



Marine Management Organisation

Date: 22 October 2024, 14:45-15:45

Location: MS Teams

Subject: Black Seabream FMP Working Group 1

Attendees:

Name	Job title
Kate Drewery	Defra, Non-Quota Species Team
Grant Horsburgh	Defra, Non-Quota Species Team
Antony Jensen	University of Southampton
Mike Bennett	Recreational fisher, Fisherman's Cafe
Richard Stride	Commercial fisher, South Coast Fishermen's Council
Edgar Moxom	Commercial fisher, Plymouth University liaison
Sarah Clark	Devon & Severn IFCA
Sarah Birchenough	Southern IFCA
Imogen Wright	Southern IFCA
Jen Lewis	Sussex IFCA
Zachary Radford	Cefas
Jim Ellis	Cefas
Rui Vieira	Cefas
Martin Peverley	Natural England
MMO FMP Team	

Apologies:

Name	Job title
Adrian Pinder	Bournemouth University
Kieran Hyder	Cefas

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions

- The aim of this meeting is to provide an overview of the [Black Seabream Fisheries Management Plan \(FMP\)](#) project and gather initial feedback on what we need to focus on going forward, working together to co-develop the FMP. Subsequent Working Group (WG) meetings will focus on more detailed topics such as evidence, goals, and management opportunities.
- The MMO thanked members for their participation.
- Due to similar stakeholder interests, the Wrasses Complex FMP and Black Seabream FMP are being developed in tandem. Working Group meetings for the two projects will be held as consecutive sessions to enable the most effective and efficient engagement for members.
- As most attendees previously attended the Wrasses Complex FMP WG session, the repeated slides were skipped in this for this meeting. Attendees not present for the first session were invited to stay behind at the end to view the missed slides.

2. Working Group Terms of Reference

Working Group members have been asked to consider and review the ToR, providing comments or amendments to the MMO FMP team by 1st November 2024. It will be assumed that the WG ToR has been accepted in the absence of feedback

Please find the published WG ToR here:

[WC FMP BSB FMP Working Group WG Terms of Reference ToR .pdf](#)

3. Overview of the Black Seabream FMP

Please see the WG meeting presentation given for further detail on what was discussed during this overview.

[Presentation slides for the WC FMP BSB FMP WG meeting 1 on 22 October.pdf](#)

- The MMO highlighted that black seabream and gilthead bream are included within the scope of the FMP. Gilthead bream was added to the FMP for several reasons: stakeholders showed interest in it being included; MMO landings data showed the

species to be caught by recreational and commercial fishers; and distribution data indicated the species is spreading across English waters. Climate and environmental changes may mean that more bream species are found in English waters and so there may be potential for additional species to be brought into the scope of the FMP in the future.

- With regards to the recreational landings data. The MMO noted that there is higher survey error for gilthead bream due to the lower number of catches recorded on the Sea Angling Diary. There is higher confidence with the estimated catch of black seabream in ICES 7e and 7d where the species is commonly caught by anglers, but lower confidence outside these areas. For more information on UK Sea Angling Information Library (UK SAIL) - https://rconnect.cefas.co.uk/sea_angling_library/
 - ***The presentation was updated following the meeting to include an appropriate caveat for this data.***
- There are concerns around being unable to understand what species are being landed by the commercial sector due to the use of the generic SBX code.

WG feedback

- WG member noted that they caught a lot of juvenile gilthead bream a few years ago in a small fish survey. Charter anglers are reporting catches around Chichester harbour.
- WG member reported catching thousands of juvenile black seabream while conducting surveys in the Solent a year or two ago.
- WG member highlighted that for the economic data, it will be important to represent the economic value to the charter fishing fleet as well as that attributed to vessels landing black seabream.
- WG member highlighted that Southern IFCA undertook a quantification of impact exercise for black seabream which covered economic impacts, impacts to associated businesses and wider impacts covering social, cultural, heritage and community - reported as Item B on the agenda for the Technical Advisory Committee meeting May 2024 - [SOUTHERN SEA FISHERIES DISTRICT](#)

4. Discussion: Issues and opportunities

The MMO invited WG members to discuss the issues and opportunities that the FMP could focus on within the first iteration.

WG feedback

- WG member highlighted that the value of commercial bream landings is known, but the value of the recreational and charter boat sector may not be.
 - WG member discussed that economic data for total UK recreational sea fishing is being collected using UKSAIL. However, it is difficult to attribute recreational economic impact/spend to specific species targeted by the recreational sector. Mentioned that they have done work relating to black seabream charter boat anglers. **ACTION - MMO to contact WG member for more details.**
 - MMO responded that the fact that this FMP is data poor, there is room to make suggestions regarding the information needed to improve our understanding of the fishery. Acknowledged the importance of the black seabream fishery to the charter and wider recreational fleet.

- WG member was involved in with a Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) project with Plymouth University to gain information from tagged black seabream. Asked whether anyone on the call had an update on this project.
 - MMO highlighted that Plymouth University academics were invited to join the WG and will hopefully be able to join future meetings. It will be important to bring in this tagging work. **ACTION – MMO to follow up on the tagging work being conducted by Plymouth University.**

- MMO emphasised that if any members of the WG know of wider research occurring with the FMP species, please do raise them during these meetings or via email.

