

# REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

## Meeting Notes 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### North West 7a

15:00 – 17:00 MS Teams Conference Call

#### Attendees

##### Industry

Paul Fagan  
Ron Graham  
Brian Phillipson  
Steven Brown

##### Defra

Andrew Carroll  
Matt Darlison  
Kate Kurton

##### Seafish

Rebecca Treacy  
Kat Wignall

##### Cefas

Kieran Hyder

##### MCA

Zia Ul Haq

##### NWIFCA Committee

Dr Cristina Mihailovici

##### MMO

###### RFG Team:

[regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk)

- Daniel Wardle, Fisheries Manager –  
[Daniel.Wardle@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Daniel.Wardle@marinemanagement.org.uk)
- Caley McIntosh, Fisheries Manager –  
[Caley.McIntosh@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Caley.McIntosh@marinemanagement.org.uk)
- Courtney Inch, Principal Fisheries Manager –  
[Courtney.Inch@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Courtney.Inch@marinemanagement.org.uk)

###### Quota Team:

[inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk)

- Katie James, Quota Manager - 07747638655
- Jacob Bestwick, Quota Manager -  
07469443840

###### PMO/Chair

- Steve Johnston – Principle Marine Officer  
[Steve.Johnston@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Steve.Johnston@marinemanagement.org.uk)

###### Other MMO Personnel:

Pete Clark, Director of Operations  
Holly Protopapa, PA to Director of Operations  
Adam Kershaw, IVMS Team  
Elizabeth Wyatt, NW SMO  
Jonathan Parr, NW Team  
Dan Howarth, NW Team  
Sophie Carew, NW Team  
Sarah Fox, IVMS Team  
James Pearson, IVMS Team  
Martin Tunley, IVMS Team  
Georgia Trelogan, Grants Team  
Chloe Boyle, Marine Planning Team

## 1) WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS – Steve Johnston (Chair/MMO)

- Steve Johnston updated on the actions the Regional Fisheries Group team have undertaken since the last North West RFG meeting:

You said	We did
<b>Fishers asked for more information regarding potential grant funding and why the engine replacement scheme does not include bottom towed gear.</b>	We have been in discussion with Defra regarding available grant funding and have brought the MMO and Defra Grants Teams along today to answer your questions. We have also requested the MMO grants team to contact individuals with ongoing expressions of interest to provide updates.
<b>The inshore fleet wanted an opportunity to speak with the minister.</b>	We hosted a national meeting back in March. Thank you to all those who participated. We are still working through the actions.
<b>Fishers asked for an opportunity to meet members of the RFG Team to raise concerns and discuss issues relating to all things fishing.</b>	We have conducted visits to Hoylake, Liverpool, Lytham St Annes and Fleetwood where we met with 11 fishers across these ports. We have begun actioning the issues and suggestions raised at these meetings with MMO internal teams and external colleagues. More meetings will take place this year across the remaining ports in the North West, and can also be arranged at the request of RFG members.
<b>Fishers asked for more information on IVMS rollout, delays and whether funding will be available for new devices if current device fitted is deemed unsuitable through external assurance.</b>	We have been in discussion with our IVMS Team, Senior Leadership Team and Defra, and have brought Pete Clark and the IVMS Team along today to give updates & answer your questions.

## 2) QUOTA UPDATE - Katie James and Jacob Bestwick (MMO)

- Jacob Bestwick introduced himself as the new inshore quota manager, sharing the role alongside Katie.
  - Katie James: 07747638655
  - Jacob Bestwick: 07469443840
  - [inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk)
- Jacob gave an update on the quota allocations in the region. Please see the PowerPoint attached for more information.



NW 7a Quota  
Presentation June 2:

- Katie mentioned that there was previously a lot of conversation over a lack of sole allocation and industry wanted to see consistency in catch limits. She has traded to try and keep catch limits high for the last couple of years and her intention is to do the same next year. It was

agreed that 2 tonne was the minimum, and her and Jacob are keen to know if anyone had any thoughts on investing in sole gear or if there are any reasons why people haven't as of yet.

- Steve Johnston asked Andy Carroll (Defra) when a decision would be made on capped licences and Andy stated that hopefully conversations will take place this summer, and if conversation is in favour of lifting the cap then this would potentially be lifted permanently by January 2024.

### Questions from Industry:

- Ron Graham stated that it is important to keep the limit on sole as it is and he cannot see any investment in gear as they need to be more confident that the species are on the ground.

### **3) NW INITIATIVE AND NW REGIONAL MANAGER INTRO – Courtney Inch (MMO) and Kat Wignall (Seafish)**

- Courtney gave an update on the NW Initiative. Please see the PowerPoint attached for more information.



