

**Note of Discard Action Group meeting held at the Wesley Hotel, London.**  
**Monday 14 October 2013**

**Seafish discards page** – for minutes and further information on discards and the Discard Action Group (DAG) activities see:

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/conserving-fish-stocks/discards/the-discard-action-group>

**Attendees**

Andrew Clayton	Defra
Barrie Deas	NFFO
Bertie Armstrong	SFF
Charlotte Bury	Tesco
Chris Leftwich	Fishmongers Company
Britt Groosman	EDF
David Parker	Youngs
Denise Fraser	Seafish
Erin Priddle	EDF
Jane Sandell	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Jerry Percy	NUTFA
Jess Sparks	Seafood Scotland
Jim Evans	Welsh Fisherman's Association
Jim Portus	SWFPO
Julian Roberts	MMO
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Kenn Skau Fischer	Danish Fishermen's Association
Leanne Llewellyn	Welsh Government
Liane Veitch	ClientEarth
Libby Woodhatch	Seafish
Luis Cocas	Undersecretariat for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Chile
Mike Montgomerie	Seafish
Mike Park	SWFPA, Seafish Board (Chair)
Nathan de Rozareux	Falfish
Paddy Campbell	DARD
Paul McCarthy	Marine Scotland
Rebecca Mitchell	MRAG
Ross Jolliffe	Cefas
Sam Stone	MCS
Sandy McLeman	Rosebloom
Stuart Evans	Head of Policy, Welsh Government
Tom Catchpole	Cefas
Tom Pickerell	Seafish

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

Mike Park, DAG Chairman welcomed attendees to the Discard Action Group meeting. Apologies were received from:

Andy Revill	Revill Nation
Andrew Mallison	IFFO
Angus Cragg	Defra
Dale Rodmell	NFFO
David Stevens	Crystal Sea Fishing
Dominic Rihan	EU Commission
Francisco Aldon	IFFO
Giles Bartlett	WWF
Huw Thomas	Morrisons
Ian Humes	DARD
Jenny Nord	Swedish contact
John Anderson	Seafish
John Atkinson	Co-op
John Hooper	MRAG
Julia Pantin	Bangor University
Peter McDonald	Scanbio
Phil MacMullen	Seafish
Toby Parker	UFI
Tom Brown	NUTFA
Tom Rossiter	Succorfish

## **2. Minutes from the DAG meeting held on 2 May 2013 in London.**

The minutes from the previous meetings were circulated before the meeting and were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting. Arising actions are covered by the agenda.

## **3. Overview of day. Mike Park**

We all know there are numerous ongoing discussions about how we implement a landings obligation. Today it is our intention to discuss the pathway to that landings obligation. The day is divided into distinct sections – looking at the industry perspective, Government perspective, practical studies and discussion. Seafish facilitates the Discard Action Group (some call it the Discard Information Group) to pull together all the ongoing strands surrounding discards, to provide an exchange of information and to provide a supply chain networking opportunity. The intended output from this meeting will be a report to the devolved administrations containing industry views on how the landings obligation should be implemented.

## **Perspectives**

### **4. Fishermen overview. Barrie Deas, NFFO**

The landings obligation is going to be introduced between 2015 and 2019 and there is a political imperative to make it happen. The reaction from industry is one of incomprehension, worry and anxiety. CFP is a political compromise with deliberative ambiguity in its wording to allow for Member States to supply the

detail through regionalisation and Multi Annual Plans (MAP). A Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) Expert Working Group has been tasked with providing guidelines for implementing the landings obligation in EU fisheries. One of the crucial factors is to look at what form regional co-operation will take. The North Sea Regional Advisory Council (RAC) is looking at what a MAP will look like, and what a landings obligation could look like under this..

