



# Marine Management Organisation

**Date:** 26 February 2025

**Location:** MS Teams

**Subject:** Wrasses Complex FMP Working Group (WG) 3

## Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Kate Drewery	Defra, Non-Quota Species Team
Callum Williams	MMO FMP Implementation Team
Kieran Hyder	Cefas
Martin Peverly	Natural England
Colin Trundle	Cornwall IFCA
Freya Sandison	Cornwall IFCA
Sarah Birchenough	Southern IFCA
Imogen Wright	Southern IFCA
Mike Bennett	Recreational fisher, The Fisherman's Cafe
Tom Russell	Commercial fisher
Hannah Rudd	Angling Trust
Calum Pritchard	University of Aberdeen
Ben Ellis	University of Plymouth
Lauren Stewart	Wrasse academic & Defra
Antony Jensen	University of Southampton
MMO FMP Development Team	

## Apologies:

Name	Affiliation
Sarah Clark	Devon & Severn IFCA
Mat Mander	Devon & Severn IFCA
Tim Smith	AIFCA

Rui Vieira	Cefas
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**Agenda:**

**1. Welcome and introductions**

**2. Overview of South coast engagement**

MMO gave an overview of the FMP engagement that took place across the south coast in January 2025. A summary of key conversations and stakeholder viewpoints was also provided.

- No comments from WG on engagement.

**3. Review and discussion of DRAFT Wrasses Complex FMP policy goals**

**Policy goal 1**

*WG Feedback:*

- WG member asked if wording around discards could be included. Encouraged the inclusion of recreational aspects e.g., catch and release, in policy goal 1.
- WG member questioned whether commercial fishers would actually record their use of wrasse as pot bait. Believed very few fishers would take the time to do so.
  - MMO responded that recording pot bait use would be a voluntary measure to start with as any data collected is beneficial. Alternatively, there were suggestions to run this exercise as part of a study to collect a sample size and then scale this up.
- WG member recommended that the message behind the collection of data for wrasse used at pot bait is positive and there is transparency with what the data will be used for. Suggested that this measure should be made mandatory to avoid biased, poor quality data being collected.

**Policy Goal 2**

*WG Feedback:*

- WG member highlighted they are working on a productivity-susceptibility analysis for wrasse in Scotland. They are trying to develop a stock assessment with data-poor fisheries as many existing ones are specific to gonochoristic species. **ACTION: Ask WG member to share this work.**

- WG member recommended that before conducting a stock assessment, the team should establish 1. What a stock assessment for wrasse is and 2. What a stock unit looks like.
- WG member explained how Goldsinny wrasse populations in one study can live very close together and yet have very distinct differences in behaviour. There is a PhD on Goldsinny wrasse starting soon which may inform future FMP policy development: <https://www.national-aquarium.co.uk/blog/job-vacancy/phd-opportunity-the-ecology-and-conservation-of-goldsinny-wrasse/>

### **Policy Goal 3**

#### *WG Feedback:*

- WG member agreed with the production of handling guidelines for to help reduce barotrauma and increase post-release survival. Mentioned that descending devices could be useful to add. Angling Trust is having currently having conversations to assess the level of compliance in recreational fisheries. It is good to have mandatory guidelines in the long term, so that by then we hopefully have a way of assessing them.

### **Policy Goal 4**

#### *WG Feedback:*

- WG member recommended looking into the Live Transport of Fish App that Cefas is working on.
- WG member mentioned that IFCA has the annual Live Wrasse Monitoring and Control Plans that help to show trends.

### **Policy Goal 5**

#### *WG Feedback:*

- WG member recommended moving one of the actions in the long term. If this is something that is started in the short/medium term, they suggested clarifying in the action that it will also extend into the long term.
- WG member noted that they have already seen annual variations in sea surface temperatures through their work, changing the spawning of wrasse. Wrasses seem to be drifting out of the usual times. Climate paper that may be of interest- <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0067492>

- WG member suggested wording as “assessing the risks/impacts” rather than “monitoring.” Such as using a modelling-type approach e.g., climate-distribution models.
- WG member questioned whether the habitat degradation concerns raised on the south coast could be included under this policy.
- WG member highlighted that timelines need to be considered to ensure they are realistic and take into account resource constraints. Once the FMPs are published, stakeholders will want to see the actions implemented.
  - WG member agreed. There should be join up across FMPs where similar evidence goals are mentioned. There are likely several instances where FMPs can collaborate to address several goals in one study.
  - MMO noted that the FMP Implementation team is looking into amalgamating actions.

## Policy Goal 6

### *WG Feedback:*

- WG member recommended centralising and streamlining data collection as much as possible. If one platform is used or there is one central form, you will increase stakeholder contribution.
- WG member highlighted that the reporting of discards can be done across all FMPs. A joined-up, holistic approach is required here.

## 4. Next Steps.

MMO noted that a document with the full draft policy goals will be circulated following the meeting for further comments. MMO reminded stakeholders that, as per the WG Terms of Reference, details of the draft policies are not to be shared outside of the group.

Once the draft policies have been reviewed and the internal MMO quality assessment has concluded, the WG will receive copy of the draft FMP to review. Further detail on this will be provided in due course.

## 5. AOB

No AOB raised.

**Appendix 1: Actions**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Action description</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
26/02/2024/01	MMO to contact WG member to send both the P-S Analysis and the stock assessments methodology to the FMP team.	FMP team