

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

**Meeting Minutes 20th September 2022**

**Meeting Number 1**

13:00-16:00 Microsoft Teams

## Meeting minutes

**1. Introductions, apologies and housekeeping** – see Annex for attendees list

**2. Welcome, scene setting and objectives of the meeting**

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) outlined the background of the FMPs and how the frontrunners are an opportunity to explore new ways of working. MMO is the lead delivery partner for the Channel demersal non-quota species (NQS) fisheries management plan (FMP) and want to work in an inclusive, transparent and collaborative way. This is the first working group (WG) meeting and MMO invited different representatives from the commercial and recreational industry involved in the Channel fisheries to attend and participate in the WG.

MMO recognises that the Channel demersal NQS FMP is very complex involving a variety of species and fisheries and would like to understand from the 14 species which are in scope of the FMP, which are most critical and should be prioritised in the first iteration of the FMP.

MMO also noted the importance of engagement and communication with stakeholders and fishing communities and that the WG will be important in identifying opportunities and best practice.

WG comments:

- There is a need to provide a framework and guiding principles for the FMP rather than focusing on specifics.

**Action** – MMO will review and present this topic at the next WG meeting

**3. Review and agreement of draft Terms of Reference (ToR)**

MMO presented the WG with the draft ToR and asked for feedback. This document outlines the objectives and responsibilities of the group. The document will be published once agreed by the WG.

WG questions and comments on objectives of the WG:

- Development of an evidence statement should be included as it is an integral part of the FMP.
- Query of the purpose of the WG e.g. to be consulted on/challenge thinking or to develop the FMP together/co-design.
- Query if anecdotal evidence is given similar weight to other data e.g. scientific literature.
- Other frontrunner FMPs are led by co-management group set up and chaired by industry. Query if there is formal recognition that the industry is involved in this FMP. MMO is the designated delivery partner but the FMP is developed in collaboration with industry with the WG as the main route to support that collaboration.

**Action** – In ToR MMO to incorporate reference of evidence statement; make clear the purpose of the group which is to design and develop the FMP together; and the role of industry and recreational sector in the development of this FMP.

WG questions and comments on subgroups:

- Subgroups can help achieve ambitious timeframes, with smaller groups bring evidence/drafts back to the main WG.
- Query if subgroups will hold decision-making responsibilities as there is concern that this could dilute the input of the WG.

**Action** - MMO to make it clear in ToR that subgroups will hold an advisory role and will not have decision making responsibilities. Advice and suggestions will be brought to the main WG in order to make decisions.

WG question on future role of the WG:

- Query of the WG role during the implementation of the FMP. MMO want to first understand WG role in supporting Defra during consultation and publication phase. MMO will keep WG informed of any developments/outcomes.

#### **4. Expectations and agreement of code of conduct**

MMO presented the draft Code of Conduct to the WG and asked for feedback. This document outlines how the WG are expected to conduct themselves within meetings. The document will be published once agreed by the WG.

- WG member suggested the term “best available evidence” may be more suitable than “best available advice”, however others disagreed as advice may be suitable when there is a lack of evidence.

**Action** – MMO to review and amend as appropriate.

#### **5. Species prioritisation**

WG were presented with a species prioritisation paper which outlined the 14 species in scope for the Channel demersal non-quota species (NQS) fisheries management plan (FMP). It was explained that these species are caught in a variety of different fisheries and MMO cannot address all the issues at once as it is too complex. Therefore, to enable MMO to develop the first iteration of the FMP, MMO suggested to focus on the most important stocks and fisheries first, with a view to incorporating more species in future iterations of the FMP. MMO's suggestion is to prioritise cuttlefish, squid and octopus in this FMP iteration.

Note: comments below have been separated into categories for ease of reading.

WG comments and queries on species:

- It is crucial to think about how management of one species will affect other species as 14 species in scope of the FMP are caught in mixed fisheries. Need to also consider unintended consequences.
- Query of why cephalopods are prioritised as they have short life spans, compared to other species with longer life spans which may benefit more from management measures. Others suggested that cuttlefish is an intensive fishery with stress at all life stages. It is also lucrative and vital fishery.

- Differing views on available evidence for cuttlefish, with some suggesting cuttlefish is data deficient and others suggesting evidence gathering has commenced with Cefas being involved.
- Cuttlefish stocks are shared across UK and EU waters and therefore there will be limited management for UK waters only. However, the EU Commission will have the opportunity to comment on the FMP through formal consultation.
- It seems appropriate to focus on cephalopods for the first iteration. However, there is concern that considering octopus could slow down work as there is currently limited evidence completed.
- Query if other countries have multi-species FMPs we could gain best practises from. Multiannual plans are similar as they manage mixed quota species.
- There is an offshore and inshore fishery in particular for cephalopods. Queried if this needs to be taken into consideration when determining species prioritisation.

WG comments and queries on timeframes:

- Concern with timeframes to deliver the first iteration of the FMP particularly considering the multi-species nature of this FMP. Other frontrunner FMPs are only focusing on single species and already have concerns with timeframes.
- The first iteration of the FMP should focus on developing the framework rather than focusing on management measures as there could be unintended consequences related to species interactions.
- Industry expectations need to be managed of what can realistically be achieved in the first iteration of the FMP. If species are not covered within the first iteration, it does not mean they are being ignored. This iteration could focus on what evidence is currently available and evidence gaps will be filled.

