



Marine
Management
Organisation

Channel demersal non-quota species fisheries management plan:

Initial NQS data analysis

Working group supplementary paper

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Introduction

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are a legal obligation in the Fisheries Act as set out in the Joint Fisheries Statement. FMPs are the mechanism through which future management arrangements will be prepared. The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is leading on a frontrunner FMP - the Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species (NQS) FMP.

MMO has been commissioned to lead the work preparing the Channel Demersal NQS FMP for publication. There is currently a lack of data for the NQS so we will be drawing on both academic, practice based and internal expertise from various departments within and outside of MMO. The first iteration of this FMP will both set out management and evidence requirements as well as where the gaps sit which need addressing before more specific management can be applied. Until this happens a precautionary approach will be adopted in the absence of evidence.

This plan includes red/tub/grey gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, John Dory, red mullet, smoothhound, bib, turbot, lesser spotted dogfish, lemon sole, brill.

The aim of this paper is to describe non-quota species catch patterns. This paper is an accompaniment to data on NQS which will be [published](#) alongside it, to provide some initial analysis into NQS stocks in scope for the FMP. More detail and evidence will be provided in due course within the draft FMP and evidence statement.

Fishery overview

The term 'fishery' is broad given that the non-quota stocks within scope are caught across a range of seasonal and gear-specific fishery subsets and otherwise more generally caught in mixed fisheries with other quota stocks.

The UK Channel fishing fleet operates alongside EU vessels other than within the exclusively UK 6nm limit. The UK fleet is dominated by under 10m vessels in terms of numbers. Of the total [UK] catch of all species 17% of catches are taken from EU waters which represents 16% by value.

However, for both EU and UK fleets, the top ten stocks in terms of tonnes landed make up nearly 90% of total non-quota landings. When considering the top ten species by quantity landed and value across UK and EU fleets the following 10 species are covered in the top 6 from each category.

Cuttlefish	Squid
Lemon Sole	Turbot
Gurnard and Latchet	Brill
Pouting (Bib)	John Dory
Lesser Spotted Dogfish	Surmullet

Cuttlefish and lemon sole are the most important species by tonnage and value for the UK fleet whereas for the EU fleet cuttlefish and squid are most important. For the

UK fleet and to a lesser extent the EU fleet, cuttlefish makes up the largest component of non-quota stocks under consideration.

Fishing gear

88% of UK fleet catches of species within scope are caught with demersal trawls. The balance of non-quota to quota catches by demersal trawls are at the ratio of 59:41. Catches from Scottish seines have the strongest bias towards non-quota stocks (76% of the catch). Beam trawls are responsible for the largest proportion of non-quota catches.

Catches from gillnets are more biased towards quota stocks. This is because of the targeted nature of gillnet fisheries which have a focus on. However, small scale gillnet fisheries exist for e.g., red mullet and grey mullet.

Catches from traps make up a small percentage of relevant non-quota landings which is attributed to the important cuttle trap fishery.

Although demersal trawls take most non-quota catches, for UK beam trawls and otter trawls this is largely cuttlefish. For the UK beam trawls, cuttlefish is by far the largest catch in terms of tonnage. In the UK otter trawls cuttlefish and lemon sole make up most non-quota catches.

The EU fleet has a slightly different catch makeup with otter trawls landing the bulk of non-quota catch followed by beam trawls and Scottish seines.

It should be noted that there is significant spatial and temporal variation. For example, the beam trawl cuttlefish fishery is seasonal and largely confined to the west Channel.

Whilst fly seine fisheries in the Channel target non-quota stocks such as squid and red mullet, this gear takes considerably less cuttlefish than other demersal trawl gears.

The top 10 species landed by tonnage make up 86.9% of total landings of NQS from UK channel waters (once species covered by other bespoke fisheries management plans are removed). Cuttlefish landings contribute to the highest proportion of this making up 42.2% of NQS landings. Most cuttlefish landings are made by beam trawlers (60.0%) with other large contributions from Otter trawlers, including twin trawls (26.8%) and traps/pots (9.6%).

Targeted fisheries

Generally, the species in scope are caught as part of a mixed fishery although cuttlefish trap fishing can be described as targeted fisheries.

Trawl fisheries have various seasonal biases towards certain stocks such as squid, lemon sole and cuttlefish. Scottish seine fisheries are more focused on non-quota stocks such as squid and red mullet.

Measures

Non-quota species in scope of the FMP are subject to a mesh limit in certain areas and there are some non-direct impacts of gear restrictions for other species.

There are other indirect impacts such as closed areas to certain gear in marine protected areas (MPAs) and species-specific legislation which could affect our non-quota stocks. There are some Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA) byelaws such as closed areas which will also indirectly impact non quota stocks.

There is no constraint on the amount of non-quota stocks that can be landed except for the current UK - EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (the TCA). The species in scope do not have minimum sizes prescribed. However, there are some IFCA byelaws for minimum sizes for species in scope for the FMP.

Whilst quota stocks are by their nature automatically excluded from the Channel NQS plan, it is important to understand that the NQS species that are left within the scope of the plan are largely caught in combination with quota stocks. Management measures that apply to non-quota stocks may have an interaction with quota stocks.