

FishingFocus

The Defra and MMO marine fisheries newsletter

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Quota management groups

Three voluntary pilot quota management groups in Lowestoft, West Mersea and Ramsgate will test the impact of a more local approach to quota management for the under 10 metre fleet.

The groups, supported by three Coastal Liaison Officers, are currently working to meet specific conditions before gaining full quota management responsibilities.

The pilots, which are part of the Government's plans for domestic fisheries reform, will generate invaluable information on whether or not the local collective management of annual quota allocations by groups of fishermen can be effective and provide added benefits for the groups' members. This information will play a critical role in our plans to place English inshore fisheries on a sustainable footing, along with the rest of the fleet.

The pilot groups have been allocated a share of the under-10 metre pool based on the vessels' track records during 2007-2010, plus a temporary



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top-slice of quota from English Producer Organisations (POs). The pilot groups will be able to benefit from swaps and gifts into the under-10 metre pool, but this won't affect others using the pool because the pilot groups' share of quota was based on the opening under-10 metre pool figures, so did not reflect any later increases.

To increase use of the UK's annual quota allocation, the under-10 metre pool will be

boosted this year by quota consistently unused by English POs each year from 2007 to 2010. There will be a permanent transfer of the associated FQAs to the under-10 metre pool from 2013. A proportion of this transferred quota will be allocated to the pilot groups based on their track records.

📍 You can find out more at:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/manage/saif/



A few days ago a leading figure in the fishing industry complained to me that there is just too much going on at the moment. I know how he feels and, after reading these pages, you might be inclined to agree. However, most of the people I talk to are keen to see change in one or several aspects of fishing policy.

We're in the unusual position of now having the chance to achieve improvements in the EU Common Fisheries Policy, domestic fisheries management, how we manage the wider marine environment and how Seafish supports the industry – to name but four of the areas covered in this issue. So do please stick with us and continue to feed in your views.

By the time this is published, we'll have had the second in a series of four monthly EU Fisheries Councils which we hope will culminate in June in an outline agreed position on CFP reform: a key part of the whole change and improvement agenda.



John Robbs
Director, Marine and Fisheries

News in Brief

Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Implementation Review

The Government published the report of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Implementation Review on 22 March. It sets out the Review's conclusions and actions to improve implementation and strengthen the purpose and integrity of the Directives. The Review found that in the large majority of cases the implementation of the Directives is working well, allowing development of key infrastructure, while ensuring a high level of environmental protection. However, some cases do encounter delays, although the Directives may only be one contributory factor. Measures to improve the implementation of the Directives to benefit the economy and the environment include establishing a Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Marine Evidence Group to address marine data sharing, research gaps, and post-construction monitoring. In the longer term, the Review commits to assessing how we can move towards a broader ecosystems approach.

📄 You can read the report of the Review at: www.defra.gov.uk/habitats-review/

Red Tape Challenge

The Red Tape Challenge Water and Marine theme ended its eight weeks in the spotlight on the Red Tape Challenge website on 12 April. 175 marine legislative measures were on the website in three areas: Sea Fisheries, Protection and Use of Marine Environment and Freshwater and Migratory Fisheries. The Marine Theme Sounding Board met on 18 April to consider all the comments received

on the measures. It includes representatives from the fishing and other marine industries; environmental organisations; angling; and the Marine Sector Champion, Barrie Deas, Chief Executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, who is acting as a link between sea users and Government. Unnecessarily burdensome regulations will be scrapped, while well-defined and necessary regulation will be kept.

📄 You can read the comments on the Marine theme at: www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/themehome/water-and-marine/ and in the last issue of Fishing Focus we explained the process for the Red Tape Challenge, see: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/www/fishing-focus/

MSCC Marine Ripple Effect

The Marine Science Co-ordination Committee (MSCC)'s 'Marine Ripple Effect' is now bringing you the latest news from the UK marine science community. Established by Plymouth Marine Laboratory on behalf of the MSCC, its E-alerts and Twitter feed will give you a brief introduction to research news and direct you to more detailed website information. If you'd like to share a news item, just send the title, a few lines of content and a link to a website with the full story to Plymouth Marine Laboratory.

📄 To register for e-alerts and to send in news items contact: marine.ripple.effect@pml.ac.uk You can follow Marine Ripple Effect on Twitter: [@MarineRipple](https://twitter.com/MarineRipple) For more information about the MSCC, see: www.defra.gov.uk/mscc/

Fishermen slash discards in catch quota trials

Fishermen participating in catch quota trials have radically cut the amount of fish they discard.

