REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes 13th of September 2022

**Southwest 7efg**

16:00 – 18:00 MS Teams Conference Call

Attendees:

**INDUSTRY**

Toby Wright

John Balls

Nick West

Lee Carter

Steve Parker

Steven Rogers

Rebecca Green

Rob Adams

David Smith

Beshlie Pool

Scott Wharton

**MMO:**

Courtney Inch

Emily Theobald

Katie James

Rachel Irish

Gordon Chittenden

Carley Elson

Nicholas French

**Seafish:**

Lewis Tattersall

**Defra:**

Andy Carroll

Helen Hunter

Matthew Johnson

Edward Kirby

Lydia Osborne

Freya Mitchison

Katie McNally

**PO’s:**

Chris Ranford (CFPO)

**Cefas:**

Paul Dolder

**IFCA:**

Sam Davies (Cornwall)

Simon Pengelly (Southern)

1. **Introduction and actions and updates – Rachel Irish, MMO and Andy Carroll, Defra**

* Emily and Eleanor have been to Lyme Bay to talk about the uplift in Sole quota, Ed Baker is continuing to investigate alongside the social and economic impacts, as well as the biological and ecological impacts. We will feed back on this project in due course.
* There is skills and training funding for round 1 of the UK skills and training scheme has opened for applications, which is available to apply for until the 12th of October.
* It was raised in previous meetings that U12m trawlers were exempt from the FaSS health and safety funding, this has now been removed, so the funding is equalized for the small-scale coastal fleet. So U12m vessels are now eligible for a funding rate of up to 80% for health and safety projects, regardless of gear types used.
* The Department of Transport have released a support package for Seafarers, to support mental wellbeing.
* Many sectors are struggling with fuel including fishers. The Marine Voyage relief, which provides 100% relief on fuel duty costs, can be utilised by fishers. Defra is continuing to engage with industry to discuss on-going challenges and potential long-term mitigations. Defra are working with Seafish to refine modelling, to understand the potential impact of fuel on the fishing fleet.
* Andy Carrol from Defra gave an update on ministers - There has been momentous changes in the past week, with a new Prime Minister, resulting in a new cabinet and the passing of Her Majesty the Queen. We now have a new Secretary of State; Ranil Jayawardena MP, who has come from the Department of International Trade. We now have two new junior ministers, Mark Spencer, and Trudi Harrison. We do not yet know who will be taking over fisheries.

1. **Quota – Katie James, MMO**

* **Latent capacity**
* Temporary lift of the under-10m licence cap from the 1st of 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 Southeast, please contact [katie.james@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:katie.james@marinemanagement.org.uk).

1. **Quota Consultation – Ed Kirby, Defra**



* There is a new approach for delivering additional quota in 2021 and 2022, and a further consultation of how Defra do this process.
* Please see the above presentation for details.

1. **Brown Crab – Matt Johnson, Helen Hunter, Defra**

* We’re hearing talks of Brown Crab stock declines across this area; we want to hear your views as to whether this is the case and what you are seeing on the ground.
* Several fishers expressed their opinions that crab has been declining over the past 5-7 years. There also expressed that Crab/Lobster is not managed and enforced as well as it could be.
* Another fisher expressed the need for quota on shellfish, as we have seen this situation repeated in history.
* We would love to hear your views on this – please contact [regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk) or to go to Matthew directly [matthew.johnson@defra.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.johnson@defra.gov.uk)

1. **Fly-seining consultation – Katie McNally, Defra**

* A consultation has been launched on the 25th of August to gather evidence about fly seining. Trying to work out with the issues are, but the data is lacking due to them being NQS.
* This is not just about EU vessels, but English registered too.
* The plan is for the consultation to be launched, we will circulate the link and the slide pack and consultation document (attached below).
* Ministers are really supportive of this, so please propose specific measures.
* We know that landings have doubled over the last 3 years, the scaling up is a challenge and the impact these vessels are having on stocks.
* A package of potential measures has been put together, and its important fishers have the opportunity to input into this.
* The presentation and consultation are attached below.
* A fisher noted that the method is sustainable, but the scale of the fishing is unsustainable – in particular the red mullet fishery is on the brink. Another fisher confirmed that red mullet is also really struggling, from the amount of fly seining.
* CFPO asked how much effort is there from EU vessels in our waters? Do we have this data? Or are we lacking on this data set and how does this feed into the consultation?
* Defra responded by saying they will take this away and come back.

