

Meeting Notes 11th September 2024

South – 7d

15:00 – 17:00 MS Teams Conference Call

Summary

Meeting title	S RFG Meeting
Attendees	18
Start time	15:00
End time	16:37
Meeting duration	1h 37m

Attendees

Industry Charlie Brock Kyle Bickerstaff Richard Stride David Curtis Tom Russel	MMO Paul Johnson Jonathan Brooks Jacob Bestwick Katie James Gordon Chittenden Alisha Patel Caley McIntosh Alex Murphey	DEFRA Iain Glasgow Andy Welberry SUIFCA Angharad Purcell Vanessa Simons
SIFCA Sarah Birchenough		

Agenda

- 1) Paul Johnson, MMO – Welcome & Introduction
- 2) Katie James / Jacob Bestwick, MMO – Quota
- 3) Iain Glasgow DEFRA – Negotiations Q&A
- 4) Angharad Purcell, SUIFCA – Netting permit bylaw consultation update
- 5) Gordon Chittenden, MMO – Tranche 4 Wrasses Complex and Black Sea Bream FMP
- 6) AOB

Contact details

Quota Team – Katie James / Jacob Bestwick
inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk

Wrasses Complex and Black Sea Bream FMP Team
FMP@marinemanagement.org.uk

Whelk FMP Team
SustainableFisheries@marinemanagement.org.uk

Sussex IFCA
admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk / 01273 454407

Southern IFCA
enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk / 01202 721373

Meeting recording

The meeting was recorded and can be accessed online at the following web address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23uWILN7vk0>

1. Paul Johnson, MMO – Welcome & Introduction

Paul, Principal Marine Officer for the Southeast and the Chair of this meeting opened the meeting.

There were no objections to the meeting being recorded nor were there any comments or questions prior to the start of the first speaker.

2. Jacob Bestwick & Katie James, MMO – Undulate Ray Update and Quota Q&A

The slides presented can be found at the end of the minutes.

A pre-recorded quota uptake update by the Inshore Quota Team was shared prior to the meeting but can still be found at the following web address:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8miZnt6k-D8

Undulate Ray

Jacob shared data from 2021 – 2024 showing:

- In 2021 the UK received an allocation of 72 tonnes (bycatch only).
- In 2022 the UK received an allocation of 75 tonnes (bycatch only).
- In 2023 there was a large increase in allocation which was 1051 tonnes for the whole of the UK. The 50kg per trip limit was increased to 200kg per trip

and away from a bycatch only stock. The uptake in 2023 was 117 tonnes (11%).

- In 2024 the UK allocation was 1358 tonnes, and the uptake so far is 52 tonnes (4%).

Jacobs explained there has been a quite large increase in allocation over the last few years, however, the uptake hasn't followed. In 2023, the 50kg catch limit (per trip) was increased to 200kg, originally as part of the management of the 0 TAC bycatch only period. From 1st September 2024, this has been changed to a catch limit of 2 tonnes per month.

Jacob stated there are several reasons for this and they are:

- To bring the stock in line with other stocks, which are mostly managed as per month allowances.
- To allow more flexibility for industry.
- There has been requests from larger vessels that found that catch limit restrictive.

Jacob shared that the 2 tonnes was based on the quota uptake data, being that no vessel so far has exceeded that amount in 2022, 2023 or 2024. As well as review of consultation responses in the catch limit review which was published 19th to 28th August, and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/september-2024-catch-limit-review>

Jacob reiterated that the restrictions on the minimum and maximum landing sizes and the closed period (May – August) still applies as per the UK Licence schedule.

Questions, Comments & Answers:

Undulate Ray

An industry member commented that historically the uptake is low because it is a bycatch species but by putting a monthly catch limit on it you will turn it into a target species. This is something to note for the quota team and for fishers.

Jacob acknowledged this comment and stated that there is a large enough quota allocation to cover an increase and that this is something that the team will be monitoring.

Q: Industry: Are you keeping the requirement to land to be landed whole and gutted, or can fishers land them as wings?

A: Jacob: This currently remains the same, but comments on this have been passed to DEFRA as it would have to be changed in the determination and TAC quota regulation.

Q: Industry: Wanted clarification on landing whole and gutting. The interpretation is that once landed it can be winged.

A: Paul: Yes, that is correct. It is purely for landing that it must be whole, then you can do what you like with them once they are on the quayside.