A report on the 2011 Catch Quota trials, published on 10 April, shows that participating fishermen have slashed discards of North Sea cod and Western Channel sole to 0.2% of their total catch for these stocks. In 2010, the average discard rates were 38% for North Sea cod trawlers and 28% for Western Channel sole beam trawlers. These fishermen also reduced their catch of under-sized fish to below 3% of their total catch through more selective fishing. This is good news for the health of fish stocks and for fishermen who depend upon them.

The catch quota scheme is run by the Marine Management

Organisation on behalf of Defra. It operates on a voluntary basis, and is continuing this year. Fishermen who join the scheme have to account for everything they take out of the sea and land all they catch, regardless of size, with CCTV used for monitoring and enforcement. Participants receive additional quota in lieu of the requirement to land all catches and North Sea participants were also provided with additional 'days at sea' to allow for more flexible fishing operations.

As well as reducing discards, fishermen who participate are making a valuable contribution to the design of a reformed Common Fisheries Policy by providing evidence about what works and what needs



to change if we move to a system that obliges all catches of specific stocks to be landed. Commenting on the report UK Fisheries Minister Richard Benyon said: "This is a tremendous result and I applaud the contribution which fishermen have made to this success".

📌 You can read more about the trial in the report at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/news/news/120410.htm

Maintenance dredging in tidal waters

Most maintenance dredging projects, which had a one year transition period under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, will benefit from a further two year transition period and will not require a marine licence.

A new Order, which came into force on 6 April 2012, extends the transition period for low risk maintenance dredging activities in English waters. Extraction of marine aggregates by dredging continues, as before, to be a licensable activity in all UK inshore and offshore waters.

Defra notified stakeholders involved in low risk maintenance dredging operations in English waters about the Order in March and the Marine Management Organisation has now published further Guidance on whether a marine licence is required. For

example, a licence would be required for activities potentially having a significant effect on a European Marine Site.

Defra and the MMO are working with stakeholders to consider how dredging should be regulated in the future, in particular to explore the scope to exempt certain low risk activities and to help prepare operators for implementing licensing requirements.

📌 You can find a link to the Order and further information at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/protect/licensing/ and the Navigational Dredging Operational Guidance at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/licensing/marine/documents/navigational_dredging_guidance.pdf

CFP reform update

Fisheries Ministers and MEPs are continuing to discuss proposals for a new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), Common Market Organisation (CMO) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The process to agree a new CFP package will reach a crucial stage in the coming months, with important discussions on key areas of the policy in the Council and European Parliament.

The UK remains actively engaged in negotiations, pressing our case for genuine reform with MEPs, the European Commission and Member States at both an official and Ministerial level. Negotiations are expected to continue into the first half of 2013.

📌 For more information see: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/cfp

What the Marine Strategy Framework Directive means for the fishing industry

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive seeks to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) in Europe's marine waters through sustainable use of our marine resources.

The UK is committed to reforming fisheries management to achieve healthy fish and shellfish stocks, a prosperous fishing industry and a marine environment, which is 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse'. So, our policies for fisheries match the aims of the Directive.

Achieving Good Environmental Status

The delivery of GES involves protecting and managing the marine environment, preventing its deterioration and restoring it where practical, while ensuring marine resources are used sustainably. To understand what GES will be like in 2020 there are 11 descriptors that set out how the environment will look and be managed, including both ensuring that commercial fish and shellfish stocks are harvested sustainably (Descriptor 3), and ensuring that the impacts of fishing activities on the wider marine ecosystem are sustainable (Descriptor 1: biodiversity, Descriptor 4: food webs and Descriptor 6: seafloor integrity).

Charting Progress 2, the basis for the UK Initial Assessment under the Directive, identifies fishing activities as one of the main human activities causing pressure on biodiversity, through extraction of species (both commercial and non-commercial) and damage to seafloor habitats. Achieving GES therefore requires targets relating to fishing activities.

The consultation

The consultation sets out proposals for UK characteristics of GES and associated targets and indicators. The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations must put in place, by 2016 at the latest, measures to deliver the proposed targets by 2020.

