



Marine Management Organisation

Date: 01/10/24 @ 14:00 – 15:30

Location: MS Teams

Subject: Celtic Sea & Western Channel Demersal FMP – Working Group Meeting 1

Chair: Rachel Thirlwall (MMO)

Secretariat: Mark Qureshi (MMO)

Attendance

Rachel Thirlwall (RT)	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Richard Hoskin (RH)	MMO Head of Sustainable Fisheries
Nicholas French	MMO Principal Fisheries Manager
Mark Qureshi	MMO Fisheries Manager
Alwyn Ponteen	MMO Fisheries Manager
Emily Theobald	MMO Southwest Principal Marine Officer
Hannah Rudd	Angling Trust Policy Advisor
Andrew Collin	Anglo Scottish Fish Producers' Organisation
Rui Vieira	Cefas
Ewen Bell	Cefas
Chris Ranford	Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation
Phil Green	Defra Celtic Sea Policy Division and EU negotiations
Mat Mander	Devon and Severn IFCA
David Stevens	Fishing into the Future
Nick West	Mevagissey Fishermen's Association
John Balls	North Devon Fishermen's Association
Adam Holland	Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation Fisheries Sustainability Officer

Edward Baker	Plymouth Fishing and Seafood Association, CEO
Juliette Hatchman	South West Fish Producers' Organisation
Jim Evans	Welsh Fishermen's Association
Colin Charman	Natural Resources Wales Lead Specialist Advisor: Marine Fisheries
Alexander Scorey	Natural Resources Wales Lead Specialist Advisor: Marine Fisheries
Harry Owen	Western Fish Producer Organisation (WFPO)
Matthew Sayer	Welsh Government Marine Science Lead
Apologies	
Anna Maclennan	MMO Southwest Regional Fisheries Group Lead
Paul Dolder	Cefas Celtic Sea and Western Channel demersal FMP lead
Sarah Clark	Deputy Chief Officer Devon and Severn IFCA

Agenda Topics:

1. Welcome and introductions

- RT - The aim of this first meeting is to provide an overview of the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal (CSWCD) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP), topics will be discussed in more detail in future meetings.
- RH thanked members for their participation, and re-iterated that this is a complex FMP, and it is encouraging to see industry is engaged. Looking for WG input.

2. Working Group Terms of Reference (ToR)

MMO went through the draft WG ToR with the group. Please find published Working Group (WG) ToR [here](#)

WG feedback:

- WG member wanted clarity around whether the WG could influence species prioritisation of those listed within the ToR or additional species. MMO said that other stocks identified and agreed can be included later- **Action**
- Red sea bream Latin name needs correcting - **Action**
- Latin name of sailray needs correcting - **Action**
- Anna Maclennan name needs correcting – **Action**

- Colin Charman agency needs correcting - **Action**
- MMO agreed to distribute updated ToR for review

3. Overview of the CSWCD FMP

Please see the WG presentation given [here](#) for further information on this agenda item.

WG feedback

- SW pilot may not be attended by all commercial sectors, seems to be focussed on Cornish fishers only and February 2025 is a long time to wait to engage with fishing industry. MMO replied that the SW Pilot is not the only opportunity pre-Christmas to engage the fishing industry as they are hosting a number of online events and Regional Fishery Group port visits as well as the online survey which will run until 2025. **Action - MMO to follow up with WG member to discuss additional workshops in the SW.**
- WG member asked what the plan for engaging with Welsh stakeholders is. MMO responded that they had steer from Welsh Government that in person engagement in Wales may not be beneficial. Therefore, Welsh stakeholders are invited to attend all events, both in person and online and to complete the online survey. Bespoke in person engagement in Wales could be considered if stakeholders feel it is necessary.
- WG member asked if Natural Resources Wales had been commissioned to provide Statutory Nature Conservation Body Advice. **Action - MMO to check with Welsh government colleagues**
- MMO asked the group if January 2025 would be a good time to engage if they could bring engagement events forward. WG responded that this would be an appropriate time to engage.
- WG members wanted to see a detailed list of planned engagement. MMO responded that they will share any planned engagement with the WG to circulate to the individuals they represent.

4. Issues/Opportunities discussion

The MMO invited WG members to have an open discussion on the issues and opportunities that the FMP could focus on within the first iteration.

