

Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) Meeting

27th February 2023

Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Barrie Deas, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) (chair)	John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association
Adam Holland, Sea Source	Juliette Hatchman, Southwestern Fish Producer's Organisation (SWFPO)
Alison Freeman, Fishmongers	Kate Morris, Heriot-Watt University
Aoife Martin, Seafish	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
Andrew Rooney, Rooney Fish	Liam Hawkes, Defra
Beshlie Pool, South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen Ltd.	Louis Cattini, Seafarms
Bill Brock, Brighton & Newhaven Fish Sales	Louise Price, Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
Chloe North, Western Fish Producers' Organisation	Michael Roach, Holderness Fishing Industry Group (HFIG)
Chris Ranford, Cornish Fish Producer's Organisation (CFPO)	Mike Cohen, NFFO
Elizabeth Wyatt, Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	Patrick Smith, DAERA
Ella Brock, Seafish	Paul Brown, Brown and Bright
Fiona Birch, Mindfully Wired Communications	Rebecca Thomas, Falfish
Gwladys Lambert, Cefas	Rebecca Treacy, Seafish
Hannah Clark, Pentire Fishing/Camel Fish Ltd	Richard Hoskin, MMO
Jack Heald, Defra	Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
Joanna Messini, Defra	Tim Smith, Association of IFCAs
Jim Evans, Welsh Fishermen's Association	Trevor Bartlett, Devon Crab
Jim Portus, Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG)	Udara Nagodavithana, Seafish

Apologies

Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish	Katrina Ryan, Mindfully Wired
Colin Bannister, Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB)	Communication
Dominique Gautier, Sea Farms	Sarah Horsfall, Shellfish Association of Great Britain

Update from members on key issues of interest to the SIAG

1. Phase II of the Defra mapping tool has been completed and covers lobsters, scallops and cephalopods. Phase I covered crabs and whelks. Seafish took an action to send out mapping tool and have also stored the file in the SIAG SharePoint here: [SIAG Resources](#).
2. The next Mid-Channel Potting Conference will be held on 23rd and 24th March 2023 in Plymouth. This is the 44th year of cohabitation in the channel and the 41st conference. Discussions at the conference will include how the mid-channel blocks have been operating, a discussion on the EU fleet, and a session on how collaborative working will continue. Please direct all enquires to Beshlie Poole at South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen Ltd.

Actions and Minutes from December SIAG Meeting

3. The minutes were confirmed as an accurate representation of meeting discussions and progress on the actions were summarised:
 - a. Action 10.1, *to organise for the Seafish market insight team to present at the next meeting on current market driven changes in the shellfish sector and how that might impact fisheries management* will be rolled over to the next meeting agenda due to the team being very busy in trade related matters at the moment.
 - b. Action 10.2, *to share FMP shared shellfish objectives* after the meeting. There have been several minor changes to shared shellfish objectives following stakeholder engagement work. These changes were reviewed in the meeting and slides will be shared with members.
 - c. Action 10.3, *Discussion of new chair at next meeting*, is on today's agenda.
 - d. Action 10.4, *Seafish to touch base with stakeholders on engagement activities in Wales and the northeast of England to address gaps in engagement where possible*. Seafish organised another stakeholder engagement meeting, focused on development of the crab and lobster FMP, in Whitby following these discussions in December.
 - e. Action 10.5, *Defra to circulate link on UK NQs uptake data*; Defra will provide an update on this at today's meeting.

Shellfish FMP update

Update Review of FMP development process and outputs (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

4. A presentation was shared by Seafish, with the main points summarised below:
 - a. September saw the start of the stakeholder engagement events facilitated by Seafish to raise awareness about the development of the whelk, crab and lobster, and king scallop (SICGWG) FMPs for England, to gather feedback on the draft shared and species-specific FMP objectives, and discuss different management options.
 - b. A total of 530 stakeholders attended the events spanning the three frontrunner shellfish FMPs. The events engaged stakeholders from across the whelk, crab and lobster, and king scallop supply chain, including fishermen, processors, researchers, regulators and environmental non-governmental organisations.
 - c. Some of the key themes emerging from stakeholder engagement activities are summarised below:
 - There was a strong appetite for collaborative management, improved data collection, and better industry input to marine spatial planning processes (reducing spatial squeeze and conflict).
 - There were mixed views on the relative importance of addressing latent capacity (perceived scale of the issue) and carbon foot-printing (perceived ability for the fishing industry to drive change vs. the importance of communicating positive environmental credentials of low impact fishing activities).
 - There were mixed / negative views on the ambitiousness of the FMP programme (sentiments like "*we have been here before, why is this time any different?*") and a lack of clarity on how FMPs will interact with other legislation, e.g. IFCA byelaws.
 - There were positive views on promoting shellfish and facilitating trade, but these objectives were considered a lower priority than building the shellfish evidence base and improving fisheries management.
 - d. Seafish also presented the updated shared shellfish objectives, which included a new objective, objective 5; *Improve understanding of the impacts of non-fishing activities on*

English shellfish stocks. Seafish took an action to share these with the group after the meeting.

