



Marine Management Organisation

Date: 28 May 2025 13:30-14:15

Location: MS Teams

Subject: Wrasses Complex FMP Working Group (WG) 4

Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Kate Drewery	Defra, Non-Quota Species Team
Callum Williams	MMO FMP Implementation Team
Ewen Bell	Cefas
Martin Peverly	Natural England
Sarah Birchenough	Southern IFCA
Sarah Clark	Devon & Severn IFCA
Tim Smith	Association IFCA
George Balchin	Sussex IFCA
James Lamb	Seafish
Hannah Rudd	Angling Trust
Calum Pritchard	University of Aberdeen
Ben Ellis	University of Plymouth
Lauren Stewart	Wrasse academic & Defra
MMO FMP Development Team	

Apologies:

Name	Affiliation
Anthony Jensen	University of Southampton
Kieran Hyder	Cefas
Rui Vieira	Cefas
Ed Blanchard	Commercial fisher

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. FMP Status Update

MMO gave an overview of the progress that has been made on the FMP and its supporting documents.

- The Environmental Report and Engagement Report have been drafted
- The first draft of the Evidence Statement is in progress
- FMP has been drafted.
- The intention is that the FMP, Evidence Statement and Environmental Report will be submitted to Defra on 6 June.

3. DRAFT Wrasses Complex FMP run through & Discussion

Executive Summary

- No feedback received.

Scope and purpose

- No feedback received.

Description of the fishery and stocks

WG Feedback:

- WG member noted that there are currently no described stocks for wrasse species. Queried how broad the stock unit is for this FMP and whether wrasse management will be focused on English waters or just within IFCA districts.
 - MMO responded that the FMP is looking to take a more general approach but this is something that will be looked at more in the implementation stage. Appropriate delineations can be decided in the future.
- WG member noted that 'wrasse species complex' is included within the FMP species list. It may be worth defining what is meant by this name in the FMP itself.
 - MMO highlighted that was the wording used in the Joint Fisheries Statement. The species list currently includes the main species in English waters, but this gives us scope to add species in the future if national management is required.

Fisheries Management

- No feedback received.

MPAs & Environmental Considerations

- No feedback received.

FMP Vision

WG Feedback:

- WG member mentioned it may be useful to include a definition of what data we are looking to gather and how we will gather this data. In most cases, we will need 3-5 years of data before analysis can begin. The sooner we have a timeseries of data, the sooner we can start analysing it.
 - MMO noted that this should be reflected within the first policy goal where we look to establish a baseline of evidence to support further work.

Priority DRAFT Policy Goals

Policy Goal 1:

WG Feedback:

- WG members discussed other species, e.g., Goldsinny wrasse, that may also be at high risk with regards to the live wrasse fishery. Another WG member noted that ballan wrasse make up around 80% of the cleaner fish in Scotland.
 - MMO highlighted that in this case, ballan wrasse are the priority species which should be reflected in the FMP.
- WG members and MMO discussed the importance of monitoring the live wrasse fishery to see whether fishing effort varies in the future.

Policy Goal 2:

WG Feedback:

- WG member queried whether the suggested consideration of minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) and Maximum CRS would be at a national or IFCA scale?
 - MMO responded that further evidence would need to be gathered for this. Noted some IFCAs already have management in place. This would be a question for implementation
- WG member questioned whether recreational fisheries would be included within this management.

- MMO noted that retention rates for wrasse by recreational anglers are low but where needed, recreational management could be incorporated. The FMP needs to remain open to bringing in these measures more widely if required.
- WG member supports best practice guidance and suggestions related to post release survival. Flagged that there could be space to include reference to descending devices in this section, collecting wrasse specific data to understand what impacts they may have on increasing post release survival. This may already be imbedded in voluntary guidance. Voiced interest in the production of identification guides, stating these would be helpful for new anglers.
 - MMO noted that the research into descending devices could be added to the Evidence Statement.

Ongoing Policy Goals

Policy Goal 3:

WG Feedback:

- No feedback received.

Policy Goal 4:

WG Feedback:

- No feedback received.

Policy Goal 5:

WG Feedback:

- WG member highlighted that it is difficult to pinpoint socioeconomic value from specific fisheries to recreational sector. Supported this being an ongoing discussion. Queried whether there will be considerations made to the private sector e.g., tackle shops, shore trade etc.
 - MMO noted that the action “further understand the social, economic and cultural value of wrasse to recreational anglers” should cover this consideration.

Implementation, monitoring and review:

WG Feedback:

- No feedback received.

Additional WG comments:

- WG member appreciated the resource constraints within the FMP programme. Questioned whether the actions without timeframes will still be delivered within the 6-year lifespan of the FMP?
 - MMO responded that some actions may be completed in the 6-year timeframe, but others may need to be addressed in future iterations.

4. Next Steps

- MMO asked for WG members to please review the FMP by COP 30 May.

WG questions:

- WG member asked that all supporting documents are available for consultation at the same time as the FMP. Noted that the Evidence Statements were not available during the Tranche 3 FMP consultations which caused some confusion as they are referenced within the other documents.
 - MMO noted that the Evidence Statement is currently being drafted and so will hopefully be available during the consultation period.

5. AOB

No AOB raised.