

Note of fifteenth meeting of Discard Action Group held at Fishmongers' Hall, London. Thursday 2 May 2013

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

<http://www.seafish.org/fishermen/responsible-sourcing/protecting-fish-stocks/discards>

Attendees

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Angus Cragg | Defra |
| Britt Groosman | Environmental Defense Fund |
| Charlotte Bury | Tesco |
| Claire Pescod | MSC |
| Claire Tibbott | Fishmongers' Company |
| Chris Leftwich | Fishmongers' Company |
| David Parker | Youngs Seafood |
| Francisco Aldon | IFFO |
| Giles Bartlett | WWF |
| Gordon Hart | Marine Scotland |
| Giulia Cambie | Bangor University |
| Jane Sandell | Scottish Producers Organisation |
| Julian Roberts | MMO |
| Jerry Percy | NUTFA |
| Jess Sparks | Seafood Scotland |
| John Anderson | Seafish |
| Julia Pantin | Bangor University |
| Karen Green | Seafish (Minutes) |
| Kenny Coull | SFF |
| Mike Montgomerie | Seafish |
| Mike Park | SWFPA, Seafish Board (Chair) |
| Mike Short | FDF |
| Mogens Schou | AquaMind, SCAR-Fish, DTU-Aqua |
| Paddy Campbell | DARDNI |
| Paul Dolder | CEFAS |
| Paul MacCarthy | Marine Scotland |
| Rebecca Mitchell | MRAG |
| Rod Cappell | Poseidon |
| Samantha Elliott | CEFAS |
| Sam Stone | MCS |
| Sandy Luk | ClientEarth |
| Sarah Horsfall | Seafish |
| Toby Parker | UFI |
| Tom Catchpole | CEFAS |
| Tom Rossiter | Succorfish |

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed the group to the fifteenth meeting of the Discard Action Group. Apologies were received from:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Andrew Mallison | IFFO |
| Ash Wilson | Defra |
| Barrie Deas | NFFO |
| Chris Jones | Scanbio (Scotland) Ltd |
| Dale Rodmell | NFFO |
| Dominic Rihan | EU Commission |
| Edouard Delloye | ClientEarth |
| Emily Howgate | Consultant |
| Ian Humes | DARDNI |
| Jim Masters | MCS |
| Jim Portus | SWFPO |
| Kenn Skau Fischer | Danish Fishermen's Association |
| Libby Woodhatch | Seafish |
| Lisa Borges | SFP |
| Nathan de Rozarieux | Falfish |
| Nigel Edwards | Seachill |
| Peter McDonald | Scanbio (Scotland) Ltd |
| Phil MacMullen | Seafish |
| Rosie Magudia | Seaweb |
| Simon Derrick | Seachill |
| Will Griffiths | Seaweb |

2. Minutes from the last full DAG meeting held on 24 October 2012 and the catching sector specific meetings in November 2012 in Brussels and January 2013 in London.

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

3. Latest on CFP reform – UK perspective

Defra outlined the progress of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform negotiations. February was a big month. The European Parliament voted with a large majority of 502 against 137 (and 27 abstentions) to overhaul the Common Fisheries Policy. The Council adopted a second general approach on a reformed CFP – this specified the Council position on the implementation of the discards ban and the possibility of by-catch quotas. Trilogue negotiations are now underway between the three main institutions of the EU: the Council (represented by the Irish Presidency under Minister Simon Coveney), Parliament (by the rapporteur Ulrike Rodust) and Commission (by Maria Damanaki). The Irish Presidency is very keen to secure agreement by the end of June, however there is always the potential for a blocking minority.

The pelagic landings obligation is due to be introduced at the beginning of 2014 (this may be moved to 2015). This is not too far away and Defra, alongside the devolved administrations, is looking ahead at all of the factors to be taken into consideration. An implementation workshop was held in February to start this process. Assuming that agreement is reached in June Defra is planning a public consultation on the pelagic landings obligation in July. A question was raised about whether this was a discard ban within a pelagic fishery or just on pelagic species. This will be looked into - but it will cover those targeting pelagic species but it will also encompass every fish caught in a pelagic fishery so it will cover bycatch of white fish.

The North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC) is running a Discards Workshop in Brussels on 19 June. The aim of the workshop is to consider the practical implications of the forthcoming discards ban in a positive and constructive manner. DAG is also planning to host a workshop/seminar on issues surrounding TACs in a mixed fishery such as the North Sea ie monitoring and control measures, what are the key commercial species, TACs for key driver species and how many there should be, choke species, joint stocks, frequency of assessment etc

Marine Scotland is writing to industry (pelagic trawlers, demersal trawlers) inviting them to take part in trials to help identify which will be the choke species. They are not anticipating choke species with the pelagic trawls, but in the demersal saithe and hake fisheries dab, which and flounder could be choke species.