- e. The next steps in the FMP process were summarised as follows:
 - Defra review process (Gateway review panel on 28th February)
 - Defra hosted FMP webinars on Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd March
 - Formal public consultation on draft FMP by Defra (May to June 2023)
 - Shellfish FMPs will be finalised and published (Autumn 2023)

Update on FMP process and timeline (Liam Hawkes, Defra)

5. Defra have received the first draft of the crab and lobster, whelk and king scallop FMPs from the delivery partners.
6. The next step is the Gateway Review process which will commence on the 28th of February 2023. The aim of this process is to ensure that the draft FMP meets the minimum requirements, 'musts', as laid out in the Fisheries Act. This process will also assess the quality of work within the FMP. The panel process will ensure that the FMP is a collaborative piece of work, rather than top-down approach. The process is to provide ministers with assurance that the draft FMP meets the requirements laid out in the Fisheries Act and Joint Fisheries Statement, and will deliver on objectives laid out in these documents.
7. Defra will host webinars on the 1st and 2nd of March for further stakeholder engagement. The webinars will expand on specifics of the FMP and delivery partners will be present to answer questions in a moderated Q and A.
8. The current timeline for publication of FMPs is for tranche 1 plans to be signed off by the Secretary of State and published in autumn 2023, and tranche 2 FMPs (bass, southern North Sea flatfish, and western Channel mixed demersal) by the end of 2023.
9. Tranche 3 commissioning has started within Defra and hoping to be commissioned by April and published by end of 2024.

Discussion:

- A query was raised in the context of compliance and meeting the minimum requirements of the FMP and who would be held responsible if/when issues arise. Defra confirmed that they are ultimately responsible for all FMPs. The intention of the gateway review process is to work collaboratively with various stakeholders to ensure legal requirements of the FMPs are met. Feedback has been gathered from within Defra (science, policy, and legal teams) and from ALBs and this will be provided to delivery leads to refine draft plans.
- A question arose on whether wider stakeholders will be formally involved in the gateway process. Defra explained that webinars (on 1st and 2nd March) are a chance for wider stakeholders to be involved in the ongoing review process but that only FMP delivery leads are involved in the gateway process.
- There were concerns that some wider stakeholders may believe that they have not been sufficiently briefed on the aims and objectives of these FMPs. Defra acknowledged that this is a risk, however, documentation such as stakeholder engagement reports compiled as part of each FMP should demonstrate the informal stakeholder engagement that has been undertaken to develop the draft FMP. The webinars and pre-consultation phase will garner greater informal feedback from all stakeholders with an interest in the plans.

UK greenhouse gas emission (GHG) study (Kate Morris, Heriot-Watt University)

10. A presentation was shared by Kate Morris on research being undertaken on greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint of the UK catching sector, with the main points summarised below:
 - a. The title of the PHD is '*how fisheries release carbon and how management can help the climate change agenda whilst protecting marine biodiversity*'; the study is focusing on greenhouse gases and the disturbance of carbon in marine habitats. The research is contributing to the sustainable management of marine resources (SMMR) space planning

- project in the context of climate change and the different risks that mobile gear fisheries pose to benthic carbon stores.
- b. The study is looking at GHG emissions from the UK fleet with a focus on fuel consumption. The first objective of the study is to present a summary of vessel GHG emissions for the UK fleet using Seafish fleet segments. Information will be further segmented by the top 10 commercial species (by weight and value).
 - c. The second objective of the research is to undertake a detailed review of the relationship between fishing behaviour data (e.g. days spent at sea), seasonality, stock size and GHG emissions for the key commercial species.
 - d. The study will also quantify the indirect GHG emissions which includes refrigeration units, ice, antifouling paints, etc. This information will be connected through a 35-minute interview to supplement the fuel data.
 - e. The study will contribute to the fair transition to a net-zero UK fleet, establishing a roadmap for fisheries globally and inform certification scheme development. Managers and vessel owners will have direct access to their own data and contribute to increasing efficiency and can contribute to building a more sustainable brand image.
 - f. The research will use mix of primary data collection on vessel emissions directly from fishers, supplemented by existing data assets such as Seafish research on vessel emissions. The research team are keen to speak to any fishers who would be interested in getting involved in the work, this can take the form of:
 - Providing primary data on vessel emissions and fishing activity to the research team, or;
 - Providing consent for data sharing between Heriot-Watt University and other researchers, if participants have already been involved in a prior study (e.g. Seafish fuel consumption studies, or University of Aberdeen fleet carbon footprinting research).