One key point is to look at the ultimate point of destination and look ahead to what the CFP will look like in the future. The description that follows highlights some of the key elements and could help shape how we introduce a landings obligation – this indicates a pragmatic approach which would work at vessel level:

- Continue the process towards high yield fisheries.
- Maintain progress towards highly responsive management policies.
- Have to accept that management objectives will have to be consistent with an ecosystem approach and that the details will be largely determined at regional level.
- The co-decision process will be reserved for overarching policy decisions.
- A high degree of understanding is needed at vessel level with full internal consistency.
- There needs to be close co-operation and mutual understanding over the whole of the North Sea.
- Import controls will all be left behind.
- Will need a system of management with outputs and results.
- Most TACs will be set within the context of the long-term management plan.
- Selectivity will be set by the skipper.
- Replace input controls (Kw days etc) with output results.
- TACs will only be set for the main economic driver species and will be based on total catch – this will create a much more flexible management system.
- There will be a decisive move away from micro-management.
- Some quota species would continue to be returned to the sea based on high survival rates.
- Low cost self-auditing would be the norm.
- Fishing vessels would be used to provide data under the Fisheries Science Partnerships.

#### Discussion

- How do we get to this point? This is really a wish list for where we want to be.
- This looks like a roadmap which covers practical considerations but there is still a gap between political aspiration and practical reality.
- The co-decision process can create problems – we need the help of the environmental NGO's to help achieve this.

- This is a very admirable destination but it is sad that after 30 years of CFP this vision looks so far ahead to 2025.
- We need a plan that recognises the need to take protein from the sea and eNGOs need to acknowledge this.

**5. PO perspective.** Jane Sandell, Scottish Fishermen's Organisation and Sandy McLeman, Rosebloom

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1120923/dag\\_oct13\\_poconcerns.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1120923/dag_oct13_poconcerns.pdf)

Jane Sandell spoke about the work that is being done by the Scottish Association of Fish Producer Organisations (SAFPO) to move towards a landings obligation. A specific discard group has been formed, suggested actions have been submitted to Marine Scotland and they have sought (and gained) support from Scottish Fishermen's Federation Discards Focus Group and the West of Scotland Demersal Discards Group. Government has the power but the PO has to deal with the consequences. We could end up with a lot of species for which there is no demand. The basic regulation contains significant complexities with regards to derogations. There appears to be a lack of grass roots information feeding into the decision making process such as anecdotal information suggesting that the discard rate is higher than suggested by ICES, specific species will be problematic for specific fleets – this does not seem to be understood. The SAFPO discards project calls for lots more data collection, getting more vessels involved, gap analysis of existing information, self-sampling schemes, on-board handling and stowage and market sampling pilot projects, looking more specifically at what vessels might be disadvantaged. Behavioral changes are not currently possible as it puts vessels at an economic disadvantage as they have to lease extra quota, which reduces the crew share so they may leave. The pilot projects must take account of this and compensate.

We need to avoid the 'big stick' approach, the crux is to give further information so fishermen can decide to make changes for themselves.

There has been a Fully Documented Fishery (FDF) trial running in the North Sea for cod since 2009. The first 'fully' documented fishery trial in Scotland (all species) started in July this year and was due to run for six months. Two vessels were taking part - *Boy John INS 110* and *Rosebloom INS 353* were the successful applicants. The trial was due to run for six months but only lasted five weeks (Marine Scotland say eight weeks).

Sandy McLeman reported that there was an uplift of quota species which did equate to a fair amount of fish (hake 7 tonnes (t), saithe 40t, haddock 190t, ling 7t, monkfish 4t, whiting 60t and Norway others 10t.) Up until that point our vessels had landed 14t of hake over the previous six months) – in the five weeks of the trial we landed 37t of hake.

The reality is that the vessels ended up sailing in circles around the North Sea to avoid everything we were not looking for fish to catch but looking for fish to avoid.

The aim was to target haddock but it was very difficult not to catch whiting, cod and coley. Vessels need to land species in proportion according to quota availability and market demand - cod, hake and saithe are a particular issue and avoiding one often means catching one of the others. Fishing closer inshore to avoid some species meant the net got choked up with weed, small flats and herring in some of the inshore grounds. Trying to sort the herring meant marketable haddock ended up stuck in the hopper for longer in the heat, which ultimately affects the quality. The herring had little or no value and created problems with storage. Fish under the Minimum Landing Size (MLS) was not a problem in the trial because the mesh size was so big (however we were really encouraged by the amount of haddock there appeared to be in the North Sea), often all we could catch is cod and that is restricted by the FDF scheme. The hauls are all documented and there are big differences between the hauls and this does not help with quota management.

