

FishingFocus

The Defra and MMO marine fisheries newsletter

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EU fisheries decisions

At the December 2012 Fisheries Council and in the EU/Norway negotiations, the UK secured a deal on fishing opportunities for 2013 that is good for both the health of our seas and the UK fishing industry.

Following marathon talks, the UK successfully managed to avert continued automatic reductions in the days-at-sea under the Cod Recovery Plan and secured a freeze on cod fishing effort for 2013. The UK also prevented a 20% cut in the North Sea cod quota, as well as securing increases for other North Sea stocks when EU/Norway negotiations concluded this month.

The UK managed to negotiate a fair and balanced package of fishing quotas for EU fish stocks in 2013 on the basis of three core principles: following scientific advice, sustainability and continued discard reduction.

Using these principles, we successfully fought off unjustified large cuts to several important fish quotas, including stocks for which data are poor. We also obtained a number of



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notable increases. Where the scientific evidence showed that cuts in quota were necessary for the health of the stock, we supported them and used all the scientific information available to agree sensible reductions.

While the December Council negotiations were underway, the European Parliament Fisheries Committee voted on its vision for CFP reform.

Both votes have considerable implications for the year ahead and we're already working hard to deliver the commitments we made at the December Council

and to conclude the CFP reform negotiations successfully.

You can find out more about the December Council and EU/Norway results and CFP reform on page 3.

The Marine and Fisheries teams are moving to Defra's Millbank office soon but our postal address will be: Defra Marine and Fisheries, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR and phone numbers stay the same.



In the early hours of 18 January the annual EU/Norway negotiations ended with good news for British fishermen. This completed the work of the December Council in overturning the big cuts in both TAC and effort that the discredited Cod Recovery Plan required. Such an event is rare in Brussels because we collectively found a way of doing what we were told was impossible even though we had convinced everyone that it was the right thing to do. In its way it was my highlight of 2012.

The year ended with major steps forward on Marine Conservation Zones, the marine Red Tape Challenge and implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive to name but three of the areas included in this issue. All of these will keep us busy in 2013 along with plenty of other challenges both in completing the protracted CFP reform negotiations and domestic fisheries management. So I suspect that we will all need to draw on the spirit of the December Council to see us through the year ahead.

Happy New Year to you all !



John Robbs
Director, Marine and Fisheries

News in Brief

Marine science inquiry

The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee has been holding an inquiry into marine science. Its terms of reference include progress in delivering the 2010 UK Marine Science Strategy; the effectiveness of the Marine Science Co-ordination Committee and the MMO; whether the selection of proposed Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) has been based on robust scientific evidence; how well the scientific evidence for MCZs has been balanced with socio-economic considerations and communicated to affected coastal communities; and how well the current and potential impacts of global warming on the oceans are being monitored and addressed by Government and others.

Richard Benyon, Minister for the Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs, gave evidence in the final session on 16 January. In earlier sessions the Committee took evidence from conservation groups, industry groups, climate change researchers, the British Antarctic Survey, National Oceanography Centre, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Marine Biological Association, and Charles Clover.

📌 You can find the terms of reference for the inquiry and the evidence at: www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/marine-science/ and the **UK Marine Science Strategy at:** www.defra.gov.uk/mscc/files/uk-marine-science-strategy-.pdf

Red Tape Challenge

Through the Red Tape Challenge unnecessarily burdensome marine and fisheries regulations will go, while well-defined and necessary regulation will be kept. Defra's proposals for regulatory reform on marine licensing were reviewed by a Ministerial 'Star Chamber' in December and are being

reviewed by the Government's Reducing Regulation Committee during January. We expect decisions to be announced on the Red Tape Challenge website in February, then Defra will begin a programme of implementation.

📌 You can find out more at: www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/themehome/water-and-marine/

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

The Government response to the consultation on the implementation of the Directive and the final Impact Assessment were published in December, together with the UK Marine Strategy Part One, which includes the UK Initial Assessment and characteristics and targets of Good Environmental Status (GES).

📌 You can see the response to the consultation and the Impact Assessment at: www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2012/03/27/marine-strategy-framework-1203/ and the **UK Marine Strategy Part One at:** www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/12/20/pb13860-msfd-strategy-part-one/ and find out more about the Directive at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/msfd/

Habitats and Birds Directives Marine Evidence Group

The Habitats and Birds Directives Marine Evidence Group, set up in response to the Habitats and Birds Directives Implementation Review, is preparing a report on the progress it has made in developing an understanding across regulators, advisers, developers, non-governmental organisations and academics on how key gaps in evidence used to assess effects of marine developments can be addressed and what is currently the best and most appropriate evidence relating to these gaps.