Discussion:

- A concern was raised about increasing levels of marine spatial squeeze and the potential displacement of fishing (due to offshore wind farms, marine protected areas, and other marine activities) leading to altered fishing patterns in the future. This could result in fishers having to travel further afield and use more fuel. The group discussion focused on issues where optimal patterns of fishing activity may be made less efficient in the future due to higher steaming times, and the impact this could have on trends seen in available data. It was noted that this particular study is only looking at trends over the past three years.

Highly protected marine areas (HPMAs) update (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

11. The outcome of the HPMA consultation in England was published the day before the SIAG meeting, as a result Defra were unable to attend the SIAG to provide an update. Apologies were sent on advance and an action was taken by Seafish to convene a standalone session with Defra colleagues and SIAG members focused solely on HPMAs.
12. A summary of responses on the HPMA consultation can be found here: [Highly Protected Marine Areas pilot sites - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114144/Highly_Protected_Marine_Areas_pilot_sites_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf)

Discussion:

- The Chair informed the group that Lindisfarne (northern North Sea) and Inner Silver Pit South (Southern North Sea) have been dropped from the plans to establish HPMAs following the public consultation. Plans for HPMAs in Allonby Bay (Irish Sea), North East of Farnes Deep (northern North Sea), and Dolphin Head (Eastern Channel) will go ahead.

NQS tonnage limits and outlook for 2023 (Jack Heald, Defra)

13. UK uptake data for 2022 shows that UK vessel's landings of non-quota species (NQS) from EU waters was 12,998 tonnes. This is provisional data but currently represents total uptake of 105% of the limit set by the TCA.
14. The increase in uptake has been primarily driven by increases in landings of king scallop, accounting for 7,488 tonnes in 2022 (up from 4,794 tonnes in 2021) representing 57% of all landings of NQS by UK vessels from EU waters. in UK waters. This is a much higher figure in comparison to the 2021 equivalent data.
15. The other main species is crab, which accounts for 3,811 tonnes landed and unlike king scallop, remains broadly at the same level as last year, but king scallops have had increases in both landings and demand.
16. The latest exchange with the EU shows that for EU uptake in UK waters, they've reached 68% of total baseline. This accounts to approximately 22,500 tonnes of landings from UK waters. This is provisional and can be updated.
17. All data is available on MMO website here: [Provisional Non-Quota uptake by UK vessels in EU waters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-non-quota-uptake-by-uk-vessels-in-eu-waters)

Discussion:

- A concern was raised regarding the species-by-species breakdown of these figures and that more granularity is needed as cumulative figures on NQS catches (based on a global tonnage limit) can mask significant changes in specific sectors.
- Members expressed how timely information from the EU would be very useful, but it's understood that this is unlikely to happen anytime soon.
- Members queried how catches looked for the last two years for UK and EU catches. Defra explained that data for the UK catches remain relatively stable in terms of total volume of NQS landed but with differences in species composition. In 2022, some species declined in total volume (e.g. whelk and pilchard) whilst others have increased significantly (e.g. scallops). There has been no significant changes in EU uptake.
- Concerns were raised about transparency and the accuracy of data being provided on NQS uptake. It was acknowledged that this is a new process and is still being refined, however the data presented (from both UK and EU) are the best available.
- Members requested whether some form of visual infographic could be produced to make this data more accessible for the SIAG. Defra linked to MMO website for UK monthly and yearly figures: [Non-Quota species uptake by UK vessels in EU waters](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/non-quota-species-uptake-by-uk-vessels-in-eu-waters).

Crab and Lobster Management Group (CMG) update (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

18. The CMG last met on 6th of February and key updates are presented below:
 - a. Seafish presented on crab and lobster specific outputs and key themes that emerged from stakeholder engagement activities carried out to date.
 - b. The shared-shellfish objectives and species-specific crab and lobster objectives developed by the CMG FMP Working Group were shared with the group along with revisions and amendments made as a result of stakeholder engagement feedback.
 - c. A discussion was held around the proposed early management interventions for crab and lobster fisheries in English waters and members were informed that these early interventions will be proposed and consulted on alongside the FMP and represent the first step in improving management of these fisheries.
 - d. The CMG heard updates from three FISP-funded research projects focused on crab and lobster fisheries.
 - The group had an update from HFIG on a new proposal which was put forward by the University of Hull on looking at the feasibility of an emerging fishery for stone crab in the northeast of England.
 - The group also received an update from HFIG on their 'Lobster Settlement Index' project, where the first early benthic phase juvenile lobster has been caught in the settlement cages deployed off the Holderness coast. Additionally, the camera project has produced outputs from the creel mounted camera

system. The project is moving into the image analysis phase for year one and planning is ongoing for the sampling season in year two.