GES targets proposed for commercial fish and shellfish stocks are based on stocks reaching safe biological limit precautionary thresholds, while aiming, in the medium to long term, for stock-specific targets for fishing at levels achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield. These targets are consistent with the Government and Devolved Administrations' existing approach to fisheries management, which includes commitments to achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield. Fisheries targets will be delivered through existing policies including the reformed CFP, existing measures for

national fisheries management, and designation of marine protected areas. Measures which might be needed to achieve GES include gear selectivity, eliminating discards, spatial restrictions and limits on landings. Many of these are already in place across our fisheries.

Stocks outside the CFP are also part of achieving GES. Proposed targets will be based on socio-economic importance of stocks, rather than applying to all commercially harvested stocks. It's possible that some extra national or local measures may be needed to protect non-CFP stocks, including shellfish (except Nephrops). Any extra measures would be delivered through Government and Devolved Administration policies and local byelaws.

GES targets are also proposed to protect the wider marine ecosystem, including targets for commercial and non-commercial species of fish; and for birds, marine mammals, pelagic and seafloor habitats. As far as possible these proposals are based on existing commitments under the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives, and the Water Framework Directive. However, because the Marine Strategy Framework Directive aims to ensure sustainable use of the whole marine ecosystem, additional targets are proposed for species and habitats not covered by existing legislation.

The UK marine protected area network (including European and nationally designated sites) is expected to give significant support for achieving proposed GES targets for biodiversity, food webs and seafloor integrity, including for threatened and vulnerable species and habitats. When site designations are completed, it will be necessary to consider whether any extra measures may be needed to protect species and habitats outside the network (e.g. sediment habitats). Again, any fisheries measures would be through existing management mechanisms of the CFP, national and devolved measures or local byelaws.

📌 You can find out more about the consultation, which closes on 18 June, including the Initial Assessment and factsheets on how the Directive links to the Water Framework and other legislation, and what the Directive means for marine industries, for the fishing industry, and for conservation at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/msfd/ and read Charting Progress 2 at <http://chartingprogress.defra.gov.uk/>

If you have any questions please email: MSFDTeam@defra.gsi.gov.uk

The future of Seafish

Seafish, the authority on seafood, has begun implementing a raft of changes following a series of landmark discussions about the future of the organisation, which supports the four Fisheries Administrations. We invited Seafish to explain the changes.

The discussions, running from October 2011 to March 2012, were critical in gathering insight from industry about the future of Seafish. There was a widespread response to the first round of the industry discussion from 113 businesses and organisations, plus individuals, and 149 people attended nine events around the UK. In February 2012, the Fisheries Administrations published their response to the discussion and Seafish announced a second series of meetings with industry representatives to explain the initial outcomes and encourage further discussion.

Feedback included widespread backing for Seafish to represent industry, as well as a general consensus that Seafish should be funded through a levy. There was no desire from industry for devolved operation. Safety and consumer relations emerged as two top priorities.

Seafish Chief Executive, Paul Williams, comments: "These important discussions have helped define the future of Seafish. There's been open and honest dialogue, which is bringing about positive change, such as more transparency in our processes and improvements to how we'll work with and build relationships with industry. We're using the feedback to shape the future of Seafish and are making changes to bring the organisation in line with current industry thinking."

The changes cover the core role and strategic objectives of the organisation, as well as revised structure, funding and governance arrangements between Seafish, its government sponsors and industry.

The first significant step has been the recent appointment of a new Board to Seafish. A new deputy chair, Jane Ryder, and seven non-executive Board members were appointed at the start of April. The members are Clare Dodgson, Peter Hajipieris, Philip Huggon, Michel Kaiser, Michael Park, Stephen Parry and James Wilson.

Seafish is also setting up industry panels, which will feed into the Seafish Board, to identify industry priorities, review activities and budgets and contribute to this autumn's review of the



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levy. There will be three panels – domestic and export, supply chain, and import and processing – each with eight to ten members, with half from industry organisations. This in turn will increase transparency, which will result in more industry say in setting priorities. And critically, Seafish will also change its approach to budgeting, with budgets built around programmes, rather than around our income.

Paul Williams comments: "I'm encouraged by the whole process and confident that the resulting changes will answer industry needs. There are many changes ahead for Seafish, particularly in the way we work with industry both nationally and regionally. The important message that we want to get across is that Seafish is listening and as a result the organisation is changing. However, this will take time and although the discussion has been extremely powerful in helping us reshape our processes, we still want further dialogue to ensure that we deliver on industry priorities."

