

# Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species Fisheries Management Plan Working Group

## **Meeting Minutes 31st January 2023**

### **Meeting Number 4**

15:30-18:00 Microsoft Teams

#### **1. Introductions, apologies, and actions (see annex)**

#### **2. Recap of previous discussions and objectives of the meeting**

The objective of this meeting was to update the working group (WG) on the progress of the Channel demersal non-quota species (NQS) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) since the last WG meeting in November 2022 and what the next steps will be for re-drafting the goals and drafting the FMP itself.

MMO also updated the group that Emma Ulyatt from the Flatfish FMP will be joining meetings as an observer. This is to demonstrate alignment between both FMPs for the species overlap in ICES area 7d and to address concerns raised in previous WG meetings and other engagement with stakeholders.

#### **3. Vision and goals (see presentation published [here](#))**

MMO updated the WG on the progress of the vision and goals of the FMP and the next steps.

All WG, Evidence Advisory Group (EAG) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) comments on the vision and goals have now been received and compiled into a comment log. Over 140 comments were received in total and the FMP team are now working through these comments to re-draft the vision and goals.

MMO have been conducting a de-conflicting exercise to highlight differing opinions between the WG, EAG or Defra's policy direction. The results of this will be summarised soon and published for the WG to see.

WG comments:

- Will this FMP and other FMPs demonstrate how the goals are achievable nationally and how this FMP and other FMPs could benefit from a joined-up approach? E.g. Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) is not for piloting within this FMP but could identify how REM could be used to support delivery of this FMP. If all FMPs were to do that then there would be a greater understanding of the value of introducing it. Will this happen rather than having it as a goal of one FMP?
- WG want a presentation of the timeline for REM policy currently being taken forward. These things should not be goals of this FMP as will be picked up elsewhere. Mindful that there is a lot happening with REM at a national level and discard policy.
  - MMO agree with the WG and although don't want to lose the thinking behind REM so far understand that it is more of a national approach than a single FMP approach. Therefore this may become an associated action of other goals rather than a standalone goal.
- WG asked how will we know when we have achieved these goals? Raised concerns over not achieving them as they are too ambitious. Highlighted that this is the first iteration of a very complicated FMP so we should not be over-committing ourselves. There are many

issues within the Channel e.g. marine protected areas (MPA) and offshore wind farms creating spatial squeeze and reducing fishing activity. The southeast has the biggest MPA restricting bottom-towed gear. This FMP should not be adding to that.

#### **4. FMP drafting approach (see presentation published [here](#))**

MMO updated the WG on the proposed drafting approach for the FMP chapters.

MMO presented the group with three options for a drafting approach to ensure that the WG can contribute to drafting the FMP in a way that is most suitable to them. These are as follows:

1. Full draft text provided via a document distributed to the WG by email. How long do you need for response turn around – time is tight for developing these so limited to 10 days for feedback.
2. Drafting workshops where we (virtually) sit down to review the full text.
3. Highlights - hour long workshops or meetings to discuss highlights of the text and content.
4. A combination of the above. Contingent on WG / individual preference and availability. Greater or lesser involvement in specific sections? Review of the FMP structure and poll on engagement preference per section.

WG comments:

- Wish to see the drafted documents before the meeting to formulate ideas.
- Wish to talk about drafting chapters in a group so they can hear others thoughts.
- Would prefer to see the full working of the FMP chapters to go through it in detail. To do this, the WG want more frequent and shorter meetings to draft chapters of the FMP to keep up momentum, noting that the goals workshops worked well.
- Would like a poll created to find the best time to have the meetings for everyone. Need to make sure that fishermen can attend and give their views.

**Action:** MMO to set up a poll for the drafting sessions and WG meetings.

#### **5. South coast engagement planning**

MMO presented to the upcoming south coast engagement events taking place in February and March 2023 ([see here](#))

WG comments:

- WG raised that fishermen need notice of MMO coming to the south coast and need to be given information beforehand to raise awareness of the plan and what they need to speak about.
- Brixham fishermen get most of their information sent on WhatsApp, is there an infographic to be able to send out to people?
- Cornish Fish Producer Organisation representative offered to help MMO with events in their area.
- WG highlighted that Friday morning may not be the best time to visit Brixham. MMO said they received feedback that Friday morning would be suitable due to fishermen going into market on Thursday evening.

**Action:** MMO to send WG leaflet with dates on and background information poster to send to their members.

## **6. MMO, Seafish and Centre for Environmental, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) evidence report summaries**

MMO, Cefas and Seafish were commissioned to produce evidence reports of the available evidence for the 14 NQS species within the scope of the FMP. Individuals from those organisations gave the WG a summary of the evidence provided to the FMP team.

### **6.1 MMO Statistics and Analysis team evidence summary:**

Data was provided for all species within the remit of the FMP and shows various landing data presented in different ways.

Data provided covered:

- Total landings (£'s and Tonnes)
- Vessel nationality
- Vessel length
- Gear type
- Gear and vessel nationality
- Landings by ICES division
- Landings by ICES rectangles
- Port of Landing
- Port and ICES division
- Seasonal trends

WG comments:

- WG said it was hard to absorb the information in the meeting but want to ask questions at a later date.

### **6.2 Seafish evidence summary**

Data was provided for all species within the remit of the FMP. Only UK fishing vessels landings and economic performance indicators were included in this data extract. Seafish used MMO data outlined above and looked at different ways to display it visually.

