

Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) Meeting

5th December 2022

Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Barrie Deas, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) (Chair)
Andrew Brown, Macduff Shellfish
Alice Bessell, Brown and Bright
Andy Wheeler, Andy Wheeler Fisheries Consultancy
Andrew Burn, Defra
Beshlie Pool, South Devon & Channel Fisherman
Bill Brock, Brighton & Newhaven Fish Sales
Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish
Colin Bannister, Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB)
Jessica Duffill Telsnig
Gwladys Lambert, Cefas
Helen Hunter, Defra
Jen Ashworth, Defra
Jim Portus, Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG)

Jim Evans, Welsh Fishermen's Association
Juliette Hatchman, Southwestern Fish Producers' Organisation (SWFPO)
Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
Mike Roach, Holderness Fishing Industry Group (HFIG)
Louise Price, Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
Patrick Smith, DAERA
Rebecca Treacy, Seafish
Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
Trevor Bartlett, Devon Crab
Elizabeth Wyatt, MMO
Martyn Youell, Waterdance

Apologies

Paul Brown, Brown and Bright
John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association
Chris Ranford, Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation (CFPO)

Richard Hoskin, MMO
Andrea O' Shaughnessy, MMO

Actions and Minutes from December SIAG Meeting

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate representation of meeting discussions and the progress on the actions were summarised:

- a. Action 9.1, *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*, to be carried to next agenda
- b. Action 9.2, *to provide a progress update at the next meeting on engagement with DAs on*
- c. *getting the common shellfish FMP objectives accepted and adopted*, to be discussed during this meeting.
- d. Action 9.3, *to share written principles of MYS with group members*, more work is needed on this action. A paper is being drafted to set out how Fisheries Management Plans will interact with existing measures. Defra will share this in due course and may hold a separate session on that piece of work.
- e. Action 9.4, *to circulate briefing paper on issues with the process for fishery dependent data collection*, is ongoing. Seafish, the MMO and Cefas are pulling together a project proposal to inform good management, identify solutions and propose the development of a strategic framework. This is a significant piece of work that is likely to take a considerable amount of time and resources, the SIAG will be used as a forum to keep industry updated on this project as it progresses.

Cefas Research (Rosslyn McIntyre, Cefas)

1. Crab disease research update
 - a) Following reports of crab mortality once being landed (and crabs showing symptoms of disease), Cefas is investigating how far the novel pathogen has spread by surveying adult catch in five sites around the country, from both intertidal surveys and landed commercial catches.
 - b) The disease is not considered to be linked to crustacean mortality events observed on the east coast of England.
 - c) Cefas is undertaking research on crab disease more generally and are primarily looking at areas that are heavily fished which are close to major crab grounds. Cefas has taken samples from each crab fishery unit and will report back to the SIAG / CMG on results as they become available.
2. Using new technology to gather fisher data
 - a) In addition to the sampling work cited above, Cefas has developed an app which allows fishers to take pictures of a sample of their catch each day and submit it to be reviewed by scientists as part of stock assessment work. An app is considered the most appropriate way of gathering data across the country but also minimising the reporting burden on individual fishers.
 - b) Prior to developing the app, Cefas will be undertaking outreach activities to get feedback on the concept to gauge crab and lobster fishers' willingness to be involved in longer-term data collection in this way. The decision to proceed on development of the app will be made based on the conclusion of outreach activities. Similar project ideas are being explored for whelk, scallop, and cuttlefish fisheries and data gathering.

Comments:

3. Questions arose on whether there is any link up with Bangor on the FISP-funded 'crustacean data improvement' project which aims to use autonomous sampling units and artificial intelligence to gather data on crab and lobster catches. Cefas informed members that they have been involved in the FISP project and that the work in this area is ongoing to ensure there is no duplication of effort in research.
4. Cefas provided an update on the latest stock assessments for crab and lobster, final reports are being finalised (2022 assessments use the assessment model used previously) and reports will be published in 2023. The SIAG and CMG will be made aware when the reports are publicly available and Cefas will be invited to present on assessment outputs.

Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) (Defra)

5. Public consultation on highly protected marine areas (HPMAs) finished at the end of September and Defra is still working through approximately 900 responses. A published package of proposed HPMA site evidence will go to ministers to determine which sites ultimately go forward for designation. Decisions on site designations will be made by Secretary of State; this decision is expected by July 2023. The designation of HPMAs will require impact assessments and notifications to non-UK stakeholders under provisions of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
6. Boundary changes or increasing the size of potential HPMAs to those proposed in the consultation will no longer be able to happen as Defra would have to launch a new consultation. This means that sites and their boundaries are effectively fixed to what was presented in the consultation.
7. During the consultation, the issue of wider context was raised e.g. the cumulative effect of competing interests for marine space (e.g. offshore wind development) as drivers of spatial squeeze. Defra noted that the impacts of spatial squeeze would be taken into consideration as factors such as effort displacement and gear conflict were raised by respondents to the consultation.
8. Defra will provide regular updates to the SIAG on HPMAs as the work progresses.

