

Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) Meeting

22nd May 2023

Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Mike Roach, NFFO (Chair)	Joanna Messini, Defra
Adam Holland, ANIFPO/NIFPO	Joe Cooper, Seafish
Alison Freeman, Fishmongers	Jim Portus, Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG)
Aoife Martin, Seafish	John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association
Andrew Brown, Macduff Shellfish	Juliette Hatchman, Southwestern Fish Producer's Organisation (SWFPO)
Andrew Rooney, Rooney Fish	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
Bill Brock, Brighton & Newhaven Fish Sales	Patrick Smith, DAERA
Carrie McMinn, Agri-food & Biosciences Institute	Paul Brown, Brown and Bright
Chris Ranford, Cornish Fish Producer's Organisation (CFPO)	Rebecca Treacy, Seafish
Colin Bannister, Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB)	Sarah Bedingham, MMO
Ella Brock, Seafish	Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
Felicity Sylvester, Sustainable Fish Education	Suzi Pegg-Darlison, Seafish
Fiona Birch, Mindfully Wired Communications	Tim Smith, Association of IFCAs
Gary Hodgson, Venture Seafoods	Udara Nagodavithana, Seafish
Hannah Clark, Pentire Fishing/Camel Fish Ltd	
Helen Hunter, Defra	

Apologies

Alex Caveen, University of Hull	Louise Price, MMO
Beshlie Pool, South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen Ltd.	Jim Evans, Welsh Fishermen's Association
Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish	Nicholas French, MMO
Jamie Robertson, Holderness Fishing Industry Group (HFIG)	Richard Hoskin, MMO

Appointment of new SIAG Chair

1. Mike Roach of National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations was nominated and appointed as the new chair of SIAG. The SIAG acknowledged the contribution of former chair, Barrie Deas, in developing the SIAG and welcomed Mike to the role.

Actions and minutes from February SIAG meeting

2. Minutes from February SIAG were approved by members, with actions all completed.
3. A drop-in session with Defra on HPMA's took place in March and any further updates will be communicated through to the SIAG.

Update from members on key issues of interest to the SIAG

4. Chair raised the iVMS issue, relayed from an MMO announcement on 19th of May, where two of the four systems were reported to have failed type approval and have been removed from the supply list by the MMO. This will be a challenge going forward, since one of the systems had roughly 1,000 units deployed before being removed from the approved supplier list. The MMO have advised

that 'no-one will be out of pocket' regarding this issue and it will be addressed as swiftly as possible. The roll out of iVMS is on hold and more information to be found [here](#).

5. Marine Scotland were unable to attend the SIAG but provided a written update on the HPMA process in Scotland. The consultation on selection criteria for Scottish HPMA's closed on the 17th of April, responses are being considered and anticipating further engagement with business owners and fishers to ensure that voices are heard. The process is slightly different to that of England, the process completed to date was regarding the site selection guidelines, as opposed to site selection itself. No HPMA sites have been proposed yet, but any further information will be relayed to the SIAG in the future.

Discussion

6. Member expressed that the HPMA process in Scotland has been very emotive and has garnered significant political interest. The First Minister has made a commitment that no HPMA's will be brought into effect where the community is not in agreement. It is expected that HPMA's in Scotland will progress at a much slower rate to that of England.
7. Member expressed that the Open Seas campaign group is legally challenging ministers of Scottish Government in allowing licencing of bottom trawl gear in the inshore zone (0-3nm). The challenge has referenced the policy in the National Marine Plan which aims to ensure that no activity has a 'significant impact on the national status of Priority Marine Features'.

Shellfish FMP update

Update on FMP process and timeline (Helen Hunter, Defra)

8. Defra provided an update on progress since the first drafts of shellfish (crab & lobster, whelk, and king scallop) FMPs have been submitted, the process that will follow and on the legal elements of the FMP:
 - a. The draft FMPs have undergone multiple internal clearance stages and have been reviewed from a technical, legal, and policy perspective, known as the Gateway Review. These reviews focus on refining the documents for the next stage of clearances before public consultation.
 - b. These FMPs are not just strategies, they are legally binding documents and anything within them means Defra are legally bound to deliver. Because of this, the FMPs are now under review by senior managers and senior legal teams within Defra to make sure there is clarity on where and who responsibility for delivery will sit with; it was noted that the FMPs includes principles and objectives that will require collaborative effort from regulators and stakeholders for successful delivery.
 - c. After sign-off from Defra senior management, the FMPs will go to ministers and ultimately Downing Street for clearance before progressing to public consultation in summer. Defra have little control over this next stage and as such, there is no firm date for public consultation as of yet. The FMP consultation will be hosted on a Gov.uk consultation page.
 - d. This will link to two citizen space pages: one for the Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) consultation and one for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) consultation. Each page will also contain relevant documents as PDFs in the 'related' section at the bottom of the page. Documents included will be the consultation letter, the consultation document and questions (conduc), the draft FMP (including annexes), and the draft de-minimis assessment. Each FMP will have its own consultation document also known as a 'conduc'.
 - e. The conduc acts a summary of the FMP and supporting documents and sets out the purpose of the consultation, specific questions that stakeholders are being asked to respond to, and guidance on how to respond.
 - f. FMP products have been developed and are available now in the form of posters and flyers. Posters can be printed at home while flyers will be printed and sent out by Defra once ordered. Anyone interested in the products can order them via an online order form [here](#).