4. The Danish approach to the discard ban – ‘turning policy into wealth generation’. Mogens Schou, AquaMind, SCAR-Fish, DTU-Aqua.

http://www.seafish.org/media/819664/dag_may13_mogensschou_thenewcfp.pdf

Mogens talked about the difference between using this as an opportunity or just working within the margins of a reformed CFP. Moving from discards to discard-free fisheries changes the whole dynamic of fisheries management. He quoted Maria Damanaki ‘everything that is hauled up needs to be landed and counted against quotas....We want to simplify regulation chiefly by moving away from micro management, towards results-based management’.

A number of scenarios were presented of what could happen. The ‘right’ regulation was crucial. He advocated large scale pilots to allow a proper phasing-in of the ban and to allow the industry to prosper from taking responsibility. This provides an opportunity for combining the discard ban with economic performance.

There was discussion on setting TAC’s and how these should be determined. If based on MSY of either the prey or predator species this raises the issue of choke species; if set with an added allowance for catch quotas – this could result in some segmentation of fleets; if based on relative stability CQM and flexibility

this did not include discards and unaccounted mortality. There were also comments on exemptions from the ban, why this was necessary – and that if this involved species with high survival rates more data would be required. There were comments that the market needed to discourage fishing for smaller fish and that technical measures under the control regulations needed to be removed.

A Danish pilot is planned to assess the impact of a discard ban and look at what to do with the discard fraction. Results from a pilot fleet will be compared with those from a reference fleet (will comply with the discard ban but will have free choice of gear). The pilot will cover 40 – 50 vessels in the Baltic, Skagerrak and the North Sea. With regard to the discard fraction fish that would have been high-graded will be sold on the market, undersized fish which can't be sold due to the reference sizes will go for silage or fishmeal production.

Discussion

- How do you deal with a developing fishery, such as hake, where there is not enough quota to begin with? The only solution is more frequent scientific advice. Danish fisheries operate a pool system which allows quota to be brought into the pool and it can transfer within the pool.
- NFFO and CEFAS are looking at various camera systems to monitor catch. However these will not work in every instance such as small vessels. Could small vessels get a net benefit and what steps can be taken to address that?
- Industry does have to think very carefully about how this is going to work. The issue is with juveniles and whether any part of the supply chain is benefitting from juvenile fish.
- There were questions over fish that would have been discarded being used for fishmeal and the economics of this. It could be that the Danish system has more beneficial logistics and that BioMar must see some benefits in taking part in the trial.
- There are suggestions of a quota uplift and a move towards MSY but how is this going to be agreed? A lot of the ICES advice does not take into account discards. Could those fisheries that do not discard receive a net benefit? CFP reform is not just about discards, the move towards MSY is also crucially important. This must be backed by science and there will not be an uplift in quota if it is not deemed to be sustainable.
- The move from a landings quota to a catch quota will only happen once. If we offer a higher quota where there is more confidence in the catch data and more control, what happens in the future? There could actually be benefits from being under less scrutiny, even if the quota uplift is less.
- Has there been any assessment of management costs – comparing the current system with the new proposed system.

5. Progress following Fishing for the Markets recommendations – market led sustainability.

5.1 Introduction

http://www.seafish.org/media/821166/seafishsummary_takingf4mforward_201305.pdf

The Defra '*Fishing for the Markets*' initiative recommended a number of follow-up initiatives to improve the utilisation of fish commonly discarded due to weak or absent markets. Karen Green updated the group on work that has already been completed, and the current and future activities in the pipeline, which have been grouped under the nine areas (+ two more) identified in the F4M May 2011 report.

5.2 New study to look at the use of discards in bait

Karen Green updated the group on this new project. One of the actionable work areas under F4M was to include a study to determine the possibility for using all (or part) of the discarded fish currently generated by the English fishing fleet, for pot bait. It was highlighted in the report that the bait industry is potentially undersupplied from national sources and it may have some potential to absorb some of the fish species which are currently being discarded by the English fleet. There was also a need to determine the suitability of using unfamiliar species (i.e. dragonets) and to investigate methods to use fish below 20cm in length for pot bait.

Defra has tasked Seafish with developing a project to further evaluate the feasibility of using discards as bait. The project will be managed by Seafish working with an external contractor. The project will comprise three main phases;

- i) a desk-top study phase to review producers and users of bait, costs, species preferences, logistics and seasonality (at National level) to highlight key issues to inform dialogue with experts and to help frame a series of commercial sea trials;
- ii) to conduct three 90-day commercial sea trials (in parallel) using discard species vs traditional bait (i.e. a control), data will be collected to allow quantitative assessment and data quality will be assured through partial observer coverage; and
- iii) to collate and review evidence and produce a final report.

