

REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes 16th August 2022

North East 4b

15:00 – 17:00 MS Teams Conference Call, Grimsby, North Shields and
Seahouses

Attendees:

INDUSTRY

Online

Andrew Collin
Gary Hodgson
James Cook
Stan Rennie
Steven Handyside
Tom Yale
Michael Roach
Sharon
Michael Nugent
Jo Ackers
Chloe Rogers
David Wilkins
Andrew Shaw
Graham Flanigan
Brian
David Wilkins
Richard Arnot

Grimsby:

Iain Gray
Rob Evan

North Shields:

Nigel Hull
Michael Bold

Seahouses:

Paul Douglas
Jimmy
Jonathan Dawson
David Shiel
Douglas Flannigan
David Fordy
Shaun Brigham
Richard Ward
Jordan Richardson
George Kyle
& 13 others

DEFRA

Jen Ashworth
Phil James
Ross Deadman

CEFAS

Ewan Bell
Rachel Hartnell

MMO

Emily Theobald
Eleanor Holford
Courtney Inch
Katie James
Tim Dixon
Patrick Gray
Lyndsey Marsden
Dan Thompson

IFCA

Tim Smith
Alex Aikens
Mark Southerton

1. Welcome – Pat Gray, MMO

Actions from previous meetings:

- Thanks to those here that raised the issue of trawler being exempt from the FaSS H&S funding. We've taken this away and can now confirm that FaSS have now enhanced and equalised the funding rates available to fund health and safety projects for the small-scale coastal fleet. This means that now *any* vessel with a length of 12 metres or less will be eligible for a funding rate of up to 80% for health and safety projects – regardless of the type of gear used. The MMO are in the process of updating guidance and their IT systems to reflect this change.

- Coverless trawls, this has been raised and is still being worked on.
- **Skills and Training**
 - Round One of the UK Seafood Fund Skills and Training scheme has opened for applications. You will be able to apply for a grant until the 12th October 2022. Further details can be found on the scheme's [webpage](#). Round One is for improving or creating training courses or specialised training equipment. Round Two which we expect to open in the Autumn will be for constructing or modernising training centres. Email was sent around on Friday with contact details but if anyone wants any more details, please do get in touch.
- **DfT Mental Health funding**
 - Department for Transport have recently announced a support package for seafarers, including £2.4 million funding to support seafarers' mental wellbeing - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The Merchant Navy Welfare Board, who are administering the £2.4m fund, welcomes grants that support fishers and have previously awarded funding in this area. The grant guidelines state that the MNWB 'supports the provision of quality welfare services for serving or retired seafarers'. This is also their mission statement and the wording seafarers is inclusive of fishers. More details can be found on the website, and the link will be provided in the meeting notes.

2. Licensing review and quota – Katie James, MMO

- **Latent capacity**
 - Temporary lift of the under-10m licence cap from 1 August 2022. The cap on some under-10m vessels which restricts their uptake to no more than 350kg per year of quota stocks will be temporarily lifted for the remainder of 2022. This is being done to facilitate uptake of available quota and as an exercise to make an initial test for any unexpected consequences of lifting the cap more permanently.
- **Additional quota**
 - The MMO were able to temporarily offer vessels with Cat B and Cat C licences additional quota: Offer of additional quota to vessels with Category B and C licences. Over 10m vessels with Category B or C licences have a limited number of quota stocks for which they can fish. Under this scheme, those vessels were able to apply for one-time offer of access to more opportunities for the remainder of 2022. This has now closed but hopefully those who wanted to took advantage of this uplift.

If anyone has any questions surrounding quota in the Northeast, please contact katie.james@marinemanagement.org.uk.

3. HMPAs – Jen Ashworth, Phil James, Defra

Recognised this is a very sensitive subject.

HPMA presentation below:



- HPMA's are the highest level of protection in our seas, in order to promote recovery, which means prohibiting extractive, destructive and depositional uses. They take a whole site approach and protect everything on the seabed, water column and the surface.
- It has been noted of concerns around the state of the marine environment around the UK.
- The consultation was launched of 5 candidate sites in July 2022. The evidence gathered through the consultation will influence the outcomes on which sites will be designated, their final boundaries and assessment of impacts.
- *Question from industry:* there is an assumption that fishers can relocate, some people have been fishing these grounds for 30 years, how can they be expected to move? Defra responded by saying that some vessels can, and others cannot relocate, and they are doing displacement analysis to determine displacement.
- *Response:* Displacement analysis took place after the consultation, which looked at where people have fished before, and was there enough capacity within that area for them to move to an alternative area. This was done on a vessel-by-vessel bases, this gave an idea of how much fishing could be displaced, and what could be recovered from that displacement. Additional costs were also incorporated into this model, to understand displacement and whether this is financially feasible.
- *Question from industry:* IVMS could answer all the questions that Defra are seeking, this could help the inshore fleet demonstrate where they fish. There is also a lack of incorporation of other spatial squeezes such as wind and gas. Defra responded by saying they are conscious of spatial squeezes that are on-going, IVMS data is also being used (from what's available) to predict behaviour of fisheries.
- *Question from industry:* diesel is extremely expensive, with being pushed further offshore/displaced, how are we going to be able to afford to fish?
- Industry stated that there was no IVMS data when the consultation happened at Lindisfarne. Defra responded by saying they created hypothetical HPMA's to understand usage, using modelled behaviour, they then compared this data to the actual IVMS data.
- *Question from Industry:* what about AIS data and has it been considered? Defra responded by saying they have built in sightings data which includes AIS data.
- *Question from industry:* about displacement and data used for the sites. Both questions pertained to the Lindisfarne sites. The VMS data will be skewed, due to mainly over 12m vessels being excluded from fishing in this area, therefore this needs to be taking into consideration. The second is that the Lindisfarne area is completely surrounded by other MPAs and a lot of the restrictions in these MPAs is decided through existing effort, so if this is displaced, into surrounding MPAs, then you are going to cascade the problems further.
- *Question from industry:* I can't find anywhere what data these studies have used to identify these sites. Defra posted the consultation annex containing data sources in the meeting chat.

- *Question from industry:* Where do Natural England get their figures from? The figures are incorrect, we look after this fishery and know exactly how this needs to be managed.
- *Question from industry:* With the net gain meetings, it was proven that potting did limited damage, and we have been managing sustainably. Why now are we looking at restrictions on potting when it's already been looked into?
- *Question from industry:* why would you want to stop potting around the islands? It clearly benefits the local community.
- *Statement from industry:* They're treating Lindisfarne as a standalone area but, it's an area where all mobile gear, and scallop dredging has been banned, with the industry's agreement. We have tried to be pragmatic with science, management bodies and regulators to reach a consensus to come up with a zone that protects but allows socio-economic activity, in an area with little other options.
- *Question from industry to the Lindisfarne fishers:* do you catch spiny lobster? Lindisfarne fishers responded by saying rarely. The question from industry continued by asking how Natural England have highlighted Spiny Lobster as a priority species when fishers never catch them.

4. Defra 2023 Quota consultation – Ross Deadman, Defra

Presentation is attached below:



Defra Quota
Consultation slides.ppt

- There is a new approach for delivering additional quota in 2021 and 2022, and a further consultation of how Defra do this process.
- Question from industry – It's really important for the U10's to diversify, and be able to fish what's there, when it's there. Defra responded by saying they use track records from 2012-2019, this has been asked whether it should be changed to better represent what the industry has been catching for the past two years.

5. Teesside Crustacean stocks – Louise Farmer, Defra

- A brief synopsis of where the investigation is: There has been a multi-agency response involving Defra, the Environment Agency, CEFAS, the MMO, Food Standards Agency and the IFCA's.
- Investigation report was produced in May, which looked at potential causes. No single consistent positive factors were identified. EA do not consider chemical pollution as a likely cause. Over 1000 potential contaminants were screened in dead crustaceans, with no anomalies being identified. Dredging has also been ruled out as a likely cause.
- There is on-going stock monitoring from NEIFCA and the MMO.
- Question from industry – We have noticed that within a couple hours of dredging at the river mouth, tonnes of lobsters and crabs began washing up. We are noticing a degrading condition of the seaweed. Another 1.9 million tonnes might be licenses to

be dredged. The surveys that were carried out weren't even in areas where the die offs have occurred. The MMO responded by saying that we can't comment on the licensing, as we don't have someone from licensing on the call. But the MMO coastal teams oversee the licensed activities and enforce the marine license. The team will be ensuring that all the licensing conditions will be met, onboard dredgers for example. Our presence has been upped in the Tees, to ensure the license is being adhered to.

- NEIFCA commented on the industry working group, individuals need to come to represent and read the points put forward. Everyone is trying to work together to improve the fishery.
- A question from industry – we used to catch boxes and boxes of Velvets a day, and since that dredge, we haven't had one. Where have they all gone?

ACTION: MMO to set up a meeting between Cefas and Teesside industry to explain the science in more detail.

6. RFG survey

If you could please take a moment to fill out the survey below, we would really appreciate it.

https://defragroup.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1QsS4Zt51B0GDs

7. AOB

- Question from industry – Questioning some of the figures that have been listed, particularly aimed at the HPMA team. The figures for Lindisfarne are incorrect, and flawed, and misleading. We need to start on a good baseline before we begin to make bigger decisions.

Meeting closed