

# REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUP

## Meeting Notes 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### East – 4C

15:00 – 17:00 MS Teams Conference Call

Attendees:

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| <b><u>Industry:</u></b><br>Paul Gilson<br>Fran French<br>Chris Attenborough<br>Darren Holmes<br>Ken Bagley<br>Shaun Hayter<br>Steve Bagley<br>June Mummery<br>Paul Lines | <b><u>DEFRA:</u></b><br>Andrew Carroll<br>Lydia Osborne<br><br><b><u>CEFAS:</u></b><br>Jim Ellis<br><br><b><u>IFCA:</u></b><br>Tim Smith (speaker)<br>Julian Gregory<br><br><b><u>MCA</u></b><br>Julie Carlton (speaker)<br>Sophie Peacey (speaker) | <b><u>MMO:</u></b><br>Justin Rowley (Chair)<br>Courtney Inch (speaker)<br>Andrea O'Shaughnessy<br>Charlotte Floyd<br>Alex Maydew (speaker)<br>Tony Miles<br>Miranda Willis (speaker)<br>Oliver Goldsmith (speaker)<br>Jacob Bestwick (speaker)<br>Matt Baxter (speaker)<br>Jonathan Brooks<br>Alex Pearson-Ross<br>Callum Williams |
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**1. Welcome, Introduction and actions and updates – Justin Rowley (MMO)**

Justin opened the meeting and requested short introductions from all attendees.

**2. Regional Fisheries Groups Update – Courtney Inch (MMO)**

Courtney provided an update from the Regional Fisheries Group on the Consultation Assistance Pilot. Courtney explained that the Consultation Assistance Pilot was an initiative started in the Eastern area where the Regional Fisheries Group team distributed a summary of marine licence applications that have the potential to have an impact on the inshore fishing fleet. Summary information on the applications is sent to the relevant RFG members and guidance is provided on how to return a consultation response. To date, two consultations have been shared with the Eastern group and one with the Southwest group. It is anticipated that this will be rolled out nationally and consequently for a larger number of application consultations.

Courtney also shared that there is work underway with the University of Oxford regarding Seal Depredation Research. Dr Claire Tanner has been contacting UK fishers to research how seals have affected their fisheries through assessments of catch depredation and interviews.

Fishers still have the opportunity to input into this research by phone interviews.

If you are interested in taking part, you are invited to contact them via email or phone; [biol0057@ox.ac.uk](mailto:biol0057@ox.ac.uk) or phone/whatsapp 07761502260.



### **3. Quota – Jacob Bestwick (MMO)**

Jacob from the Quota Management team (MMO) updated the group on the quota uptake in area IVC for this year to date. A copy of this presentation can be found below:



4c Quota  
Presentation Oct 23.p

If anyone has any questions regarding quota, please contact Jacob directly at [Jacob.bestwick@marinemanagment.org.uk](mailto:Jacob.bestwick@marinemanagment.org.uk) or via the [quota team mailbox \(inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk\)](mailto:inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk).

### **4. U12 m Sensitivity to Offshore Wind**

Oliver Goldsmith, from the Evidence Team (MMO), provided a presentation on a proposed project to improve understanding of under 12m fishing vessels fishing areas and the sensitivity of these

activities to offshore wind development in the Eastern marine area. The project is expected to be carried out in 2024.

Anyone who would like to be involved in this project once it is underway is invited to register their interest by emailing [SRU@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:SRU@marinemanagement.org.uk).



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verview.pdf

Multiple industry representatives raised concerns about the value of this data as it is dependent on the stability of the fishery and assuming there will not be significant changes in fishing areas. It was said that similar exercises had taken place in the past with no visible benefit to the industry, so fishers are sceptical of the benefits of this project.

Industry asked for further information on the amount of money that has been secured for this project and the contractors that are undertaking the work. The evidence team confirmed that they would be able to publicise these details once they have received a proposal for the work.

#### **5. Skates and Rays FRM, Southern North Sea – Alex Maydew MMO**

Alex from the Fisheries Management Planning team (MMO) provided an update on the tranche 2 Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs). There are 5 tranche 3 FMPs, and these will be publicised by the end of 2024.

Tranche 2 fisheries management plans are:

- Cockles
- Queen Scallop
- North Sea and Channel Sprat
- Southern North Sea demersal non-quota species (NQS)
- Southern North Sea and Channel Skates and Rays.

The MMO will be delivering the Southern North Sea demersal non-quota species (NQS) and the Southern North Sea and Channel Skates and Rays Fisheries Management Plans.

Alex shared that there will be in-port and online engagement opportunities for fisheries management plans. Further details of these events will be published on MMO media pages. You can contact [fmpp@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:fmpp@marinemanagement.org.uk) to register your interest.