 

If you wish to contact Defra directly on this, please use [NQSflyseineconsult@defra.gov.uk](mailto:NQSflyseineconsult@defra.gov.uk)

1. **Floating wind farms in Celtic Sea – Sion Roberts, Crown Estate**

* The crown estate manages the seabed, and manage assets on behalf of the public, for the purposes of energy, but does not include oil and gas.
* There is a desire to identify areas of seabed that might be suitable for floating offshore wind. We have to identify suitable areas of seabed, which then get passed to developers, who then have to gain consent to place a wind farm there.
* The Crown Estate aims to support the development of floating wind in the UK.
* Industry noted that mobile boats are the industry that are going to suffer, not the inshore fleet, to floating wind farms. Cables are also going to cause major problems. Defra responded by saying that cables are certainly an issue, and the Crown Estate don’t plan these. There has always been a desire to bury cables for offshore wind, generally around safety. Around the UK there is fishing happening over them. There will be opportunities as projects start to be developed, there will be opportunities to input of types of mitigation.
* The MMO recommended that they come back and talk to this group to discuss cable refinement.
* CFPO stated that these sites present concern for a lot of their members. If the MPA is mixed with the offshore wind, we are looking at a significant chunk of North Cornwall that we lose for fishing. One way around this would be to get fishers up the list to be statutory consultees, to be able to feed into the refinement of these sites, would make a big difference. We need time to pull responses together, so it would really help if we were able to be considered earlier.
* Crown Estate responded by saying that they don’t have consultees, but they have been talking to the NFFO since the conception of this project at every step. The fishing industry has had greater opportunities for engagement that other sectors.

1. **Channel Demersal NQS, FMP – Jess Duffill-Telsnig, MMO**

* MMO are leading on one of the 6 frontrunners that Defra are producing, which is the Channel demersal non-quota species FMP.
* This covers ICES areas 7 d and 7e, it covers demersal Non quota species. This was highlighted as an important plan due to over exploitation of some stocks and lack of data for other stocks.  We are leading on talking with interested stakeholders to gain a full picture of the demersal non-quota demersal species in the Channel. We will gather evidence from various sources and use this to help us steer what we will include in the FMP. We are looking to have regular engagement with stakeholders to keep people informed and involved with the development of the FMP.
* There are several non-quota demersal species listed withing the JFS such as red, tub and grey gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, John dory, red mullet, and lesser spotted dogfish.
* Industry led working group is being set up and will have its first meeting in September. If you have any further queries, please contact: [fmp@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:fmp@marinemanagement.org.uk)​



* CFPO asked if there is the option to add any species to this FMP? Spurdog has been highlighted as a potential species.
* The MMO responded by saying that because in some EU regions, Spurdog is a quota species, therefore it couldn’t be included in the FMP.

1. **Shellfish Fisheries Management Plan – Lewis Tattersall, Seafish**

* There are three FMPs: Brown Crab & Lobster, Common Whelk and King Scallop.
* Seafish are still creating the FMPs, but are currently evidence gather and reporting, and continuing with stakeholder engagement.
* The purpose of the stakeholder engagement is to raise awareness of the FMP and the process, to ensure everyone knows why it’s happening and when. The second is to encourage active engagement in the FMP development.
* This gives stakeholders the opportunity to comment on draft objectives and management interventions, not gather initial information to create content.
* There is an overarching FMP webpage from Defra to cover this (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fisheries-management-plans/fisheries-management-plans>), and soon there will be a Seafish page for the Shellfish FMP specifically.
* A point from industry was that there is a lot of engagement happening, and it’s difficult to be involved with everything, especially getting active, full-time fishers involved in these plans.
* A statement from industry – there is no younger fishers coming to the engagement, we need to see results and the only way you’ll get them to come is if they see results.
* Seafish responded by saying they want to touch base with the fisher, to see what more they can be doing to get young people to attend.

If you have further questions, please contact [lewis.tattersall@seafish.co.uk](mailto:lewis.tattersall@seafish.co.uk)

1. **AOB**

* Industry raised the point of Pollock, that there is a planed 67% quota cut in Pollock next year. It would be good to have a plan in place for those involved in the wreck net fishery but also those in the rod and line fishery for Pollock through the winter.
* The MMO responded by saying they are currently looking into Pollock, using landings data to look at population issues. If you wish to discuss Pollock further or have anything to add please contact Emily Theobald, Fisheries Manager [emily.theobald@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:emily.theobald@marinemanagement.org.uk)
* A point from industry – how does GDPR work in regard to finding out who towed your gear away? We have the IVMS data on who was where, so can we use this to find out who towed gear? Who can contact who?
* The MMO responded by saying this is being looked at and we will contact industry to share answers.
* A question from industry – If you re-engine your boat, you have to use Tier 3 engines, which will cut fuel consumption, minimally, by 15-20%. Because it cuts fuel that much, does this mean you are still eligible for the grant funding? CFPO added that tier 3 engines are not eligible for the funding, but there are a lot of people raising this around the coastline. Industry came back and said that the amount of fuel they save, means they can pay their crew more, which is better than asking for fuel rebates.