



Marine Management Organisation

MMO and South East Quota Advisory Meeting Minutes

5 March 2020: 10:30 – 13:00, at the Alexandra Suite: St Mary's Road, Swanley, Kent, United Kingdom, BR8 7BU.

Attendees

MMO: Leanne Stockdale, Edward Baker, Paul Tyack, Justin Rowley and Celia Carter

Defra: Jonny Peters

Coastal PO: Jim Pettipher

Felixstowe Ferry Association: J White

Harwich Fisherman's Association: R Lovett

Leigh Fisherman: D Godbold and M Meddle

Lowestoft Association: S Wightman

NFFO SE: P Gilson

Queenborough Fisherman Association: R Bingham and D Ferris

Ramsgate Fisherman (TFA): E Temple

R.E.A.F: P Lines and C Lines

Whitstable Fisherman's Association: C. Attenborough

Introduction

Paul Tyack opened the meeting by explaining the purpose and introduced the Terms of Reference (ToR) that were circulated ahead of the meeting. All agreed to agree the ToR at the second meeting.

Area IVc

EB provided a summary of quota uptake for relevant species in Area IVc for 2019 and compared this to quota availability in 2020.

Queries on what the MMO had traded in and out.

Catch limits for 2020

General opinion was that NS skate is vastly abundant compared to the available quota and in some areas it is the only fish available to catch. An agreement was

reached to allow the catch limit to stay at 2.3t if possible (but no higher) for March, April and May and accept a likely reduction in catch limit later in the year to ensure catches remain within quota. MMO will have to trade in a minimum of 100t to sustain this fishery this year, and it was stressed by EB this may be harder this year due to a reduction in trading currency such as NS cod.

The Over-10m catch limit has been raised to 2t, again on the understanding that it will likely be reduced later in the year.

The current quota for herring matches uptake but there is some increased interest in this stock. EB has slightly raised the catch limits to 25t and sourced more quota.

Quota Management Trials

There was general support for an effort trial that would allow whatever was caught to be landed.

Within an effort trial it was suggested that:

Effort should be determined by either Days or Hours at sea

Effort could be allocated as per the type and quantity of gear used. Gear could be tagged and the gear type used monitored via the catch app.

Effort could be reduced once a certain amount of a specific species was landed but conversely trials need to show how much can be caught and not be capped by quota.

Gear restrictions are the best way to manage stocks because you would be able to more effectively land everything you catch and not have to discard.

AOB

Bass

The group highlighted that a reduction in restrictions on bass fishing was their top priority.

Spurdog

The group highlighted that there was a significant amount of spurdog on the ground and they would like to be able to land some as it is sometimes being discarded dead and they need to be able to diversify and make money where they can.

EB has since spoken with CEFAS who highlighted that although current ICES advice states *“Based on medium-term projections, annual catches at the recent assumed level (2468 tonnes) would allow the stock to increase at a rate close to that*

estimated with zero catches” across the EU only 270t of quota has been made available and the UK has 100t of it which is currently being used as part of a trial in the SW. CEFAS could not provide any additional information on the potential for access to more quota as this is a policy decision made at EU level.

Dredging in MPAs

The general opinion at the meeting was that for many stocks there is more quota than fish e.g. NS Cod, Plaice and Sole. The group suggested that dredging, windfarms and foreign vessels could be blamed for the lack of stocks.

General comments

It was stated by some attendees that the current system of management is too complicated and drowned in bureaucracy.

Actions

1. MMO to circulate the trade spreadsheet.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/867586/2019_non-sector_pool_quota_trades.csv/preview
2. Question regarding the permitted trawl net mesh size when fishing for Herring was raised. - 16mm is permitted outside 6nm.

For more information see:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/824993/Gear use - N Sea - General Dem and Pel Towed v2 final version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/824993/Gear_use_-_N_Sea_-_General_Dem_and_Pel_Towed_v2_final_version.pdf)

3. Question regarding the use of NS cod – EB to provide detail on NS cod trades (see link in Action1 above)
4. Request for info on whether there could be a spurdog trial similar to the SW.

There is currently no scope for a trial in 2020 due to a lack of by-catch quota as explained above.

5. Question regarding why there is a lack of skate quota. Answer: The current EU quota allocation is based on a precautionary approach due to limited survey data but CEFAS have informed us that survey data is now showing a slight increase in stocks for thornback ray and also that a potential change for the management of this stock is being considered by the EU (see STECF report attached).



STECF 17-16 - LTM
skates and rays.pdf

6. Request for info on the affect dredging and turbulence from shipping has had on spawning grounds in the Thames Estuary - EB has received this from MMO conservation team:

There are some MPAs that do contain a licence to dredge for aggregates e.g. Margate and Long Sands SAC however these licences include conditions requiring operators to survey the area prior to dredging and instructions to avoid any of the sensitive habitats detailed in the MPA. It should also be noted that fishing restrictions in MPAs are put in place only when adverse effects from fishing on the MPA cannot be ruled out, and many MPAs include areas which remain open to all types of fishing.

7. Question regarding why dredging was being allowed in MPAs - EB to contact MMO teams to find out more (see above).

8. Request to see some outputs from the Future of Inshore Fisheries conference.

A report on the meeting is being compiled and when completed it will be circulated.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the meeting was valuable, and we will meet again in August.