📌 You can read about the Review at: www.defra.gov.uk/habitats-review/ and see the Marine Evidence Group's report there in March.

Fisheries negotiations – key results

The Total Allowable Catches (TACs) agreed by EU Member States at the December Fisheries Council negotiations – to conserve fish stocks by limiting the weight of fish which fishermen may land – and the results of the EU/Norway fisheries negotiations follow:

In the South West of England, in return for further efforts to improve selectivity, a proposed 55% cut to haddock was reduced to 15%; rollovers were secured for megrim and hake; and for whiting in the Celtic Sea we secured a 29% increase in the TAC. In the Western Channel we secured a 15% increase in sole quota.

In the South East of England, quota for channel plaice was increased by 26%, and sole by 6%, and we fought off a threatened 20% cut next year for sprat, successfully negotiating a rollover of this year's TAC, secured for the next five years.

In the West of Scotland, following last year's 200%

TAC increase in haddock, a threatened 48% cut for 2013 was reduced to 30%, alongside a commitment to continue to develop improved selectivity and spatial management measures. We also secured an 18% increase in the Nephrops TAC and a proposed 40% cut to the megrim TAC was avoided by securing a rollover. Proposed 20% cuts in quota for both anglerfish and plaice quota were reduced to 5%.

In the Irish Sea, we succeeded in ensuring that the significant TAC cut of 12% proposed for the economically important Nephrops stock was reversed to achieve a 6% increase, which better reflected the latest scientific assessment for the stock. A proposed cut of 20% for Irish Sea whiting was reduced to 6%.

The UK also fought off the potential introduction of a new rule governing our successful fully documented catch quota trials (see page 6). Vessels in these schemes have eliminated

discards of stocks such as North Sea cod. This new rule would have unnecessarily prevented the transfer of quotas between participating and non-participating vessels and acted as a strong disincentive for fishermen to join the trials.

As an agreement on shared stocks with Norway wasn't reached before the December Council, EU/Norway negotiations resumed in January. We secured an agreement that will allow us to catch the same amount of North Sea cod as last year, instead of a proposed 20 per cent cut in the quota. We also secured an agreement on mackerel in line with scientific advice, as well as 15% increases in TACs for haddock, plaice and saithe; 11% for whiting and an 18% increase for herring.

📍 You can find details of December Council and EU/Norway negotiations at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/cfp/fish-stocks/

Latest CFP reform developments

Following agreement of the ambitious General Approach by the Fisheries Council on the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation in June 2012, attention switched to the progress being made by the European Parliament Fisheries Committee in reviewing the Commission proposals.

Those Fisheries Committee discussions have been comprehensive and lengthy. Members initially identified over 2,500 amendments to the

proposals. Following a long examination process, these amendments were consolidated and taken forward to a vote on 18 December 2012. At that vote the Committee supported provisions to eliminate discards, set fishing rates sustainably and to put in place a form of regional decision making. The next step is expected to be a 'plenary' vote of the whole European Parliament on the provisions

identified by the Fisheries Committee in either February or March 2013.

We don't agree on every single detail in the amendments proposed by the Fisheries Committee – some of it is too detailed for the basic regulation and risks hampering regional decision making. However, it gives us a platform to fine tune the detail of crucial elements like regionalisation as we negotiate the final package this year.

Shellfish stock assessments

Cefas scientists have been assessing stocks of brown crab and lobster and will be assessing scallop stocks.

So far, Cefas has published crab stock assessments for the central North Sea, the Eastern and Western English Channel, and the Celtic Sea; and lobster assessments for Yorkshire Humber, the Southeast and South coast, and the Southwest. It will be publishing more crab and lobster assessments soon.

Using official landings data together with Cefas and MMO port sampling of shellfish catches data for the assessments, Cefas scientists estimated the total number of crabs and lobsters of each length being landed. Then, using growth rate data, they allocated

ages to the different length categories. They calculated the fishing rate (fishing mortality) and population numbers from the catch numbers via computer models widely used by fisheries scientists. To see if the stocks were being fished at a sustainable rate and if they were in a healthy state, the scientists compared the results of the assessments with stock levels needed for long-term sustainability.

