

Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) Meeting

21st July 2022

Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Barrie Deas, NFFO (Chair)	Joanna Messini, Defra
Adam Holland, Seasource	John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association
Alison Freeman, Fishmongers	Juliette Hatchman, Southwestern Fish Producers' Organisation
Andrew Rooney, Rooney Fish	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
Annabel Stockwin, Defra	Martin Noel, DAERA
Aoife Martin, Seafish	Mike Roach, Holderness Fishing Industry Group
Beshlie Pool, South Devon and Channel Shellfishermens Association	Mike Cohen, NFFO
Chris Ranford, CFPO	Gwladys Lambert, Cefas
Chloe North, Western PO	Rebecca Treacy, Seafish
Colin Bannister, SAGB	Sara Mynott, Mindfully Wired Communications
Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish	Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
Emily Theobald, MMO	Sarah Horsfall, SAGB
Ewen Bell, Cefas	
Fiona Birch, Mindfully Wired Communications	
Helen Lovell, Fishermen's mission	
Jim Evans, Welsh Fishermen's Association	

Apologies

Martyn Youell, Waterdance
Paul Brown, Brown & Bright Shellfish Ltd
Patrick Smith, Daera

Actions and Minutes from May SIAG Meeting

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

1. An action was set for the Seafish Market Insight team to present at this meeting but due to clashes with annual leave, no one was available to attend as there are only two members in that team. The insight team have prepared slides and notes which will be sent out along with the minutes for this meeting and they will be invited to attend and present at the next SIAG.
2. Seafish are holding off on the next action to provide a progress update to the DAs on the common shellfish FMP objectives as work is ongoing with the FMP Working Group to achieve a final draft of the objectives before then taking the final draft out to the various FMP working groups within a week or so. The objectives will then be taken to the DAs. Action to be carried over to next meeting.
3. The multiyear strategies work underway at Defra will be provided and circulated out to the shellfish groups in due course.
4. A briefing paper is being prepared by the Seafish team on issues on the process for gathering fishery dependent data collection. Seafish have a meeting with key data collecting organisations in several weeks' time and any proposals will be fed back to the SIAG in the near future.

Update from members on key issues of interest to the SIAG

5. Recently had diseased Lobster caught off the Isles of Scilly. This has been raised with Cefas and they believe it may be a copepod parasite but have yet to confirm as they have looking further in to this.
6. The IFCA's have asked stakeholders to look out for isopods on Gills of which was discovered on lobsters up North, and it could be linked to stress and/or warmer waters this season.
7. Cefas in Weymouth have reported that this copepod parasite has been around dating back to the 1800's and gets removed when the animals moult and is not linked to mortality and is unlikely to be affecting the stocks.

SIAG shellfish FMP development (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

8. The Defra's frontrunner FMPs for shellfish are crab, lobster and whelk in English waters. king scallop is also included, in English in and Welsh waters, as part of the frontrunner phase which is prioritised for delivery.
9. Delivery of a draft FMP is due by March 2023 and then sign off and publication by September 2023.
10. The SIAG Working Group have been working on draft objectives and actions which span across the different FMPs and these were shared via presentation by Seafish;
 - a. Formalise the structure and operation of the SIAG, and associated sub-groups, so that it becomes the focal point of engagement on shellfish fisheries and their management in the UK.
 - b. Assess the likely impact of latent capacity on fishing pressure and stock sustainability and implement appropriate measures to manage the risk of increased fishing pressure from latent capacity.
 - c. Establish a mechanism to ensure that industry stakeholders are able to engage in discussions on fishing opportunities and future management interventions for UK/EU shared NQS under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
 - d. Support the shellfish industry in matters regarding marine spatial planning and spatial squeeze. Develop and pilot an approach for identifying important fishing areas to better address issues of marine spatial conflict aligned with the requirement for increased marine protection.
 - e. Progress initiatives to increase and promote and consumption of UK shellfish.
 - f. Facilitate and promote trade opportunities for UK shellfish in overseas markets (EU and non-EU).
 - g. Develop advice and guidance on shellfish welfare issues and support the industry to further develop best practice handling measures.
 - h. Support the industry to build and maintain a positive reputation by promoting fair and equitable working conditions in the UK shellfish sector.
 - i. Improve understanding of the carbon footprint of UK shellfish fisheries
11. These draft objectives will soon be shared with the group for review.
12. Seafish will write up guidance on how they believe these objectives fit into the wider FMP.
13. There is a joint venture between Seafish and the SAGB in response to decapods, lobster, crab etc, being added to the Animal Welfare Act which became law 28th of April. The venture will aim to develop a code of practice for the entire supply chain, from catching all the way through to chefs and home sale in direct relation to animal welfare.
14. Devon and Severn IFCA have also been speaking to Seafish about potentially developing a FISP project proposal to look at how to measure Soft Cell shelled crab using techniques that have been developed in Alaska and Canada using a durometer.

Spatial squeeze in fisheries (Barrie Deas, NFFO)

15. There's been a growing appreciation of the increased competition for marine space and within that context the vulnerability of fishing activities because unlike farmers, as fishers do not have legal rights over production areas.

