

Southern North Sea Non-Quota Species Fisheries Management Plan Working Group Meeting

Meeting One

Online MS Teams 9-10am 10th October 2023

Agenda

- 1. Introductions (5 minutes)**
- 2. Presentation on the background to the FMP (5 minutes)**

MMO provided the working group with a presentation on the background of the FMP and what it would cover.

- 3. Working group discussion on Issues or opportunities for the FMP (15 minutes)**
 - Working group members confirmed that squid and gurnard are key species in SE (4c). Mostly by-catch, but some targeted fisheries for squid and gurnards. Economically viable and worth developing further for inshore fleet.
 - Defra reiterated that proportionality is important to consider when looking at raw landings data. Phil made a point around proportionality and it being important to consider against raw data.
 - It will be important to understand the gear that is being used to target each FMP species
 - The working group made reference to the decline of the inshore fleet. The FMP needs to be dynamic and take into account current and future impacts of climate change. Emerging fisheries are key to survival of inshore fisheries, and the FMP needs to defend the fishing rights of inshore fleet. Reported significant issues with fish on grounds, and how climate has impacted this. Reflected on how changes might be positive (assemblages of cephalopods)
 - The working group raised gear conflict between fixed and static gear, example used was cuttlefish.

- Working group member reiterated that the FMP species are not just caught as by-catch and that squid is becoming an important fishery in the North Sea. Mainly caught by trawling and flyseining however some smaller vessels use Squid jigging.
- Need to understand the market for the FMP species and where this can be improved in the UK. Example used of red gurnard recipe promoted on television which helped the market for that species. Markets inflate depending on trends and the FMP needs to be adaptable to these changes.
- Working group member raised concerns over the lack of representation from the offshore fleet. MMO responded that many people had been contacted to sit on the Working Group who did not respond, and they are working to get balanced representation between fishing sectors.
- Working group member asked about the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and whether this is a separate document to the FMP. MMO confirmed the SEA is separate to the FMP but supports it and will be available to view at the consultation stage.
- Working group member highlights that cuttlefish numbers in 4c used to be high and that cephalopods are becoming more prevalent especially octopus. Need to understand the numbers of octopus in the area to manage it effectively. Historic data is important to consider.
- Working group member highlighted issues with the management of fisheries within the Wash.
- Working group member raised that fishermen in 4c need to be able to diversify but current licencing regime hinders that.
- Working group member highlighted that water conditions in 4c are improving. Cefas have evidence of this.
- There is appetite for a management group for the Southern North Sea.
- Working group member suggested that fishermen would benefit and be more engagement if government listened to their views and showed how their views had fed into something.
- Working group member highlighted that high catches of lesser-spotted dogfish in the Sea Angling Diaries does not mean that recreational sea anglers are targeting those species.

4. Presentation on Engagement and working group thoughts (15 minutes)

MMO provided the working group with an overview of the proposed engagement approach. This included in person engagement across the Southern North Sea from the 5th to the 8th of December 2023.

- Working group members asked that engagement in the Southern North Sea could incorporate both MMO-led FMP's to help with stakeholder fatigue. MMO clarified that the southern North Sea events will cover both FMP's.
- Working group member from West Mersea offered to help set up a workshop for the engagement in December. **ACTION: Rachel to follow this up.**
- Working group member offered to set up a meeting in Whitstable which would also cover the Skates and Rays FMP. **ACTION: Alex to follow this up.**

5. AOB (10 minutes)

- No other business was raised.
- Next working group meeting will be end of October/ beginning of November and focus on bringing proposals on FMP goals and management to the working group for feedback.

Attendance

Attendees	
Name	Organisation/ Representing
Rachel Thirlwall	Marine Management Organisation (MMO) Working Group Chair
Alex Maydew	MMO Working Group stand in Secretariat
Phil McBryde	Defra Non-Quota Species Policy Lead
Richard Hards	North Sea Fishermen's Organisation
Frances French	Mersea Island Fresh Catch
Judith Farrel	Humberside Fish Producer Organisation
Esther Gilson	Industry representative for Whitstable fishermen
Andrew Collins	Anglo Scottish Fish Producer Organisation
Jerry Percy	New Under Ten Fisheries Association
Apologies*	
Hannah Rudd	Angling Trust Policy and Advocacy Advisor
Paul Gilson	Inshore Fisher representative
Dale Rodmell	East of England Fish Producer Organisation

*All working group members who could not attend the meeting were contacted separately to give feedback. This has been included within the above meeting minutes.