

REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

Meeting Notes 16th May 2023

South West 7efg

15:00 – 17:00 MS Teams Conference Call

Attendees:

Industry:

Laurence Hartwell
Lee Carter
William Taffinder
Stephen Parker
Scott Wharton
John Balls
Nick West
Tich Preston
Gus Caslake
Richard Caslake
1 x Anon

PO's:

Chris Ranford
Karen Pringle
Juliette Hatchman
Martyn Youell
Chloe North

CIC:

Pamela Charlick

Apologies:

David Smith
Andrew Pascoe
Beshlie Pool

MMO

RFG Team:

regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk

- Rebecca Thomas: Fisheries Officer
Rebecca.thomas@marinemanagement.org.uk
- Courtney Inch: Principal Fisheries Manager –
Courtney.inch@marinemanagement.org.uk
- Emily Theobald: South West Fisheries
Manager –
emily.theobald@marinemanagement.org.uk

Quota team:

inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk

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

Other MMO personnel:

Hubert Gieschen
Mae van Loef
Madalein Bradshaw
Susan Tait
Sarah Fox
Adam Kershaw
Kirstyn May
Michael Johnson

Cefas:

Paul Dolder

IFCA:

Samantha Davies (Cornwall)
Mat Mander (Devon & Severn)
Sarah Birchenough (Southern)

Defra:

Kate Kurton
Matt Darlison
Andrew Carroll
Iain Glasgow
James Sharples

1) Welcomes and introduction – Emily Theobald (MMO)

- Emily Theobald updated on the actions taken since the last South West Regional Fisheries Group meeting:

| You said | We did |
|--|--|
| You wanted to see a breakdown of bass entitlements, and uptake of those. | Those who asked, they received an email of breakdowns. |
| You wanted access to Spurdog. | A Spurdog fishery has now opened. |

- Emily Theobald also updated the group that she will be shortly taking on the role as the South West Principle Marine Officer and will be chairing these meetings in the future.
- 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 Emily from the RFG team at: Emily.Theobald@marinemanagement.org.uk

2) Crab and Lobster legislation reminders - Madalein Bradshaw (MMO)

- The MMO updated on The Lobsters and Crawfish (Prohibition of Fishing and Landing) Order 2000. The legislation was updated in 2017. Please see the full information on the website by following the link here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/catching-or-landing-of-berried-lobsters-and-crawfish-in-england/catching-or-landing-of-berried-lobsters-and-crawfish-in-england>
- From 1 October 2017 British fishing vessels must not fish for berried lobster or crawfish from within English waters.
- British fishing vessels must not land berried lobsters or crawfish into an English port regardless of where they were caught.
- Any berried lobsters or crawfish which are brought on board a British fishing vessel within English waters must be returned to the sea immediately.
- Current rules prohibiting the landing or retention of any lobster or crawfish with a 'V' notch in the tail or which is mutilated to obscure a 'V' notch remain in force.
- There is no change to the Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes for lobster or crawfish in English waters:
 - European Lobster (LBE) MCRS - 87mm - measure from rear of eye socket to end of carapace.
 - Return all berried LBE.
 - Crawfish (CRW) MCRS - 95 mm - tip of rostrum to end of carapace.
 - Return all berried CRW.
- Fishing prohibition:
 - (a) a mutilated lobster,
 - (b) a mutilated crawfish, or
 - (c) any lobster or crawfish bearing a V notch.
- The Undersized Edible Crabs Order 2000:
 - ICES Divisions VIId, e, f: 140 mm - widthways across carapace (Please note - this is MMO legislation, Devon & Severn/Cornwall/Isles of Scilly IFCA have separate byelaws for inside their district)
 - Return all berried CRE.
- All species to be landed whole.

- When using pots or creels, a maximum of 1 % by weight of the total catch of edible crabs landed.
- For all other gear types, a maximum of 75kg of detached claws may be landed.

- IFCA Byelaws inside the 6nm limit:

- Devon and Severn IFCA –



Cornwall_IFCA_full-list-of-minimum-sizes

- Cornwall IFCA –



Minimum+Sizes+for+Fish+and+Shellfish

Questions from industry:

Q: A member of industry expressed that measurements vary outside and inside the designated zones and expressed the hope that all fishers are aware of these measurements from the perspective of the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA). The idea of creating a summary of the existing legislations both inside and outside the designated area was proposed.

- Emily Theobald (MMO) suggested that a one-page summary could be sent out in the meeting notes, providing a concise overview of the regulations.
- Mat Mander (D&S IFCA) pointed out that the information is already available on the website, indicating an additional resource for obtaining the necessary details.

