

FishingFocus

The Defra and MMO marine fisheries newsletter

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2013 TACs and quotas

On 24 October the European Commission released proposals for 2013 Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas for those stocks not subject to agreement with non-EU countries.

The main elements of the proposals include:

- TAC increases for North Sea megrim, West of Scotland nephrops, VIIb-k whiting, Channel plaice and western Channel sole.
- No TAC split for Channel plaice, and no new TACs for seabass or red mullet.
- Retention of catch quota schemes in Western Waters.
- A series of 20% TAC reductions – VI & VII angler, VII megrims and Channel sprat.
- Other stocks subject to significant reductions including: hake, VIIIb-k haddock, North and Irish Sea nephrops stocks and VIa haddock.
- A new condition on fully documented fisheries schemes that prohibits the leasing between catch quota and non-catch quota vessels.



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- Rollovers for Irish Sea plaice, VI and VII pollack.

Over the next month the UK Government will work with all those with an interest to agree UK negotiating priorities on these proposals. The Ministerial stakeholder event in Cardiff on 26 October is the start of this process.

By mid-November we hope to have received the Commission's

proposals for the fishing opportunities subject to wider international negotiations or agreements. This final set of proposals will inform EU/Norway negotiations in November.

The process will culminate with the December Fisheries Council on 18-20 December, where the UK Fisheries Minister Richard Benyon will agree the full range of EU and UK fishing opportunities for 2013.



24 October was a busy day in European fisheries policy.

In Luxembourg in the early hours Ministers reached provisional agreement on the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. This will be heavily focussed on implementing the changes in the CFP needed under the reform package. There is still work to be done on much of the detail and with the European Parliament. But the key commitments have been made by Ministers on the ways in which the industry will be supported in adapting to CFP reform and helping to increase the stocks that can be fished sustainably.

And later the same day in Brussels the Commission published its proposals for next year's quotas. There is some good news but at first look it is difficult to make sense of some of the cuts proposed. We therefore have plenty to do with stakeholders to prepare for what is likely to be another late night negotiation in December.

John Robbs
Director, Marine and Fisheries

News in Brief

Register of FQAs

Defra and the other UK Fisheries Administrations held a first meeting with industry in September about a project to develop a register of Fixed Quota Allocation (FQA) unit holdings. The main aim of the register is to give greater transparency over FQA holdings to those in and outside the fishing industry. The information on the register will therefore be publicly accessible. As a first step the Fisheries Administrations will be requesting detailed information from Producer Organisations about the FQA units which they hold on behalf of others. The Fisheries Administrations plan to publish the register online during 2013.

Alongside the register, we intend to establish an electronic trading platform. We are at the initial planning stages for this, but expect that it would facilitate the movement of FQA units and quota and therefore improve access to both for fishermen.

📧 Please send any comments on these initiatives to: FisheriesReform@defra.gsi.gov.uk

North East Atlantic mackerel

Mackerel catches by Iceland and Faroes have increased to such an extent over recent years that total catches now exceed recommended limits by over 300,000 tonnes. This is putting the stock, the UK's most valuable by value and volume, at serious risk.

EU Commissioner Damanaki met the Ministers of Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands in early September in an effort to

resolve the ongoing mackerel dispute. The Ministerial talks, aimed at agreeing a new sharing arrangement, were unsuccessful as the positions of different parties were too wide apart.

The issue was raised again at Fisheries Council on 25 September and Member States and the Commission are determined to continue to seek an agreement that will protect the stock in the future but the different shares must be in our best interests. Meanwhile, a Commission proposal aimed at introducing sanctions on countries which fish unsustainably on stocks of interest to the EU has been adopted by both the European Parliament and Council.

Special Areas of Conservation

The Studland to Portland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in Dorset was submitted to the European Commission in September and this completed the SAC network in English waters. Five sites in offshore waters adjacent to Scotland are due to be submitted to the Commission in October and this will complete the offshore SAC network.

📧 For more information on SACs, see: www.defra.gov.uk/news/2012/09/13/studland-to-portland/

Marine Conservation Zones

We're planning a formal consultation on MCZs in December.

📧 You'll be able to find this at: www.defra.gov.uk/consult/open/

Cod Recovery Plan

Following strong lobbying by Defra for a review of the Cod Recovery Plan, the European Commission has now published a draft amendment to the Plan.

The Cod Recovery Plan controls fishing activity in the North Sea, Irish Sea and waters to the West of Scotland to enable the cod stocks to recover from overfishing. It controls how much cod vessels can land and how long vessels can spend at sea carrying fishing gear capable of catching cod. These effort controls also apply to vessels targeting other round-fish, flatfish and nephrops, but catching cod as by-catch. Defra has long felt, and has evidence, that the Plan has not been delivering sufficient recovery in cod stocks and also penalises fishermen trying to do the right thing by reducing discards.