Q: Industry: Does this mean that undulate ray can be represented as wing presentation on the sales note?

A: Paul: Yes, the catch app will show it is landed whole and the sales note will show as winged. This is flagged but we are aware of this issue.

Q: Industry: The ICES advice shows that twice as much is being discarded than landed, which appears to be wasteful and unsustainable. What is happening with this?

A: Katie: This would be difficult for the MMO to answer as the science comes from ICES. Under the landing obligation for the MMO, skates and rays have a discard exemption in consideration of high survivability and therefore, although its discarded it may not be discarded dead.

Sole & Plaice

Q: Industry: From the quota video there is a lot of swaps from Sole 7d and Plaice 7d, are you confident given the high percentage of swaps in those 2 species that you'll get a similar ratio next year?

A: Jacob: Yes, we are fairly confident that we will still be able to cover what is needed for the non-sector in terms of uptake. The uptake for sole 7d has been lower than previous years, so there has been more trade this year than normal.

Brill

Paul commented that if undulate ray becomes a targeted species, brill will be bycatch because of the gear used. This would need monitoring as brill is a quota species and therefore need to be landed under the landing obligation. Jacob answered by stating that there is some flexibility for example with POs, if it does become an issue but will be monitored.

Q: Industry: How many under 10s or over 10s non sector caught the 600kg for brill?

A: Jacob: There hasn't been many vessels reaching the limit, a few that have been close. Trade has come from some of the PO's so there was an opportunity to increase a little bit.

General

An industry member commented that the monthly charts seem very compressed this year on a lot of the species, which suggests that either there's a lower abundance of the species or there has been a change in fishing patterns.

Another industry member commented that the weather pattern has caused difficulty in fishing this year as boats didn't fish as many days during the spring as they have done in previous years which will affect uptake.

Another industry member asked that with low uptake, is there an opportunity to do something with capped licences. Andy Welberry from DEFRA commented that the cap has been temporarily lifted until the end of year and DEFRA are hoping to get more clarity before the end of the year.

3. Iain Glasgow, DEFRA – Negotiations Q&A

Iain introduced himself as being from the negotiations division at DEFRA. Iain explained that he had gained lots of insight from the quota update discussion but had a series of questions that he wanted to hear industry members thoughts on.

7d Sole

Q: Iain: From the earlier discussion, it appears the uptake to date has been weather driven and there is not an issue with abundance and that there is a risk of a problem from the potential of a 20% cut. Would it be right to say a 20% cut would be a problem or is uptake likely to be low again next year?

A: Industry: A 20% cut would 100% cause a problem because then what you are reliant on to swap in, the POs will not have it. If swaps have already been secured this year or with the promise for next year, if the POs have a 20% cut, they won't have any more to give.

Q: Iain follow up question: Is there concern about the level of quota that is leaving the UK.

A: Industry: Not able to comment on the question as the amount of international swaps is not known.

Q: Iain: Can you confirm that there is an abundance of stock in the channel or the eastern channel

A: Positive visual responses given.

Q: Industry: Was the earlier question referring to sole quota leaving the UK which might be traded in negotiations in the annual negotiations or traded operationally throughout the year?

A: Iain: Only that traded operationally across the year, that being what POs and other groups would swap in and out during the year. We are not planning to swap in or out any quota with the EU.

Iain added that last year, the group TAC for 7d sole was 2,712 of which the UK received 427 tonnes.

Eastern Channel Skates and Rays

Iain stated that he does not have the advice for skates and rays yet as it will only be published on 4th October 2024. Iain welcomed any comments in relation to skates and rays.

Q: Is it still true that a B to K flex can be used for skates, so that if you did need more you can use that unused from b to k in d?

A: Iain: Yes.

The industry member confirmed that if this was the case then in previous years it has been enough for the eastern channel to get through, even in high fishing years to use the b to k flex as there is a lot more than in d.

Q: Iain: Are there any species of skates and rays that the group was concerned about?

A: Industry: No, there seems to be an abundance everywhere.

Eastern Channel Lemon Sole

Iain stated that the Eastern Channel Lemon Sole was one of the new TAC stocks where the advice is for a 30% cut. Iain commented that he believes in the Eastern Channel there is a relatively low uptake, with 7 tonnes in 2023. If the 30% cut was implemented, then the opening quota would be 20 tonnes for 2025. Based on 2023 data this would be ok. Iain asked the group for any comments on this.