16. There is an underlying assumption that fishing activity can be pushed aside safely and take place elsewhere without undue harm and as the scale of potential displacement has become clearer, particularly through the expansion of offshore wind and marine conservation marine protected areas the impacts this is having has become more and more evident.
17. Marine spatial plans and tools associated with those plans are limited due to prioritising some activities over other activities and also the silo mentality of government and lack of a strategic overview to deal with the displacement that will arise from the expansion of particularly offshore wind and Marine Conservation Zones.
18. Scottish Fisherman's Federation and the NFFO along with financial support from Fishmongers have commissioned a report from ABPMER who will look into the issues around spatial squeeze.
19. A limitation of the report is it only focuses on bottom trawling and a much more extensive report would be needed if all fishing methods were going to be considered.
20. Another limitation of the report is that it only focuses on UK fishing effort and doesn't take into account EU fleets.
21. The spatial squeeze report is a necessary piece of work but it's just the beginning. the SAGB has coordinated a letter to Victoria Prentice highlighting the shellfish industry's concerns.
22. Following the publication of the report, NFFO and SFF submitted a joint request to meet the Secretary of State to discuss the implications of the report and plan a parliamentary event in either September or October.
23. Members suggested that when developing our FMPs, we should also be future proofing them and also the reviews that will takes place every 5-6 years should include looking at changes that may take place to the biology of the stocks that are being managed.
24. There is an urgency to get fishing involved earlier in the planning process as a recognized stakeholder in this process.
25. The marine spatial planning team at Defra isn't in the Crown Estate meetings and the Crown Estate aren't in the NPA meetings and so they're all thinking about their own spatial issues, separately.
26. There was concern about what the government are expecting from fisheries and the lack of support and resources fisheries have in relation to this spatial squeeze.
27. In terms of future proofing, could industry insist that cables are trenched in within the new FMPs?

Climate change and shellfish fisheries (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

28. Not very much literature out there at the moment or that is specific to shellfish fisheries in the UK and the climate change space but there are a few key papers that are cited quite often.
29. the shellfish carbon footprint higher than other fisheries because of:
 - a. High energy production methods (e.g. dredging) as a result of drag
 - b. High commercial value of target species making it economically viable to use more fuel to land a lower volume of product
 - c. Higher waste / by-product ratio in studies comparing protein production
30. The climate change issues for shellfish fisheries include:
 - a. Metrics used to assess protein yield –
 - i. Hilborn et al. 2018 used CO2 eq. per 40 grams of protein
 - ii. Parker & Tyedmers used fuel use intensity per tonne
 - b. No consideration of carbon sequestration in shell material – challenging to quantify and requires improved understanding of by-product utilisation
 - c. Aggregation of data despite extensive variation between fisheries – Parker & Tyedmers, 2014 acknowledge “an order of magnitude difference in fuel consumption in shellfish fisheries between different regions and target species”
31. The actions proposed under FMPs:

- a. Shared shellfish FMP objective:
 - i. Assess the carbon footprint of shellfish fisheries to inform efforts to reduce emissions in the future
 - ii. Maintain a watching brief on climate change-related issues of interest to the shellfish sector and use the SIAG as a forum through which to raise awareness and promote collaborative working
- b. Species-specific objective (crab/lobster/whelk):
 - i. Explore options around minimising the contribution of crab/lobster/whelk fisheries to climate change, and;
 - ii. Facilitate industry adaptation to changing climatic conditions in order to minimise the adverse effects of climate change on crab/lobster/whelk fisheries

Species management group updates:

Crab & Lobster Management Group (Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish)

32. The following is a summary of key updates provided at the most recent CMG:
- a. Updates on FMP development – objectives are being finalised and will be sent out to the wider group in due course
 - b. CMG Science Subgroup have drafted the science plan and that is now with members for feedback
 - c. Update on annual review for southwest FIP, pre assessment for North Sea crab fishery and overview of the crab management Workshops
 - d. Discussion on harmonisation of Crawfish management

Whelk Management Group (Aoife Martin, Seafish)

33. The following is a summary of key updates provided at the most recent WMG:
- a. The whelk anecdotal information report is being finalised and should be circulated shortly
 - b. FISP funding secured for project led by researchers at Heriot Watt University to investigate stock structure, bait alternatives, and the utility of artificial intelligence technology for gathering catch composition data.
 - c. Whelk research plan is now with the group for final review and comments.
 - d. Update on Shellfish FMP stakeholder engagement strategy
 - e. Discussion on next steps following the WMG whelk effort management workshop and what management scenarios may look like

SICG (Jim Portus, SICG chair)

34. The following is a summary of key updates provided at the most recent WMG:
- a. Update on FMP development by the SICG FMP Working Group (SICG FMP WG)
 - b. Update from MSC on FIP progress
 - c. Update on Shellfish FMP stakeholder engagement strategy being carried out by Seafish, and which will begin in early September when the SICG FMP WG will be presenting the first draft of the FMP

- d. It was decided to reinvigorate the Queen's Scallop Working Group with a view to ultimately jump starting a process leading to a queen scallop FMP.

AOB

- 35. Minutes approved from May meeting
- 36. MMO led workshop being in the coming weeks, internal to government, to determine how data is collected for the correct purposes which brings together the MMO, Cefas, Defra, IFCA's and Seafish is helping to coordinate that.
- 37. Defra and Seafish have published the Shellfish Legislation Mapping Tool covering crabs and whelks.
- 38. There are two opportunities to join the Fisheries Management Team at Seafish, a fisheries project officer and a fisheries analyst.

Actions

Action no.	Action	Responsibility
10.1	Share FMP draft objectives with the SIAG when it's received sign off from the Working Group.	Seafish
10.2	Share written principles of MYS with group members.	Defra
10.3	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