

REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes Tuesday 14th June 2022

South West 7efg

15:00 – 18:00 MS Teams and Future Inn, Plymouth

Attendees:

Industry

David Smith
Graeme Searle
Steve Parker
Rodney Anderson
Jason Berry
Terri Portmann
Mandy Wolfe
Nick West
Scott Wharton
Jonathan Billot
Alexander Plaster
Andrew Pillar
Karen Pringle
Chloe North
Chris Ranford

MMO

Rachel Irish
Emily Theobald
Ed Baker
Katie James
Courtney Inch
Isobel Johnston
Hubert Gieschen
Matt Baxter
Sarah Bedingham
Julian Roberts
Viv Roberts

Defra

Tom Moore
Jon Davies
Andy Carrol
Lydia Osborne
Phil McBryde
Freya Mitchison

Policy Lab

Alex Mathers
Kate Langham
Eliza Collin

Cefas

Jim Ellis

IFCA

Samantha Davis (Cornwall)
Mat Mander (Devon and Severn)
Simon Pengelly (Southern)
Pia Bateman (Southern)

Seafish

Richard Caslake

MCA

Simon Beer

Jersey Government

David Yettram

1. You said, we did – Rachel Irish, MMO

- **You said:** Speak to the MMO Evidence and Grants teams about funding for adapting the catch app to include information on catch limits and summaries of a vessel's total landings.
We did: The MMO are currently looking into this and the initial conversations have begun. There is the potential to use a line of innovation funding for this to help fishers stay within their limits and therefore fish sustainably.
- **You said:** Speak to the MMO Evidence team and Grants teams about funding an investigation into the effects of netting on bycatch species and sole populations in Lyme Bay.
We did: This is underway. A number of meetings about this topic have already happened and it will be discussed as part of today's agenda.

- **You said:** Speak to the MMO Evidence and Grants team about funding for an investigation into Pollack population concerns, particularly decreasing fish size and diminishing population size.
We did: The MMO has already liaised with Cefas on this and have had initial conversations with Devon and Severn IFCA. Analysis has now begun looking at Pollack landings and the MMO will feed back to the group when there are substantial findings and somewhere to move forward with the project.

2. Fisheries Management Plans Update - 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 \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

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

FMP title	Fishing area
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
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

3. Bass Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) - Alex Mathers, Policy Lab



Policy Lab_RFG
presentation_new.pdf

If you have any questions or would like to send policy lab further information please email:
bass@policylab.gov.uk

- Question from Samantha Davis (Cornwall IFCA): *'It sounds like you want people to get in touch with you so that you can organise interviews, are you also prepared to meet with people during port visits as they come and find you?'*. Alex Mathers from Policy Lab responded by saying that they will be flexible in their approach and will also do their best to ensure that fishers know where they are going to be and when for the upcoming port visits.
- Question from Samantha Davis (Cornwall IFCA): *'What mechanisms will you be using to make sure people know when you are going to be in the ports, and when are the dates going to be finalised so that others can help you with getting that message out?'*. Alex Mathers from Policy Lab replied by saying that they have developed a good contact list from people completing the forms, so to an extent will be relying on that to help get the word out. They will also have help from Defra colleagues who are well connected with relevant regions and groups. Policy Lab are hoping to have locations, dates and times finalised by the end of June ahead of visits commencing in July.
- Question from Simon Pengally (Southern IFCA): *'There's a heavy recreational sea angling participation in the bass fishery, are you going to engage with them? If so, will that be via the route you have just explained? We have sector groups set up within the IFCA for recreational fishers within our district. These would provide a great platform for you to engage with these users.'* Alex Mathers from Policy Lab replied by saying that they will absolutely be engaging with recreational fishers. Policy Lab are aware of some recreational events happening over summer and are in the process of working out which of those will be the best to attend to maximise engagement with recreational fishers.
- Question from Mat Mander (Devon and Severn IFCA): *'5 of the 6 front-runner FMPs are linked with the South West. If fishers are unable to attend face-to-face events for any or all these FMPs, is there a way for them to still feed back to the relevant people? Also, the Bass FMP is national, but has any thought gone into what management will look like at a regional level?'* Alex Mathers from Policy Lab responded by saying that as this stage nothing has been decided about how regional variation could look and that is because they want this to form part of the discussion for the co-design process. Fishers (both commercial and recreational) will have many opportunities and different way to engage with Policy Lab. The upcoming July port visits will not be the only ones and Policy Lab hope to organise drop-in surgeries around the UK later in the year. Policy Lab are also looking into offering virtual attendance for some of the upcoming workshops.