The hake explosion in the North Sea also proved problematical. By the end of the 3rd trip the vessel had run out of all hake (including uplifted, owned and leased) as they had landed 30 tonnes of hake. The SFO has an annual hake quota of just 96 tonnes. To lease costs £500/tonne and the average price is £0.75/kg.

#### Discussion

- How was the quota uplift agreed? This was calculated on the basis of the total landings for 2012 plus the estimated discard rate.
- Was space an issue on the vessel? Yes for storage and handling and this creates difficulty in maintaining the quality of the marketable fish. The vessels were not really designed to handle this. The issue really is 'true' discards.
- Does trying to introduce mitigating measures to reduce discards create problems? An increased mesh size means losing more haddock and then you are strangled by cod.

#### **6. Scientific perspective.** Carl O'Brien, Cefas

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1120926/dag\\_oct13\\_cefas\\_scientificperspective.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1120926/dag_oct13_cefas_scientificperspective.pdf)

Carl O'Brien reported changes to ICES advice in light of the landings obligation being introduced. ICES has been asked to provide advice on catches and landings, which includes assumptions on discards. ICES will also look at a geographical filter e.g. split up the North Sea & Western Waters. Based on relative stability, any quota uplift will consider track records and it will be up to Member States how to split this within regions, though a breakdown by gear-type will be required to identify where most uplift is required. There are three basic forms of advice: manager-agreed management plan, consistent with PA and/or MSY; no agreed management plan; and advice for data-limited stocks. Five situations have been identified: landings only; landings + discards; landings + dead discards; landings + discards + industrial by-catch; landings + discards + unaccounted removals. However it is recognised that there are going to be different problems in different areas so ICES has started to look at models to show the consequences of a landings obligation ie North Sea with its various

fleets, legal landings, over TAC landings of marketable fish, split between fish below and above MLS. High survivability is not really an issue – also ICES and STECF do have different definitions on this.

#### Discussion

- We need to be clear that fish that is discarded at sea, whilst to be avoided if possible, does at least feed back into the ecosystem, even though this is politically unsavoury.
- The whole purpose of the landings obligation is to instigate change within the industry.
- There is a subtle difference between a landings obligation that means all fish is landed and a landings obligation that means all fish is recorded.
- Quota uplift is going to be critical. ICES discard data is patchy. Are you confident that ICES can provide reliable data to inform the quota uplift process? Any quota uplifts should be based on what is actually happening in the fishery. The problem arises when vessels are discarding far more than the average. Under relative stability some vessels will gain and some will lose. STECF will indicate the magnitude of the uplift necessary and will need to look at vessels/fleets where there is a particular problem.
- Quota uplift is going to be very difficult to determine. Has the percentage generally been agreed? The ICES advice on TACs is currently for landings, in future this will be for total catches including discards.
- I understand ICES and STECF have different discard data. Why? It is not actually different data but different fill-in rules. This needs to be reconciled and work is ongoing to do this.
- The Commission want reconciliation on data obtained from the fleet as estimates from ICES and STECF differ.

**Action:** DAG to be kept up-to-date on progress.

#### **What Government needs to know to address this:**

**7. Defra.** Andrew Clayton

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1120932/dag\\_oct13\\_governmentperspective\\_defra.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1120932/dag_oct13_governmentperspective_defra.pdf)

There are still a few steps in the legislative process re the CFP reform basic regulation, the Common Market Organisation and the EMFF so there is no absolute guarantee that the reformed CFP will come into effect on 1 January 2014. Defra is planning to consult on pelagics in early 2014 - detail on quota, enforcement, science etc, decisions for England, but link to UK, and decisions to be taken based on the CFP regulation, and/or provisions to seek through regionalisation. Re demersal stocks there will be a similar process later in 2014. The consultations will consider de minimis; survivability exemptions; priority discard problems; forecasting the residual problems

#### Discussion

- Are the devolved administrations going to consolidate information on this? We need to know what industry needs to be able to operate profitably under a landings obligation, and we will all need to co-operate.
- How will the exemptions be applied, how are Member States working with the RACs and how will the Concordat affect quota uplift? The uplifts will be

based on a relative stability basis and on this the Commission has handed responsibility to the Member States. The Concordat sets out how the quota is allocated and we need to look at how quota uplifts fit into that. We ultimately need a mechanism that will cut discards and deal with different fisheries in different areas. The consultation with the Pelagic RAC has not yet started in earnest.