Katie from the Quota team answered by stating that there has been requests from the non-sector for an increase because industry have seen good lemon soles with 30-40kg being caught in a day fishing and therefore the currently catch limit of 200kg wouldn't be enough. There is a potential for it to not have an impact, but it could do if people were to see more lemon sole.

Iain commented that there was also an opportunity to use flex with area 4. Katie responded by confirming this but said they have not had to use this so far, but this could be a future option.

An industry member commented that in the western end of 7d (in inshore waters) they do not catch lemon sole, so it is not the same throughout the whole area of 7d.

Other questions

An industry member commented that the ICES advice (recruitment) for Bass doesn't match up with the data from the Solent survey, with the Solent survey showing less positive data on recruitment and wanted to highlight this ahead of the CEFAS briefing on the 19th which is expected to be the better forum for this question.

Q: Industry: ICES have stated that the way they produce advice for stocks that are below B trigger isn't very good, but they are still issuing the advice. What does the government/DEFRA do with advice where it has been noted that there is a problem?

A: *Answer not able to be provided during the meeting. Answer is outstanding and will be added to the minutes once available and shared at the start of the next meeting.*

Q: An industry member, raised that there is a UK issue which effects the south east which is the underutilisation especially in Wales, where an example of 37 tonnes of f & g soles not being used, which the POs and under 10m pool can utilise as swap currency to get in d sole and d plaice.

Why is there underutilisation and why is nothing being done to make full use of the resource?

A: Iain / Andy: It is not within their remit to comment on that, but they will raise it with the Quota Policy Team. *Answer not able to be provided during the meeting. Answer is outstanding and will be added to the minutes once available and shared at the start of the next meeting.*

Q: Paul: Is there an update on the transfer of bass authorisations?

A: Andy shared that the bass management working group has been set up and will be having the first meeting in November. This is made up of a mixture of people from DEFRA, Welsh government, regulators, scientists and from people working in commercial sectors.

Q: Industry: We were hoping to be involved in the bass working group, however, have not heard anything.

A: Andy: Your details can be passed on so that the team can get in touch and give an update.

4. Angharad Purcell, SUIFCA – Netting permit bylaw consultation update

Angharad Purcell introduced herself from Sussex IFCA. Angharad stated that the second consultation has now closed, and the team are currently analysing the data from the consultation. There is a technical subcommittee meeting scheduled for the 26th of September where the team will be presenting the analysis and the recommendations. The IFCA will then be having the principal committee later in October following any conclusions from the subcommittee meeting. The netting bylaw will then move forward later in the year.

Angharad further explained that the IFCA have had a few bylaws in the process the last couple of years and are waiting to sign off from the minister on the minimum size bylaw. The IFCA have also sent the marine protected areas bylaw 2023 to the MMO and are waiting for the hand gathering bylaw to be signed off.

5. Gordon Chittenden, MMO – Tranche 4 Wrasses Complex and Black Sea Bream FMP

The presentation slides can be found at the end of this document.

Gordon introduced himself as the Principal Fisheries Manager in the Fisheries Management Plans team and will cover the Wrasses Complex and Black Sea Bream FMP which is due to be published next year. The species covered are:

<u>Wrasses Complex FMP</u>	<u>Black Sea Bream FMP</u>
Goldsinny	Black seabream
Ballan	Gilthead seabream
Corkwing	
Rock cook	

Wrasses Complex FMP

Gordon stated that the commercial landings are dominated by live wrasse fishery, destined for usage in salmon aquaculture. The team have collected a lot of anecdotal evidence from fishers that when it is caught it is used at pot bait. The team are also aware of underlying landings from wrasse bycatch. The species are important both commercially and recreationally, particularly for shore-based anglers and some charter interest. Gordon explained that they are a key species within reef ecosystems and that they are a slow growing species and ballans which are the key commercial species are protogynous hermaphrodites (born female and can change sex to male later in life). They are mostly inshore species although there are some offshore landings (probably associated with towed gears). There is also no stock assessments and very little species-specific reporting.

Black Seabream FMP

Gordon explained that initially the JFS identified this FMP to be only black sea bream, however, it had been identified that it should include guilthead bream for which approval has been received from DEFRA.