- WG member flagged that bream are a huge part of the charter boat catch and charter boats really value this species.

- WG member discussed farmed gilthead bream being sold for consumption more often than black seabream.
 - MMO responded that the Mediterranean aquaculture sector is large, and the UK sells a lot of their seabream. It could be interesting to build our understanding of the market for our own domestic products.

- WG member queried why there is not a separate commercial landings figure for gilthead bream.
 - MMO responded that as generic species codes are often used, there is very little reported species-specific landings data.
 - WG member highlighted that if the fish is being caught in nets, you may be able to assume that it is gilthead. There are a number of people in their district who net for gilthead.
 - WG member noted that in their area, they may be picked up in mullet nets in the harbour, there may be some bycatch.

- WG member highlighted that there is gillnetting for black seabream and gilthead bream off Portland.

- MMO noted that would be interesting to know how offshore catches compare to those reported inshore. Need to tease the trends out of the landings data.

- MMO emphasised that it is important to try to increase the level of species-specific reporting. Having a broad understanding of what gears are picking up what species and where is key.

- WG member asked whether there are commercial quotas on bream around the UK.
 - MMO highlighted that this a non-quota species.
 - WG member noted that the Sussex IFCA district have a bag limit and zonal protection.
 - WG member responded that some IFCAs have MCRS for black seabream but there is nothing at a regional or national level for gilthead bream.

- WG member referenced more gilthead bream being caught outside estuaries in the Devon and Severn region.

- WG member queried whether the online survey had picked up any fishing activity around the North Sea. There are records of black seabream in 4c and small amounts in 4b.
 - MMO responded that they want to try and future proof the FMP and raise awareness that the distribution of black seabream will likely be moving north.

- WG member highlighted that there is an understanding of black seabream in the Channel, but little is known about the species in the southern areas of the North Sea.
- WG member heard reports of a commercial longline fisherman in Harwich catching 2 or 3 gilthead bream off the Galloper wind farms in the North Sea

MMO asked for WG thoughts on MCRS and the use of bag limits:

- WG member supported bag limits for recreational fishers. Concerned that there has not been much research conducted on what would be an appropriate MCRS.
 - MMO agreed. There is some maturity data and the IFCA's that have MCRS will likely have additional data.
- WG member reported that recreational anglers are keen to see bag limits. Concerned that there are some people that take large quantities of fish from charter boat activities. Recommended enforcing bag limits early with seabream before the stocks diminish.
 - MMO highlighted that proactive management is important for bream to help prevent what has happened to other species.
- WG member noted that charter boats in Weymouth would be happy to have a bag limit to ensure customers fish sustainably. Reported that they find the size limit too small and would support an increase. Commercially, a small black seabream is relatively worthless at market.

MMO asked for WG thoughts on developing a stock assessment:

- WG member mentioned that the pattern of species recording has changed, and this may be something for the FMP to consider. Discussed that there may be some limitations in developing a stock assessment due to the ecology of the species. Before robust stock assessments can be considered, there are other steps that can first be taken. It is important to set up stock assessments to meaningful biological units, and timeframes may be more in the medium-long term. Important to consider whether the stock assessment will be at a national level or whether there will be a request to ICES to have access to data from other countries.
 - MMO responded that putting forward a stock assessment for this FMP would be important and will need WG input. Dealing with data poor species, they are one step behind. Aware of the time required for an international stock assessment.

- WG member discussed that it is important to understand what gears are used to target species and ensuring there is specific data collection using these gears. If the wrong gear is being used in surveys, the perception of the stock will be different for researchers and fishers.
 - MMO noted that species specific landings and gear issues are both important in development stock assessments.

- WG member was working on seabream more widely under the scope of another project. Noted that FISP and FISH INTEL have restricted geographical and spatial scope, so from a stock assessment context, it may be good to widen the scope and look more broadly across the Channel. WG member has a wide historical database and could look at the data that is available and what research and development projects may be applicable to this FMP.

5. Next steps

Please see the presentation given to the WG for further information on next steps.

6. AOB

- WG member queried whether the delay to recent FMPs is predicted to impact the delivery of this FMP.
 - There have been delays to the entire FMP programme as a result of the General Election that took place over summer. Defra are currently consulting on revising the publication timetable for various FMPs, including the Wrasses Complex FMP and Black Seabream FMP.

- WG member questioned whether this FMP will be working to original timelines.
 - MMO responded that they are working on the basis that engagement will start in January 2025, drafting will begin in spring and the final draft aims to be submitted to Defra in the early summer. Timelines are subject to change

- WG was encouraged to circulate the Wrasses Complex FMP & Black Seabream FMP online survey to any contacts they have - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wrasses-complex-fmp-and-black-seabream-fmp-online-survey>

The MMO highlighted that if any members had any further points they would like to put forward, please send them via email (fmp@marinemanagement.org.uk)

Appendix 1: Actions

Reference	Action description	Assigned to
2024/10/22/01	MMO to follow up on the tagging work being conducted by Plymouth University.	FMP Team
2024/10/22/02	MMO to contact WG member for more details on their economic work with black seabream charter boat anglers.	FMP Team