WG feedback

- WG members highlighted that the FMP is covering too much and that we cannot do something for every species included. MMO responded that this is why a species prioritisation exercise is needed to understand where the FMP can focus on for the first iteration.
- WG member suggested prioritising species by economic value.
- MMO suggested de-prioritising deep-water sharks as they are a prohibited species.

- WG member highlighted that spatial squeeze is an issue in the FMP area that is impacting the fishing industry e.g. offshore wind farms and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- WG member asked if the issue with stock units of sole in 7e can be addressed by the FMP. Cefas advised that there is a live Defra funded project being carried out that looks at stock units of sole in the Western Channel which has an expected completion date of April 2025.
- WG members wanted gadoids such as pollack prioritised within the FMP. Other WG members noted that pollack is already heavily managed and any management options within the FMP will need to be agreed with the EU.
- WG member said that Republic of Ireland will have an interest in the nephrops fishery as well as other EU stakeholders and asked how engagement with those stakeholders is being handled. MMO said that the consultation will be open for all to respond to but would like to discuss other ways of engaging with these stakeholders. **Action - MMO to contact WG member to discuss engagement with Republic of Ireland and EU.**
- WG member highlighted that climate change is causing a northward shift in many FMP species and that stock issues are not solely caused by fishing activities. MMO responded that the FMP has a section included on the impact of climate change on the stocks and will look to develop the evidence base further.
- WG member highlighted the need to understand which vessels are fishing in UK waters, specifically within the 6-12 nautical mile limit. MMO responded that they will review the available data and report back at the next WG
- WG member highlighted that the language in the FMP needs to focus on opportunities as well as concerns.
- WG member suggested that the FMP could be used to support food security. WG members highlighted that other FMPs do not highlight future opportunities for supporting the fishing industry and that all FMPs should include goals around this. MMO invited the WG to share any lessons learned from their involvement in other FMPs.

5. Next steps

Please see the presentation given to the working group here for further information on next steps.

6. AOB

No other topics of discussion were brought up by the WG.

7. Feedback received via email on the WG meeting

WG members were given the opportunity to submit further feedback via email.

WG feedback

- WG member highlighted that recreationally important species within the scope of this FMP are cod, pollack, haddock, whiting, plaice, thornback ray, small eye ray, blonde ray, spotted ray, cuckoo ray, and undulate ray. Blue and white

skate are also occasionally caught (and released). Shore-based and boat-based (both private vessel and charter boat) recreational fishing is socio-economically important in this region. In addition to the UKSAIL/SADP data, sea angling clubs in the region may also be interested in sharing their catch records with the region to support the FMPs development.

- WG member agreed that it is important to recognise and account for environmental factors within management decision-making. However, we should be cautious in supporting the notion that overfishing and damaging fishing practices do not contribute to stock declines in the region. An evidence-based approach to fisheries management that focuses on maintaining or recovering fish stocks to sustainable levels, in line with the requirements under the Fisheries Act and Joint Fisheries Statement is integral.
- WG member highlighted with regard to climate change, the support for prioritising short-term and medium-term actions that ensure sustainable (social, economic and environmental) fisheries of gadoid species, whilst also recognising the possible climate change induced range shifts of these species, limited recovery predictions and requirement for diversification.
- WG member suggested that MMO speak to charter boats, particularly the Professional Boatman’s Association (PBA), about this FMP. The Western Channel and Celtic Sea are both major hotspots for the recreational charter boat sector, with many targeting the species highlighted above as an integral part of their businesses. Evidencing the socio-economic value of recreational species for priority stocks, once agreed, is another important element of this FMPs evidence needs.

8. Actions

Agenda item	Action	Owner
2 Working Group ToR	MMO to update ToR to give further clarity on species prioritisation role of the WG	MMO
2 Working Group ToR	Correct Latin name of red sea bream	MMO
2 Working Group ToR	Correct Latin name of sailray	MMO
2 Working Group ToR	Correct name of Anna Maclennan	MMO
2 Working Group ToR	Correct Agency of Colin Charman	MMO
3 Overview of the FMP	MMO to discuss with WG member possibility of additional in person workshops	MMO
3 Overview of the FMP	MMO to check with Welsh Government if NRW have	MMO

	been commissioned to provide SNCB advice	
4 Issues/ Opportunities Discussion	MMO to contact WG member to discuss engagement with ROI / EU	MMO