Cefas is using the assessments to advise the industry and fishery managers on the health of the stocks. The results of these assessments, along with other scientific studies, can be used to help develop management measures to assist the UK in meeting its obligations under

the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive to ensure commercially important shellfish species are sustainably exploited.

Cefas is presenting the findings of the crab and lobster stock assessments at Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) meetings, before wider discussions with the industry.

📍 You can find the crab and lobster stock assessments at: www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/our-science/fisheries-information/commercial-species/shellfish.aspx and Cefas will be publishing scallop stock assessments in 2013/14.

To find out about meetings, contact your local IFCA (see: www.association-ifca.org.uk/useful-links.html).

New Seafish Chair



© Seafish (Dave Moss)

Elaine Hayes started work as Chair of Seafish at the beginning of the year.

On her first day at its Grimsby HQ, Paul Williams the Seafish Chief Executive introduced Elaine to work on marine safety, fish marketing and nutritional research. Later that day she met with Young's Seafood, with an early morning tour of the fish market the following day.

We invited Elaine to tell us about herself and her ambitions for Seafish:

"I've had a life-long interest in the seafood industry. People starting new jobs always say that, but in my case it's true. My dad was a sea angler and I went bait digging at Winchelsea, collecting peeler crabs and shrimping at low tide. Later, my science degrees, which include aquatic resource management, stoked my interest in fisheries. I did a lot of research work on the effects of heavy metals on crustaceans.

"My previous posts include being Chief Executive of the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Director of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and of Living Coasts, a conservation charity. I'm currently Chair of the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA). As an IFCA member, I understand the value of the fishing industry to coastal

communities. We need to ensure they can survive and diversify. We need to recognise, too, that environmental management is essential to everyone depending on the sea for their living. It's the best way of ensuring there are stocks for the future. Marine conservation is not a barrier for the industry, it's an opportunity.

"Looking to the future, I want Seafish to be professional, active and trusted to make a significant contribution to the economic and environmental sustainability of the seafood industry. It's vitally important for the industry. We need to educate consumers to eat a wider range of fish and promote the use of sustainably sourced seafood as part of a healthy balanced diet. There's a great job to be done."

📍 You can find out more about Seafish at: www.seafish.org

Sustainable seas – an exciting challenge for the IFCAs

We asked Stephen Bolt, Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), to tell us about the work of the IFCAs:

We are now at an exciting time with a fundamental shift in our approach to marine management. By moving away from single issue management, we are beginning to understand the inter-related nature of all the resources the sea provides.

All the marine interests need to pull together to realise the UK vision of 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas'. To achieve this in English inshore waters, the IFCAs have been working with stakeholder groups, Government and regulators since April 2011, when IFCAs replaced Sea Fisheries Committees.

The IFCAs' responsibilities are to achieve sustainable inshore fisheries and to help achieve conservation objectives. Their challenge is to interpret and deliver the complex array of European and UK legislation aiming to achieve this step change. There has never been a time when so much change has been proposed in the marine environment over a relatively short period of time. So much change is not always comfortable or easy to deliver but the IFCAs have not been slow to begin to implement changes.

All ten IFCAs and the Association have been working closely with our partners to deliver good and proportionate management of the newly forming network of marine protected areas, while reviewing all existing byelaws in the inshore areas. By working



Richard Benyon, Minister for Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs, with Tim Dapling, Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer of Sussex IFCA, on the Sussex IFCA's patrol vessel, Watchful. They were photographed on 12 December, heading for Seaford Bay below the Seven Sisters cliffs to publicise the consultation on the first tranche of Marine Conservation Zones and to see how the IFCA's officers map fishing activity.

together at a national level, as well as locally with stakeholders, the IFCAs can ensure that we do our part as the lead inshore regulator in delivering the UK vision of sustainable seas.

For example, Devon and Severn IFCA and Southern IFCA, working closely with Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation and stakeholders, are trialling multi-use area management plans using high-tech inshore vessel monitoring systems (iVMS) to deliver effective management for the Lyme Bay Marine Protected Area.

Another example is the Isles of Scilly IFCA proposing to limit the use of potentially damaging fishing methods in the 0-6 nautical mile area to protect both European Marine Sites and any future Marine Conservation Zones.

