

REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes 17th May 2022

North East 4b

15:00 – 18:00 MS Teams Conference Call & Linskill Centre North Shields

Attendees:

DEFRA

Andy Carroll
Jon Davies
Thamy Duffield
Phil McBryde
Lydia Osbourne

CEFAS

Ewan Bell

MMO

Ed Baker
Matt Baxter
Sarah Coulthard
Tim Dixon
Eleanor Holford
Pat Gray
Lynsey Marsden
Meg Stafford
Emily Theobald

IFCA

Andrew Boon
Tim Smith

INDUSTRY

Paul Douglas
Brian Douglas
Graham McDonagh
Philip Walsh
Nigel Hull
Andrew Faichey
Brian Dunn
David Wilkins
James Wood
Kevin Woodcock
Michael Roach
Stan Rennie
Kevin Woodcock

MCA

Thomas Maddison

Policy Lab

Eliza Collin
Kate Langham
Pina Sadar

1. Welcome – Pat Gray, MMO

2. Introduction to Fisheries Management Plans – Jon Davies, Defra

The Fisheries Act (2020) enables Defra and the devolved administrations to publish Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) to help achieve our ambition for sustainable fisheries. The Act describes an FMP as "a document ... that sets out policies designed to restore one or more stocks of sea fish to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels".

Defra see FMPs as an opportunity to significantly improve the way we manage our fisheries into the future. Our FMPs will shift how fisheries management is approached with a greater focus on involving the fishing sector in the management of their activities.

The draft Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) included a list of proposed FMPs with a timetable for their publication. Defra are reviewing the responses to the JFS consultation and a final list will be published by November 2022.

- [Consultation draft of the Joint Fisheries Statement.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/consultation-draft-of-the-joint-fisheries-statement.pdf)

Defra and the Devolved Administrations are responsible for fisheries in their waters and will prepare and publish plans to meet their needs. The four UK administrations will collaborate on all FMPs, particularly where stocks are shared, or their fleets operate in the waters managed by another administration. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the plans.

Scottish Government is presently working collaboratively with Defra, DAERA (Northern Ireland) and Welsh Government to prepare 21 joint FMPs that cover our important and most valuable northern stocks of finfish species. Members of the Inshore Regional Fisheries Groups will have an interest in some of these FMPs. Defra are keen to hear views from RFG members.

FMP title	Fishing area
North Sea Cod FMP	North Sea
West Coast of Scotland Cod FMP	West Coast of Scotland
Atlantic Cod FMP	Rockall, North East Atlantic
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Haddock FMP	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland
Atlantic Haddock FMP	Rockall, North East Atlantic
West Coast of Scotland Whiting FMP	West Coast of Scotland
North Sea Whiting FMP	North Sea
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Saithe FMP	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland
Northern Shelf Hake FMP	Northern Shelf
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Monk/Angler FMP	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Megrim FMP	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland
Northern Shelf Ling FMP	Northern Shelf
North Sea Nephrops FMPs	North Sea
West Coast of Scotland Nephrops FMP	West Coast of Scotland
Northern Shelf Mackerel FMP	Northern Shelf
Atlanto Scandian Herring FMP	North Sea and Arctic
North Sea Herring FMP	North Sea
West Coast of Scotland (and Clyde) Herring FMP	West Coast of Scotland
North Sea Greater Silver Smelt FMP	North Sea

FMP title	Fishing area
West of Scotland Greater Silver Smelt FMP	West Coast of Scotland
Northern Shelf Blue Whiting FMP	Northern Shelf

FMPs in English waters

Defra is accelerating its FMP projects in 2022. Our first projects, known as ‘frontrunner FMPs, will explore ways of preparing plans to build a shared understanding of everyone’s roles in learning to work in partnership in fisheries management. Lessons learnt from these frontrunner projects will shape our future FMP work.

The current list of frontrunner projects in 2022 are:

- ☐ Crab & lobster FMP
- ☐ Whelk FMP
- ☐ King Scallop FMP*
- ☐ Bass FMP*
- ☐ Channel Non-Quota demersal species FMP
- ☐ Southern North Sea Eastern Channel Mixed flatfish FMP

The King Scallop FMP and the Bass FMP are being developed jointly with Welsh Government.

These projects are being taken forward collaboratively with industry groups, Seafish, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), AIFCAs (Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities), and IFCAs (Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities).

Defra is encouraging our partner organisations and industry groups to collaborate with us in preparing these plans. We are seeking views from a wide range of stakeholders who have an interest and knowledge of their fisheries.

To get in touch, send us a message to FMPs@Defra.gov.uk

Question: How will FMPs benefit the fleet?

Defra are aware that there are significant issues with some fisheries e.g., bass, shellfish. FMPs provide a chance for fishers to contribute ideas/have a say. Protecting stocks means protecting livelihoods.

Question: Is data collected by area? There are notable differences between areas, and they shouldn’t be considered together.

Defra agree that this is an issue that must be considered. They are currently looking at where we need to improve/where the data gaps lie. Any information the fleet can give is very useful.

3. Bass Fisheries Management Plan – Kate Langham, Pina Sadar, Policy Lab

The presentation contains more detail:



Policy Lab_RFG
presentation4b.pdf

If you would like to take part in the development of the bass FMP please complete the form: tinyurl.com/seabassFMP

Question: Why can't industry get a small by-catch provision for bass when we are not actively targeting it?

Suggestions from industry that a % or small quota for bycatch would be beneficial to stop the throwing back of dead fish. A quota (tonnage amount) is better for different gear types, whereas a % benefits those catching a higher volume.

Comment from industry that there is widespread apathy from fishers. Fishermen are not netting because they know they'll catch bass and which they would then have to throw back dead. Netting takes pressure off shellfish, which is the only other stock in this area.

Question: How can policy lab reach the right people to feed into this project?

Policy Lab are planning port visits to large and smaller ports. They are trying to avoid top-down management.

ACTION: NE Marine Officers are happy to facilitate meetings with industry on the ground/quayside. RFG team to follow up and set up a meeting between Policy Lab and Marine Officers.

4. Seafish Shellfish Management Groups – Rebecca Treacy, Seafish

- The Crab and Lobster Management Group (CMG) and Whelk Management Group (WMG) are currently working to identify and review current measures used to manage fisheries, identify knowledge gaps, and explore opportunities to improve the science and data behind the fishery's management.
- Key work areas include: FMP development; Crustacean welfare issues; Data improvement; Fisheries Industry Science Partnership research projects (FISP)
- The inaugural meeting of the Finfish Industry Advisory Group (FIAG) took place in March 2022 and was well attended by fishers, fishers' associations, regulators, scientists, recreational interests, and the wider supply chain. Future FMP sub-groups could include the bass FMP, southern North Sea flatfish FMP, and Channel non-quota demersal fisheries FMP.
- Seafish will have a phased stakeholder engagement process and will engage with industry in a number of ways, including the Seafish website, shellfish working groups, external sharing sites, workshops, external meetings e.g. RFG meetings and mailing lists.
- In terms of FMP implementation, an Annual Plan will be produced each year by SIAG setting out priorities and actions/activities that will be progressed during the coming year. Annual monitoring report produced at the end of each year to report on progress.



17.05.22 RFG
Shellfish manageme

Question: Why isn't there a nephrops group within the shellfish FMP?

Nephrops are a quota species – the Seafish group deals with non-quota shellfish and non-quota fin fish stocks. You can feed into comments about nephrops to various sessions on ICES advice that take place in the second part of the year.

The groups membership is made up of more southern fishers so it would be get more representation.

