

REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes 27th July 2021

VIId

Microsoft Teams Conference Call

Attendees:

DEFRA

Rebecca Korda
Phil McBryde
Harry Stirk

MMO

Paul Johnson
Ed Baker

CEFAS

Carl O'Brien
Jim Ellis

IFCA

Pia Bateman (SIFCA)

Industry

Pete Dadds
Shane Ball
Richard Stride
Bill Brock
Charlie Brock
Martin Yorwarth
Neil Witney

1. Chair Welcome & Introductions

2. Fisheries Management Plans

Rebecca Korda (DEFRA) gave a brief overview of the development of Fisheries Management Plans. See attached presentation and contact Rebecca: Rebecca.Korda@defra.gov.uk or Jon: Jon.Davies2@defra.gov.uk if you require more information.

Rebecca asked for industry to tell DEFRA how best to communicate with them.

Question – is the aim to cover all stocks and species? And on what time scale?

Answer – eventually yes. It is our intention to complete all FMPs by end of 2025. For front-runners, we are aiming to set up by autumn with a view to completing next summer – but this is still a flexible timeline.

Question – have national groups e.g. for shellfish been contacted?

Answer – yes some of this work has started and we need to look at how the groups work together and we are looking to the RFGs to help.

Question – how are the IFCA's approaching FMPs? It looks like they want all towed gear out to the area.

Answer – FMPs will consider day to day challenges of management.

Question – what is the driver behind FMPs? Are social and economic factors considered?

Answer – both the sustainability of the stock and social and economic factors are being considered. We need to enable sustainable management that allows fishers to continue fishing.

IFCA response - The IFCA are familiar with building socio-economic factors into fisheries management.

CEFAS – reiterated that FMPs need to balance socioeconomic factors and the science of stock management.



3. Quota management – Presentation (Edward Baker)

Edward presented the Quota management presentation; group discussed stock and catch limits (see appendix 1).

Comments on Additional Quota usage

U10 – need time to gear up and a guarantee the AQ will be available year on year.

O10 – Non-sector and POs have more chance of catching the AQ than the U10s.

A loosening of the capped licences e.g. capped up to 1t for sole and plaice was suggested as a way of using AQ.

Action - Passed to DEFRA for review.

4. Terms of Reference

ToR will be updated with comments received. This is a live document and can be updated as needed / agreed.

Industry request for declarations of interest to be part of the ToR.

This is covered in the principles:

“The name of the individual attendees and (if relevant) the organisation(s) that they represent will be publicly available.”

5. Collaborative science

Effect of windfarms on fish distribution

CEFAS - Electromagnetic Frequency (EMF) unlikely to damage skate but could have a mild attraction effect.

Industry – most fishers believe the windfarm has had an effect on fishing and there are reports from Denmark where wind farms have affected fishing. How do we verify that a windfarm has not affected fish stocks?

Answer - Pre / post construction surveys exist but the survey time scales are short. No gross changes in fish populations seen.

CEFAS - DEFRA have previously tasked CEFAS to model potential displacement of fishing due to windfarms, MPAs etc.

Action this work can be presented and discussed at a future meeting if required.

Squid

CEFAS are looking at historical data to determine species distribution and improve stock assessments.

Industry – this is naturally a boom and bust fishery. Suggestion to manage the fishing pressure rather than the stock.

Industry - fly shooters use 65mm nets compared to trawlers that use 80mm, this could be the reason for the decline in squid.

Undulate Ray

CEFAS – the stock in 7de is a Category 3 assessment. Previous closure in 7d was due to a misinterpretation of advice. ICES area now providing catch and landing advice. We still need to know more about size, maturity, life history and interaction with other species e.g. sole.

Thornback Ray is a stock indicator and is increasing in abundance.

Question – why is there a maximum size for landing undulates?

Answer CEFAS – this came from a s STECF recommendation because the large females are more fecund. Mangers could look into this.

Question - how can fishers help with studies

Answer – need to develop a plan for this.

Industry - They are a dominant species and detrimental to other fishing.

Sole

Desk based survey undertaken last year, awaiting publication.

Would be helpful to have more reliable recruitment survey. The survey is currently only made in French waters which affects stock assessment. It is possible that assessment has overestimated stock abundance, similar to 4c.

Industry paid for a young fish survey in 2019 but this has not been repeated and more than 1 year is needed.

ACTION – Carl to follow up with DEFRA as to how the 2019 survey fed into negotiations and whether it can be repeated.

6. Grants

MMO grants team provided summary of FASS scheme currently available.

There were no questions from industry.

Please contact Michael Johnson: Michael.Johnson@marinemanagement.org.uk for more details if needed.

7. AOB

Call for evidence on potential temporary closure of scallop fishing in 7d:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-for-evidence-ices-area-viid-king-scallop-fishery-closure>

Concern from industry that this could cause displacement into beam trawling.

Request for update on Celtic Sea Measures

Action – MMO to provide once information available.

Request for update on annual negotiations before the end of the year.

Action – MMO to provide

8. Date and Time of next meeting

1500 OK start time. Suggest 28th October and 16th of December

Meeting Closed

Appendix 1

Stock	U10's Comments	O10's comments
Cod VIId	Need some quota as a by-catch in autumn Not seeing any cod at the moment Catch limit ok for now	As for U10
Plaice VIId & e	Concern there is a lack of fish on the grounds CEFAS – there is a lack of abundance but also the assessment of recruitment	Lots of small plaice in Newhaven area.

	was higher than has materialised. This is being looked at by ICES. Landings have increased in Brighton area.	
Skates & Rays VIId	Preference for more quota in winter if possible. Can an increase be made to 1.2t for now?	Newhaven area there is no skate at the moment.
Undulate Ray VIId & e	Suggested increase to 70kg in September OK. They are dominant species and detrimental to other fishing.	As for U10
Sole VIId	The stock has not necessarily declined but there is a decline in uptake due to the abundance of spider crabs clogging nets.	As for U10
Western Mackerel	Some vessels beginning to target mackerel to avoid spiders. Brighton - making good money at the moment.	Newhaven – only small mackerel. Not viable as a handline fishery.
Herring IVc & VIId	Occasional winter fishery in Poole.	No Comments