Shellfish FMP development (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

9. A presentation was shared by Seafish on Shared Shellfish Objectives:
- Objective 1: Formalise the structure of the SIAG
 - Objective 2: Assess impact of latent capacity
 - Objective 3: Establish stakeholder engagement mechanism
 - Objective 4: Address marine spatial conflict
 - Objective 5: Promote consumption of UK shellfish
 - Objective 6: Facilitate & promote trade opportunities
 - Objective 7: Develop advice on shellfish welfare issues
 - Objective 8: Addressing human welfare issues
 - Objective 9: Understanding the shellfish sector's carbon footprint

Comments:

- a) Members asked whether understanding the carbon footprint (objective 9) is in relation to impact from the catching sector only or from across the shellfish supply chain; it was noted that a full picture of shellfish industry's carbon footprint could only be achieved by looking at the entire supply chain.
- b) Many existing studies on the carbon footprint of animal source proteins are not appropriate in a shellfish context and a more appropriate metric for the shellfish sector is required (e.g. studies do not consider shell weight, catching methods, or carbon sequestration in waste material).
- c) Members hoped that the FMP will provide strategic level thinking on how these objectives will work together and how they are approached as a suite of interlinked objectives, as opposed to approaching individual objectives in isolation. This is important both within the shellfish sector (across different species-specific FMPs) but also between different, non-shellfish FMPs. This is particularly important in cross-sector issues such as spatial conflict and latent capacity, where decisions may have unintended consequences for other fisheries.
- d) Objective 3 mentions a forum for stakeholders and industry. Members questioned if this will this be a separate forum to the SIAG or if it will be channelled through the SIAG. The remit and scope (as well as mechanism to report to the SIAG) of the new group is to be decided and updates will be provided in due course. The group must focus on balanced representation across different fisheries and sectors with an interest in NQS and management via the TCA.
- e) Members acknowledged that the number of shared shellfish objectives is reflective of the complexity of the shellfish sector and suggested that the SIAG should serve as a vehicle for constructive discussion around both FMP delivery and minimising potential conflicts in the future between different fisheries and stakeholders.
- f) Members felt that the vision of the shared shellfish objectives (*'Contribute to the long-term sustainability and economic viability of the UK's shellfish fisheries'*) should give consideration to sustainable harvesting and food security, if not specifically acknowledged elsewhere in the draft FMP.

Update on stakeholder engagement process (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

10. Seafish presented an update on stakeholder engagement activities that will be delivered as part of the shellfish FMP development process, summarised below:
- a) Timeline for the FMP process:
 - i. Stakeholder engagement events to gather feedback on draft FMP content (aims, objectives, and management options) will be carried out from November to December 2022
 - ii. Feedback from stakeholders will be used to refine and update the FMP to reflect feedback received at meetings and by email.
 - iii. Seafish will provide the first draft FMP to Defra in January 2023
 - iv. Formal public consultation on draft FMP by Defra from April to June 2023

- v. Crab & lobster and whelk FMPs for English waters will be finalised and published in Autumn 2023
- b) FMP Development – Stakeholder engagement
 - i. Stakeholder engagement events are being held around England to:
 - Raise awareness about FMPs
 - Encourage active involvement in FMP development
 - Seafish will host a mix of in person and online events
- c) Some of the key themes emerging from stakeholder engagement activities carried out to date are summarised below:
 - i. 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).
 - ii. 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).
 - iii. There were mixed / negative views on the ambitiousness of the FMP programme (“we have been here before”) and a lack of clarity on how FMPs will interact with other legislation, e.g. IFCA byelaws.
 - iv. 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.

11. Comments:

- Members discussed opportunities for stakeholders outside of England to engage in the FMP process. Although the FMPs for crab, lobster and whelk are for fisheries in English waters only, they will impact fishing opportunities for those in other administrations. It was noted that in-person engagement events only took place at ports in England but that online events were open to any stakeholder; engagement events for the king scallop FMP were held in Wales (Bangor) and specific Welsh online events were also hosted. Similar considerations were raised in some engagement events (e.g. Northumberland) where cross-border differences in management exists.
- Members discussed if stakeholder engagement events have given any indication of industry appetite for future management options. As events are ongoing no definitive conclusions can be drawn though discussions on management options have been held at all meetings. A stakeholder engagement report summarising feedback will be drafted by Seafish and submitted to Defra alongside the draft FMP in early 2023. It was again pointed out that Defra is taking an iterative approach to FMPs and as such there will be opportunities to change things in the future to ensure management actions are appropriate.
- Members discussed the king scallop FMP for English and Welsh waters, which is being developed by the SICG Working Group and is adopting a co-management approach to drafting the plan. It was suggested that lessons could be learned between the different plans and groups on different approaches to future co-management and to collaborative FMP development.

Update on actions from other meetings (CMG / WMG)

12. NQS tonnage limits and outlook for 2023 (Defra)

- a) No update currently available on NQS tonnage limits and uptake through the TCA, work is ongoing and Defra will provide an update at the next SIAG.

- b) MMO projects NQS uptake by UK vessels in EU waters will be 102% of the tonnage limit available by the end of the year. This projection is based on data from previous years and current uptake data. One of the driving factors of this is the increase in king scallop uptake. Crab and whelk landings (UK uptake) are both lower than this time last year.