Data provided covered:

- Capacity and activity data by vessels economic dependency
- Spatial activity of the fleet
- Port reliance on the species associated with the FMP
- Economic data
- Employment (full-time equivalent) by fleet segments

WG comments:

- Agreed that covid contributed to the reduction in earnings for the NQS fleet.
- Lesser spotted dogfish is targeted for Bass. They have seen a lot of activity in the southeast and this may be why the species has declined.

### **6.3 Cefas evidence summary**

Information included in the evidence covered:

- Basic information on geographic distribution of the species
- Life history
- Definition of stock assessment unit(s)
- Ongoing data collection
- Stock assessment(s) and reference points

- Evidence gaps for assessment purposes
- Information on recreational fisheries

WG comments:

- Fishermen have seen a second spawning of cuttlefish in September/ October 2022 and are also seeing squid eggs in deep water 3 – 4 miles off of Beachy Head. The WG report seeing small sized cuttlefish.
- Query over stock assessment of lemon sole – There are stock assessment for 7d and nothing for 7e.
  - Cefas responded that it is dependent on the distribution of the stock. ICES area 7d is part of North Sea ecoregion and ICES area 7d lemon sole are put with North Sea assessment. Lemon sole data might not be available in 7e, and the recommendation is that these stock units need to be looked at. Need to make sure focusing on the science of lemon sole in 7e.

## 7. Next Steps for the evidence (see presentation published [here](#))

MMO presented to the WG that the next steps will be now that the commissioned evidence has been received.

The FMP team now going through all of the MMO, Seafish and Cefas reports and incorporating this into the Evidence Statement and FMP drafting.

## 8. AOB

### 8.1 Fly seining update

Defra gave an update on the recent fly seining consultation. The results have been analysed and there is clear steer towards the need for action, however there are mixed responses on what that action should be. Defra are aware they need to work with MMO and the WG to create a framework for overall management. The programme for making changes to retained EU law is taking a lot of resource and will shape what Defra may, or may not, be able to deliver in terms of legislative changes. The official Government response to the consultation will be published soon. Defra will keep the WG informed of any updates.

### 8.2 Exeter University Marine Planning Trade-Off Analysis Tool

MMO highlighted to the WG the work that Exeter university are carrying out to develop a Marine Planning Trade-Off Analysis Tool. The tool helps to determine the approach to management you take and highlights the trade-offs for different sectors. MMO and Exeter University are looking into how the tool can be used in the development of FMPs. MMO asked the group if Exeter University can come to a WG meeting. No WG members objected.

**Action:** MMO to invite Exeter University to a WG meeting to introduce the WG to the trade-off tool and how it could be used for FMPs.

### 8.3 Speakers for next WG meeting

MMO asked the WG if they would like anyone to come and speak at the next WG meetings.

WG comments:

- REM

- Funding mechanisms for the FMP

**Action:** MMO to invite speakers to WG meetings to update the group on REM and funding.

Final WG comments:

- Fishing in the channel is changing and this needs to be reflected in the FMP and need more join up with the science and what is happening on the ground. Scientific data normally lags with what's happening in the fishery. Never seen a second spawning of cuttlefish or as many squid eggs on the ground. Could be down to climate change or other factors. MMO says need to trial methodologies for how we include anecdotal evidence into the scientific evidence.
- Need industry reps on EAG – MMO highlights that there are several industry representatives on the EAG. WG want to see the EAG member list.

**Action:** MMO to send EAG member list to the WG.

## 9. Annex

### Actions

Section	Action	Responsible
4. FMP drafting approach	Set up a poll for the drafting sessions and WG meetings.	MMO
5. South Coast Engagement	Send WG members PDFs of leaflet and engagement dates to send to members	MMO
8. AOB	Invite REM, funding and Exeter University speakers to next WG meetings	MMO
8. AOB	Send evidence advisory group members list to WG member	MMO

### Actions from previous meeting

Section	Action	Responsible
3. FMP Vision	Amend the draft vision in line with WG comments	MMO
3. FMP Vision	Work with the working group in future to test language used in engagement	MMO
4. FMP Goals	Bring WG information on funding mechanisms for FMPs	Defra
4. FMP Goals	Set up bespoke sessions to draft FMP Goals and themes	MMO
7. Summary and next steps	Present to the WG on the evidence outputs and gaps	Cefas

### Attendees and apologies list

Name	Organisation
Isobel Johnston	Marine Management Organisation (MMO) (Chair) Head of Fisheries Management Plans

Rachel Thirlwall	MMO (Secretariat) Fisheries Manager
Nicholas French	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Alex Maydew	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Rebecca Korda	MMO Senior Evidence Specialist
Richard Hoskin	MMO Head of Sustainable Fisheries
Neil Whitney	Newhaven Fisherman
Emma Ulliyatt	Southern North Sea Flatfish FMP lead (Observer)
Dave Fernell	MMO Statistics and analysis team
Phil McBryde	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Team Leader NQS Policy Team
Chloe North	Western Fish Producer Organisation (FPO)
Chris Ranford	Cornish FPO
Mat Mander	South coast IFCA FMP lead
Arina Motova Survama	Seafish
Ted Legg	Gosport/ Portsmouth Fisherman
Katie McNally	Defra NQS Policy team
Rui	Centre for Environmental, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)
Gwladys Lambert	Cefas
Andrew Pillar	Interfish PO
<b>Apologies</b>	
Richard Stride	South Coast Fishermen's Council
Peter Eggleton	Weymouth Fishermen
Sean Cooper	Weyfish
Rachel Irish	MMO Principal Marine Officer
Juliette Hatchman	Southwest FPO
Dave Saunders	Professional Boatman's Association
Jessica Duffill Telsnig	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager