

REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes 9th August 2022

North West 7a

15:00 – 17:00 MS Teams Conference Call

Attendees:

INDUSTRY

Ron Graham
Vicky Henderson
Simon Ward

MCA

Zia Ul Haq

DEFA

Jack Emmerson

IFCA

Stephen Aikens
Cristina Mihailovici
Phil Capper

DEFRA

Andy Carroll
Ross Deadman
Thamy Duffield
Philip James
Jen Ashworth
Lydia Osbourne

MMO

Courtney Inch
Katie James
Steve Johnston
Elizabeth Wyatt
Eleanor Holford

1. Welcome – Andy Carroll, Defra

Actions from previous meeting:

FaSS funding: 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.

FMP meeting: We would like to remind everyone that Policy Lab will be in Barrow for a drop-in session to meet fishers and other stakeholders and discuss your experiences of bass fishing and regulation. Wednesday, 10 August 2022 13.30 - 5.30pm (with a break from 3-3.30) The Ferry Hotel (restaurant), 1 Promenade, Walney, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 3PE.

Other updates:

- **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. uksfskillsandtraining@defra.gov.uk
- **Department for Trade 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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/24-million-funding-to-support-seafarers-mental-wellbeing>

Other updates:

Fuel prices: Number of people have asked about fuel. Like many sectors, the fishing industry is facing challenges as a result of global fuel prices. Though unlike many other sectors eligible vessels can utilise the Marine Voyages Relief which provides 100% relief on their fuel duty costs. Defra is continuing to engage with industry to discuss ongoing challenges and potential long-term mitigations, and we are working closely with Seafish, to refine their modelling to understand the potential impact on the fleet of fuel price increases. On top of the fuel duty relief the UK fishing sector receives, the UK Government has offered substantial funding to the fishing sector and continues to do so with funds like the £100 million UK Seafood Fund on top of schemes such as the FaSS (in England). FaSS provides extensive grant funding to fishing businesses, including through projects to enhance energy efficiency on vessels. For example, the scheme can fund investments to improve the hydrodynamics of the hulls of vessels or to reduce electricity or thermal energy consumption. Generous levels of funding have been made available to small fishing businesses – with up to 80% funding available to members of the small-scale coastal fleet and up to 60% for other micro-entities.

Post-RFG Survey: We will be sending round a survey which we would appreciate you taking the time to fill in, it will help us improve these meetings and tailor them to the needs of the group. Complete the survey here https://defragroup.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bfjdL0KvtWCSTtk

Request from industry to investigate the Plaice exemption, the same as is in place the North Sea.

ACTION: RFG team and Defra to investigate and feedback to the group.

2. NW Initiative Update – Courtney Inch, MMO

Following feedback from this RFG, a consultant was hired on behalf of NFFO, Seafish and MMO to look at the region as a whole and conduct an 'industry feasibility' study. This came from concerns raised by industry in light of the significant decline in registered and licenced vessels and processors

in the NW and tries to pull in people from across the supply chain. Results have been distributed in draft, once the report is finalised it will be circulated to the RFG distribution list.



Northwest Initiative
slides.pdf

Recommendations:

1. Local fisheries development officer: the funding is in place for this. The working group are planning the details and responsibilities of the role.
2. Cross supply chain working group to promote local interests
3. A study on road transport network and logistics
4. Environmental Risk Assessment / MSC accreditation
5. Develop branding toolkit for B2C / 'Great Northwest Seafood'
6. Fishing trials to promote diversification of species
7. 12-month social media / visual content
8. Business directory website (seafood search tool) and app
9. 2-day 'Want to sell your own catch' workshop
10. Remote auction at Fleetwood, Grimsby, Plymouth or Brixham clock auction
11. Access to FaSS funding
12. Bait freezing facilities

If you would like to sit on the working group or have questions, please contact:
regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk

3. 2023 Quota Consultation – Ross Deadman, Defra



Defra Quota
Consultation slides.

This part of the consultation is an opportunity for you to help decide how we apportion **additional quota** between the four UK fisheries administrations beyond 2023. We want to ensure that quota is shared fairly and benefits all parts of the UK. Recognise quota is a zero sum game and may require compromise. **We are not changing how we apportion our existing share of quota. This will continue to be based primarily on FQA units. Please see the slides for details.**

Do you have any views you would like to share with us now, or any questions?