Please get in touch if you would like to get involved with the shellfish management groups:

Rebecca.Treacy@seafish.co.uk

5. Fisheries and Seafood Scheme – Thamy Duffield, Defra

- The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) relaunched the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme last month.
- The new iteration of the scheme will deliver investment to safeguard the long-term sustainability, resilience and prosperity of the seafood sector across England.
- Fass is available for organisations in England only. The scheme will have simplified guidance – reflecting feedback from the first year – and will continue to evolve and improve throughout its lifetime.
- We are very keen to work the fishers and our matching rates reflect that, micro entities have a rate of 60%
- If you have a project you would like to progress through the scheme, please do look out for the new guidance published on the MMO's website more details on [Fisheries and Seafood Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Or for any queries please email MMO at FaSS.queries@marinemanagement.org.uk



Grants Team
Presentation (002).p

6. Quota – Katie James, MMO (See Annex 1)



NEQAG
Presentation May 20

Contact: InshoreQuotaManager@marinemanagement.org.uk, 02080269083

7. I-VMS – Adam Kershaw, MMO

Vessels under 12m long will be legally required to report positional data from an approved device to the MMO operations room during fishing trips. This data will enable a better understanding of the scale, location and seasonality of fishing activity.

MMO website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/i-vms-type-approval-programme>

FAQs: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/i-vms-frequently-asked-questions>

Question: Why should we have to pay for airtime? It's being forced on us, we're happy to have the devices on board but you want the data so why do we have to pay? Lots of these boats are very small, it's an added expense on top of fuel and materials. The airtime could increase, what's stopping that?

Airtime can be negotiated with the supplier. By using multiple suppliers, it drives competition to keep costs low. We will wait to see what happens when the tariffs expire.

Question: The airtime charge is very high. You can get airtime for £30 per year, whilst suppliers are charging £15 a month. Do we have to use the supplier's airtime? Sim cards are relatively cheap, and you should be making sure we get a fair deal. Suppliers won't listen to us, our concerns about price should be put forward by you.

Comment: Frustration from industry that there is an issue with having the locking tag on the boat so the device cannot move it. The warranty only covers a set time, the device is expensive and being on a working fishing boat, industry are concerned about what happens after the warranty ends

ACTION: Adam Kershaw will talk to suppliers about the cost of airtime and the warranty and provide industry with an update.

8. Industry slot

a) Coverless trawls by Nigel Hull:

Legislation is from 2001 with no drawings as to how the trawl should be constructed and where the selective headline panel should be placed in the net. However, legislation isn't flexible enough to allow for coverless trawls to be used without an HLP.

Causing issues with catch in the net. No differentiation from trawl and coverless trawls as to whether should have a headline panel. The regulations are outdated.

Net measurements: Comment from industry: There should be a + or – tolerance on net measurements. People shouldn't be punished for being 1mm out.

ACTION: RFG team to set up a meeting with Defra to discuss.

b) Industry raised the cost and benefit of the MMO patrol ships and enforcement

Question: Can you use the money that is being used for these patrol ships to help the guys on the ground? Why are the charters needed?

c) The use of the patrol boats started when we left the EU and needed to police our own waters. They have been highly effective. They also operate outside of the inshore, up to 200nm and carry out boarding and inspections on many vessels.

ACTION: Pat to present on this area of MMO work at the next RFG meeting.

d) Berried lobster and lobster scrubbing:

Industry would like to see more enforcement of lobster scrubbing regulations.

Berried lobster regulations is going to be reviewed.

This view needs to also be raised at the Seafish shellfish FMP working group at national level, but the process also needs to drill down into these questions of if this regulation working? Or could we consider other options e.g., minimum size?

The current regulations are difficult to enforce, there is the burden of proof and the MMO must be able to prove that a lobster has been scrubbed. This is a huge barrier to tackling this problem. The best approach is to board vessels at sea.

e) Licensing of French vessels to fish in English waters:

Industry have had pots trawled away by French boats. Pot boxes aren't being respected. Could there be a license condition introduced so that French vessels must inform us when this happens rather than us having to chase them via Whatsapp groups/find out when we turn up to collect our pots? We are currently relying on gear conflict groups. Without a license condition, boats will not act on it.

ACTION: The MMO will take this back to talk to the Fishing Vessel Licensing/External Waters team.

f) Scallop dredgers:

Concern from industry about scallopers from 4c/7d coming inside the 12nm boundary, due to displacement of the fleet in the channel.