A further example of proactive engagement by the IFCAs is by the North Eastern IFCA which has been working closely with the local fishing industry on a number of projects including

the development of a funding bid, through the Holderness Coast Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG), to establish a lobster hatchery at the major shellfishing port of Bridlington. The proposed hatchery would eventually be managed directly by the industry for the wider benefit of the region's fisheries.

The IFCA model of bottom-up regulation through working with stakeholders is not always easy; indeed historically stakeholders with different interests have often been confrontational. However, the IFCAs and the Association are committed to seeking common goals and aims to secure the future of our seas and the benefits we all get from them.

📌 You can find out more about IFCAs at: www.association-ifca.org.uk/ including links to the websites of the ten IFCAs.

The Association of IFCAs welcomes any comment or feedback on the work of the IFCAs. Please contact Dr Stephen Bolt: stephenbolt@association-ifca.org.uk

Catch quota trial success

Catch quota trials, involving fishermen in the South West and North Sea, are radically reducing discards.

The 2012 trials increased both the number of vessels and of species involved, with twelve vessels in the North Sea and six in the South West taking part for five species.

The MMO's report on the trials showed that through the scheme discards of important quota stocks of sole, cod, plaice, megrim and anglerfish have been drastically reduced. In the North Sea fishermen have reduced discards of cod to 0.2% of their cod catch. Also, catches of non-marketable fish are very low, demonstrating that the selectivity measures participating fishermen are choosing to use are effective.

Fisheries Minister, Richard Benyon, said: "I'm delighted that these results show that the UK continues to lead the way in Europe in trialling schemes which tackle discards through managing fisheries by what is caught, not what is landed. I'm keen for these trials to be rolled out to other fisheries in advance of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

"Discarding perfectly good fish is a waste of our natural resources. My aim is to create sustainable fisheries around the UK which are good for the environment and for fishermen at the same time."

The MMO has been operating the trials on behalf of Defra since 2011 as part of the UK's initiative to tackle the problem of discarding fish.

James Cross, Chief Executive of the MMO, said:

"This is really good news for all those interested in a long-term, sustainable future for our fishing industry. By working with fishermen to develop innovative solutions, we hope to reduce waste of our marine resources while increasing healthy seas and fish stocks for the future.

"The excellent results of the latest trials show how important working together can be for finding alternative ways of managing fisheries."

The MMO recently advertised for applicants for the 2013 scheme, which aims to continue to investigate how the use of catch quotas can further reduce discards in the South West mixed fishery and how catch quota management could reduce discards from fisheries where they have been high in the past.

📞 If you want to take part in the 2013 catch quota scheme please phone Julian Roberts, the MMO trials manager, on 01752 228 001 as soon as possible. You can read the 2012 report at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt_interim2012.pdf

First marine planning workshops for South coast

The MMO is holding the first marine planning workshops for the South coast this month.

We've arranged three workshops, from 28 to 30 January, in Exeter, Southampton and Brighton.

Marine plans will inform and guide marine users and regulators, managing the sustainable development of marine industries, such as wind farms, shipping, marine aggregates and fishing, alongside the need to conserve and protect marine species and habitats and recognise leisure uses too. Marine plans will also promote significant economic benefits for local communities.

The South Inshore and South Offshore areas are the third and fourth areas in England to be selected for marine planning, and include a coastline stretching from Folkestone to the River Dart in Devon.

The views of all those with an interest in the South marine areas, including the fishing industry, are vital for the plan making process, and the next step is speaking to people who have an interest in the plans. The workshops will help us produce a guide on how to get involved, which will be published before plan making officially starts.

Fishing industry representatives have been invited to attend the workshops and a summary of the workshops will be published on the MMO website in early February.

📞 You'll find the workshop summary at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/index.htm and if you'd like to attend the workshops or future events and receive our planning newsletter, please email planning@marinemanagement.org.uk or call us on 0191 376 2790.

New projects set to benefit English fisheries

Over £2 million has been awarded to the English fisheries sector following the latest European Fisheries Fund (EFF) panel. Eleven projects have been approved to receive funding.

The projects will benefit local fishing communities by targeting growth and employment.

Five projects were awarded around £1.2 million under Axis 3 of the EFF scheme which funds port and harbour regeneration. These included new chill capacity and ice plants for Sutton Harbour in Plymouth and Padstow Harbour in Cornwall. A project involving the installation of a weighing and grading machine as part of the second phase of the regeneration of Grimsby fish dock also received a grant.

