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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Response to the consultation on the extension of the Dogger Bank king scallop closure until 01 October 2020



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Summary

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) acting on behalf of all four UK Fisheries Administrations (UKFAs) was seeking views on a proposal to extend the initial closure of the Dogger Bank area king scallop fishery (which includes a Special Area of Conservation, see Annex 1) beyond 29 August 2020 until 01 October 2020. The closure includes ICES rectangles 39F1, 39F2, 39F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 37F1 and 37F2.

On 00.01h 12 July 2020, all four UKFAs implemented a variation to fishing vessel licences to reflect the temporary closure of the Dogger Bank king scallop fishery. This closure was initially put in place for four weeks and was extended on 07 August until 23.59h 29 August 2020, following preliminary advice from Cefas around the spawning condition of the stocks and to allow enough time for a detailed analysis of the research to be provided and considered by fishery managers and industry.

Between 02 and 05 August Cefas had already conducted sampling activity on the research vessel RV Endeavour to determine the spawning condition of king scallops found on Dogger Bank. The survey fished at 14 locations derived from VMS activity of dredges in 2020 plus two in otter-trawl derived areas (which caught no scallops). The results of this survey identified that spawning activity was still taking place or about to begin, with spawning likely to continue until late September.

The purpose of this consultation was to seek views on an extended closure to 01 October 2020 to provide increased protection for spawning king scallop stocks in the Dogger Bank area. The additional observations were identified as required by the survey carried out during the previous closure as spawning was still ongoing.

This consultation ran from 18 August 2020 to 24 August 2020.

Response of the UK Fisheries Administrations

Three bodies representing large fishing / industry groups, responded to the consultation. In summary all three responses were in favour of the proposed closure. All respondents asked to extend the closure until the end of February 2021.

No responses opposing the proposed closure until 01 October 2020 were received.

Having considered the consultation responses UKFAs initially decided to extend the closure of the king scallop fishery in the eight ICES rectangles: 39F1, 39F2, 39F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 37F1 and 37F2 until 11 October 2020.

A further Cefas survey of the area was expected to commence on 30 September and run for 4 days to conclude by 4 October, to obtain additional data on the spawning condition of the stock. A closure extension until 11 October was seen as giving enough time to consider the results of this survey and communicate them to industry. The additional time would have given the UKFAs time to discuss and agree next steps for the fishery with industry.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) would have funded the Cefas research vessel RV Endeavour to allow samples and scientific data to be gathered from the Dogger Bank area.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic there have been delays to the RV Endeavour survey schedule which resulted in the vessel no longer being available to undertake the second round of Dogger Bank survey work.

A further report from Cefas on hydrographic/scallop larval distribution and scallop ageing work is expected in early 2021. UKFAs have therefore agreed to extend the closure beyond 11 October 2020 until 28 February 2021. This is in line with the request from the three respondents to extend the closure and with the SICG intention to implement a voluntary closure until 1 March 2021.

The UKFAs would like to thank industry for the work they have done to date. We are committed to continuing to work 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 Consultation Questions and Answers

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

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

Q1. Your views on an extended closure to the Dogger Bank king scallop stock closure in ICES rectangles 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 28F1, 37F2, 28F3, 37F1 and 37F2 until 01 October 2020.

All 3 respondents answered question 1.

All 3 respondents were in favour of an extended closure until 1 October 2020 and suggested to extend the closure until 28 February 2021.

Q2. Your views on how an extended closure would impact you and your business, and other fisheries.

All 3 respondents answered question 2.

None of the 3 respondents expected a negative economic impact.

Comments made suggested that the fishery was not available the previous year.

Other comments suggested that the closure period would give the opportunity to recover from both low prices and the Covid situation.

Q3. Your thoughts on if the features of the Digger Bank SAC are being impacted by fishing activity.

All 3 respondents answered question 3.

Of the 3 respondents only one answered question 3 in any great detail.

One respondent did not respond to question 3 due to unfamiliarity with the SAC. Another one responded that any adverse impacts should be managed in a sustainable and proportionate manner and discussed through a co-management group between industry and UKFAs.

In the longest response received reference was made to the upcoming review of the SAC Impact Assessment in January 2021. The respondent requested that the 2021 review should also look at the impact on the scallop fishery.

Useful Information

Topic of the consultation:	The ask for views on an extension of the closure of the Dogger Bank to the King Scallop fishery until 1 October 2020.
Scope of this call for evidence:	To seek evidence on an extended 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:	MMO: Fisheries Management Team and Statistics & Analysis Team, Defra and UKFAs.
Duration:	The consultation ran from 18 August until 24 August 2020.
Enquiries:	For any enquiries about the call for evidence please contact effort@marinemangement.org.uk

Annex 1: Chart of ICES rectangles currently closed and the area of Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC)



Dogger Bank SAC



- Dogger Bank SAC
- ICES Rectangles: 39F1, 39F2, 39F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 37F1 and 37F2
- ICES Rectangles



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