T3\_FMP\_Introduction  
Slides\_AM.pdf

Multiple industry representatives shared concern over the impact of Seal predation on stocks including skates and rays and expressed that it should be considered within any development on Fisheries Management Plans. It was also raised that price should be considered as an impacting factor on these stocks.

#### **6. Cockles Fisheries Management Plans – Tim Smith – AIFCA**

Tim Smith from the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA) shared an update on the development of the Cockles Fisheries Management Plan which they are leading.

Anyone interested in future engagement events for this FMP is encouraged to register their interest at [CockleFMP@association-ifca.org.uk](mailto:CockleFMP@association-ifca.org.uk).

Industry representatives highlighted concern over the management and monitoring of the Cockle fishery in The Wash.

### **7. Medical certification for Fishers – MCA Sophie Peacey and Julie Carlton**

Sophie from the MCA gave a presentation on the Certificate of Medical Fitness, which for fishers, the phase-in period ends on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023.

Sophie provided some clarity surrounding Grandfather Rights, Body Mass Index (BMI) and referrals to medical assessors. The details of which can be found in the attached presentation.



Medical certification  
for fishers slides (002)

Any questions related to the introduction of the Certificate of Medical Fitness are invited to contact Sophie or Julie at [Sophie.Peacey@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.Peacey@mcga.gov.uk) and [Julie.Carlton@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.Carlton@mcga.gov.uk)

Anyone wanting to speak with the medical team to query the medical process and results from medicals is encouraged to contact the MCA Medical team at [Medical@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:Medical@mcga.gov.uk) or 02038 172835.

Industry representatives raised concerns and issues with the implementation of the Certificate of Medical Fitness and requested grandfather rights with no conditions.

The industry requested clarity as to how the requirements for Certificates of Medical Fitness will be enforced. MCA representatives explained that compliance with certificates of medical fitness will be assessed in line with the standard inspection and monitoring regime of the MCA.

### **8. IVMS Update – Matt Baxter**

Matt Baxter (MMO) provided an update on the current rate of installation of IVMS devices.

As of October 2023, there is a 50% uptake of type-approved devices by the 6-12m fleet. With 453 grant applications having been received and 91% having been paid at a value of £398,393.

Vessels of 6-12m were reminded that they have until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to apply for grant funding.

Industry has called for information as to how the data is managed and protected.

Matt Baxter explained that the data is managed by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). For more information on what information I-VMS data contains and who will have access to the data, please see the FAQ on the I-VMS guidance page: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inshore-vessel-monitoring-i-vms-for-under-12m-fishing-vessels-registered-in-england#frequently-asked-questions>.

Anyone with questions or queries related to I-VMS installation, rollout or compliance can contact the Engagement and Support team at [ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk) or 01900 508618.

For any questions related to the processing or issuing of grants, you should contact the grants team at [ukfisheriessupport@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:ukfisheriessupport@marinemanagement.org.uk) or call 0330 041 6579.

## **9. AOB**

Pre-submitted questions were not able to be answered during this meeting due to time restraints of this meeting.

Please see the answers to the pre-submitted questions below. Any pre-submitted questions that are not answered below will be answered directly to those concerned.

### **Q. What level of monitoring is taking place to monitor and assess the actions of the Ifcas and their impacts on the security of food production and the environment?**

**A.** A quayside conversation engagement exercise led by contractors concluded early this year and was part of a wider approach to engagement-seeking views on the ten IFCAs. We expect to be able to launch the two remaining engagement exercises (a Citizen Space consultation and Qualtrics tailored survey) in the next month and will promote these opportunities through our Stakeholder Bulletin, industry contacts and the IFCA's. The consultations will be open for six weeks and we expect to be able to lay the Report in Parliament and publish by March 2024.

Response provided by Lydia Osbourne, DEFRA Fleet Management Team.

### **Q. With collapsing sole and flat fish stocks, what efforts are being made to investigate and re-instate a limited drift net fishery for bass? As set nets are being heavily predated on by seals.**

**A.** 2024 ICES advice for bass was lower than in previous years, and recruitment remains low, so the stock is still vulnerable. The draft Bass FMP proposed a review of the current authorisation system as a short-term priority, including consideration of which gears should be allowed to land bass. However, we need to be mindful of not increasing fishing pressure on the still vulnerable bass stock and of limiting the risk of protected species bycatch often associated with netting.

The draft Bass FMP public consultation closed last week, and we are currently considering the 300+ responses. The final FMP will be published by the end of the year.

Response provided by Lydia Osbourne, DEFRA Fleet Management Team.