Northwest Initiative  
update 06.06.23.pdf

- Courtney then passed over to Katrina Wignall to introduce herself.
- Kat explained that she was appointed the North West Regional Manager with Seafish in April following her role as a Marine Officer with the MMO, also based in the North West of England.
- During her 19 months within the MMO she became enthusiastic to move from a regulatory role to a liaison role whereby she could continue to work within the fishing/seafood industry yet from a different angle.
- Her stepfather worked as a fisherman when she was younger, which gave her a realistic insight into some of the challenges the industry face. Her husband's family were also fishermen out of Fleetwood on the Icelandic trawlers and her father worked on the Fleetwood docks as a Customs Officer checking the boats when she was very young.
- She volunteers as a Coastguard Rescue Officer (which mainly involves shore-based searches for missing people). She also volunteers with the RNLI in Lytham St Annes on the fundraising team and school visits team teaching about beach/seaside safety.
- She is passionate about the development plan that has been compiled to re-connect the Northwest Fishing/Seafood Industry with the wider UK network and will endeavour to assist in all areas I am able to.
- She is happy to travel where necessary to assist the industry, and is open to suggestions.
  - Contact Katrina Wignall at: [katrina.wignall@seafish.co.uk](mailto:katrina.wignall@seafish.co.uk)

### Questions from industry:

- Ron Graham discussed issues surrounding geographical isolation from the markets, whereby the North West initiative and buyers are being bypassed and the cost of a 14 hour round trip to Lowestoft or Brixham offsets the prices you are getting at the markets. There are also issues getting boxes back, what you are able to catch in winter months, and getting a price good for skate. Ron stated that there must be a greater connection between Seafish and the fishing industry in the North West.
  - **Action:** For Dan Wardle and Katrina Wignall to visit ports together in the NW.

#### 4) GRANT FUNDING - Matt Darlison and Kate Kurton (Defra)



Regional Fisheries  
Groups - June 2023.

- Defra recapped the available funding schemes in England.
- Defra advised anyone who is considering applying for funding to submit an expression of interest before completing the official application to find out whether the bid is applicable for funding.
- Please refer to the PowerPoint slides for more information on available grant funding.

#### Open Funding Opportunities

##### FaSS

- The FaSS is currently open for applications and is aimed at small, local projects supporting either individuals or multiple businesses. The FaSS can provide a maximum contribution to a project of £250,000.

Fisheries and Seafood Scheme - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

- This is a rolling opportunity that does not have a deadline date – you can apply throughout the year.

##### **Infrastructure Round 4: Recreational Sea Fishing (Closing 19 June 2023)**

- You can apply for a minimum of £10,000 and a maximum of £100,000 for projects supporting the recreational fishing sector to develop and improve infrastructure and promote sustainable growth.

Apply for the UK Seafood Fund: Infrastructure Scheme round 4 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

##### **Infrastructure Round 3: Fleet Modernisation (Closing 31 October 2023)**

- Funding is available to replace engines for the small-scale coastal fleet; up to a maximum £40,000.

Apply for the UK Seafood Fund: Infrastructure Scheme round 3 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

- Defra explained that 'Fleet modernisation' is a pilot. This trial has been aimed at the small-scale inshore fleet for now due to the ease of executing and monitoring the trial, but further decisions will be made in the future about extending the eligibility for funding.

#### Questions from industry:

- Steve Johnston asked if there has been much interest in new engines and Matt Darlison (Defra) mentioned that, given the lack of interest and uptake, Defra are potentially looking to do something regarding the eligibility and there may be some earlier announcements on this.
- Steve Johnston asked if there had been any trials done on electric fishing boats as there has been some hesitancy regarding health and safety, and Matt Darlison explained that there is still a big piece of work to do to increase confidence in these types of engines and that is why they are currently piloting the small-scale coastal fleet.

- If there are any potential grant application questions, please feel free to reach out to Georgia Trelogan (MMO) on [georgia.trelogan@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:georgia.trelogan@marinemanagement.org.uk) or 02087203557.

## 5) I-VMS UPDATE – Pete Clark, Director of Operations (MMO)

- Pete Clark, Director of Operations in the MMO, gave an update on I-VMS.
- Last year the MMO rolled out I-VMS devices through grant funding to industry. Feedback was then received suggesting that some of the devices may not be compliant with the MMO's Type Approval specification. In response, the MMO have been undertaking an independent testing process to provide additional assurance to fishers ahead of the wider rollout of the I-VMS programme.
- Suppliers were advised not to market, sell, or install any devices pending the outcome of the independent testing assurance process.
- On 21 April 2023, MMO took action to suspend one of the suppliers after receiving evidence the supplier has disregarded this instruction. Whilst this suspension is in place, fishers are advised not to purchase this device if they intend to seek MMO grant funding.
- This independent testing is now complete, and two of the devices have failed the assurance process. Type Approval status will therefore be revoked from Maritime Systems Ltd MS44 device and from the Satlink Nano as they have been shown to not meet the original Type Approved specifications set out by MMO. This will be effective from 12:00pm Friday 19 May 2023, subject to final confirmation from MMO. The remaining two devices, Fulcrum Nemo and Succorfish SC2, will remain Type Approved following minor fixes and further review.
- If there is an issue with the device individuals have on board, the MMO will be in direct communication with affected vessels. The MMO will also be updating the government website with advice on the government in the coming weeks.
- The MMO stated that there is a lot of misinformation on social media and asked industry members to ignore that.
- The most recent update from the MMO can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mmo-announces-the-results-of-i-vms-device-testing>
- If you have any questions, please contact the I-VMS team or the funding team, depending on your query...
  - I-VMS emails to [ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk)
  - Grants team email: [FaSS.queries@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:FaSS.queries@marinemanagement.org.uk)
  - Michael from the grants team Telephone: 0208 026 5539

