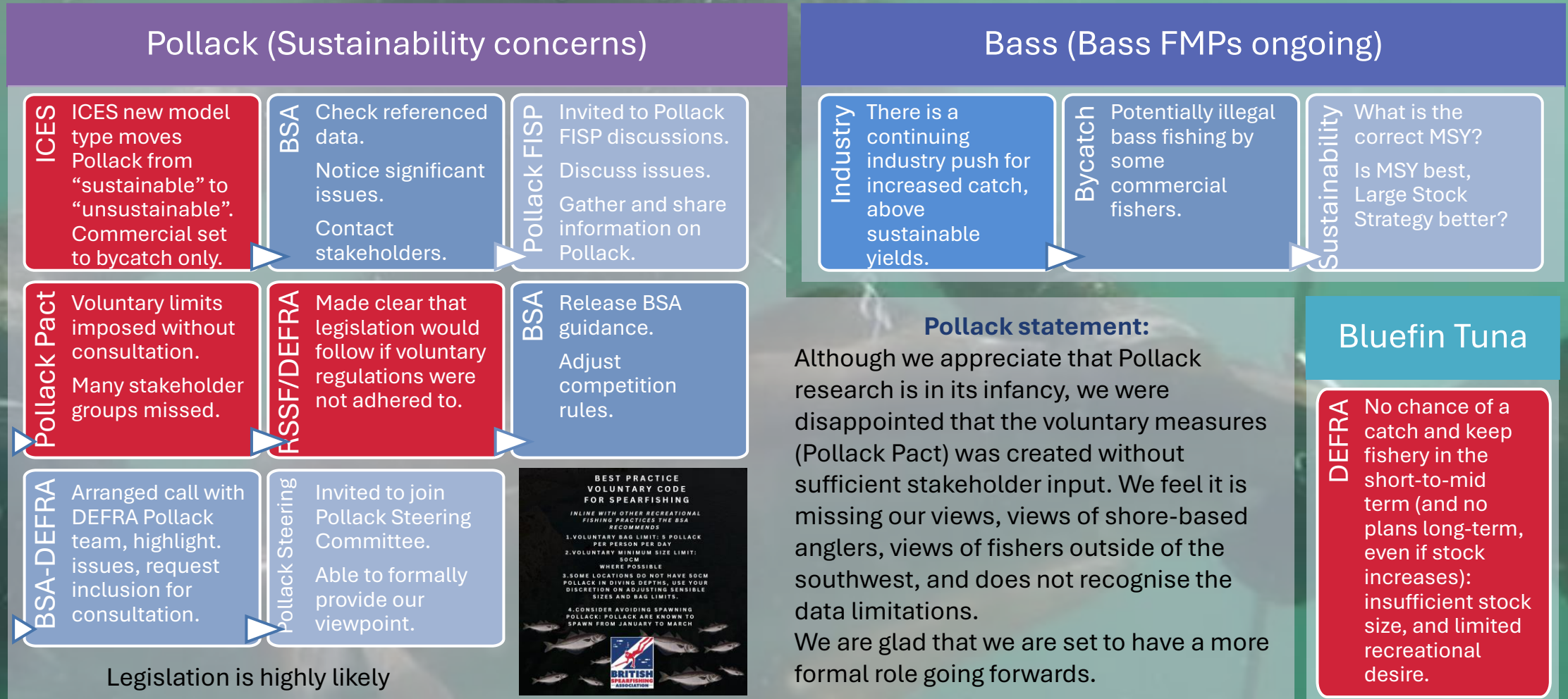
We conduct spearfishing lobbying in three ways:

- 1) Engaging with the authorities (MMO, DEFRA, CEFAS, IFCA, Local Authorities, etc.) who are directly affecting policies which might impact us, to understand and influence their thought processes through consultation and conversation.
- 2) Working with authorities, other stakeholders (e.g. rod and line groups, conservation groups, charter groups, and the wider fishery groups), directly or through consultation to try and protect and improve fish stocks for the future.
- 3) Sharing knowledge with others. This includes creating and sharing resources on legislation, regulations, and safety, to help spearfishers stay safe both physically and legally. It also includes educating the public and other stakeholders when they have questions, to improve general understanding and decision making.

Science, data, and discussions with internal and external stakeholders on a wide variety of issues: supporting spearfishing and sustainability



Update on specific species: The current situation and future plans regarding Pollack, Bass, and Tuna



Lobbying is a lot of work (especially for volunteers), and we need support. How to get involved:

How you can help:

- 1) Be a member:** We are here to fight for you, but effective change needs effective support. Other stakeholders are much larger and better funded, so we need all the help we can get.
- 2) Help with local issues:** it's near impossible to monitor all international, national, regional, and local issues simultaneously. Let us know if something interesting/important is happening in your area.
- 3) Take on a workstream:** monitor an issue, help formulate policy, and get involved in discussions.
- 4) Be an expert:** if you know a lot about a topic, or are willing to dive in, help us make stronger arguments.

BSA National Committee

BSA Lobby and Sustainability Representative

Locals
interested in
local issues

Members
focusing on
specific issues

Experts on
particular
topics

Email us at: info@underwaterfishing.co.uk

Given the vast amount of work the BSA does, it is impossible to summarise and explain every aspect in a short document. However, we are very happy to discuss our efforts at length. Get in touch!

How to join us, and how to contact us:

How to join us:

Membership is available here:

<https://www.underwaterfishing.co.uk/membership/>

- Note, if joining the LIC, LIC club fees are paid separately via their website:
<https://www.spearfishing.org.uk/>

Membership runs from April to April. Pro-rata first year available at the later half of the year (please contact us).

Membership fees consist of a national membership fee, and a fee set by your local club (some clubs are more expensive, but have more and subsidised events).

How to contact us:

info@underwaterfishing.co.uk

bsachairman@underwaterfishing.co.uk

Or via our [facebook](#)

Or if a member: contact your club committee (fastest way to get a response)

Please remember that the BSA is ran by volunteers, who are busy people. It may take a few days to reply:



BRITISH SPEARFISHING — ASSOCIATION —

Providing support and a united voice
for all spearfishers in the United Kingdom.