In general, we welcome the direction of the amendment which contains measures for which Defra has been pushing. They include one which allows Fisheries Ministers to halt further annual reductions of fishing effort – a UK priority, so



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welcomed. The amendment will also exempt from effort restrictions any vessel which fully documents its catch. This means vessels in North Sea catch quota trials will not be restricted by effort, so can take longer to steam to areas where cod is not abundant, or there are more high value, larger fish. Again, Defra has pressed for this.

The UK Government wants this amendment adopted as quickly as possible. However, it requires agreement of the European Council and Parliament so may take longer to put in place than we would like. Nonetheless, securing an effort freeze for 2013 remains a UK priority for this December's Fisheries Council.

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

The UK Government wants the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to support a reformed Common Fisheries Policy that will lead to healthy fish stocks, a prosperous fishing industry and a healthy marine environment.

The UK Government played a pivotal role in brokering the 'General Approach' that was agreed by European Fisheries Ministers at the Fisheries Council in the early hours of 24 October. It meets key UK demands, including the ability to fund

selective catching gear that will contribute to eliminating discards, and to fund innovative research projects to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of the fishing industry.

The new proposal puts safeguards in place to ensure that fleet measures also contribute to CFP reform, and sets an overall combined limit of 15% on decommissioning, tie-ups, and engine replacement.

While the General Approach is an important step, the

Regulation is subject to co-decision and discussions will continue in the European Parliament. The UK will press for further improvements, including increased flexibility, simplicity and proportionality in operating the fund. The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament will then need to agree the package. Final agreement of the regulation is not expected until spring 2013 at the earliest, with the EMFF scheduled to replace the European Fisheries Fund by the end of 2013.

CFP reform update

Following the agreement of a General Approach by Fisheries Ministers on the proposals for a new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) all eyes have now turned to the European Parliament's discussions on the package.

As expected, those discussions have demonstrated that there is a broad range of views from the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on the main challenges facing Europe's fisheries. It is however clear that major reforms to how Europe's fisheries are managed are essential.

The UK Government is currently working with MEPs to encourage the European Parliament to take the bold steps that are needed to bring about real reform. This means explaining the reasons for fundamental reform and convincing MEPs of the need for ambitious goals to eliminate



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discards, fish at sustainable levels and introduce a process of genuine regionalisation. Alongside agreeing these goals, we are urging MEPs to help us ensure that the detailed practical measures can be put in place to deliver the goals.

The European Parliament's position on the reform package

will become clearer in the next few months. We remain hopeful of a final agreement in 2013 that will allow us to build on the progress achieved in Council in the summer, and provide the framework for a prosperous industry and healthy marine environment that we all want to see.

New English Scallop Order

The Scallop Fishing (England) Order 2012 came into force on 1 October 2012 and is the first step in the new Anglo-Scottish approach to scallop management.

The nomadic nature of the large scallop vessels means there is potential for displacement if Fisheries Administrations act unilaterally and Defra and Marine Scotland have agreed to work together on managing this important national resource.

The new Order aims to:

- provide protection for the smaller scale fleet;
- reduce gear conflict between scalloping vessels and non-scalloping vessels;

- improve the enforceability of existing fishery management measures;
- put English waters on a similar footing to Devolved Administration waters, reducing the impact of displacement of scalloping activity between areas; and
- allow attachments used solely for the purpose of emptying dredges safely.

This will be achieved by extending the existing restriction in the 0-6 nautical mile area of eight scallop dredges on each side to apply in the 6-12 nautical mile area as well.

There is a new requirement for all scallops caught on trips which cover both the Western

and Eastern English Channel to comply to the higher minimum landing size of 110mm. The new Order also relaxes the rules on what attachments to dredges may be used, permitting those which increase the safety of tipping the dredge.

Marine Scotland is currently considering consultation responses on its proposed changes to the Scottish Scallop Order, reflecting this approach. Defra and Marine Scotland will be reviewing the effectiveness of the measures in two years' time.

📄 You can find the Order at: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2283/pdfs/uksi_20122283_en.pdf

Fisheries in European Marine Sites

To ensure that Marine Protected Areas receive the right level of protection, and comply with the UK's legal obligations under European Directives, the Government has decided to revise the approach to the management of commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites in English waters.

European Marine Sites (Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation), which are part of the UK's network of Marine Protected Areas, protect wildlife habitats and species of European importance. Activities that could damage these Sites need to be managed effectively in line with the EU Habitats Directive.

The new approach involves assessing the potential impact of all existing and potential commercial fishing activities in European Marine Sites and, where appropriate, introducing local management measures to prevent damage to them. The approach will build on existing arrangements and will be applied on a risk-prioritised, phased basis. It will focus first on sites that contain features where evidence suggests there is significant risk that certain types of fishing activities could prevent the achievement of conservation objectives. Following a phased implementation, sites with



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features identified as high risk should have management measures identified and introduced by the end of 2013, with those with moderate to low risk by 2016.