- It is up to industry to decide how to operate under the ban; Government is not using it to re-structure the industry.

#### **8. Marine Scotland.** Paul MacCarthy

Paul MacCarthy reported that the Scottish Discard Observer programme and the cod catch observer programme are going to be amalgamated to increase coverage; that there will be an economic assessment of the de-minimis provision; and that a Terms of Reference is being produced for the Scottish Stakeholder Discard Group, which will advise Scottish Government on policy. He then reported on the trial (covered above). The trial had focused on the TR1 fleet with a 12 month uplift in quota applied to the six month trial. The trial was stopped and Marine Scotland and the vessels involved agreed to allow the vessels to come off the trial for the remainder of the year, provided they continue to record haul by haul, their saithe and hake discards. The positive from this is that we now have a system we feel confident will detect discarding on demersal vessels when the ban comes into effect. The trial will also be used to inform the inshore sector, especially with respect to the potential increase in landings of fish below MLS, which would require market adaptation. We are looking at refining system further by use of tools to estimate weight of net as it is hauled on board. Some of the discarded fish that was landed could be used as creel bait.

Scottish Government think there is only an issue with saithe and hake, but the industry see cod as a choke species too, which is why vessels are leaving the FDF scheme.

#### **9. Welsh Government.** Leanne Llewellyn

Leanne Llewellyn reported that the situation in Wales is very different to that in Scotland. The Welsh fleet comprises 50/60 netters and 10/12 inshore trawlers most of which are under 10 metres. The Welsh Government has not yet formulated a discard policy yet as they don't have the data to under-pin it, but the main issues are data collection, limited quota, carrying capacity on the vessels and port capacity. We are looking at ways to observe vessels and introduce a self-sampling programme, remove the locality infrastructure, identify which species could be choke species, address selectivity issues such as spurdog, and look at elasmobranch exemptions. We need agreement with the fishing industry to help with this.

#### Discussion

- Has there been resistance from industry? Is there a strategy for better connection? We are working with the Welsh Fisherman's Association and this is improving.
- Marine Scotland Compliance have presented their FDF scheme, but Welsh Government has limited resources and as 85% of the fleet is involved in potting it is about how to balance this.

#### **10. Irish Government. Paddy Campbell**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1120935/dag\\_oct13\\_governmentperspective\\_dard.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1120935/dag_oct13_governmentperspective_dard.pdf)

Paddy Campbell reported that the main fisheries affected are the: Pelagic – 3 vessels – from 1st Jan 2015; Nephrops – 100+ vessels from 1st Jan 2016-19; and the whitefish – 1 full time from 2016-19. For us the uncertainties are: How much extra fish will be landed? What's the total cost of all this? What quota uplifts will be made to account for the landing obligation? How selective, can we/do we need to, be with highly selective gear? What is 'high' survivability; What is standard of evidence to decide if selectivity is very difficult or cost is disproportionate? Will the MAP also determine the means of monitoring and enforcement? How do we make sure 'spare' quota is efficiently used at least cost? Will the tech – con changes be sufficient? The main aim now is to revamp the discard working programme on selectivity and address the other issues in the New Year.

#### **Practical studies**

##### **11. Results of Seafish case studies. Rod Cappell, Poseidon**

Rod Cappell reported on the final draft of a report on the case studies being conducted by Poseidon to look at the potential impact of the landing obligation on the Irish Sea Nephrops, North Sea TR1 (>100mm) and the North Sea TR1 (>100mm) fisheries. Various scenarios have been modelled including: status quo; with choke species (current quota and swaps); no choke species (quota can be leased in (a) all landed (b) constant volume; quota uplift; flexibility; de minimis; and all the various combinations.