Following delays in obtaining match funding, Seafish is funding the balance of the project. NFFO Services Ltd. will be undertaking the project. This work will be led by Nathan de Rozarieux. It is anticipated the project may be completed by Jan-Feb 2014.

5.3 Cefas discard ban trial

Tom Catchpole updated the group with initial feedback on the trial. The four month practical study completed at the end of April. It looked at: practical implications; monitoring and enforcement; drivers for discarding; fisheries management and data collection. Four vessels over 10 metres took part and four under 10 metre vessels took part for 10 days.

It identified a number of issues: volume of discards being landed; quota; landing/transportation costs compared to fishmeal return; health and safety on vessel; points of control – security of bins; survivability i.e. SKA, PLE etc; limitations of trial; seasonal fisheries; number of vessels involved

The main reason for discarding was over-quota and cod was the top species discarded by weight. The discarded fish was sent to UFI in Grimsby for fishmeal. The next steps are to speak to vessel owners, skippers, transport companies and UFI to complete the picture.

Discussion

- Was there any discussion with the skippers as to what they could have done to have avoided catching the fish that they did? Strategies were being adopted by the different vessels ie different nets and gears.
- Are leasing costs going to be taken into account? Detailed records have been kept showing material costs, transport costs, market costs for handling, fishmeal prices etc but leasing does need to be taken into consideration (one of the netters from Newlyn went to the effort of leasing in extra cod quota).
- Discards are a loss maker for the vessels.
- The price paid by the fishmeal producers will not encourage fishing for discards however does offer a revenue stream if no other end use is available.

Action: Final report to be added to the Seafish website.

5.4. Interim report on a review of the potential impact of a discard ban on UK fishing vessels in selected case study fisheries: Irish Sea *Nephrops*.

Rod Cappell from Poseidon presented the preliminary results from this Seafish-funded study to look at: the costs and benefits of specified discard reduction measures; how these would affect vessel economics; the most cost-effective approach to reducing discards for the fleet(s) concerned; and what the quota requirements would amount to; whether there are 'choke' species that could limit operations of the fishery.

A number of scenarios were presented. The results showed that for Irish Sea *Nephrops* whiting is the critical choke species, and with no quota flexibility the fleet would not be viable. The TAC, and quota availability, is out of balance with bycatch levels. 96% of discards are below MLS so the de minimis rule and flexibility would be essential. Other choke species could also kick in (plaice, less so rays). In general the details of the regulation are critical (flexibility, de minimis, etc.); details of the measures also critical (type of BRDs, extent of move on rules, etc.); there are questions over how will quota market react, reduced availability, price increases and the extent of quota uplift.

Discussion

- If 96% of whiting discards are under sized selectivity measures are not going to work but other measure could be applied. It would be interesting to compare the best performers against the worst.
- Fishermen do seem to know which fishing areas cause the most bycatch.
- The work was welcomed but there was some alarm at these conclusions. 18 months ago hardly any selective gear was being used but now most vessels fishing in the Irish Sea are using highly selective gear. Small whiting do present a major headache.
- It is necessary to clarify how the quota is clarified. ICES does not include discards in its whiting assessments. It is crucial that we manage the transition from a landing quota to a catch quota. There was concern that ICES does not recognise the high levels of whiting discarding.
- There were comments that stocks that are assessed with discards taken into consideration will have an advantage over stocks where discards are not included in the assessment.

Actions

5.4.1 Presentation to be circulated to those attending the meeting for feedback.

5.4.2 Final report to be added to the Seafish website.

5.4.3 Next studies will look at North Sea *Nephrops* and North Sea plaice.

5.5 Catch Box Scheme

Karen Green gave an update on the Seaweb Community Supported Fisheries (CSF) Catchbox scheme. This is a new Defra-funded action and research based project to link fishers to consumers in Chichester, Brighton and Horsham by asking consumers to take part in a CSF whereby consumers pay in advance for a fish box provided by inshore fishermen. Consumers get no choice in the selection of fish, but will get a wide mixture of whole fish and fillets, and the fishermen are paid more than they would normally get. Aim is to change buying behaviour and ultimately increase seafood consumption. The project will also involve educating consumers through lessons on how to fillet, gut, prepare and cook fish. There will be an interactive website and involvement with local chefs.

There is a small co-operative running in Chichester, and a larger one in Brighton. The scheme was launched in late March with two events and fish deliveries started at the end of April. To date the scheme has 90 members in total (67 in Brighton, 23 in Chichester). The fish comes from one fishermen in Chichester (Peter Williams, *Sarah C* out of Hayling Island), and from a range of fishermen in Brighton. Consumers can choose to have weekly or fortnightly deliveries. There is a £10 joining fee and prices are £6 per kilo of whole fish or £7 for a kilo of filleted fish. The trial will run for 12 weeks.

Action: A report on the scheme will be given at the CLG on 3 July.