ACTION: Lyndsey Marsden to take this away and send to the MMO [Call for Evidence](#)

9. Marine Protected Area byelaws – Charlie Wiseman, MMO

See the slides for maps and details:



MCT 4.b.
Presentation.pdf

We are considering the following high-level management options to further the conservation objectives of Stage 2 MPAs:

Option 1: No fisheries restrictions. Introduce a monitoring and control plan within the site.

Option 2: No statutory restrictions. Introduce a voluntary agreement.

Option 3: Reduction of pressures associated with bottom towed fishing gear(s) of concern, through zoned management (partial site prohibition of these gears over areas of highly sensitive designated features).

Option 4: Removal of pressures associated with bottom towed fishing gear(s) of concern through a whole site prohibition of these gears.

Questions to consider

In this call for evidence, for each MPA, we ask the following questions:

1. Do you have any additional information about the location, condition, or sensitivity of the designated feature(s) assessed?
2. Do you have information about the level or nature of fishing activity within the site?

Link to have your say via the Call for Evidence: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/call-for-evidence-stage-2/>

10. Development of scientific projects – Ewan Bell, Cefas

Industry are having real issues regarding seals around the cod end. Seal deterrents (flappers) are now illegal.

ACTION: RFG team to speak to the MMO Evidence Team have seal deterrent trials and we can share the results of this with industry.

ACTION: Pat Gray to organise a session highlighting what some guys are doing locally with their gear to avoid this in North Shields.

11. MCA

Comments from industry:

- Regarding the new rules and regulations and MCA certification, different surveyors have different agendas. This needs to be standardised. If it isn't black and white, it shouldn't be enforceable.
- MCA are trying to implement LOLER (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations). This won't work because of the costs. The MCA should be bringing awareness of it, but not try to push enforce it.
- Roll test has a crude method. The only way it can be done accurately is by using an expensive inclinometer.
- Filling in scuppers. Potting boats are now taking on water, and it is a dangerous problem. We were being told to put in scuppers that we are now being told to close.
- The MCA are coming down with a heavy-handed approach locally, having severes issued from people (MCA) who don't have the expertise to be making those decisions around stability and measurements etc.

Questions directed to thomas.maddison@mca.gov.uk

12. Regional Fisheries Groups Feedback – Sarah Coulthard, MMO

What do you think is most important for the RFG to deliver?

- Get out and see people.
- Let fishers know about the ability to phone up about catch limits/quota.
- Some talks pitched too high. Overall, very informative.
- This session seems to be the most productive so far, even with the difficulty of the hybrid meeting.

Suggested agenda item:

- update on shellfish report at next RFG meeting.
- Presentation on the MMO patrol vessel and inspections
- Scrubbing lobsters – presentation from Defra.

Annex 1

<u>Stock</u>	<u>U10 Comments</u>	<u>O10 Comments</u>
<u>NS Cod</u>	No comments	No comments
<u>NS Angerl</u>	No comments	No comments
<u>NS Mackerel</u>	<p>Q: When trading mackerel in, what would you trade out?</p> <p>A: It depends on who has NS mackerel available. It could be West Coast mackerel (large handline allocation) for example. We can use surplus from other areas/stocks. We would not use stocks that are fished.</p> <p>Q: Why are the allocations for the U10s so poor? The little bit of quota we have for fish isn't enough to survive on.</p> <p>A: The Secretary of State Determination sets out fishing opportunities and quota, it is then apportioned to the non-sector and this isn't something we are in control of. We can however trade in/manage catch limits to ensure that the needs of the non-sector are met.</p>	No comments
<u>NS Nephrops</u>	No comments	No comments
<u>NE Skates & Ray</u>	No comments	No comments
<u>NS Plaice</u>	No comments	No comments
<u>NS Sole</u>	No comments	No comments
<u>NS Whiting</u>	<p>Comment: The low U10s allocation for NS whiting isn't enough to live off.</p> <p>A: Let me (Inshore Quota Manager) know if you feel this is the case. We have quota and can trade quota in. Contact me and I can alter the catch limits if that is what you need.</p>	No comments