

REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes Wednesday 28th April 2021

South – 7d

14:00 – 16:00 Zoom Conference Call

Attendees:

DEFRA

Phil McBryde
Lydia Osborne

MMO

Richard Hoskin
Ed Baker
Katie James
Sarah Allison
Julian Roberts
Phil Haslam
Paul Johnson

CEFAS

Carl O'Brien

IFCA

Ian Jones – Southern IFCA
William Wright – Kent and Essex IFCA
Tim Dapling – Sussex IFCA

Industry

Charlie Brock
Neil Witney
Richard Stride
Lucy Doswell

1. Chair Welcome & Introductions
2. Scene setting and Introductions – Phil McBryde/Richard Hoskin

There are 6 regional groups; these will be a forum for bringing together policy makers, scientists, fishermen and regulators in order to work together to compliment and deliver an intelligent approach to fisheries management.

This is picking up the Future of Our Inshore Fisheries action plan which came out of the conference. We are trying to move away from top-down one size fits all management as that approach doesn't work.

There are opportunities from having left the EU, we want to listen to your priorities and concerns to see how we can do things differently. These groups are a platform in which to elevate conversations, produce trials, pilots and collaborative science ideas.

There will be an opportunity for 1:1 surgery after meetings when we move into face to face environment.

These won't be perfect to start with and are expected to evolve. It is important that you feedback on these group meetings so we can collectively learn and improve.

Terms of Reference have been drafted and we will send those out after the meeting to be commented on before future meetings are held.

MMO / Defra will chair these meetings and provide a secretariat for the rest of the year but going forward you can recommend/ make suggestions for this role.

The objective is to work together and identify challenges with different regulators which affect your region.

ACTION: Defra to clarify roles and responsibilities of different bodies for next meeting.

The national group has not disbanded but we needed space to get the RFGs up and running. We will pick up national issues, but we want people on group to contribute ideas to agenda.

Attendance: towed gear feels like they are being picked on so can't be bothered to put themselves out there again. The green agenda is far too powerful and influential. A lot are whelking at the moment so maybe don't feel relevant.

3. Collaborative science

There is a link between this group, shellfish management groups and the Future of Our Inshore Fisheries action plan. We want ideas from you around collaboration you'd like to see and how to better utilise fishermen expertise.

Can we look at a BFT fishery? ICCAT plan makes provision for commercial bycatch. We are working through this, have no details for you at the moment but it's on the radar.

As people displaced from regulation, it's important that we look at sound science to shape management and effect of that (displacement and gear conflict).

Want to see more work on undulate ray as there are more on the ground that are bigger than ever.

Cuttle is more lack of management attention than lack of knowledge of the species. Would welcome the chance to take part in any project on cuttle.

Previously took part in Cefas trial using electronic callipers to measure shellfish. This was interesting and the device improved because of it.

Wind farms and magnetic fields around cable routes needs looking into. We are not seeing particular species now.

ACTION - Carl talk to Cefas colleagues looking at wind farm impacts.

Undulates are now eating baby thornbacks- can we check ICES advice is right? We have scientists who analyse stomach content who could collaborate on thornback issue.

Would like to understand predator prey relationship around crustaceans and interaction of food webs/ chains. Concern about state of lobster stocks within inshore and further afield.

4. Annual negotiations

Negotiations are still ongoing. The UK has extended TAC for the rest of year to give certainty, details are on gov.uk. If agreement is reached in negotiations, that would override the current provisional TAC.

VIIId are doing well in terms of quota: a comparison with 2020 shows a decrease in cod, increase in plaice and similar amounts for skates and ray.

We are trying to improve science behind NQS to get a better state of those stocks. NQS is important to both sides which is why there is no agreement yet. TCA is set according to 2012-2016 reference period.

Fly shooting agreement was not a government agreement. We recognise that it was brokered by POs and doesn't cover all elements of industry. We are in favour of industry coming up with initiatives and solutions, but we are currently trying to understand this agreement.

Temporary solutions could be detrimental to the fleet long term. We need to juggle the problem and any unintended consequences.

Bass arrangements for 2020 have been rolled forward 2021. Discussions with EU haven't concluded so we hope modest changes are coming in July.

Bass stocks are recovering due to the measures which have been in place since 2015. Would be premature to say it has recovered sufficiently to allow targeting. Data is from last June, there will be an assessment in a few weeks for next year's advice.

5. Quota management – Presentation (Sarah Allison)

Sarah presented the Quota management presentation; group discussed stock and catch limits (see appendix 1).

6. AOB

There was big hope prior to TCA there would be additional quota significant enough to allow caps to be lifted. Challenge from TCA and implementation means progress on other priorities have been slowed e.g. licence review.

ACTION - Defra get timelines from Quota team.

NQS are coming under pressure because reassurance was given to those with caps that they could fish NQS. People have come to rely on them to a greater extent.

On increasing industry participation: hopefully you will have seen the benefit and will talk to other industry reps. Any thoughts on increasing attendance let us know.

Bass nursery report is due to be published mid-May, we'll flag it with you.

Agreement that quarterly is an acceptable Frequency unless something crops up. Where do we direct engagement in between?

ACTION - Defra/ MMO look at setting up shared mailbox.

Meeting Closed

Appendix 1

Stock	U10's Comments	O10's comments
Cod VIId	<p><u>U10 subbing 100 kilos to O10?</u> Don't think anyone is targeting as there's so little of it around. No issue with current limit. We catch more cod in autumn, would hate for quota to have been traded out by then but don't want to see non-sector discard it. If it helps them, we support the subbing.</p>	<p>Didn't see a lot of cod last year, not a problem but might be worth revisiting at end of summer. Agreement to reduce now and save for autumn/ winter.</p>
Plaice VIId & e	<p><u>Trade out or extend catch limits?</u> Not come in yet, possibly late due to warming of the sea? As hospitality opens up there will be an increase in effort. Catch limits not limits on us at all. No requests. Agreed to keep having conversation throughout year to see what they need.</p>	No Comments
Skates & Rays VIId	<p>Agreed not to swap so as to keep flexibility. O10 are fishing this currently. Wouldn't mind it being put down now and put back up later in year so if not caught it's still there. If anyone is struggling, they can get in touch with MMO and have conversation about limits.</p>	See U10 comments
Undulate Ray VIId & e	<p><u>Just about to go into stock breeding closure season</u> Can we do something about max size restrictions on landing because they're getting bigger? Cefas colleagues are keen to explore max length limits on skate and rays. ACTION: can take message back and explore if there is interest from fishing industry. Licence conditions are for whole or gutted. But the market demands skate wing.</p>	-
Sole VIId	<p>U10 have so much which is underutilised. Once whelks are gone, we will be targeting sole.</p>	No comments

	We are not limited at the moment so it's not critical. Will become clear later in year once effort increases with hospitality and prices improve.	
Western Mackerel	Additional 1000t to play with. Can give the opportunity for some to develop handline over summer months, there has been interest in past. There is not a huge demand for mackerel or the market crashes.	No Comments
Herring IVc & VIId	No preference for how use it. Occasionally have a fishery in Poole towards end of year if there is a decent catch limit.	No Comments