#### **Conclusions**

- Irish Sea Nephrops: Whiting is critical choke species; TAC and so quota availability out of balance with bycatch levels; with no quota flexibility/de minimis or uplift the fleet is not viable; quota flexibility for whiting appears unlikely; 75% quota uplift will be required to maintain viability (6.4% profitability); 96% whiting below MLS so the de minimis rule is critical (if 5% of total catch all species) then this allowance will cover 2012 discard levels; improve selectivity for small whiting (and maintain cod avoidance)
- North Sea TR1: Reduced profitability & GVA, but viable with swaps; highly dependent on current agreed swaps (81 days fishing); choke – hake currently but saithe likely; quota lease costs negate any benefit from landing discards; constant landed volume (hold is full), fleet is loss making; quota uplift – some advice from ICES on scale of increases; hake & saithe – no advice given so av. 20% assumed; 2014 hake quota increase means saithe becomes the choke; reduced profitability & GVA,



but viable with quota uplift; quota flexibility on saithe unlikely – not within limits; is de minimis likely?

- North Sea TR2: Fleet less profitable, but viable with swaps; highly dependent on current agreed swaps (67 days fishing); choke – hake first then cod, haddock, whiting, saithe; quota lease costs negate any benefit from landing discards; constant landed volume (hold is full), fleet is loss making; quota uplift – some advice from ICES on scale of increases; no advice on some species (incl. hake & saithe); 2014 hake quota increase & uplift means haddock is choke; quota flexibility on saithe & cod unlikely (not within limits); is de minimis likely?

### **Actions:**

11.1 Rod is very keen to get feedback from the group on the conclusions.

11.2 Report to be published and DAG to be alerted.

## **12. CEFAS practical studies.** Tom Catchpole, Cefas

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1120938/dag\\_oct13\\_cefas\\_practicalstudies.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1120938/dag_oct13_cefas_practicalstudies.pdf)

Tom outlined a number of practical studies being conducted by Cefas to work towards preparing for the landing obligation.

- **NW Discards Project completion**  
Reported on in Fishing News 13 September.
- **North East Coast Nephrops Net Grid Trials (FSP)**  
The primary aim of this project will be to develop the net grid design so that it can meet the objectives of significantly reducing catches of cod in the English NE Nephrops trawl fishery by 73% with only a 1% reduction in Nephrops, while being considered practical and acceptable by the fishers who will have to use it. Timing: during September to December 13 period. Vessel: Aquarius II. Results going to STECF.  
<http://www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/industry-information/fisheries-science-partnership/current-programme.aspx>
- **SW haddock selectivity (FSP)**  
Area VII Haddock Discard Eliminations Using Technical Measures  
The aim of this project will be to research optimum whitefish trawl setups with the objective of reducing the number of high grade haddock discards whilst landing commercially viable catches. Timing: July to October 13. Vessel: Ocean Spirit. Report being drafted.  
<http://www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/industry-information/fisheries-science-partnership/current-programme.aspx>
- **Self-sampling of the Inshore Fleet (SESAMI) 2012 – 2014.**  
In the process of analysing the data  
[http://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=129:selfsamplingoftheinshoresector&catid=10:newsandpress](http://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=129:selfsamplingoftheinshoresector&catid=10:newsandpress)
- **Discard ban trial**  
Has now been completed – this involved eight vessels. The final report is due to be published by the end of the year. This has focused on the logistics of sorting/storing/quayside/uses/cost implications.

- **ASSIST (Defra funded 2013-18)**

This is the main focus at the moment. This shows a partnership approach. To help English fishermen prepare for a landings obligation for all quota species, Defra and Cefas have begun a five-year project, 'Applied Science to Support the Industry in delivering an end to discards' (ASSIST). Cefas will conduct scientific studies alongside fishermen to provide evidence to support the English fishing industry to end discarding and to maximise revenues. A series of roadshows are designed to understand how different English fishing groups will be affected by the ban. The roadshows have now mostly taken place and the focus has been on gaining insight into restrictive species, looking at the opportunities to improve selectivity and improve discard data and look at which species are indicative of high survival rates. The Steering Group is due to meet in November. The aim is to highlight fisheries that may have problems, prioritise operational studies, including selectivity work and supplementary data collection programmes.

