



# Marine Management Organisation

**Date:** 12 December 2024

**Location:** MS Teams

**Subject:** Black Seabream FMP Working Group (WG) 2

## Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Rui Vieira	Cefas
Jim Ellis	Cefas
Kate Drewery	Defra, Non-Quota Species Team
Grant Horsburgh	Defra, Non-Quota Species Team
Sarah Clark	Devon & Severn IFCA
Sarah Birchenough	Southern IFCA
Imogen Wright	Southern IFCA
George Balchin	Sussex IFCA
Mat Mander	Devon & Severn IFCA
Tim Smith	AIFCA
Hannah Rudd	Angling Trust
Alice Hall	University of Plymouth
Peter Davies	University of Plymouth
Ed Blanchard	Commercial fisher
Edgar Moxom	Commercial fisher, Plymouth University liaison
MMO FMP Team	

## Apologies:

Name	Affiliation
Tom Russell	Commercial fisher
Richard Stride	Commercial fisher, South Coast Fishermen's Council

**Agenda:**

**1. Welcome and introductions**

- The MMO thanked members for their participation.

**2. Working Group Terms of Reference (ToR) acceptance**

- In the last meeting, Working Group members were asked to consider and review the ToR, providing comments or amendments to the MMO FMP team by 1 November 2024. No comments were received via email and no objections were received in this meeting. It is 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**

**4. Review and discussion of DRAFT FMP policies**

**Working Group Feedback:**

Note: the following feedback from the Wrasses Complex Working Group also applies to the Seabream FMP:

- Several WG members questioned the use of the term “policy” over “action”.
  - A WG member agreed that improving data quality is a policy but noted that policy one and two are the same. A WG member would not use the term “stock assessment” at all and suggested consideration of different wording. A WG member reiterated that Policy one and two are not policies but “actions” or “goals”. The policy would be more around improving the status of the stock.
  - A WG member noted that what MMO are now calling policies, Cefas are calling goals. It would be useful if terminology was consistent across FMPs.
  - A WG member mentioned there is new guidance from Defra that goals are now ‘Policy Goals’. A WG member also agreed that these are more evidence gathering actions. Suggested contacting the Defra policy team to get a steer on the wording.
  - WG member said that there is expected to be guidance soon around standardizing the language. A word of caution with wording to keep expectation right with stakeholders.

**Policy 1**

- A WG member recommended against the suggested removal of generic SBX code, as then there is a risk of losing information on codes that people do not know or rarer species that are not in the Catch App. This may result in users misreporting species if not given the generic code option.
- A WG member suggested action to ensure there are enough ID guides and well as the take the initiative to train fishers how to accurately record their catch.
- A WG member suggested to align wording of this Policy with that of the Celtic Sea and Western Channel demersal FMP.
- Furthermore, the wording was queried, highlighting that the goal of this policy is not clear.

## **Policy 2**

- A WG member raised questions about the overlap between Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) and FMPs, seeking further clarification on the scope of the FMP.
  - MMO explained that the FMP needs to be aligned with existing management and not contradict it.
  - A WG member agreed on the need for clarity around engagement process and remits, specifically regarding MCZ management and FMPs.
  - MMO was to follow up with respective WG members to firm up the language and manage stakeholder expectations.
- A WG member noted that the policy goal should be updated to reflect every MCZ, not just Kingmere MCZ.
- A WG member identified an opportunity in short-term outputs, suggesting the use of the "Angling for Sustainability" FishINTEL (Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships) project, which concludes its reporting stage in March 2025, as a chance to include short-term actions related to behaviours and biological information.

## **Policy 3**

- A WG member suggested that charter trips could record their catch using an app similar to the Catch App and inquired if variations in temperature and weather were being considered.
  - WG members explained that the Sea Angling Diary is an existing platform that allows for this.
  - MMO noted the difficulty in mandating recreational catch recording but mentioned that a voluntary approach, asking people to keep a log, could work.

- A WG member mentioned that they are working with a consortium of 16 charter skippers through the [Pollack FISP project](#) to gather fisheries data, including numbers, length, catch per unit effort (CPUE), which has worked well. So, it would be possible with funding to establish something similar for black seabream.
- A WG member questioned the framework at a national level and suggested leveraging existing systems.
- A WG member mentioned that the policy concept covered stock assessment and evidence gaps and recommended exploring options and existing data.
  - A WG member inquired about the stock assessment in the EU.
  - MMO proposed considering the ICES stock assessment.
  - A WG member responded stated that Defra would decide if the ICES stock assessment was worthwhile, noting that the main goal of the assessment was to form a TAC. They added that without a TAC, the usefulness was questionable and set the expectation that the FMP's lifetime might not align with international agreement levels.

#### Policy 4

- A WG member noted that the pre-engagement report stated that the bag limit in Kingmere MCZ management is a voluntary code of conduct, when it is mandatory. Emphasised the need to ensure this change.
  - A WG member noted that the bag limit in Kingmere MCZ was a byelaw with a limit of four, but there was also a voluntary code of conduct. Inquired if there were other examples of successful voluntary bag limits.
  - A WG mentioned that in their experience, bag limits were unpopular and called for compliance monitoring. They highlighted the importance of presenting consensus on the appetite for this measure but expressed their support for it.
- A WG member continued that their conversations with anglers and recreational fishers had shown opposition to voluntary limits, whereas the group's conversations had been more positive. They therefore suggested examining spatial differences in support and how representative the feedback was.
  - MMO reiterated that more input would be gathered during the engagement phase to achieve a wider sample size.
- A WG member remarked that it would be unusual to check 'compliance' with voluntary measures and suggested using the term 'adherence' instead.