Black Sea Bream (*Spondyliosoma cantharus*)

- The species are migratory, the juveniles recruit into estuarine and coastal environments. The adults come back to nest in April to June.
- They are targeted by commercial and recreational vessels during the nesting period (April to June).
- Nesting black bream are a designated feature of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) within Sussex, Hampshire and Dorset.
- Historically it was a pair-trawl fishery in the southeast.
- There is no stock assessment and there are some concerns around the reporting (e.g. landings under generic bream codes)
- There are concerns around specific targeting of males.

Guilthead Bream (*Sparus aurata*)

- Species has been added due to stakeholder feedback and government evidence.
- Southwest focus but there is evidence that there is an eastly spread along the channel and further north.
- An important recreational species, but some landings from netting fisheries.
- There is no stock assessment and there are concerns around the lack of species-specific reporting

Gordon explained the stages for developing the FMP:

The first being the scoping stage which is about gathering evidence. In this stage there has been informal discussions with the IFCA, work with other bodies such as CEFAS and had some informal discussions with fishers and recreational bodies on the south coast.

The next stage is the pre-engagement stage (this is the stage the team are currently moving into). This stage looks at getting more evidence through online surveys, and stakeholder discussions etc. The online survey was released on Friday (6th September 2024). Gordon asked industry if it is seen on social media etc please share with those that may be interested in it. (*The QR code is at the bottom of this section*).

The engagement stage will use workshops (hopefully early 2025) and working groups. Gordon stated that the team will be inviting individuals to workshop after Christmas once those individuals have been selected. The team are looking for those that are keen to contribute, listen and consider other views, as well as sharing their own.

Gordon reiterated that there are no preconceived ideas on what this FMP is going to look like and therefore, it is important for stakeholders and industry to help develop the FMP by sharing their views. The workshops in early 2025 will be based around 4 or 5 locations across the south coast which will focus on the detailed conversations

around management and potential outcomes of the FMP. Gordon stated that for those that cannot make the in-person workshops there will be virtual ones too.

Gordon stated that if any industry members or stakeholders have any comments or would like to be involved in the FMP engagements to please contact the team via email (*contact details in contact section of this document*).

Gordon concluded by thanking everyone for their time.



Questions, Comments & Answers:

An industry member commented that it is correct to state that fishers use wrasse as pot bait but only those which are caught incidentally in the pots. There is not a separate fishery directed at them for use as bait. They also do appear in net catches but because they tend to inhabit reef and other ground where it is difficult to catch them with nets, there is no targeted fishery for them. As SIFCA has a code of practise to manage the targeted fishery for the salmon farms, which appears to be going well, it is important that they are on the working group as they are doing a lot of work that could be beneficial to the FMP.

Another industry member commented that bream do appear to be in abundance, particularly around Portland and that catches in the winter are good. The industry member agreed with the above comments that the wrasse (for bait) that is caught is in pots not nets.

Q: Industry: I have not been able to complete the survey in one sitting, is there an option to save it and continue later?

A: Gordon: Unfortunately, no, you would need to go through it in one go. However, this will be mentioned to the team as feedback.

Q: Industry: On the survey there didn't seem to be any way of saying that we utilise the bycatch of wrasse.

A: Gordon: There are points in the survey where you can write free text and those are the places best to put these sorts of comments.

Q: Industry: I was filling out the survey for the association, however it treats me like an individual person not a group. Additionally, there were a few stumbling blocks filling it out.

A: Gordon: I will call to follow up with you.

6. Alex Murphey, MMO – Whelk FMP

Alex introduced himself as being part of the fisheries management plan implementation team working on the whelk FMP.

Alex stated if anyone wants any further information or wants to share their views on the whelk FMP to get in touch with the team (*contact details are at the beginning of this document*).

7. AOB

Q: There is quite a lot of interest from commercial fishers in increasing minimum conservation reference size for some species for example, sole and bream. SIFCA was looking at these species, but where the FMPs include a review of the minimum conservation reference size, it seems to have taken local efforts out. Is there any reason for that to be discouraged?

A: Sarah: This is correct that the IFCA did investigate this a few years ago. The important factor to consider is to align nationally and work with FMP teams to align on species.

A: Alex: local level work is important and from an FMP perspective teams will be working together to potentially harmonise sizes.