13. FISP project update (Mike Roach, HFIG)

- a) HFIG have recently completed a FISP Part A (research proposal development) project and will apply for funding for a Part B (full research project) project on the potential feasibility / viability of a northeast England stone crab fishery. HFIG encourages anyone fishing in the northeast of England to get involved in this work.
- b) Mixed results from the FISP-funded HFIG lobster settlement project as, to date, settlement cages have not caught any juvenile lobsters. The approach is based on proven methods for assessing larval settlement but have not yet proved effective in the study areas off the east coast of England. This may be due to differences in behaviour of American and European lobster juveniles; studies are ongoing and further updates will be brought to the SIAG and CMG as appropriate.

Species management group updates:

SICG (Jim Portus, SICG chair)

14. The SICG last met on 8th September and key updates are presented below:

- a) Stakeholder engagement events took place from September through to November. More engagement to come in Wales which will be led by Welsh government.
- b) Stakeholder engagement report has been submitted by Seafish to the Working Group (WG) and it was considered in detail in November.
- c) Agreed the aims and objectives for the FMP and a lot of questions have been sent to the subgroup arising from the report. The WG is awaiting answers on specific questions from the Scallop Science Group.
- d) The SICGWG will meet again in December to consider evidence from Cefas, IFCAs, MMO, and Seafish to identify what evidence gaps that need to be filled for English and Welsh king scallop fisheries, this will form the basis of the FMP evidence and research plan.
- e) The WG has drafted a project plan for the next few months and there will be more WG meetings over the next few weeks to finalise draft FMP content before submission to Defra in January.

Crab & Lobster Management Group (Claire Pescod, Seafish)

The CMG last met on 7th November and key updates are presented below:

- a) Presentations on the work of the CMG were given at the Blue Marine Foundation's brown crab symposium; this included information on the history of the CMG, group priorities, and the group's involvement in the development of the crab and lobster FMP.
- b) Work is ongoing on the crustacean welfare codes of practice for the shellfish industry – following on from the inclusion of crustaceans in the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2021. This project is being led by CMG, SAGB and Seafish. A consultancy has been commissioned very recently to establish industry panels to develop the codes. More information on how stakeholders can get involved in this work will be circulated soon via both the SIAG and CMG.
- c) The CMG Science Sub-group heard has been reviewing key evidence packages in order to develop the evidence and research plan of the crab and lobster FMP and has been reviewing literature on future management options for crab and lobster fisheries to inform management proposals.
- d) At the last CMG the group heard updates from Project UK Southwest crab industry workshops (report to be published soon), Cefas' new technology for gathering fishery data, and updates on Teesside crab mortality events from industry, Newcastle University, and Defra.
- e) An overview was provided on FMP development progress as follows:

- i. Engagement events began at the start of November and are well underway – members who haven't attended an event yet are encouraged to attend both the in-person and online events. The events are industry focused but also for wider stakeholders.
- ii. Crab and lobster FMP engagement is being carried out alongside the whelk FMP events and are being delivered by Seafish.
- iii. Events lay out the objectives developed by the CMG Working Group and feedback fed in by CMG membership. The presentations include high level objectives as identified by the SIAG which filter down into each of the shellfish FMPs and objectives specific to the Crab and Lobster Fisheries

Whelk Management Group (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

The WMG last met on 14th November and key updates are presented below:

- a) An overview was provided on FMP development progress as follows:
 - iv. Engagement events began at the start of November and are well underway – members who haven't attended an event yet are encouraged to attend both the in-person and online events. The events are industry focused but also for wider stakeholders.
 - v. Whelk FMP engagement is being carried out alongside the crab and lobster FMP events and are being delivered by Seafish.
 - vi. Events lay out the objectives developed by the WMG Working Group and feedback fed in by WMG membership. The presentations include high level objectives as identified by the SIAG which filter down into each of the shellfish FMPs and objectives specific to the whelk fisheries
 - vii. Discussion around management options and managing fishing effort into the future
- b) The WMG discussed notable data gaps for whelk fisheries and how these could potentially be (in part) addressed through industry involvement and 'backcasting' to fill in the gaps in fishery-dependent data, e.g. the inclusion of industry records of pot hauls or pot numbers fished to fill gaps in understanding whelk fishing effort. The WMG plans to convene a meeting of both the Science Sub-group and a wider stakeholder meeting in 2023 to understand what industry data may be available and how this could be used to bolster existing data assets.
- c) Group discussions focused on defining future management options for whelk fisheries including tools to restrict or ringfence fishing effort.

Round up and close:

- 15. Barrie Deas will retire from the NFFO in April 2023 and will additionally give up chairing role for the SIAG. The SIAG must start planning for a replacement chair.

Actions

Action no.	Action	Responsibility
10.1	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
10.2	Share FMP shared shellfish objectives after the meeting	Seafish
10.3	Discussion of new chair at next meeting	SIAG

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
10.5	Defra to circulate link on UK NQs uptake data	Defra