6. Latest on selectivity initiatives, regulatory issues and new areas of work.

6.1 Update on English, Scottish and Irish selectivity trials.

Mike Montgomerie updated the group on the trials Seafish had been conducting. Last year the emphasis was on reducing discards of cod. Devices had to be brought in quickly due to new regulations.

Two new devices have been introduced in Scotland. The Flip Flap and FCAP Fathlie cod avoidance panel have both been classed as highly selective by Scottish Government and have now been in place for six to nine months. Industry has pushed for these.

Trials in England are ongoing in the North Sea, the north east and north west focusing on smaller vessels targeting *Nephrops*. The problem is unwanted plaice and dab. The aim is to reduce the level of herding and reduce catches of plaice and dab.

6.2 Catch Quota Trials for 2013

In Scotland in the first tranche of 2013 eighteen TR1 vessels signed up for the CCTV FDF scheme. These vessels were allocated an extra 447 tonnes and 3568 days. The second tranche saw a further two TR1 vessels and six TR2 vessels apply. The TR1 vessels would receive an additional 16.4 tonnes, the TR2 vessels would not receive any additional quota, but would get 30 extra days each if their cod by-catch remained below 1.5%. Marine Scotland is also looking to introduce a trial scheme for pelagics and a zero discard scheme later in the year.

The MMO gave provided a preliminary insight into the results on the trial in 2012 in England – 19 vessels took part. The final report will be published in June or July and there will also be a new web page and a separate report on the inshore trials. The report will show discard rates of less than 1%. The report will also look at: some choke species scenarios; the cost implications for EM; analysis methods for catch estimation; the compatibility of a landing obligation with current regulations. More boats are taking part in 2013.

Discussion

- These are excellent results but there are still some issues.
- CCTV provides the opportunity to gather data over a much longer time series than having an observer onboard.
- There were questions over which vessels had joined the scheme, and had they changed the way they fished as a result? It was mostly offshore vessels and reducing discards was more to do with avoidance rather than using selectivity measures.

Action: Final report to be added to the Seafish website when published.

6.3 Scoping Industry Approaches to Fully Documented Fisheries

http://www.seafish.org/media/819599/dag_may13_cefas_scopingfdf.pdf

Paul Dolder from Cefas spoke about this project which looked at: what data are required to deliver FDFs; what mechanisms exist to collect the data; the merits (pros/cons) of different approaches/technologies; and how do different fishery characteristics affect choice of approach.

Some of the key findings were: Strong support from fishermen for greater and improved data collection (and its use...); issues around data ownership and (its use...); fishery problems/pinch points are not necessarily the same everywhere - depends on the characteristics of fishery; in general “self-led” approaches such as reference fleets and self-sampling were preferred by industry over ‘control-led’ approaches, such as CCTV; there were different requirements from management; there was a strong industry preference for incentives to be economic, but this may be indirect (‘better fisheries management’ = better opportunities). www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/industry-information/fisheries-science-partnership/current-programme.aspx

7. Consideration of a meeting/workshop to consider issues surrounding TACs in a mixed fishery such as the North Sea in June/July.

This would cover: monitoring and control measures; what are the key commercial species; TACs for key driver species and how many there should be; choke species; joint stocks; frequency of assessment etc. This is viewed as an exercise that could help to formalise industry views to feed into Defra/Marine Scotland.

It was agreed that this was something that DAG should consider once we know the outcome of the CFP negotiations; the June 19 workshop in Brussels; and new ICES advice at the end of June. North East Scotland was mentioned as a possible venue.

Action: To be re-visited.

8. Any other business

8.1 New technical conservation measures framework within a reformed CFP.

Rebecca Mitchell from MRAG spoke about a new project. MRAG Ltd is currently leading a consortium including Oceanic, Poseidon, Lamans International Evaluation Partnership and IREPA to work on a European Commission framework contract to undertake evaluations and impact assessments for Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE).

The consortium is currently working on a study ‘in support of the development of a new technical conservation measures framework within a reformed CFP’, which involves both a retrospective evaluation of the current regulatory regime, focusing on Council Regulation (EC) No. 850/98 and a prospective evaluation of the likely economic, social and environmental impacts of different policy options proposed for the future technical measures (outlined on p.11 of the STECF-12-20 Report). There is a North Atlantic and North Sea focus to the study, and for data collection purposes we are carrying out a number of national surveys to inform both parts of the study - to consult with management authorities, research institutions and professional organisations. England and Scotland represent two of these national surveys. The consultation process will ensure that the views of key stakeholders will inform the project team’s evaluation of the current technical

measures regulations. If anyone wishes to know more about the study or provide feedback contact Rebecca Mitchell on r.mitchell@mrag.co.uk

Action: Details to be circulated to DAG.

8.2 Date of next meeting

This was not discussed but next DAG meeting is likely to be in October 2013.