



Marine
Management
Organisation

marinescotland



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Response to the call for evidence on the Dogger Bank king scallop fishery closure



...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Contents

Summary of call for evidence	3
Response of the UK Fisheries Administrations	4
Summary of Call for Evidence questions and answers.....	5
Useful Information	8

Summary of call for evidence

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) acting on behalf of all four UK Fisheries Administrations (UKFAs) put out a call for evidence from 1 July 2020 to 8 July 2020 on a proposed king scallop fishery closure in the Dogger Bank area (which includes a [Special Area of Conservation, SAC](#)) to include ICES rectangles 39F1, 39F2, 39F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 37F1 and 37F2.

The purpose of closing this area is to enable the UKFAs to make an informed review of the current king scallop fishery and the spawning condition of the stock. Without a more detailed analysis of the stock, it is not known if scallops in the area are locally recruiting individuals, whether there is significant larval import/export from the area or what sustainable fishing levels in the fishery are. These insights are crucial to inform effective management controls to ensure long term sustainable harvesting in the fishery.

Industry members implemented voluntary measures within the area to help ensure the sustainability of the stock and approached the UKFAs to implement uniform management measures as soon as possible. Stakeholder comments were sought on a closure of at least three weeks which would be reviewed based on the scientific data gathered during the closure.

Response of the UK Fisheries Administrations

Fourteen respondents, representing individual vessels and large fishing/ processing industry groups, responded to the call for evidence. In summary there was a nine to five majority in favour of a temporary closure and of those nine all but one preferred a closure beyond 3 weeks. The majority agreed that a temporary closure to survey the area and obtain data was both desirable and necessary. The minority opposed to closing the fishery cited the economic impacts as a reason for their opposition to the closure.

Having considered the responses to this call for evidence the UKFAs decided to proceed with the closure of the king scallop fishery in the following eight ICES rectangles: 39F1, 39F2, 39F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 37F1 and 37F2. The closure was put in place for four weeks initially from 00.01h 12 July 2020 to 23.59h 8 August 2020. The duration of the closure is subject to review based on the progress and outcomes of gathering scientific information on the stock in the area. Following preliminary advice from Cefas, this closure was extended until 23.59h 29 August. Fishing vessel licences were varied by all UKFAs to reflect the temporary closure.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) funded the Cefas research vessel RV Cefas Endeavour to allow samples and scientific data to be gathered from the Dogger Bank area. Four days were allocated to survey the ICES rectangles in the closure area.

Sampling locations for the survey were selected using VMS and scallop by-catch data, ensuring coverage of the main dredged locations as well as those areas where trawlers indicated catches. The survey aimed to establish the spawning condition of scallops at each location to make a rapid report based on the initial closure. The survey also aimed to collect data to help establish the size and age structure of the patches to better understand their sustainability, although the time required for analysis of the shells will mean this element of reporting will be later in the year. The closure and any subsequent extensions will be kept under review by the four UKFAs. The UKFAs would like to thank industry for the work they have done to date. We are committed to working with the scallop industry throughout the closure, during the review and in any subsequent decisions or actions that result from the data gathering.

Summary of Call for Evidence questions and answers

The call for evidence was made up of six questions. The MMO received responses from 14 respondents.

The questions posed are outlined below and summaries of answers received are given.

Q1. [Your views on closing the suggested ICES rectangles identified above.](#)

All 14 respondents answered question 1.

Of the 14 respondents nine were in favour of a closure and five were against.

Of the nine respondents in favour three asked for ICES rectangles 38F3 and 39F3 to be excluded and five were in favour of a longer closure than the proposed three weeks to ensure the sustainability of the scallop stock.

Q2. [Your views on alternatives to a temporary closure to allow data collection.](#)

Of the 14 respondents 13 responded to question 2.

Of the 13, ten were in favour of a closure in principle to enable data gathering on the stock. Three were in favour of a quota-based system in cooperation with the processing industry.

Those against a temporary closure gave the need for fishing effort to provide data until scientific data becomes available.

Six respondents specifically mentioned the need for better scientific data and shared the concerns of the UK FAs that there was insufficient scientific data currently available to be confident that the scallop stocks in the area could be sustained if the recent levels of fishing were maintained.

Two respondents claimed the damage had already been done.

Q3. [Your experience or evidence of fishing for king scallops in the Dogger Bank SAC and the adjoining Southern North Sea SAC.](#)

Of the 14 respondents 12 responded to question 3.

The responses to this question were split between:

- the need for a closure based on different assessments including the strength of the stock in the Dogger Bank area; and
- whether the area was ripe for fishing or needed a temporary closure.

The 12 respondents had rather different experiences and evidence of fishing in this new area. Respondents stated that there was a large quantity of scallop on the ground, with this quality of fishing not seen in 17 years. Once a rectangle had been fished vessels move on to different areas. Comments on the spawning cycle of the Southern North Sea SAC were also noted.

Q4. Your experience or evidence of any problems encountered with fishing in the Dogger Bank SAC and the adjoining Southern North Sea SAC

Of the 14 respondents 12 responded to question 4.

As with question 3, the FAs received a variety of responses on different sides of the argument about the need for closure based on different assessments as to the strength of the stock in the Dogger Bank area and whether the area was ripe for fishing or needed a temporary closure.

There is an overlap in answers to the previous question.

Again, the 12 respondents saw rather different problems of fishing in the area although one respondent said it was the most problem-free area. Respondents said that a closure would be catastrophic and would force them to fish a lower quality stock. On the other hand, one respondent gave comments that dead scallops landed from the area are the result of bad cooling not reaching proper temperature and that had resulted in quality issues. Another respondent commented that there was a problem of low prices for scallops. On the other hand, another respondent commented that there were unsustainable catch levels in the area. A third respondent advised that the stock should not be worked as before and no longer allowed to be fished above sustainability. Two respondents preferred a management solution that looked at queen and king scallop together as loss of queen scallop stock could lead to fishing for king scallops.

Q5. Your evidence of the problems that the proposed closure would cause you or your business.

Of the 14 respondents 12 responded to question 5.

Of the 12 respondents seven saw long-term benefits for the species, especially on sustainability.

The five against a closure expected a negative financial impact with a detrimental effect on the catching sector and processors.

Q6. Your evidence of the problems that the proposed closure would cause you or your business.

Of the 14 respondents 13 responded to question 6.

Of the 13, eight were in favour of a longer closure period. Views on the length varied widely starting with one more week and going up to twelve months.

Another response suggested the closure period should be dependent on scientific evidence.

Useful Information

Topic of the call for evidence:	The call for evidence called for evidence on a three week closure of the Dogger Bank to the King Scallop fishery.
Scope of this call for evidence:	To seek evidence on a proposed king scallop fishery closure in the Dogger Bank area (which includes a Special Area of Conservation, SAC).
Geographical scope:	ICES rectangles 39F1, 39F2, 39F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 37F1 and 37F2.
Those consulted:	Scallop fishing and processing industry, academics and members of the public.
Body/bodies responsible for the call for evidence:	Fisheries Management Team, Statistics & Analysis Team in the MMO, UK FAs.
Duration:	The call for evidence ran from 1 July until 8 July 2020.
Enquiries:	For any enquiries about the call for evidence please contact effort@marinemangement.org.uk