An industry member commented that it is important to have one minimum conservation size to avoid complications for fishers and enforcement.

Q: Industry: Will there be a change in fly seining law by some sort of horsepower restrictions and is this still a worry to commercial fishers?

A: Paul: Yes, there is some regulations in the pipework regarding fly seiners in the 12nm. The horsepower restriction is not yet in place.

Paul asked when the industry members wanted the next meeting. Industry members agreed that it would be useful to have the next meeting after the negotiations have happened. Jonny stated that a few dates will be given by poll for the next meeting date.

The meeting was concluded at 16:37

Thank you for attending this Regional Fisheries Group meeting. If you would like comment on these or previous minutes, be added to this groups contact list, or contribute in any other way please contact the MMO Regional fisheries Mailbox: regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk or find out more at the Regional Fisheries Groups webpage: Regional Fisheries Groups - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



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RJU 7de Undulate Ray 1st Sept 2024

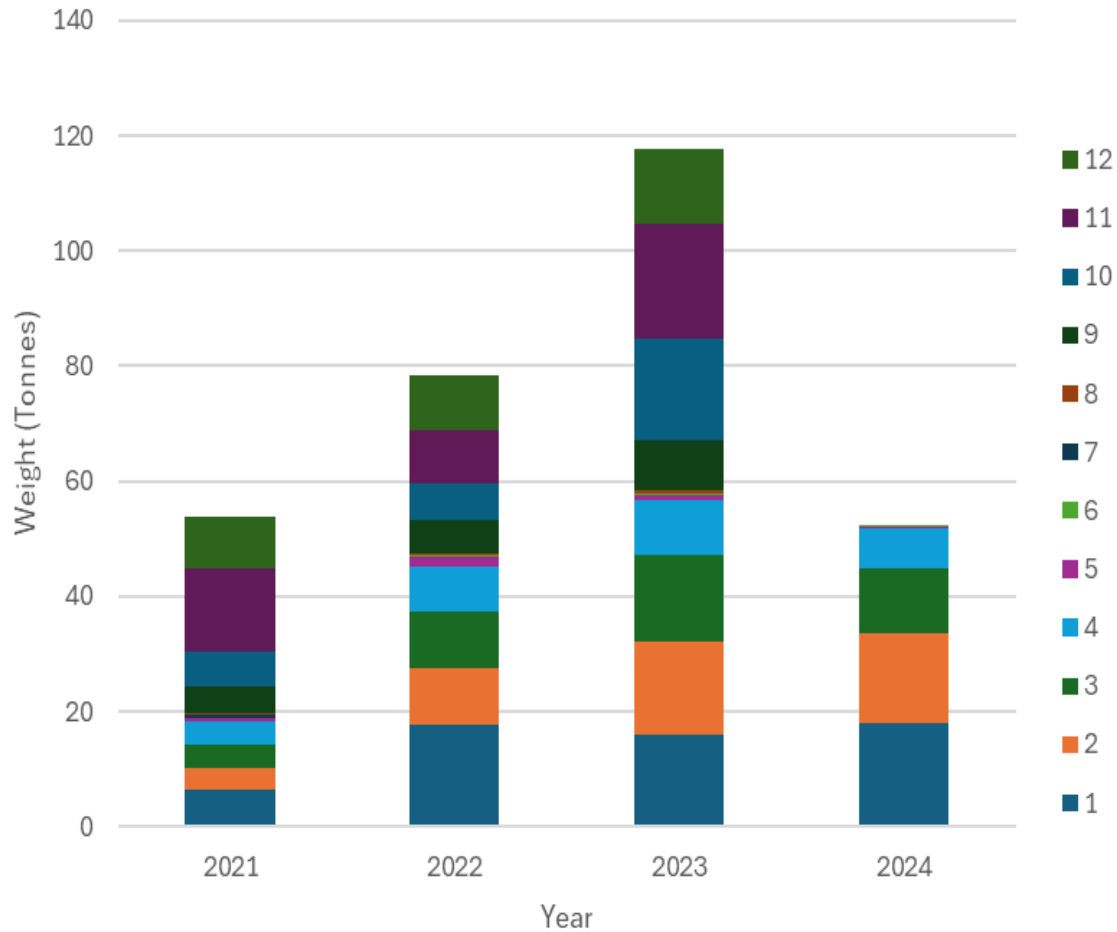
Katie James
Jacob Bestwick

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Undulate Ray 7d & e

Monthly Uptake by Year - RJU 7de



UK 2021 Allocation - 72t – by catch only
UK 2022 Allocation - 75t – by catch only
UK 2023 allocation – 1051t – UK Uptake 117.7t (11%)
UK 2024 allocation = 1358t – UK Current uptake 52t (4%)

