Marine Management Organisation

Date: 28 May 2025

Location: MS Teams

Subject: Seabream FMP Working Group (WG) 4

Attendees:

Name	**Affiliation**
Kate Drewery	Defra, Non-Quota Species Team
Callum Williams	MMO FMP Implementation Team
Ewen Bell	Cefas
Zachary Ranford	Cefas
Martin Peverly	Natural England
Sarah Birchenough	Southern IFCA
Sarah Clark	Devon & Severn IFCA
Freya Sandison	Cornwall 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
Peter Davies	University of Plymouth
Alice Hall	University of Plymouth
MMO FMP Development Team	

Apologies:

Name	**Affiliation**
Anthony Jensen	University of Southampton
Kieran Hyder	Cefas

Rui Vieira	Cefas
Ed Blanchard	Commercial fisher
Richard Stride	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 Seabream FMP run through & Discussion**

Executive Summary

- No feedback received.

Scope and purpose

- No feedback received.

Description of the fishery and stocks

- No feedback received.

Fisheries Management

WG Feedback:

- MMO noted some changes may need to be made to this section depending on the outcome of the Southern IFCA consultation on Seabream measures.
- A WG member queried whether there is scope to expand some of the regional management further. For example, include measures that include black seabream but are not primarily for black seabream e.g., bottom towed management will be applicable to areas where there are black seabream, protecting relevant habitats.
    - MMO responded that they will consider this.

- A WG member highlighted that the description in table 3 referring to “black seabream management measures” makes it sound like black seabream is the focus of the byelaw, when for some, it is not. Recommended adapting the title of the table to make it applicable to the broader management.
    - MMO agreed to adapt the description.

MPAs & Environmental Considerations

WG Feedback:

- No feedback received.

FMP Vision

- No feedback received.

DRAFT Priority Policy Goals

Policy Goal 1

WG Feedback:

- A WG member queried whether we would also be asking International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) for advice alongside asking them to do the stock assessment. There are few stocks where they give assessments and not advice. Questioned why ICES will want to do the assessment if they won’t be paid to provide advice afterwards.
    - MMO noted this may be a point to refine during the implementation stage. Believed it’s important to do a stock assessment at an international level. Open to suggestions on rewording this section if needed.
- A WG member highlighted that when asking for ICES assessments for new species, they will want to go through the stock identification issues first. If there is no data to begin with, ICES will likely have to set up a workshop. The process could be time consuming depending on how much of the work can be started before going to ICES. ICES capacity may also be a limitation. To conduct our own stock assessments, we would need to get hold of international landings in a timely manner. There doesn’t seem to be an appetite for data sharing in other projects.

Policy Goal 2:

WG Feedback

- A WG member asked the MMO to consider how the FMP will interact with existing/incoming management for black seabream in Sussex and Southern IFCA. There may be confusion with regulations if they differ between IFCAs and FMP. May be good to refine or align and keep consistent.
    - MMO highlighted that IFCA work is separate to the FMP. Reducing complexity is important and this is a point for implementation.
- A WG member noted the dilemma that some recreational fishers are facing – What to do if an undersized fish is caught that is deeply hooked vs a fish caught within the MCRS threshold. Many anglers will likely prefer to keep the deeply hooked fish with less chance of survival and release the one within the MCRS threshold.
    - MMO agreed this dilemma is a challenge when looking at size-based management. Suggested investigating examples nationally/internationally and see how they are managed elsewhere.
- A WG member had just completed a formal management review of Kingmere Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and noted that the available evidence suggests that the combination of spatial and temporal management seems to be working well, with local experts suggesting that the MCZ may be at carry capacity for the nesting black seabream feature. It was suggested that these sorts of measures should be considered in the management of black seabream more broadly. Also queried why policy goal 2 had been changed from a tangible management measure, which would be introduced in the first phase of the FMP, to a consideration for implementation at a later stage, given that there seemed to be broad support for this measure during stakeholder engagement.
    - MMO responded that this consideration comes from comments received during the Defra review with the aim of keeping the FMP more agile.
    - Defra responded that currently, flexibility is required due to uncertainty of future resource and funding. Need to be able to work with any changes/challenges that come up in the future. Don't want to struggle to deliver on actions.
- A WG member highlighted that the title of this policy goal refers to a point that is not referenced within the text or policy goals.
    - MMO noted that list point may have been lost during the re-drafting phases. Will add it to the text.
- A WG member queried whether MMO have a legal framework to implement mandatory management.
    - MMO responded that this has been done. However, statutory instruments can take time to complete. The FMP is going in the direction of looking at the

success of voluntary management to see whether mandatory management may be required.

- A WG member noted that in some cases, due to enforcement limitations, mandatory management can end up being voluntary for some recreational fishers.
- A WG member responded that mandatory management can be self-enforcing amongst the community. We do not need to be in a state where we need to have a bad stock assessment before measures can be put into legislation.

Ongoing Policy Goals*:*

Policy Goal 3

WG Feedback:

- A WG member questioned whether the ongoing policies are looking across different FMPs and joining up work where possible. Noted that Essential Fish Habitat mapping is also referenced in other FMPs. Resource sharing could be used here. Believed having ongoing policies that can be linked up with other FMPs was a good idea.
    - MMO agreed, these policy goals will look at joining up with other FMPs. MMO will look to make it clearer what the ongoing policy goals and timeframes mean, emphasising that they will look at what other work is taking place across the FMP programme.

Policy Goal 4

WG Feedback:

- A WG member queried where the idea to explore option for entering with Marine Stewardship Council came about.
    - MMO responded that this was raised as a solution for some of the market problems with black seabream. The feasibility and appropriateness of this is still to be considered. The benefits of this work could be positive for small inshore fishers.

Implementation, monitoring and review.

- No feedback received.

4. **Next Steps**

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

5. AOB

No AOB raised.