Defra is working closely with the MMO, Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) and representatives of fishing and environmental interests through an Implementation Group. This Group aims to deliver a detailed plan on how this new approach can best be achieved, including a timetable, by November 2012. We expect that decisions on legal or management measures to protect sites will be made locally for each site by the MMO

or IFCAs in consultation with the fishing industry and other marine interests.

Projects are also under way to identify fishery management measures for three offshore European Marine Sites through the Common Fisheries Policy: Dogger Bank, Stanton Banks and Haig Fras. Measures for Dogger Bank are being co-ordinated between Germany, Netherlands and the UK. If successful, similar approaches will be adopted in other offshore European Marine Sites.

For more information, see: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/protecting/conservation/ems_fisheries.htm

Protecting threatened sharks

A new conservation plan has been agreed to reduce threats to migratory sharks and help to reverse the long-term decline of shark species.

The plan was agreed at the first meeting of Signatories to the Convention on Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks held in Bonn from 24-27 September.

Countries around the world will work together through government bodies, scientific institutions, international organisations, and other marine and fisheries interests to address the key threats to migratory sharks, such as over-fishing. The sharks covered by the MoU are whale shark, basking shark, white shark, longfin mako, shortfin mako, spurdog, and porbeagle.

The meeting also set up an advisory committee of ten experts from around the world. Cefas scientist Jim Ellis was one of two scientists nominated to represent the European region.

The MMO has published advice on porbeagle at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/news/news/120914.htm

South coast marine plans

The next marine plans will cover the coast and seas from Dover to the River Dart in Devon.

The South Inshore and Offshore areas have now been confirmed as the second areas of England's seas for marine planning.

Marine planning will look at how busy areas can be shared between users, to make the most of our waters. Marine plans will inform and guide marine users and regulators, managing the sustainable development of marine industries, such as fishing, wind farms, shipping and marine aggregates, alongside the need to conserve and protect marine species and habitats and take account of leisure use.

The views of all those with an interest in the South marine areas – including fishermen – are vital to the plan-making process, and the next step will be speaking to as many people as possible affected by these plans. A guide on how to get involved will be published before plan-making officially starts in early 2013. Open meetings along the South coast will also be announced soon so we can hear your views.

Steve Brooker, the MMO's Head of Marine Planning, said: "England's South Inshore and Offshore marine areas were chosen because of the wide range of marine activities that need to co-exist in these busy waters."



The marine economy is currently worth more than £47 billion annually to the UK, and has the potential to increase significantly. We are the first country in the world to plan across all marine activities, for all our territorial waters, and the South plan areas are two of the 10 in total to be delivered by the MMO in the next decade.

The East Inshore and Offshore plan areas were the first to be announced, and draft plans will be available for public consultation early next year.

The MMO is accountable to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who will approve each plan.

📍 You can find out more about marine planning, including the dates of the open meetings at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/index.htm

Net tagging

In early October 2012 the MMO launched a new net tagging scheme.

The scheme, developed by the MMO in consultation with the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), may help to reduce the length of inspections at sea. It also means vessels could avoid having their towed nets measured for up to six months.

The scheme is open to any UK-registered vessel fishing in English waters or landing into English ports. To take part a master must arrange with the MMO to allow the net to be measured and tagged in accordance with the scheme's rules.

Liz Humphreys, Director of Operations and Compliance for the MMO, said: "I'm pleased that through this scheme we can reduce some of the time taken up at sea by inspections, benefitting the majority of fishermen who fish responsibly.

We've designed the scheme with feedback from industry and believe it is straightforward and convenient. I'd encourage people to contact us and find out about signing up."

Nets tagged as part of the scheme will not normally be measured on inspection, either at sea or in port, provided they remain in date. An inspection may still be carried out in certain circumstances, for example if a problem is encountered elsewhere or if part of the net appears to have been changed. Verification inspections may also be carried out.

The relevant parts of the net are: cod end, extension piece, strengthening bag, headline panel, square mesh panel, chafers (where measuring is applicable), and other legal attachments.

📍 You can find more information and application forms at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/net_tagging.htm or ask at an MMO coastal office.

European funding for Cornwall fisheries

Over £3 million is still available from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) towards projects which will benefit fishermen, the wider fisheries sector and related companies in the Cornwall area.

Axis 1 of the EFF supports fishermen to make modifications to their vessels, with funding available towards projects that will increase safety, sustainably and improve working conditions. Over £285,000 has so far been awarded for fishing vessel modernisation projects in Cornwall.