4. Channel Non-Quota Demersal Species FMP – Isobel Johnston, MMO



Fisheries Management Plan Team: fmp@marinemanagement.org.uk

- Question from industry: *'Is the list of species on the slides the total list of species?'*
MMO response: the initial list covers species identified by the Joint Fisheries Statement. The MMO's FMP team have also been doing some work looking at landings data for commercial fisheries in English waters and are open to suggestions from fishers. However, it is important to ensure that the initial scope is manageable.
- Question from industry: *'Is the goal to transfer non-quota species into quota species?'*
MMO response: the goal is to better understand these stocks to ensure sustainable harvesting. Management could take a variety of forms, including the introduction of a maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for some stocks, or catch limits.
Defra response: there are lots of tools to achieve sustainable management and there are no pre-determined outcomes for how to manage non-quota species. All management decisions will be guided by evidence and working with industry just as much as by internal policy thinking.
- Question from industry: *'Turbot, brill and lemon sole should be included in the list as these have direct, targeted fisheries. Apart from the species, what is the other definition of the fishery? For example, whilst squid and cuttlefish do have targeted fisheries, there are times of the year where fishers may be catching a little bit of these species mixed with other species. So, will you be considering the entire beam trawl fishery? If so, there are other FMPs for the quota species, so how is the 'fishery' in this instance being defined, and how does this FMP merge with the others?'*
MMO response: defining the fishery is what the FMP team are currently working on and will be engaging with industry about as part of the initial scope. In terms of interacting with other FMPs, the MMO's FMP team will be considering all FMPs as part of the process.
- Question from industry: *'So potentially each fisherman could be covered by multiple FMPs?'*
MMO response: this could potentially be the case, depending on the fisheries that they are involved with.
- Question from Mat Mander (Devon and Severn IFCA): *'Is the list of species a final list? Will there be room to review? We shouldn't be including too many species as a frontrunner as it is important to get it right with the key stocks rather than including lots of species (some of which are bycatch of directed fisheries).'*
MMO response: the FMP team will be working with industry to prioritise effectively and address the biggest concerns first, ensuring that it is achievable. The FMP will run in iterations, meaning that key stocks can be scoped out in the first instance without disregarding others. Other stocks can be looked at later down the line.
- Comment from industry: *'We have information about stocks on this list as part of the South West Ecological Risk Assessment which you might find useful and that we would be happy to share.'* MMO response: thank you, we would be keen to see it.
- Comment from Industry: *'It would appear that the species included in the list are predominantly caught by fly-shooters, especially considering volume of landings.'*
Defra response: this is entirely by coincidence and not by design. These are species that geographically are found in the channel.

- Question from industry: *'Approximately 10 species are included, some are very data deficient. Where is the budget coming from for the stock assessments and how big is the budget?'*
Defra response: as always there is a limited budget for the stock assessment work. It is important to prioritise stocks for data collection and decide how to take forward management in the absence of data (as part of the precautionary approach).
- Question from industry: *'Is it possible that we could end up with fisheries management on these species based on the precautionary approach?'*
Defra response: yes as this is a legal requirement and something that is already done.
- Question from industry: *'Why can't you just use the historical data that you already have? So much data has been collected, why isn't it being used?'*
MMO response: historical data is absolutely being used. There are however data gaps and a need for better stock analysis (not just landings data) so the FMP team are currently working to identify and prioritise these.