📌 You can view an interview with Paul Williams on the key outcomes from the industry discussions at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw8vGD9c-3k and read the Fisheries Administrations' response to the discussion and the next steps for the future of Seafish at: www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/10/06/sea-fish/

20-year marine vision outlined for East of England

The MMO has published a draft vision that details how the East of England marine area could look in 20 years' time.

This is an important step in marine planning for the first two plan areas, which stretch from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe. The vision – and objectives that detail how we will get there – cover all the information currently available to the MMO following a range of consultations, workshops and other meetings. They also take into account the current condition of the plan areas, and activities already underway along the East coast and in estuary communities, as well as possible future demands.

The vision recognises that the East marine areas are already busy, and that activities, such as commercial fishing, are important to communities along the coast.

Details of how the marine areas could look in 2033 include:

- New developments in the marine areas have been undertaken in a way that has enabled sustainable commercial fishing and aggregate extraction to

continue, providing economic and social benefits, particularly to the communities along the East coast.

- New technologies are in use, contributing to climate change mitigation through the capture and storage of carbon dioxide emitted from fossil fuel use. The new technologies have increased the sustainable extraction and use of the oil and gas reserves in the marine areas.
- As a result of the strong links between marine and terrestrial planning, the inshore area has maintained diverse estuaries and working ports; vital to communities, nature and the economy.
- Tourism and recreation are making a significant contribution to the prosperity and well-being of all the people who live near, or visit, the coast and estuaries in harmony with the natural environment.
- The plan areas have the largest amount of offshore wind energy generation in England's waters, along with significant amounts of essential infrastructure, both



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at sea and around the coast. The new marine wind farms have been developed in a way that supports European and international shipping links, navigational safety and connectivity with other countries.

- The East plan areas should contribute to achieving good environmental status, with relevant habitats and species in favourable condition as a result of the way in which the new developments and uses have been implemented and managed.

The MMO will now look at responses to the vision from the informal public consultation that finished at the end of April 2012. This process will inform the draft plan which we will consult on at the end of 2012.

📍 You can find out more about marine planning at:
www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/index.htm

Electronic notification of licence variations

Variations to licences of English fishing vessels will soon only be available on the MMO website and will no longer be sent out by letter. This new electronic notification system aims to provide a more efficient, transparent and timely means of communicating variations.

From 1 July 2012 licence holders or nominees should check the MMO website every Friday for any notifications of variations to fishing vessel licences. The MMO will also on request send

notifications through an email and/or text message. A variation will be considered as being received when it is published on the MMO website.

All owners of vessels administered by the MMO have been sent letters explaining the change and asking them to supply email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers to their MMO local office.

The MMO will continue to send out paper notifications from July

to September as well as the new electronic notifications (email or text message). The first electronic-only variation will be issued for 1 October 2012.

Actual vessel licences will continue to be sent out as hard copies when they are due to be re-issued.

📍 You can find variations and more information at:
www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/licences_current.htm

Six fishing communities benefit from funds

Since the last issue of *Fishing Focus* was published all six Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) in England have begun work to help make their fishing communities more sustainable.

The FLAGs, which aim to help build sustainable solutions to the challenges faced in the local fisheries sector, have been set up in North and West Cumbria, the East Riding of Yorkshire, North Norfolk, Hastings, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and Northern Devon.

They are sharing approximately £7.3 million, with £3.9 million coming from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Axis 4 scheme and £3.4 million from Defra.

The total amount of funding available to each FLAG is North and West Cumbria: £1.35 million; North Norfolk: £1.3 million; East Riding of Yorkshire (Holderness Coast): £1.15 million; Hastings: £963,000; Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly: £1.13 million; and Northern Devon: £1.05 million.

The Northern Devon FLAG was launched on 19 March at an

event in Bideford. John Butterworth, Chief Executive Officer of the North Devon Fishermen’s Association and Chair of the Northern Devon FLAG, said: "We are delighted to receive this support in recognition of the challenges and opportunities facing Northern Devon. The programme will bring together a wide range of businesses, communities and agencies to develop local projects which make a real difference to the economy of the area."

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly FLAG was launched in Looe on 2 March. Paul Trebilcock, Chief Executive of Cornish Fish Producers Organisation, said: "The involvement of the Cornish and Scillies fishing community in shaping the FLAG means that the benefits of the fund will have a real impact locally, regardless of the size of the project."