One local fisherman to have benefitted is Anthony Hendy who received over £1000 towards a life raft and fuel tanks. He has also been granted £1000 towards a new wheelhouse. Mr Hendy said: "Not having to handle fuel cans every day has improved my working conditions and saved me time. I also feel safer knowing I have a life raft on board. I would encourage other fishermen to apply for EFF money. I had no problems and found the application process straightforward. On both occasions MMO staff in the Penzance office were on hand to answer questions and check my forms."

Axis 2 of the EFF can support projects which involve aquaculture or seafood processing. Crab processing company 'Seafood and Eat It' received over £30,000 towards new equipment. Neville Pittman, owner of the company explains: "The money allowed us to purchase a continuous crab boiler and electric stunner. This means we can process more crab and increase our capacity to meet demand. The application process was fairly straightforward. I downloaded a form from the Marine Management Organisation's



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website, filled it in and returned it to the team."

Axis 3 of the scheme supports projects which may benefit groups within the fisheries sector. This can cover harbour regeneration projects and smaller developments, such as improvements to facilities and new equipment. Looe Harbour Commissioners have benefited from Axis 3 funding, as Jeff Penhaligon, Looe harbour master, explains: "We've received over £2 million in European funding for various projects. The money has enabled us to create a new storage facility, a packing unit, processing and

kitchen facilities, and hopefully a cookery school. We have also been able to install new stores and fuel tanks."

Graeme High, EFF England Programme Manager, said: "We don't want people to miss out on the opportunity to receive funding so contact the EFF team quickly if you are thinking of starting a project."

📌 Applications must reach the MMO by 31 December 2013. For more information see: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/funding/eff.htm or call the EFF team on 0300 123 1032 or contact your local MMO office.

New fisheries report

A new report published by the MMO will pull together all the current evidence on fishing activity in English waters, including location, trends and landings.

The review of fisheries is part of the MMO's work to identify gaps in knowledge and will make recommendations on what information is needed and how the evidence base could be improved in the future. These recommendations will be used to guide the development of marine plans and to ensure fisheries are taken into account when the MMO plans

for the future use of our seas.

Having a more accurate picture of activities is vital in understanding how fishing communities could be affected by marine planning policy and industry developments in inshore and offshore waters.

The information was gathered from existing scientific studies, and by speaking to fishing organisations and other experts in a workshop held in December 2011.

📌 The report will be available at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/evidence/index.htm

YOUR VIEWS

Sea anglers – join in the survey!

Sea Angling 2012, England's largest survey of recreational sea angling, is gathering momentum, receiving responses from thousands of sea anglers, and there is still time to join in.

Sea angling is an important economic activity, with the potential to grow as fish stocks recover. *Sea Angling 2012* will generate data on sea angling that will improve scientific knowledge of fish stocks, support the Government's sustainable fishing objectives, and be useful to angling bodies.

On-site and online surveys will provide estimates of the number of sea anglers in England, what they catch, and the social and economic benefits of sea angling. The project is led by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the MMO, working with the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs).

Since the last report in Fishing Focus (Spring 2012) there has been lots of activity, so here is a summary.

Residents of over 7,500 households have been surveyed as part of the National Household Survey and initial results show similar sea angling participation rates to previous studies. IFCA representatives have surveyed about 1,000 shore and private boat anglers at fishing marks and boat launching sites around England, with the majority of anglers agreeing to join in the survey. Work to estimate activity and catches of charter boats has started and data are already being provided by skippers.

The first two online catch surveys are now complete and a third survey was launched in October to collect data on catches between July and September 2012. To ensure we

have the broadest evidence, we are urging as many sea anglers as possible to complete this survey by following the link from the *Sea Angling 2012* website.

Over 2,000 people have responded to online and face-to-face surveys on the economic value and social benefits of sea angling, run by social research co-operative Substance for the project.

If you've been sea angling – either as an expert or beginner – do complete the surveys, either online or if approached by surveyors while fishing, and you could win a share of nearly £4,000 of fishing tackle that the project is giving away. You can see some of the winners on the *Sea Angling 2012* website.

📍 For more information and to complete the online surveys, visit: www.seaangling2012.org or www.seaangling.substance.coop/

Special Protection Areas

Natural England is engaging in informal dialogue with marine interests on two Special Protection Areas (SPA) proposals which will contribute to meeting our commitment to protect and conserve the marine environment through the creation of a network of Marine Protected Areas.

The first is for an extension to the existing Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs SPA along the coast between Filey Brigg and Cunstone Nab and out to sea to a distance of 2km. This follows data assessment and survey work by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) which has shown that internationally important numbers of rare sea birds extend beyond the original SPA boundary.

The second is for a new SPA off the South Cornwall Coast from Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay where important numbers of inshore wintering waterbirds, such as divers and grebes, currently have no statutory protection.

📍 You can find out more at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/mpa/ems/flamboroughspa.aspx and www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/mpa/ems/falmouthspa.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 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/