5. Quota – Katie James, MMO



SW Quota
Presentation June 2022

See Appendix 1 for comments.

Please contact Katie at: InshoreQuotaManager@marinemanagement.org.uk with any questions or quota enquires.

6. Lyme Bay Sole Management – Ed Baker, MMO



Lyme Bay sole
management.pdf

- Comment from Mat Mander (Devon and Severn IFCA): *'The Catch app and i-VMS will provide invaluable, reliable data. However, these technologies won't capture the bycatch issue. I would be very supportive of the use of observers to help rectify this. Managing sole using just quota has had certain unintended negative consequences. This issue is a good example of how RFGs, FMPs, technology and the engagement and participation of all concerned can work to solve a key issue.'*

ACTION: Ed Baker (MMO) to arrange a meeting to discuss this issue further.

7. Marine Protected Area byelaws – Viv Roberts, MMO



MMO Marine
Protected Area Byelaw

- Comment from Mat Mander (Devon and Severn IFCA): *'I would encourage fishers to engage with the latest MPA call for evidence. Devon and Severn have just gone through this process and have made the decision not to close the Tintagel MCZ for various reasons. Firstly, although we had i-VMS data for all of the towed-gear vessels, no vessels during the reference period of 3 years went into that area. There were also concerns raised by fishers during the consultation as to the level of accuracy of the habitat data provided. When reviewing the data, Devon and Severn IFCA felt that the quality of the habitat data was not sufficient to make a decision at that stage. This consultation process does work in informing the decision-making process and fishers should be engaging with it if they have the time to do so.'*
- Comment from Samantha Davis (Cornwall IFCA): *'We have been doing a similar process for our part of the site and have found that activity levels for towed-gear are very low. I endorse what Mat says about the data that supports the habitat types, it is very poor. Hopefully there will be more data for this site in the future, but until then our approach is likely to be similar to Devon and Severn IFCA.'*

The MMO 'call for evidence – MMO assessment of fishing impacts in marine protected areas – Stage 2' is now open and closes on the 10th July. To respond please go to Citizen Space:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/call-for-evidence-stage-2/>

For any questions or queries please email the MMO's Marine Conservation Team:
conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk

8. MCA Q&A – Simon Beer, MCA

Open floor Q&A for both in-person and virtual attendees with Simon Beer from the MCA.

If you have any questions or feedback regarding MCA regulations, please contact:
simon.beer@mcga.gov.uk.

9. AOB, i-VMS Q&A and RFG feedback – Rachel Irish, MMO

For any questions relating to i-VMS please email: ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk or call the i-VMS helpline on: 01900508618.

To contact the RFG Team with feedback about the groups please email:
regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk

Appendix 1

Stock	U10's Comments	O10's comments
Angler 7	No comment.	No comment.
Cod 7b-k excluding d	No comment.	No comment.
Haddock 7b-k excluding d	No comment.	No comment.
Western hake	No comment.	No comment.
Herring 7e-f	No comment.	No comment.
Western mackerel	Comment from industry: <i>'Can you make sure you leave mackerel in the pot for nets later in the year?'</i> Katie James from the MMO replied to say absolutely.	No comment.
Handline mackerel	No comment.	No comment.
Plaice 7de	No comment.	No comment.
Plaice 7fg	No comment.	No comment.
Pollack 7	No comment.	No comment.
Skates & rays 6/7 excluding d	No comment.	No comment.
Sole 7e	No comment.	No comment.
Sole 7fg	No comment.	No comment.
Whiting 7b-k	No comment.	No comment.
Undulate ray 7de	Comment from industry: <i>'We should not have an undulate ray quota as we are seeing undulate ray everywhere.'</i>	No comment.
Small-eyed ray 7fg	Comment from industry: <i>'Similar to undulate ray. The results of the most recent Cefas survey were incorrect and this has greatly affected us.'</i>	No comment.