WG comments and queries on FMP processes:

- Concern that data from recreational angling is lacking and recreational interests may not be fully represented.
- Desire to ensure the FMP can be revised as further evidence becomes available and follow a precautionary principle.
- Confusion over the purpose of this FMP and if it will explain more about the fishery than put management measures in plan. Suggestion that FMPs are a long-term plan on how to manage fisheries in the future. Part of the plan will outline if available evidence is sufficient to complete stock assessment and determine maximum sustainable yield (MSY). With data deficient species, further evidence may need to be collected before management decisions can be made. Suggestion that MMO present a visual of what FMP aiming to achieve and available evidence/gaps.
- Issue with communication e.g. a FMP indicates management will be part of the plan. Issue with increasing mistrust and frustrations that already exist so transparency is crucial.

**Action:** SWFPO send MMO scallop FMP visual representation as a template

## **6. WG subgroup: Evidence**

MMO proposed an evidence advisory group to be set up as a subgroup, mandated and endorsed by WG. This subgroup would be composed of technical experts from different industries such as academics, Cefas, statutory nature conservation bodies (SNCBs), environmental non-governmental organisations (eNGOs), commercial and recreational fishing industries.

The subgroup would provide access to relevant and high-quality evidence and independent expert advice. The evidence lead of the subgroup would deliver outcomes to the WG for discussion and decision making.

WG comments and queries:

- There is general support of this approach.
- Socio-economic specialists should be included in the evidence subgroup.
- Query if statutory nature conservation bodies have a role in advising Defra, if there is duplication of effort if they also sit on the evidence subgroup. MMO stated that SNCBs advise Defra on a programme level but can attend the subgroup and advise on a project level if certain colleagues have specialist knowledge.
- eNGOs often outsource scientific reports to consultants so may not have scientific expertise themselves.

**Action** – MMO to set up evidence subgroup and circulate draft ToR and suggested membership to the WG for comment.

## **7. Future WG meetings**

The WG were asked how they would like to move forward with WG meetings in terms of frequency and format.

WG comments:

- There is a requirement for WG members to better understand their responsibilities within the group first.
- Content for meetings to be monthly going forward, with an aim to send calendar invites asap. MMO need to co-ordinate with other FMP meetings to avoid clashes.
- Meetings should be held online.
- The communications and engagement strategy should be shared with the WG and how engagement can be promoted more widely with stakeholders.

**Action** - MMO to share communications and engagement strategy with WG. MMO to set up monthly WG meetings online.

## **8. AOB**

### **Feedback survey**

Feedback surveys will be sent out after meetings to allow for WG to make suggestions of improvements to meetings.

### **Proposed Finfish Industry Advisory Group (FIAG) FMP group**

MMO explained to the WG that there is an opportunity to link up with the proposed FIAG FMP group whose purpose would be to ensure that FIAG members have an oversight of all of the FMPs currently being prepared.

- Query of the responsibility of Seafish in setting up FMP groups not related to their delivery. MMO suggested it can ensure FIAG members can provide input into FMPs.
- Multiple groups can create confusion and places unnecessary stress on stakeholders. If there was correct representation within one group then further groups do not need to be created.

## Face to face engagement

MMO explained that they are planning to hold face-to-face engagement events along the south coast in autumn and asked for feedback.

WG queries and comments:

- People need to be given adequate time to be able to attend the in-person events and need considerable notice.
- Important to have feedback from representatives on the WG to the people they represent.
- Concern of what the purpose of the face-to-face engagement would be and if there is sufficient time to develop FMP with WG before engagement.
- Query if MMO produced a feedback document following face to face engagement in June 2022. This is available [here](#). A feedback document following a forum with recreational anglers is also available [here](#).

**Action** - MMO to review purpose of face-to-face engagement and if required at this stage. Any outcomes will be shared with the WG.

## Actions

Section	Action	Responsible
3. Terms of reference	Incorporate reference of evidence statement; make clear the purpose of the group and role of industry in the development of FMP; outline subgroups will hold advisory role only.	MMO
4. Code of conduct	Review terminology used around “advice” and “evidence”	MMO
5. Species prioritisation	Send MMO scallop FMP visual representation as a template	SWFPO
6. WG evidence subgroup	Set up evidence subgroup and circulate draft ToR and suggested membership	MMO
7. Future WG meetings	Share communications and engagement strategy with WG. Set up monthly WG meetings online.	MMO
8. AOB	Review purpose of face-to-face engagement and if required at this stage.	MMO

## Annex

Attendees	
Name	Organisation/representation
Richard Hoskin	Marine Management Organisation (MMO) Head of Fisheries and Conservation
Isobel Johnston	MMO Head of Fisheries Management Plan Team
Nicholas French	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Jessica Duffill Telsnig	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager (Meeting Chair)
Rachel Thirlwall	MMO Fisheries Manager (Working Group Secretariat)
Georgia Clack	MMO Fisheries Manager
Rebecca Korda	MMO Principal Evidence Specialist
Julian Roberts	MMO Head of Future Fisheries
Freya Mitchison	Defra Policy Non-quota species Team
Joanna Messini	Defra Policy Non-quota species Team
Charlie and Bill Brock	South East Fishermen’s Protection Society
Nick West	Mevagissey Fishermen’s Association

Chloe North	Western Fisheries Producer Organisation (FPO) Brixham and Newlyn
Chris Ranford	Cornish FPO
Hannah Rudd	Angling Trust
Juliette Hatchman	South West FPO commercial fishermen
Louise Williams	Chapmans - Sussex and Kent
Mandelai Wolfe	Lyme Bay Fisherman's Community Interest Company (CIC)
Matt Mander	FMP lead for Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA)
Richard Stride	South Coast Fishermen's Council
Peter Eggleton	Weymouth Fishermen's Association
Ted Legg	Commercial fisherman representing Eastern Solent areas
Jason Berry	Plymouth CIC
<b>Apologies</b>	
Sean Cooper	Weyfish
Dave Saunders	Professional Boatman's Association
Neil Witney	Newhaven fishermen