**Action:** DAG to be kept up-to-date.

### **13. Chilean discard law and the Chilean research program.** Luis Cocas, Undersecretariat for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Chile.

[http://www.seafish.org/media/publications/DAG\\_Oct13\\_ChileanDiscardLaw.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/publications/DAG_Oct13_ChileanDiscardLaw.pdf)

Luis Cocas is responsible for implementing the new Chilean Discard Law, which was introduced in September 2012. Chile's discards law prohibits discards of target species and bycatch by industrial and artisanal vessels and will be monitored via onboard cameras and self-assessments with fines issued to offenders. However, the law's sanctions do not come into effect until a Research Program, with a minimum two year timescale, has been completed in the various fisheries with both the industrial and artisanal fleets. This program aims to quantify the extent of discards and incidental catches of birds, turtles and mammals and to identify the causes of discards. The vessels owners have agreed to let scientific observers on board and to collaborate with them to monitor discards, and the skippers will also be required to fill out log books, regardless of the presence of an observer. The last represents a significant shift in the approach to the problem, making the fishing users participate actively in its solution.

#### Discussion

- Vessels less than 15 metres do not have to carry cameras. Is this a problem? Vessels under 15 metres represent only 10% of the catch so it is not required. We have chosen to concentrate on the most important vessels.
- What is the feedback from industry? This has been a collaborative effort to design a research programme to collect data. We are about to start analysing the data collected to date.
- The big problem we have in the EU is trying to regulate discards, on a single species basis, in a mixed fishery. What is the experience in Chile?

In the pelagic fisheries we have single species however in the demersal fisheries we can have up to 112 species and a lot of these have no value.

- Do you have subsistence fisheries? If you don't regulate vessels below 15 metres do you get allegations of free-loading? We have to put the effort into monitoring the vessels where the majority of the catch comes from.
- Do you plan to adjust quota? Chile can adjust its own quota which will be decided by a scientific committee. For joint species we are members of a Fishing Organisation that handles negotiations.

**14. Discussion session.** Facilitated by Libby Woodhatch, Seafish.

*Clearly data is at the crux of this but what are the key areas we could/should be focusing on now?*

- More quota? The fundamentals such as quota and fleet size must align to make it work. There are major concerns that a quota uplift will not be enough. It will be the survival of the fittest. In the TR1 fishery the problem will be quota and the economic pressure of keeping fish caught under the MLS in the hold. It is hard to be selective when you are not catching fish under the MLS.
- There is still a fundamental lack of understanding. Owners of the smaller vessels just don't know how this is going to impact on them and feel that they are not relevant to the discussion.
- With more and more meetings there is a danger of creating the illusion of progress but we have not yet got a roadmap out of this and we need to know what components are necessary to get to a landings obligation. Concentrating on the big commercial species is a start and STECF has been asked to look into this.
- The roadmap detailed at the beginning of the meeting is a start although there are a lot of holes and a lot of unanswered questions. The discard ban trial in Scotland worked out the quota uplift on the basis of landings + discards and doubled the figure, so to run out of quota in five weeks is a real worry. The Seafish studies are painting a similar worrying picture.
- There is the concern that discussions will fall into general dissent unless we take this forward.
- We have the compliance tool in the CCTV cameras but we need the components to make as flexible as possible and we must start with the main commercial species.
- The overall response has to be proportionate to the problem. Discards are not a new problem, even though we are getting less fish because of the reduction in fleet size. We need a better sense of proportion – we need to know the exact size of the problem today rather than just knowing that fishing mortality is declining and biomass is growing.
- Industry has become the product of what regulation has made it. Do we even know if Government is planning a further decommissioning exercise? Barrie's statement about what the industry will look like in 2025 is important and it will probably take until 2025 to make it happen. The reality

is that we need proper discard data. Discard plans have got to be produced on a regional basis.

- Uplifts and timing is crucial. At every level we are talking about averages and averages will not always be strictly relevant.