Q: A question was raised by a member of the industry regarding the potential unification of regulations across different areas. They emphasized the need for a one-size-fits-all approach both inside and outside the 6nm to avoid possible loopholes.

- Mat Mander responded by explaining that vessels operating within their district must adhere to the Devon and Severn IFCA requirements. Compliance with these regulations is mandatory for all species onboard, but it is important to note that active engagement in fishing, as defined under the permit conditions, is necessary. Thus, it is not a deeming clause.
- Mat Mander mentioned that while fishing in their district, all species onboard must comply with size and other catch requirements. The discussion of minimum sizes has been considered in the context of the crab and lobster Fisheries Management Plan (FMP). This suggests the possibility of achieving more consistency in the future. However, the size differences between regions, such as the South West and the North Sea, pose a challenge in determining the extent of uniformity.
- Mat Mander also mentioned concerns related to southern IFCA, where lobster measurements are set at 87, which differs from the 90 measurements in their district. Additionally, crab sizes in southern areas were noted to be smaller.

Q: A member of the industry raised the viewpoint that the minimum size for lobsters should be set at 90 millimetres uniformly across the board.

- The regional differences in regulations were acknowledged, and it was discussed that achieving complete uniformity would require a comprehensive approach covering all regions.

3) Spurdog Q+A - James Sharples (Defra)

- ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) has advised that the North East Atlantic Spurdog stock has shown signs of recovery and can support fishing activities for 2023 and 2024.
- The UK Government has taken swift action to open the fishery on April 1st, allowing access to this stock.
- The allocation of the stock is based on dividing it into two stocks from the North East region. Existing units related to this stock, such as fixed quota allocations (FQA) holdings, have been taken into consideration.
- As a precautionary measure, a portion of the stock has been held back, and there may be a possibility of reallocating it later in the year based on uptake and other factors. The MMO is managing the non-sector portion of the stock, with a monthly catch limit of five tonnes. The Western stock is being managed differently due to the absence of equal units and catch recording in that area, with a monthly catch limit of five tonnes also.
- Both allocation methods are considered temporary. Continuous monitoring of these stocks will be conducted, and a more comprehensive and long-term methodology will be developed once more data on stock utilization and uptake becomes available.

Questions from industry:

Q: A member of industry raised a question regarding cutting the fins of spurdog, but MMO informed them that it is not allowed due to shark finning rules.

- Defra confirmed the industry's statement, acknowledging that cutting fins off spurdog is prohibited.

Q: Another industry member inquired about future allocations for FQA's and mentioned the potential for spurdog to be caught as bycatch.

- Defra clarified the UK's position, stating that no new FQA units will be created for any stock at the moment, including the western stock.

Q: A member of industry highlighted that the current maximum landing size for spurdog restricts commercial activity as it is too small for market and suggested reconsidering it to allow for the landing of marketable catches.

- Defra appreciated the comment, acknowledging that the issue will remain under review and they expressed openness to alternative suggestions.

Q: An industry comment pointed out that the volume of landed spurdog is minimal and too small for the commercial market. It was also mentioned that trawlers discard marketable fish.

- Defra noted these comments regarding the minimal volume of landed spurdog and the discarding of marketable fish by trawlers.

Q: An industry member asked whether the landing size issue could be discussed with the EU or if it will follow ICES advice for two years.

- Defra responded that they would inquire and provide feedback to Chris Ranford, indicating a willingness to explore the possibility of discussions.

Q: A question was asked about the total amount of spurdog landed so far.

- Defra stated that it was 81 tonnes overall.

Q: An industry member emphasized the need for support in marketing spurdog to make it worthwhile to catch them.

- Defra stated that no changes are expected for the current year but that a review will be considered.
- An industry member suggested involving merchants in the discussion to gather their perspective and determine their desired outcomes. Additionally, there was a proposal to introduce larger spurdog sizes.

4) Available grant funding - Matt Darlison and Kate Kurton (Defra)



Regional Fisheries
Groups - May 2023.p

- 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)

- 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).

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)
- 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 funding.

Questions from industry:

Q: A member of industry suggested that it may be worthwhile to see a demo project of a replacement hybrid/electric engine to showcase to the fleet that the engines work effectively as confidence is low.

- Defra responded that this is a good point which will be considered moving forward.

Q: A member of industry stated that the relationship with the MCA is poor which could be having an impact on the uptake of grants.

- Defra are interested to understand what engagement can take place to improve relations between the fleet and the MCA which should help boost interest.

Q: A member of industry stated that the application process is a bit too complex for fishers, and asked could the UKSF consider adopting a similar process to FaSS which industry is more familiar with?

- Defra have noted this feedback.

Q: A member of industry enquired about uptake, the number of applications and those that have been successful.