- HFIG also updated on a successful FISP Part A funding bid to develop a research proposal to understand the drivers of gear loss and ghost fishing. The Part B proposal is for a project is to:
 - Assess the financial impact of gear loss to fishers;
 - determine drivers of gear losses;
 - use simulated 'ghost gears' to understand bait attractiveness and persistence;
 - estimate overall scale of gear losses and estimate how many pots are lost annually and the associated economic impact, and;
 - to develop codes of practice across key stages of the seafood supply chain to try to minimise the drivers of and risks of gear losses.
- e. For more information on these FISP projects please follow the link attached: [FISP projects](#).
- f. Work is ongoing on the crustacean welfare codes of practice for the shellfish industry, following the inclusion of crustaceans in the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 1 2021. This project is being led by CMG, SAGB, and Seafish. Cumulus Consultants has been commissioned to establish industry panels (catching, processing, food service, retail, and wholesale / trade / live export and import) to develop codes of practice applicable across different stages in the supply chain. Cumulus will be speaking at the SAGB / CMG event on the 28th of February and the benchmark report by Crustacean Compassion will be presented at the event.

Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) update (Jim Portus and Juliette Hatchman)

19. The SICG last met on the 8th December 2022 and key updates are presented below:
- a. The first draft of the King Scallop FMP for English waters was completed by the SICGWG and submitted to Defra at the end of January. The King Scallop FMP is part of the tranche 1 frontrunner phase, meaning public consultation is scheduled for May with the aim of publishing the plan in autumn 2023. The draft plan will now undergo the Defra gateway review process detailed above.
 - b. Additional FMP stakeholder engagement activities were carried out by Welsh Government at the end of 2022 to ensure Welsh stakeholders had sufficient opportunity to input to the FMP development process.
 - c. The next meeting of the SICG will be held in March 2023, topics to be discussed include effort uptake and Q2 limits, area 7d closures in 2023, and shellfish supply chain economic analyses.

Whelk Management Group (WMG) update (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

20. The WMG last met on 20th of February and key updates are presented below:
- a. Seafish presented an update on the Whelk FMP development process.
 - b. Discussions took place on the proposed early management interventions for the whelk fishery, particularly means of restricting access to whelk fisheries in the future by means of permitting / entitlement schemes. More work is required to define what mechanisms are most appropriate in the English whelk fishery context to contain effort.
 - c. The group had three updates from ongoing FISP projects:
 - Researchers at Bangor university presented on the *impacts of climate change on whelks*
 - Researchers at Bangor university presented on the [Seabed Ecosystem Project](#) which looks at the impacts of whelk pot fishing gear on sensitive biogenic reef habitats off the coast of Wales; and
 - Heriot-Watt University presented on their collaborative *Whelk data improvement project* with the WMG which looks at various elements of the whelk fishery including pot design to minimise undersize catches and whelk bait alternatives.

Discussion of appointing new chair for SIAG

21. Barrie Deas, current Chair of the SIAG will step down before the next meeting of the group, as such the SIAG must now appoint a new Chair.
22. The Chair acknowledged that the position is supported by Seafish staff and that the new Chair is unlikely to be overburdened. The role of Chair is primarily focused on running SIAG meetings, and approving agendas and meeting minutes each quarter.
23. It is proposed that members can volunteer / nominate for the position of SIAG Chair by contacting Seafish directly. If there is more than one prospective Chair then SIAG members will be asked to cast votes to select the new Chair.

Actions

Action no.	Action	Responsibility
12.1	Organise for the Seafish market insight team to present at the next meeting on current market driven changes in the shellfish sector and how that might impact fisheries management	Seafish
12.2	Send out link to Defra legislation mapping tool	Seafish
12.3	Send out FMP overview slides	Seafish
12.4	Send out contact details for Kate Morris at Heriot-Watt University for members interested in being involved in GHG emissions research.	Seafish
12.5	Arrange meeting or drop-in session with Defra on HMPAs	Seafish
12.6	Defra to share link to NQS uptake data for UK and EU vessels as part of management through the TCA	Defra
12.7	Nominations / volunteers for Chair to be sent to Seafish by email	All members via Seafish