*What is the view of a roadmap?*

- We are still talking in generalities. This problem will only be cracked if we look every single individual case. We have to have a coherent infrastructure but individual skippers need to look at their own situation. Any uplift must follow a logical sequence of events to justify this. We need to get to grips with the quantities of fish involved. If we land it we must be able to sell it. We are going to have to work under a landings obligation so we need to know why we have not got enough quota.
- We need to ensure there is some coherence across Member States when drawing up discard plans. At a domestic level we need to know how the Concordat will be affected.
- The POs will need more power. We need to know the definition of derogation, the roles of the POs, the powers of POs, different ways to allocate and manage quota.
- Under regionalisation Member States will make decisions and the RACs will advise. We also need to be aware that not all Member States are that enthusiastic about regionalisation.
- We need 'definitions' of some of the terms being used. Nobody really seems to know what target we are trying to hit – this needs clarity.
- What we had before was a regulation with no flexibility – now there is some creative ambiguity but there are some areas where Government can offer some clarity.
- Is there a role that the market can play in better utilising these smaller fish? In reality is there any less incentive to discard than there was before?
- The view of the conservation groups is that we want to make this work. If industry is calling on the NGOs to help in what way can we help?
- We need to promote smaller fish, we need to promote good practice and we need to promote gear trials.
- The introduction of the co-decision process occurred at the same time as negotiations on CFP reform. The result is that the NGOs put all their lobbying effort into influencing that process and not into collaboration. The end result is a CFP which is aspirational but potentially not workable. We need a roadmap. The request now is for support and a common sense approach to produce a practical plan.
- The fishing industry has changed. Fishermen are now different, they will embrace selectivity. We need to avoid the possible danger of driving stocks into the red due to quota uplifts. We have to get this right.

**Action:** Government to provide clarity on what the various terms mean under the new CFP.

## **15. Summing up and outputs. Mike Park.**

I have found this hugely informative. The next steps are crucial and we need to decide what role the Discard Action Group can play. Should DAG collate industry views and compile a report to the devolved administrations on how the landings obligation should be implemented, or is this better done individually?

### Comments

- The production of a roadmap could be very useful.
- The ideas presented by Barrie identified a destination but a very rocky road to get there. There would be no harm in looking at what the hurdles are going to be and a briefing for the new Minister could be very useful.

The group does have a certain uniqueness in that it is representative of the whole seafood supply chain. It would be useful to plan out a sequence of events to highlight the issues by taking a reverse view. We know what the outcome has to be but we now need to look closely at the vehicle to take us there a DAG blueprint. We could create a drafting group of selected individuals to help draw this up. There was a comment that SAFPO would not be able to commit to this plan. However it was intended that this would highlight the issues but not be a definitive plan.

### Comments

- Would be keen to have a skeletal plan to highlight the way forward.
- This would almost have to come down to vessel specifics. Must be careful not to build up aspirations that we can't achieve.
- It would be useful to increase the body of evidence. By creating a better awareness of the problems we could potentially identify the solutions. The important thing is to avoid duplication and to work alongside the administrations.

### Action:

15.1 Seafish to prepare briefing on the group and the discards issue for the new Fisheries Minister.

15.2 Seafish to prepare proposal – timescale, framework, deadlines for a roadmap. This was discussed in more detail within Seafish after the meeting. The intention is that this will start with the 'vision' presented by Barrie Deas which is being prepared by the North Sea RAC. Once this is finalised (hopefully before the end of the year) DAG will convene a small drafting group. The aim is to work back from the 'vision' and suggest a UK programme to make this happen which is aligned with the introduction of the landings obligation.

## **16. Any other business**

Mike Park raised a question about the group and whether it was truly a Discard 'Action' Group. He also mentioned the uniqueness of the group and that it had merit as a Discard 'Information' Group to provide up-to-date information on the issue. He asked whether participants at the meeting were in favour of the group continuing in its current format at least in the medium term. All participants were in favour, however there was a comment from SAFPO that they did not feel the group was meeting its role and that there were other groups that were better placed to work in this area.

**16. Date of next meeting**

This was not discussed but next DAG meeting is likely to be in early 2014.