- The funding team responded that there have been around 30 applications and half of these have been successful.

Q: A member of industry raised that the deadline for funding application is coming around quickly and is not reaching all areas of the fleet.

- Defra responded the pilot may be reviewed with the potential to extend.

Q: A member of industry enquired why the funding is open to static boats and not to all.

- Defra advised that when developing the Small Scale Coastal Fleet (SSCF) fund were chosen for the pilot due to the accessibility to trial new engines compared to the rest of the fleet. Defra noted that there will be an evaluation of the scheme and will discuss if there is a potential to extend the eligibility moving forward.

Q: A member of industry stated that there is a lack of confidence in the technology not being ready and the infrastructure not being in place which is putting some fishers off.

- Defra have noted this feedback.

Q: A member of industry questioned why we will only replace petrol/diesel engines manufactured before 2011 and whether we would consider changing this to include any after 2011 as improvements to reducing emissions from older engines includes those manufactured after the current cut off point.

- Defra advised we would take this point on board and consider.

5) Quota – Katie James (MMO)

- Katie James introduced Jacob Bestwick who is the new inshore quota manager, sharing the role alongside Katie. Jacob may be presenting the quota presentations in the future.
 - Katie James: 07747638655
 - Jacob Bestwick: 07469443840
 - inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk

- Katie explained that the graphs on the PowerPoint slides all represent the under 10m fleet, however there is a box in the bottom right corner with the over 10's allocation if this is of interest.

Katie updated on the quota allocations for 2023. Please see the PowerPoint presentation attached for reference.



SWQAG May
2023.pdf

- Katie emphasised that fishers could get in touch regarding catch limits, via email, text or call.

Questions from industry:

Q: An industry member expressed a concern about the timing of the catch limit increase, stating that traditionally it occurs from July onwards, but many have been getting caught earlier in the year.

- Katie mentioned that this year's uptake is behind compared to the previous year, the information on uptake is relied upon to determine if an increase is necessary.

Q: A question was raised regarding the reason for the increase in non-sector sole netting by the over 10m fleet. It was suggested by a member of industry that it may be due to the removal of the sole recovery zone and the elimination of the 5% bycatch landing obligation.

- Katie noted the comment.

6) IVMS update – Adam Kershaw (MMO)

- Adam Kershaw, the I-VMS manager at 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 devices may not be compliant with the MMO's Type Approval specification. In response, 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, the 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.
- MMO will shortly advise suppliers and fishers of the outcome of the independent testing process and the Type Approved status of all devices.
- There is currently no SI, and fishers are under no legal obligation to have an I-VMS device installed or transmitting data to the MMO from your device, however it is important to make fishers aware that their device will need to be switched on and operational if they fish within the D&S IFCA area with certain gear types and/or Welsh territory waters.

- MMO would advise any fishers who believe they may be impacted to contact DSIFCA and/or Welsh Fisheries Office.
- 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 I-VMS roll-out programme project is currently on pause while MMO reviews the test results, once the review is complete, we will communicate directly with industry.
- The MMO will follow up with more information in due course.
 - The most recent update can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mmo-announces-the-results-of-i-vms-device-testing>
- The MMO stated that there is a lot of misinformation on social media and that if you do have any queries or concerns to get in touch.
- 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
 - Grants team email: FaSS.queries@marinemanagement.org.uk
 - I-VMS team Telephone 01900 508 618

Question from industry:

- Q: A question was asked regarding the payment of £18 per month for a service that cannot be currently utilized and is not type approved. It was also mentioned that if the payment is stopped, there may be a reactivation fee.
 - The response advised checking the terms and conditions with the supplier. It clarified that there is no obligation to transmit data, so if the fishing activities do not take place in the Devon and Severn IFCA regions or Welsh waters, there is no legal requirement to transmit data to the authority. Therefore, the device can be turned off if not needed.
- Q: There was a discussion around funding applications.
 - Action for Michael to contact this industry member regarding his application
 - If anyone has specific funding questions, please contact Michael from the grants team, Telephone: 0208 026 5539

7) AOB – Emily Theobald (MMO)

An industry member raised the issue of gear conflict between whelk pots and trawlers, expressing a desire for a meeting to find a mutually beneficial arrangement.

- Mat Mander responded, expressing interest in facilitating a meeting and mentioning that he will be in touch with the industry member in the next few days.

IFCA mentioned that a consultation on net management is forthcoming, which will assess the effectiveness of netting management through the netting permit byelaw. All permit holders will receive this consultation, and greater engagement with fishermen is encouraged.

- A comment was made regarding the number of ongoing consultations, suggesting that consideration should be given to manage the volume. Emily Theobald noted that discussions