The MMO administers the EFF in England. Alison Thompson, Director of Corporate Support and Governance for the MMO said: "I'm pleased that through this scheme the MMO is providing support to local fishing communities to develop and implement their own sustainable solutions to the challenges they face. The FLAGs involve a wide range of representatives and we believe their combined knowledge, experience and ideas could make a real difference to the future of the local fisheries sector. This is reflected in the significant amount of funding our panel has awarded to them."

📞 To find out more about local funding opportunities or for more information contact the FLAGs directly:

| FLAG | Email | Telephone |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| North and West Cumbria | admin@cumbriaflag.org.uk | 01946 67182 |
| East Riding of Yorkshire (Holderness Coast) | ray.williamson@eastriding.gov.uk | 01482 391708 |
| North Norfolk | enquiries@northnorfolkflag.org.uk | 01263 510709 |
| Hastings | jcollins@hastings.gov.uk | 01424 451851 |
| Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly | rob.poole@cornwallrcc.org.uk | 01872 243559 |
| Northern Devon | flag@northdevonplus.co.uk | 01237 426426 |

News in Brief

New marine plan areas to be announced this summer

The next areas around England’s coast to be chosen for marine planning will be announced in July 2012.

The MMO has already begun working with interested groups in the future plan areas to build understanding of the key issues for each area, and will continue to increase this knowledge as time goes on.

📞 You’ll be able to find out more about the next plan areas at:

www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/index.htm

YOUR VIEWS

England's biggest sea angling survey

The biggest ever national government survey of English recreational sea angling – *Sea Angling 2012* – is underway to find out how many people go sea angling, what they catch, and the value of sea angling to the local and national economy. It will provide the necessary evidence base to support Defra and the new Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) in meeting their objectives for sustainable fishing.

Previous UK surveys have shown that sea angling is a major economic activity. There is a great potential to boost sea angling participation and angling tourism, with considerable further economic benefits, if there are big improvements in the state of our fish stocks. Fishery management measures are reducing overfishing, but it is important to know if sea anglers are seeing the benefits. *Sea Angling 2012* will provide up-to-date evidence on what anglers are catching, and on the economic value of sea angling, while also helping to improve the scientific knowledge of our fish stocks.

On-site surveys of sea angling catches and activity are being carried out by IFCAs working with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas). The IFCAs have been doing weekly visits to shore angling and boat-launching sites all around the coast of England. So far, around 80% of anglers approached have agreed to be interviewed –

a very high success rate for public interviews. Additional data on activity and catches of angling charter boats will be collected by the Marine Management Organisation. *Sea Angling 2012* is also using online surveys for anglers to provide information on their catches. The first online catch survey was launched in April to ask anglers to provide information for January to March 2012, and to seek their views on how the quality of sea angling has changed over time. This survey will be repeated at intervals during the project to collect data for the rest of 2012.

An economic and social benefits survey is being run by the social research co-operative Substance, working with Cefas and the Universities of Cardiff and Newcastle. It involves an online survey (around 400 questionnaires already completed) and face-to-face interviews with anglers at five locations around the coast. Data from these surveys will be

analysed along with information on angling expenditure gathered by the IFCAs during their on-site surveys, to show the overall economic value of sea angling for England as well as for local coastal communities.

If you are a sea angler, even if just a beginner, *Sea Angling 2012* wants to hear from you. If you complete the online catch and economic surveys or answer the surveyor's questions if approached while fishing, you could win a prize out of nearly £4,000 of rods, reels and vouchers available over the course of the project.

For more information and to complete the online surveys, visit www.seaangling2012.org or www.seaangling.substance.coop You can read the report of the *Social and Community Benefits of Angling Project* – another major angling study which Substance recently completed at: <http://www.anglingresearch.org/>

European marine protected areas consultation

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is currently consulting on five new possible SACs (pSACs) in UK offshore waters.

These are Hatton Bank, Anton Dohrn Seamount, East Rockall Bank, Pobie Bank Reef and

Solan Bank Reef in the Scottish offshore region. The closing date for the 12 week formal consultation is **25th May 2012**.

You can find out more about the consultation at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-3995>

FishingFocus – Your views

Have you any questions you'd like us to answer in the next issue of Fishing Focus or comments on this issue? You can email us on fishingfocus@defra.gsi.gov.uk or write to Fishing Focus, Defra Marine Programme, Area 2D Nobel House, London SW1P 3JR. You can read previous issues of Fishing Focus at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/www/fishing-focus/