### **Questions from industry:**

- Brian Phillipson asked why the MMO did not test before installation, what will happen to the free airtime that was promised since MMO has moved the goalpost of the legal requirement, and will iVMS be used in enforcement/why is IFCA using the data?
- Pete Clark responded saying that he was not with the MMO at the time before installation so could not comment but this will be reviewed. In regard to free airtime, Pete stated that this is something MMO will work through with the remaining suppliers and although we cannot comment on exact arrangements yet, the MMO are conscious that airtime is a cost and are looking into this. In regard to enforcement, Pete stated that although the primary focus will be for fisheries management, if the MMO have evidence of a breach we retain the right to use this data for enforcement purposes and can share with other law enforcement bodies.

- Paul Fagan asked if he could disconnect Fulcrum as the constant beeping sounds like an engine alarm and he has already had fisheries officers come down having seen him on the VMS.
- Pete Clark responded saying that there are no legal requirements to transmit from our end, however, we are keen to know that all of the devices are working properly and it is beneficial for the MMO have this data. He also mentioned to ask Fulcrum through their support line if there is a silent mode.

## 6) SHELLFISH FMP – Rebecca Treacy (Seafish)

- Rebecca Treacy gave an update on the Shellfish FMP. Please see the PowerPoint attached for more information.



06.06.23 Seafish -  
RFG update June 20

### Questions from industry:

- Steve Johnston mentioned that differences in regulations between various agencies in the North West can become quite complex for fishermen and Rebecca stated that it has been mentioned at stakeholder engagement how these different jurisdictions will interact with the FMP, however, this has now been handed over to Defra.

## 7) AOB – Steve Johnston (MMO)

- Lex Palmer, from the under 10m catch recording team, is seeking participants for a focus group to feedback on functionality of the catch recording app. This group will provide insights on catch recording practices. The time commitment will be minimal, with virtual calls taking place once every three months or so. Interested volunteers can contact Dan Wardle from the RFG team at [Daniel.Wardle@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:Daniel.Wardle@marinemanagement.org.uk).
- Steve Johnston mentioned there has been concerns regarding the 3 new proposed wind farms off the coast in the Irish sea and their efforts on migratory fish and other species. He stated the decision to go ahead with them are out of the MMOs hands, but we would get involved in the licence conditions if they do go ahead. Public consultation has now closed (4<sup>th</sup> of June), however, the developer will expect to engage with the fishing community directly.
  - **Action:** MMO to respond on where to raise issues now consultation has closed.  
**Views sought on plans for three wind farm projects in Irish sea - BBC News**
- Steve Johnston mentioned that there have been questions regarding lifting the ban on landing bass caught by driftnetting, and stated that there are not likely to be any developments until the fisheries management plans have been progressed further.
  - **Action:** Query with Bass FMP team following meeting.
- Paul Fagan explained that he used to use a small drift net to catch flounder for pot bait and started to pick up dover soles. He stated he would happily rig up to drift net for dover soles but does not want to have to throw away bass. There is scope for a small-scallop drift net fishery using small nets, and there is a sole fishery there, but the fishers cannot target this without throwing away bass. He then explained that the drift net fishery is a very clean fishery and it would be a shame to lose it when there is stock there, and a regional approach is needed.

- Katrina Wignall mentioned that she facilitated policy labs visits but has not heard any outcome
  - **Action:** Courtney to get in touch with Defra for a follow up.
- Steve Johnston mentioned that there have been some concerns regarding the MCA medical requirements, and Zia Ul Haq shared a link for the new document:  
<https://mca-ws.apsmos.com/ViewProduct.html?sp=Scertificateofmedicalfitness>
- Steve Johnston then closed the RFG meeting and stated the next meeting will take place in December with a hub likely to be in Lytham St Annes.

### **Fisheries Management Plans Engagement – have your say!**

- Do you have views on Fisheries Management Plans? Have you been made properly aware of what a Fisheries Management Plan is? What do you think of the process of developing Fisheries Management Plans so far? Have you been able to participate? Has the collaborative approach been meaningful? Is it meeting your expectations? Have your say!
- Defra have commissioned an independent research team to assess how the development of Fisheries Management Plans is progressing. It will provide evidence and advice to Defra, the MMO and others on how to improve the development of the plans. Your views and opinions will be a key part of this evidence.
- If you would be interested in discussing the FMP stakeholder engagement with the research team or would like to know more about this research, please contact:

Ellie Cook at: [FMPEvaluation@icf.com](mailto:FMPEvaluation@icf.com) or +442030965511