2023 CL – 50kg increased to 200kg per trip allowance – originally as part of the management of the 0 TAC By catch only period

From 1st September 2024 – 2t p/month

- Allows more flexibility for industry management –requests from larger vessels in earlier in the year.
- UK data shows no vessel has exceeded 2t per month in 2023/24
- IUCN (International union for conservation of nature) – classified species as “endangered” based on an assessment from 2003 – last updated 2009
- ICES – Category 2 assessment – This stock was bench marked in 2022 – “ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, landings in 2023 and 2024 should be no more than 4836 and 4675 tonnes respectively.” UK/EU
- Catch limit review – published 19th to 28th August [September 2024 Catch Limit Review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2024-september-catch-limit-review)

Restrictions on the minimum and maximum landing sizes and the closed period (May-August) still apply as per the UK Licence schedule.

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Please remember you can get in touch with us regarding catch limits – Email, Text or Call....

Katie James: 07747638655

Jacob Bestwick: 07469443840

inshorequotamanager@marinemangement.org
[.uk](http://www.marinemangement.org)

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Wrasses Complex and Black Sea Bream FMPs

Gordon Chittenden
Principal Fisheries Manager

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Wrasse Complex FMP Scoping: Key Points

Wrasses Complex (*Ballan, corkwing, goldsinny, cuckoo and rock cook*)

- Commercial landings dominated by live wrasse fishery, destined for usage in salmon aquaculture.
- Underlying landings from bycatch/pot bait usage.
- Important recreational species, particularly for shore-based anglers. Some charter interest.
- Key species within reef ecosystems
- Slow growing, ballan hermaphroditic
- Widely distributed, but abundance dependent on habitat (rocky shore, reef).
- Inshore bias
- No stock assessments



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Black Bream FMP Scoping: Key Points

Black Sea Bream (*Spondyliosoma cantharus*)

- Adults migratory, juveniles recruit into estuarine and coastal environments.
- Targeting by both commercial and recreational vessels during nesting period (April-June).
- Designated feature of MCZs
- Historic pair-trawl fishery (SE)
- No stock assessment, reporting concerns
- Research on PRM essential to understand
- Hermaphroditic, concerns around specific targeting of males

Gilthead Bream (*Sparus aurata*)

- Formally added to FMP based on stakeholder feedback and government evidence
- Distribution and abundance spreading, but SW focus
- Important recreational species, but some landings from nets
- No stock assessment, concern around reporting



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Scoping Stage

Identify Issues

Sustainability, evidence, social and economic issues identified through initial scoping of fisheries and sustainability evidence. Will include discussions with MMO colleagues and other internal bodies (i.e. IFCA, Cefas) and commission of evidence products.

Pre-engagement stage

Develop Online Survey

Online survey implemented to identify stakeholders, issues, solutions and evidence gaps (post-election)

Informal Stakeholder Discussion

Pre-election sensitive discussions held with key contacts to understand fishery and potential management/evidence requirements

Pre-engagement Report

Engagement Stage

Remote engagement on refinements

WG Review

WG feedback on results from pre-engagement stage with view to prepare workshop material.

Regional Stakeholder Worksnops

Stakeholder engagement (including regional workshops) undertaken to gather feedback on draft management options, evidence gaps etc.