- g. Gov.uk pages are being updated with structure and content.
- h. Upon consultation launch, Defra is planning a consultation roadshow, this is likely to include a return to locations delivery partners have already visited as part of FMP stakeholder engagement in 2022, with some other ports flagged as potential locations. Defra comms teams are looking at various way people can feed into the consultation, other than the citizen space page on the website.

Discussion:

- 9. Members enquired as to whether the deadline for publication (scheduled to be published by the end of 2023) of the FMPs will be adjusted following the delay in launching the public consultation. Defra responded that there is a commitment for the shellfish FMPs to be published before the end of the year, however due to the delay in public consultation, a deadline cannot be confirmed at this point.
- 10. Defra shared the link to order FMP public consultation posters. A form will have to be completed so Defra can know where to send out the posters and understand where they will be placed. Flyers will be printed professionally in batches and sent out by post. [Follow the link to order](#)

Overview of shellfish FMPs and SIAG involvement (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

- 11. Seafish presented an overview of the shared shellfish principles, including:
 - a. SIAG involvement in the FMP content development and the overarching responsibility of the SIAG
 - b. Shared objectives, which were developed by the SIAG FMP working group, are now listed in the draft FMPs as 'shared shellfish principles' as:
 - i. Some are based around principles of working, e.g., role of the SIAG, as opposed to specific objectives with tangible outputs.
 - ii. Some are more industry-led and / or require commitment of industry to deliver (not just government) so the onus is on all involved, including the SIAG.
 - iii. Some are not directly aligned with the objectives of the Fisheries Act 2020, so whilst they may relate to other pieces of legislation (e.g. the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022), they might not align with the Fisheries Act so are technically outside of the direct scope of the FMP
 - c. The shared shellfish principles
 - d. The anticipated role of the SIAG in the implementation, monitoring and review of aspects of the frontrunner shellfish FMPs.

Scallop FMP update (Juliette Hatchman, SWFPO)

- 12. The SICG Working Group gave a verbal update on the King Scallop FMP for English and Welsh waters:
 - a. The plan's core objectives are to ensure king scallop stocks are fished sustainably and proposes a number of approaches to management.
 - b. The plan considers all evidence of wider impacts the fishery has on the marine environment and sets out a long-term plan to improve data to inform mitigation and evidence management decisions in the future.
 - c. The plan brings together (for the first time) a portfolio of all existing management measures for king scallop in England and Wales, plus all available science and evidence, highlights the existing gaps, and identifies what action is required to fill those gaps.
 - d. A stakeholder engagement report was presented to the SICG WG after a period of engagement events held between September and December in 2022, to feed into FMP development.
 - e. The SICG WG have proposed the establishment of a formal king scallop co-management group as there was unanimous support for the formalisation of a system of co-management where industry and regulators work closely together to manage the fishery.
 - f. Implementation plans will be developed over the coming months.

- g. The proposed management measures within the draft FMP are a combination of long- and short-term measures.
- h. The FMP proposes a review and development of all existing and new management approaches and propose ongoing management and monitoring measures.
- i. Approaches proposed in the FMP include the consideration of a scientifically derived output-based control which will limit the proportion of stock that can be removed, as well as consideration around the application of input controls which will limit the amount of fishing effort.
- j. The SICGWG acknowledges in the FMP that a suite of measures, encompassing effort controls, technical measures, increased protection of juveniles, and area-based management etc., is likely to be the most effective way of managing king scallop fisheries in England and Wales.

Open FMP discussion (All members)

- 13. The Association of IFCA are in the final stage of being commissioned to draft the Cockle FMP for English Waters which is due to be completed by the end of 2024. Tim Smith (AIFCA) will be the lead contact for the draft cockle FMP development, two-way conversation between AIFCA and the SIAG on the FMP is encouraged.
- 14. Colin Bannister and Mike Bell at Heriot Watt University have completed a major review of the cockle stock assessment process in the Thames Estuary which was a condition in the MSC assessment. It is an extensive report that contains modelling to understand the Thames cockle order which is up for renewal. The draft has been submitted to Kent and Essex IFCA and it is hoped that this will help inform the development of the FMP.

Seafish Market and Trade Insight (Joe Cooper and Suzi Pegg-Darlison, Seafish Market Insight Team)

- 15. The insight team introduced the services of the Seafish Insight and Economics team with a focus on advice and data the team can provide on trade and market insight.
- 16. The team presented some examples of recent work undertaken by the team and gave an overview on:
 - a. Finding solutions to the real issues facing seafood businesses in terms of supply, processing and markets.
 - b. Providing key information and actionable insight to help seafood businesses make sound commercial decisions
 - c. Trade data, retail data, and foodservice data.
- 17. The team also shared many helpful links and supporting reports with the group of which can be found by entering the Seafish Market Insight Portal [here](#).

Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) update (Jim Portus)

- 18. The SICG last met on the 22nd of March 2023 and key updates are presented below:
 - a. Routine works ongoing to set days at sea limits for quarterly periods for area 6 and area 7 waters, but area 7 is the primary focus.
 - b. Update from MMO on call for evidence in March 2023. There was concern about closing certain parts of the Channel to scallopers. From 1st May EU vessels are prohibited from scallop dredging in EU waters of 7d until end of September 2023. This has implications for UK fleets as EU regulations do not apply to UK waters and there are concerns that EU fleet can fish in UK waters when their waters are closed. The SICG submitted a response to the MMO call for evidence immediately after SICG meeting.
 - c. ICES area 7d will be closed for UK and EU vessels >10m from 1st July to 30th September.

- d. Lyme Bay has 4 closed rectangles in 7e for UK and EU >12m from 1st July to 30th September, with the closure being enacted through a licence variation.
- e. Next meeting will be held on 14th June in London.
- f. Entering the final year of the Channel FIP. This was a five-year project but was extended by two years due to Brexit and Covid. Now planning for what happens next with this at the end of 2024.

Whelk Management Group (WMG) update (Aoife Martin, Seafish)

19. The WMG last met on 15th of May and key updates are presented below:
- a. Primary focus was on FMPs, with an update from Defra on consultation and comms and from Seafish on reviewing draft content of the plan including species-specific objectives, fisheries management strategy, role of the WMG in implementation, monitoring, and review.
 - b. Discussed initial management interventions being proposed in the FMP – these are management interventions that the WMG believes can be made now, on the basis of existing evidence, for whelk these are:
 - i. Introduction of a whelk permit / entitlement to manage effort from vessels entering the fishery
 - ii. Exploration of the use of a closed season to protect spawning stocks
 - c. Had planned to have an update from Welsh Government reflecting on their whelk permitting scheme and application of annual and monthly catch limits, however they were unable to attend at short notice, so this has been deferred to the next meeting.

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

20. The CMG last met on 9th of May and key updates are presented below:
- a. Primary focus on FMPs, both from Defra on consultation & comms and from Seafish on reviewing draft content of the plan including species-specific objectives, fisheries management strategy, role of the CMG in implementation, monitoring, and review
 - b. Discussed initial management interventions being proposed in the FMP – these are management interventions that the CMG believes can be made now, on the basis of existing evidence, for crab and lobster these are:
 - i. Harmonisation of lobster and crawfish MLS to 90mm and 110mm respectively, echoing the larger MLS already in place in some IFCA jurisdictions as a means of protecting stocks and simplifying the management landscape.
 - ii. Prohibiting the landing of soft brown crab as bait – already prohibited to land soft crab under Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967, however it is allowed to be used for bait.
 - iii. Piloting finer scale management of selected CFU and LFU based on Cefas' proposed 3-S approach, managing the fishery based on size, sex and season.
 - c. Session to discuss ongoing project to develop industry codes of best practice on crustacean welfare, handling, and dispatch – this is a collaborative project between the SAGB, CMG, and Seafish – prompted by the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act which recognises crustaceans as sentient:
 - i. Aim is to develop guidelines to help different parts of the supply chain adopt best practice
 - ii. Enable businesses to meet requirements and evidence good practice
 - iii. This is Phase 2 of the project, following work to assess feasibility in Phase 1, Cumulus Consultants have been contracted to host panel meetings and draft codes – the work is being progressed in five different areas: catching, processing, wholesale and export, food service, and retail.
 - iv. Expected to be completed by November 2023

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21. The Mid channel conference, ongoing for over 40 years was held this year held in Plymouth, with key points summarised below:
 - a. Delegates were made up of industry from various parts of France, potters from South Devon and Channel, beam trawlers from Brixham, scallop dredgers from the Channel, and potters representing the Channel Islands.
 - b. This is not a government-led conference, it is an industry-to-industry conference, but MMO and Defra are invited to participate.
 - c. The NFFO gave a presentation on spatial squeeze.
 - d. The origin and purpose of the mid-Channel conference is to delineate potting boxes in the western Channel.
 - e. With anticipation of gear conflict this year (as a result of spatial closures for scallops), there is a commitment that all mobile gear fishermen are in possession of charts that relate to potting areas and agree to communicate with each other.
22. Members raised the concern of EU under 10m vessels being able to fish in UK waters during the 7d closed season. Members recalled the MMO stating their understanding was that French authorities would not be testing landed scallop in French ports, which means they would not be able to legally land to French ports and would instead be forced to land in UK ports. As a consequence, this member hoped that the risk of French vessels being highly active in UK waters during the EU closed season would be reduced.
23. Chair raised that that Cumulus Consulting will be presenting on the Crustacean welfare project at the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) conference in June.

Actions

Number	Description	Responsible
13.1	SIAG to disseminate information regarding the development of the cockle FMP. Members with an interest in the cockle FMP to contact Tim Smith, AIFCA	Seafish
13.2	Maintain a watching brief on HPMAs in England and Scotland	Seafish
13.3	Circulate information on iVMS rollout issues	Seafish
13.4	Share slides on market insights and trade update	Seafish