

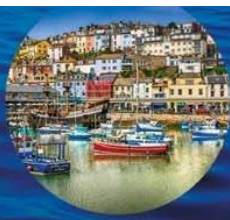


Marine
Management
Organisation

Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species Fisheries Management Plan:

Feedback from initial recreational fishing industry engagement

September 2022



...ambitious for our seas and coasts

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Background

Now the UK has left the European Union, we have the opportunity to manage our fisheries in a way that best meets the needs of stocks, the marine environment, and the people whose livelihoods depend on them. Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are one of the key ways in which we can achieve our ambition for sustainable fisheries in England.

A FMP, and the process that creates it, is a means to enable the long-term sustainability of fish stocks and protection of our marine environment. Development of a FMP for demersal non-quota species (NQS) in the English Channel was highlighted by the fishing industry and other key marine stakeholders as a necessary move because of concern about potential over-exploitation of some stocks and a lack of data about non-quota stocks in general.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is leading on stakeholder engagement and drafting of the Channel demersal NQS FMP. The Channel demersal NQS FMP will include ICES divisions 7d and 7e and will cover demersal species such as red, tub and grey gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, John dory, red mullet and lesser spotted dogfish which are listed within the Government's draft [Joint Fisheries Statement](#). Lemon sole, bib, turbot, brill and smoothhound are also being considered for inclusion in the Channel demersal NQS FMP based on findings from scoping research and this initial engagement. The FMP will be developed in stages and therefore some species will be prioritised to begin with, and others will be included within later versions of the plan.

In July 2022, as a first step in developing the Channel demersal NQS FMP, MMO attended an initial online event with stakeholders from the recreational fishing sector hosted by the Angling Trust. We were able to speak with recreational anglers from the south coast and gathered a wide range of views and feedback. The information gathered will give MMO a steer for what needs to be considered when developing the Channel demersal NQS FMP. MMO would like to reiterate that we are planning to hold engagement sessions with other stakeholders from within the recreational fishing sector such as the Professional Boatmen's Association later in the year.

The summary in this document covers the views of recreational anglers who attended the Angling Trust Forum. The views expressed in this document are not MMO's opinion. These are anglers' opinions which we would like to share for transparency and to encourage further discussion.

Summary of recreational anglers' engagement

Initial engagement with the recreational angling community took place via an online Angling Trust Forum meeting on 28 July 2022. In total, there were 39 people registered to attend the event. During the forum, MMO presented to recreational anglers on the background of FMPs in general, the Channel demersal NQS FMP scope and asked attendees a series of questions. Questions posed to attendees covered which species MMO should prioritise in the first iteration of the FMP, potential management measures and how to engage with recreational anglers going forward.

In addition to the online forum, an online survey was also distributed to gather the views of those who could not make the online forum. We had 7 responses to the online survey that have also been included within the preparation of this document.

We summarised stakeholder's views into the following themes below:

Species of interest

- Smoothhound and turbot were the species that recreational anglers wanted to see prioritised. Smoothhound is one of the main summer species for anglers
- Flounders, dabs and grey mullet were also mentioned as important species to recreational anglers.
- Mullet are very slow growing, spawning once every two years. Mullet are heavily impacted upon by commercial fishermen targeting bass.
- Several other species were mentioned, however are not within the scope of the Channel demersal NQS FMP. These include tope, spurdog, black bream and gilthead bream.

Management Measures

- Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (MCRS or Minimum Landing Sizes) need implementing within the Channel demersal NQS FMP as current sizes are considered too small to allow for breeding
- Supertrawlers are a big issue as they can catch elements from a whole ecosystem
- Introducing management measures for Spurdog were highlighted as being beneficial due to commercial pressure on the species
- Recreational anglers said that emphasis needs to not wholly be on economic value and should also focus on the social and cultural value of species.
- MMO should analyse data and records of species used for pot bait such as dogfish
- It was suggested that management measures need to also be considered for the prey of species within the scope of the Channel demersal NQS FMP

Issues

- Climate change was mentioned as one issue affecting stocks in the Channel. Recreational anglers suggested it could be beneficial to look at new species distribution due to climate change and these should be considered within the FMP in future iterations

- Recreational anglers highlighted the effects of wind farms on fish species and suggested they needed to be considered within the FMP

Engagement

- Transparency is key to the recreational anglers
- MMO need to work closely with IFCA's when carrying out engagement and development of the FMP
- Recreational anglers would like to be updated monthly or bi-monthly on the progress of the Channel demersal NQS FMP and be given the opportunity to respond to consultations
- Phrasing is important to recreational anglers and MMO should not be using the term "industry" when referring to all fisheries stakeholders.
- MMO should utilise Angling Trust Forums and emails as some do not use social media
- Recreational anglers would like to see shorter discussions that address one question or aspect of the Channel demersal NQS FMP.
- MMO should utilise local clubs to reach a wider range of recreational stakeholders

Next steps

It is clear from this initial engagement with the recreational anglers that they are keen to be involved regularly with the development of the Channel demersal NQS FMP. There are also some key differences in the stocks that are important to recreational anglers and commercial fishermen and how they are caught. We will consider this as we develop the Channel demersal NQS FMP.

Now we have gathered initial feedback from both the commercial and recreational fishing sectors, we will aim to continue to engage with all relevant stakeholders. There will be further opportunities for the recreational fishing industry to provide additional feedback on the development of the Channel demersal NQS FMP during future engagement in the coming autumn.

Furthermore, we have taken on board the feedback that many stakeholders wish to be kept up to date on the progress of the Channel NQS FMP throughout every stage. We will, therefore, continue to feedback to stakeholders through various channels such as social media and meetings.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further feedback.

Useful Information

- Contact details
- Fisheries Management Plan Team: FMP@marinemanagement.org.uk
- [Non-Quota Species FMP MMO Blog](#)
- [Fisheries Management Plans .gov.uk page](#)
- [Angling Trust Forum Recording](#)