Refinement Stage

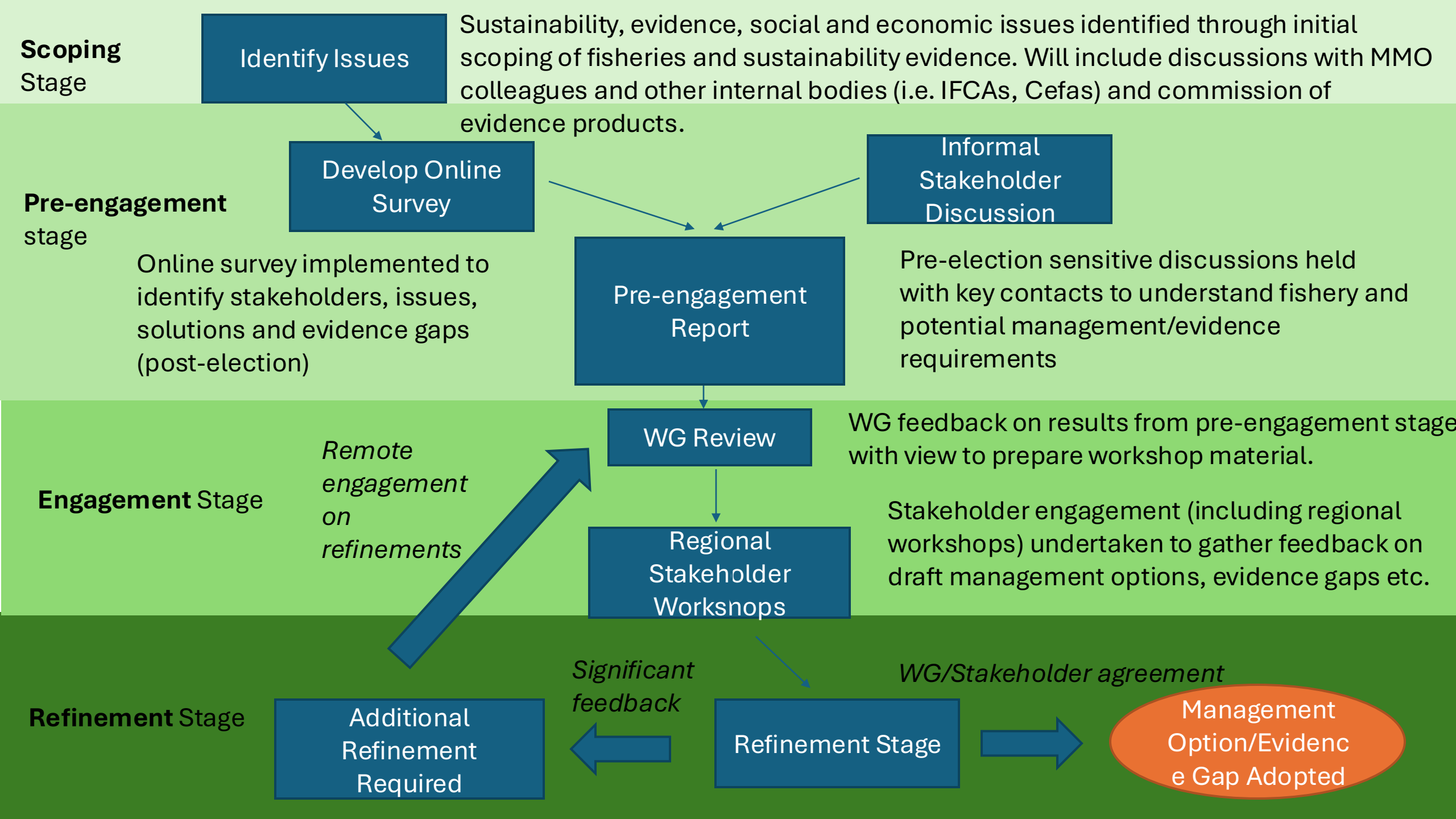
Additional Refinement Required

Significant feedback

Refinement Stage

WG/Stakeholder agreement

Management Option/Evidence Gap Adopted



Next Steps

Online Survey

- Has been released, link has been circulated via social media and government channels (*please share!*)
- Focus on understanding your thoughts on the fisheries, existing management and evidence.
- Identifying interested stakeholders for further engagement



Informal Stakeholder Engagement

- In-person and online engagement with stakeholders across the coast
- Focus on gathering more information, identifying interest, understanding fisheries.
- Now until end of 2024



Working Group, Workshops and Formal Engagement

- Working Group invites to be sent end of September
- Stakeholder workshops early 2025
- Focus on discussing detailed outcomes of the FMPs with key stakeholders identified through previous stages.
- 4-5 locations across S.coast



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Take our quick online survey to help shape future management of wrasses and black seabream in English waters

Scan the QR code to get started



**Wrasse and Bream:
FMP@marinemanagement.org.uk**

Please let us know if you'd prefer a phone call.

You can also find our contact details on the FMP policy page on gov.uk