- WG member noted that Defra had used the term 'compliance' in discussions on voluntary measure proposals for other species, which is why she used that term, but acknowledged the suggestion.
- A WG member proposed increasing the maximum conservation reference size (MCRS) to 28cm or 30cm, noting that smaller seabream were not desirable for buyers.
  - A WG member supported this, noting that with a voluntary bag limit, smaller fish were undesirable, although occasionally they were of breeding size and had eggs.

## Policy 5

- A general comment highlighted that a large proportion of seabreams were caught by demersal trawls. With an expanding black seabream fishery, there were no policies to manage demersal trawls or address the impacts of the gears.
- A WG member expressed a desire for a policy on gears to mitigate their impact on the wider ecosystem and incentivise sustainable practices.

## Policy 6

- A WG member noted that the wording of CO<sub>2</sub> impacts was unclear and questioned if it was within the scope of the FMP, suggesting a focus on temperature instead.
  - MMO explained that the reasoning behind exploring CO<sub>2</sub> impacts was to examine various climate change effects, such as increased pH from excess CO<sub>2</sub> in the ocean and its impact on fish species' biological traits. However, it was agreed to remove this if not relevant.
  - A WG member questioned if including CO<sub>2</sub> impacts as an Action/Policy was necessary, suggesting it might fall outside the FMP's scope as other Defra programmes addressed climate change.
  - MMO acknowledged that the details might be too specific and agreed that prioritising temperature impacts was appropriate.

## Policy 7

- A WG member highlighted supported the policy.
- A WG member noted that certain ports were particularly important for the charter fleet targeting black bream and questioned the granularity of the socio-economic evidence.
  - A WG member mentioned that tackle shops were creating bespoke items for gilthead, seeing it as an opportunity for fishing.

- MMO acknowledged that some areas were more important than others and questioned how to investigate economic areas.
- A WG member suggested that the data collection framework could be expanded to include charters, questioning whether they were a commercial interest in the fishery.
  - A WG member mentioned that Catchwise included a socio-economic survey as part of its data collection.
  - A WG member highlighted the commercial importance of bream to charter vessels in the Devon and Severn IFC districts.

### Schematic feedback

- A WG member noted that the positioning of the arrows makes it seem like there is a timeline at the top that is linked to the schematic.

## 5. Wrasses Complex FMP and Black Seabream FMP Stakeholder Engagement Plans

- 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.
- Following the Wrasses Complex FMP session but prior to starting the second Working Group meeting for the Black Seabream FMP, there was a joint FMP engagement plan session.

### WG feedback:

- WG members appreciated that many of the workshops are in the evening.
  - Concerns were raised about advertising around Christmas and recent timelines.
  - A WG member expressed willingness to support spreading engagement message through the Angling Trust.
  - A WG member based in Shoreham had a list of anglers and netters and was willing to assist with communications.
  - A WG Member suggested Fisherman's College as a potential engagement location in Lyme Regis.
- Overall feedback from the WG was to consider more thinking into the balance of coming in with draft policies versus open-ended discussion. While some structure is important to facilitate effective dialogue, presenting draft policies may send the wrong message to stakeholders.

- A WG Member questioned what was expected from stakeholders and how their input would be integrated into the process. Emphasised the need for transparency and the value of stakeholder contributions. Highlighted that stakeholders often felt uninformed or believed that policies were pre-determined, urging for better transparency regarding their level of input.
  - A WG member suggested leading with asking stakeholders what management measures they would like to see, using examples from other contexts or asking how they would adapt them.
  - Advised caution in engaging with policies, suggesting that presenting evidence and asking for development ideas might be more effective than proposing management or policies.
  - MMO agreed to look into how to best change the workshop format to reflect this feedback.
- A WG Member expressed opinions about stakeholder fatigue and recommended consulting Defra and ICFA about lessons learned from previous tranches.
- A WG Member also emphasised the need to really explain the legislative reasoning behind FMPs, their jurisdiction and the development/implementation process. that recreational fishers lacked experience with FMPs and suggested providing more background context as part of the engagement to clarify the policy process.
- A WG member raised a question about the Scottish Government's actions, noting its importance for understanding stock structure.

## **6. Next Steps**

## **7. AOB**

- WG was encouraged to circulate the Wrasses Complex FMP & Black Seabream FMP online survey to any contacts they have.
- FMP team welcomes any feedback on the internal pre-engagement report to be sent by the 6 of January 2025.

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

## **Appendix 1: Actions**

Reference	Action description	Assigned to
-----------	--------------------	-------------

12/12/2024/01	FMP Team was to follow up with respective working group members to firm up the language and manage stakeholder expectations regarding MCZs.	FMP team
12/12/2024/02	Correct bag limit in Kingmere management from voluntary code of conduct to mandatory in the internal Pre-Engagement report.	FMP team
12/12/2024/03	Provide feedback on the <u>internal</u> pre-engagement report to be sent by the 6 <sup>th</sup> of January 2025.	All WG members
12/12/2024/04	Shoreham had a list of anglers and netters, and WG member was willing to assist with communications once published online.	WG member
12/12/2024/05	When published online, help disseminate January workshops/engagement information through Angling Trust.	WG member
12/12/2024/06	WG member mentioned there is new guidance from Defra that goals are now 'Policy Goals'. Contact the Defra policy team to get a steer on the wording.	FMP team
12/12/2024/07	Review Policy Goals and workshop agendas based on WG feedback	FMP team
12/12/2024/08	Reflect the gear impact of demersal trawls on large proportion of seabreams in policies.	FMP team