Just under £600,000 has been granted to two projects under Axis 2 of the scheme which supports the seafood processing sector.

One of these projects saw The Severn and Wye Smokery awarded a grant for a new fish filleting line. This will eliminate



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the need to send fish off site to be filleted. The project will improve the quality and value of their products and create jobs.

Training opportunities have also been supported. Seafish has been awarded grants for four projects to provide training for new entrants to the fishing industry, as well as training in navigation, engineering, stability and radio operation for experienced fishermen.

Catherine Murphy, Programme Manager for the EFF in England, said: "The EFF Grants panel was delighted to support these projects, which will be of great benefit to the local areas

involved and the wider English fisheries sector. EFF has had a very positive impact in England but there is still funding available to make further improvements.

"We're now in to the last year of the EFF scheme and don't want potential applicants to miss out on funding. I'd encourage anyone planning projects to get in touch with us quickly to see if we may be able to help."

📍 To find out more about funding go to:
www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/funding/eff.htm
or call 0300 123 1032 as soon as possible.

Funding for fisheries research

People with ideas to improve fisheries management are being encouraged to apply quickly to the MMO for research funding.

Through the Fisheries Challenge Fund grants are available to enable fishermen and other interested parties to get involved in research projects looking at fisheries management issues. The funding can support all types of research and analysis which look at an issue currently facing the UK fishing industry and are consistent with the objective of achieving sustainable fisheries.

Projects sponsored by a university or government agency are particularly being sought, along with those which involve fishermen making vessel time available for research work or another similar stakeholder contribution. Priority will also be given to applications which look at providing effective practical support to Regional Advisory Councils.

Proposals for projects must be received by the MMO by 18 February 2013.

📍 For more information email fcf.queries@marinemanagement.org.uk or call 0191 376 2507.

Application forms and details of previous projects supported by the Fisheries Challenge Fund are at:
www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/funding/fcf.htm

MCZ consultation

You are invited to give Defra your views on proposals for designating Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in English inshore and English and Welsh offshore waters.

Designating MCZs to contribute to a network of marine protected areas is a Government commitment under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to ensure that our marine environment is protected for years to come.

We're proposing to designate about 10,900 km² of marine habitat (an area roughly three times the size of Cornwall) in the first phase in 2013. The 31 proposed sites provide homes for a variety of animals and plants, such as corals, jellyfish and seahorses and will give them greater protection.

Launching the consultation, Richard Benyon said: "The UK has one of the world's richest marine environments, and we need to make sure it stays that way. This is why we are creating a network of marine protected areas. We have to get this right. Designating the right sites in the right places, so that our seas are sustainable, productive and healthy, and to ensure that the right balance is struck between conservation and industry."

Four Regional Projects across England: Balanced Seas, Finding Sanctuary, Irish Sea and Net Gain, managed by Natural England and the Joint Nature



© Mark Warren

Sponge community on rocky reef, with featherstars, branching sponges and jewel anemones

Conservation Committee (JNCC), brought together conservationists, fishermen and other sea users to lead the identification of sites for MCZs.

All the Regional Projects' recommendations are covered by the consultation and Defra has considered them all, along with the advice from Natural England and JNCC.

A key factor in drawing up the proposals for designation of the 31 sites in 2013 was the quality of the evidence base. Where there are problems about the quality of the data, Defra proposes that these MCZs need further consideration before possible designation in future.

The consultation confirms that reference areas will not be included in the first phase but will be subject to further review; and clarifies the treatment of MCZs at different stages in the designation process in licensing decisions.

Through the consultation, people and organisations with

an interest in our seas have the opportunity to say whether the proposals are right, or if changes need to be made, and particularly if there is any new relevant evidence.

Defra will use your comments and any new evidence to inform the final decision on which sites will be designated in the first phase in 2013. We'll also use responses to the consultation as part of the selection process for consideration of sites in later phases.

📅 The consultation runs until 31 March 2013. You can find the consultation documents, plus information on how to respond, at: www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2012/12/13/marine-conservation-zones-1212/

The final reports from the Regional Projects are at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2080291> and Natural England and JNCC's advice is at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/mpa/mcz/advice.aspx.

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 and Fisheries, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. You can read previous issues of Fishing Focus at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/wwo/fishing-focus/