- To submit your response, please see.
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- **Citizen Space:** [Consultation on Managing Quota in 2023 and Beyond - Defra - Citizen Space](#)
- **By post:** Consultation Coordinator, Defra, 2nd Floor, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX
- **By email:** quota@defra.gov.uk
- Please let us have your comments by 19 September 2022.
- **By post:** Consultation Coordinator, Defra, 2nd Floor, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX
- **By email:** quota@defra.gov.uk
- Please let us have your comments by 19 September 2022.

Question about the reference period for FQA's: this affects Fleetwood vessels who did not have a historical record of catching 7a stocks. Various EU countries have a large quota of Irish Sea stocks but no longer fish this area, is this going to be looked at.

Response from Defra: this consultation is only looking the current UK additional quota, but the TAC is due to be renegotiated with the EU in 2026 and this could be looked at then.

There is an historical issue linked to Fleetwood boats with FQAs attached to them being bought by flagged vessels and POs. This means uptake is low for various stocks in the Irish Sea, but these stocks are important to the inshore fleet and the quota could be allocated more effectively.

ACTION: take this to the Defra negotiations team.

4. Highly Protected Marine Areas, Allonby Bay – Jen Ashworth, Philip James, Defra



HPMA Slide Pack
for RFGs NW.pdf

See slides for more details. Defra launched a consultation on 5 candidate sites on 6 July 2022. The Consultation closes **28th September:** [Consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas \(HPMAs\) - Defra - Citizen Space](#) and questions please contact hpm@defra.gov.uk

- Defra want to gather additional social and economic evidence from stakeholders: there are gaps in the macro data used and Defra would like industries help to understand the level of fishing and recreational angling.
- The intention is that no fishing activity will be permitted in the site, including bait digging, dredging and other damaging activity.
- The views and evidence we gather will influence
 - Which sites are designated as HPMAs
 - Whether any boundaries for candidate sites should be changed
 - The assessment of the benefits versus the impacts

- We will hold a series of online, site-based and national workshops, starting in late August, to complement the consultation and gather further evidence. Within 12 weeks of the consultation closing, we intend to publish a summary of responses. Pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas will be designated within 1 year of the consultation, in line with s119(10) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Candidate site overlaps with both Allonby Bay Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Solway Firth Special Protection Area (SPA), and part of Solway Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Defra will be running a workshop in the Maryport at the end of September – details to be finalised and will be circulated.

5. Quota and Licencing Review – Katie James, MMO Lydia Osbourne, Defra

- **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.

Any queries relating to Capped licence lift, Cat B/C additional Quota, catch limits, please contact: Katie James, Inshore Quota Manager, 07747638655, inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk



NW 7a Quota
Presentation August

- The temporary lifting of the cap is to trial any unintended consequences. Defra are undertaking a general licencing review next year. If anyone has any suggestions or comments for aspects of the licencing system you would like Defra to consider, please get in touch with Lydia.Osborne@defra.gov.uk

Comment from DEFA: the temporary uncapping is welcome, but diversification is expensive, and many fishers will not diversify if the cap only lifted temporarily. The Isle of Mann fleet does not have access to the same grants as the English fleet.

Questions about how the fleet were made aware of the changes and how they track the quota they catch. The U10s received a licence variation in the usual way. They will be given the catch limits monthly, these are also available on the website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/current-catch-limits-10-metres-and-under-pool> or speak to Katie.

6. MCA Q&A – Zia Ul Haq, MCA

Question: what is the time limit on the roll test for U15 m vessel?

This needs to be done every 5 years. Criteria is pass/fail based on time if roll period is less then the beam it will pass.

7. AOB

- Welcome Steve Johnson the new PMO for the NW in the MMO, who takes over this role in September. Steve is based in the Preston Office.
- **ACTION:** RFG team to ask Cefas about how species are affected by temperature change in linked to climate change and water quality and how this affects quota and stocks. Are there risk management plans when planning quota?
- **ACTION:** RFG team to speak to Cefas and ask - Are Cefas planning stock assessment in the Irish sea and does this feed into how quota is set.

Meeting Closed