

Crab & Lobster Management Group (CMG) Meeting

22 July 2021

Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish (Chair)
Andrew Wheeler, Andy Wheeler Fisheries Consulting Ltd.
Aoife Martin, Seafish
Barrie Deas, NFFO
Beshlie Pool, South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen's Association
Christian Proud, MMO
Colin Bannister, SAGB
David Jarrad, SAGB
Duncan Jamieson, Defra
Ella Brock, Seafish
Gary Hodgson, Venture Seafoods
Harry Wick, Northern Ireland Fish Producer's Organisation
Helen Hunter, Defra
Holly Kaiser, Seafish
Hubert Gieschen, MMO
Jack Emmerson, Isle of Man government
Jennifer Mouat, East Coast RIFG
John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association

Les Lawrence, Dorset Fish and Shellfish Ltd.
Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
Mark Moore, Dartmouth Crab Company
Marta Moran Quintana, Seafish
Martyn Youell, Waterdance
Matthew Johnson, Defra
Mike Roach, Holderness Fishing Industry Group
Natalie Hold, Bangor University
Neil Milsom, IoM government
Owain Wynn-Jones, The Cornish Shellfish Company Ltd.
Patrick Smith, Daera
Paul Brown, Brown & Bright Shellfish Ltd.
Phil McBryde, Defra
Phoebe Harris, Defra
Rosslyn McIntyre, Cefas
Sally Stewart-Moore, Seafish
Sarah Clark, Devon & Severn IFCA
Sarah Hussey, Sea Farms
Trevor Bartlett, Devon Crab

Apologies:

Andrew Rooney, Rooney Fish
Jim Portus, SWFPO
Rachel Irish, MMO
Richard Corner, Seafood and Eat It

Western Waters Effort Regime (WWER)

1. The intention remains to host a workshop (or series of workshops) to discuss alternatives to the WWER. This work will require a significant input from industry and a dedicated session of the CMG will be held to help inform discussions. It is acknowledged that alteration/replacement of the WWER will have implications for all stakeholders, including non-CMG members.
2. Dates for a workshop will be proposed for September/October and will be sent to CMG members for feedback.

Animal Welfare Bill and crustacean sentience

3. The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill was introduced to the House of Lords in May 2021. Debate of the Bill will continue in early September following the summer recess. The Bill is unlikely to reach the House of Commons until autumn 2021.
4. Improving animal welfare standards is a government manifesto commitment so there is an expectation that the Bill will be passed. The Bill will provide legal recognition that animals are sentient beings and will establish a committee to review policy relating to animal welfare; the Bill will not change existing laws, policies, or practices.

5. Appointments to the animal welfare committee will be overseen by the secretary of state and will be in accordance with government appointment processes, this means there will be a rigorous selection process. CMG members expressed concerns about the risk of seafood industry interests being ignored by the committee. It was noted that industry stakeholders will have the opportunity to apply to join the committee.
6. A report on animal sentience by London School of Economics, commissioned by Defra, is due to be published soon, this will be shared with CMG members when it is available.
7. A review of existing practices around handling and dispatch of cephalopods and crustaceans, highlighting good practice already occurring within industry, will be published by Seafish soon.

Traceability

8. A member raised the topic of traceability and discussion was held around inclusion of traceability aspects in the CMG work programme. Traceability is not currently listed as a CMG priority work area. The primary focus of the CMG at this time is effective fishery management and development of the crab and lobster chapter of the National Shellfish Fisheries Plan (NSFP). On this basis, it was agreed that traceability of seafood products through the supply chain would remain a low priority for CMG for the time being, and that in some cases individual businesses may be able to work closely with their suppliers to establish traceability information for their own products.

Update on development of the crab and lobster specific chapters of the National Shellfish Fisheries Plan (Aoife Martin, Seafish)

9. Work is progressing to develop the overarching objectives for the NSFP (objectives relevant to all shellfish fisheries) and the species-specific objectives for crab, lobster, and whelk chapters.
10. A CMG working group has been created to develop the crab and lobster chapter of the NSFP and the group will meet in mid-August. Initial focus will be on drafting objectives based on discussions held at CMG and CMG science sub-group meetings.

Update on the Regional Fisheries Groups (Phil McBryde, Defra)

11. The aim of the Regional Fisheries Groups (RFGs) is to adopt a more collaborative approach to inshore fisheries management by bringing together commercial fishers, recreational fishers, scientists, and regulators. The RFGs provide fishers with an opportunity to discuss specific issues with regulators and scientists.
12. It is important to ensure that there is strong communication between the CMG and the RFGs. A standing update on the RFGs will remain on the CMG agenda going forward, with any issues relevant to the CMG fed back to the group for discussion.
13. RFGs are currently chaired by Defra, though it is hoped that chair responsibilities will pass to industry stakeholders in 2022.
14. Membership of the RFGs is open and CMG members are encouraged to engage with the groups although matters relating to the management of crab and lobster fisheries will be brought back to the CMG for consideration.

Defra: Call for Evidence on latent capacity (Helen Hunter, Defra)

15. Defra has launched two calls for evidence to gather information on:
 - a. Management of the under 15m scallop fleet; and
 - b. Latent capacity (unused licenses and entitlements) in the over 10m scallop and shellfish fleets in England.

The aim of the second item is to help understand whether (1) the uptake of latent licences presents a risk to stock sustainability and (2) the likely impacts of capping latent licenses.

16. All responses to the Call for Evidence are required by the **30th August 2021**. More information on the call for evidence, including instructions on how to respond, can be found here: [Latent capacity in the over 10m scallop and shellfish fleet](#).
17. The call for evidence on latent capacity stems from preliminary discussions and requests from industry members at previous CMG meetings (April 2021) and as such all CMG members are strongly encouraged to respond to the call to ensure their opinions are considered.
18. It was agreed that the CMG would not submit a combined response given the range of views held by members.

Efforts to address latent capacity in the Isle of Man (Jack Emmerson, Isle of Man Government)

19. In October 2020 the Isle of Man government carried out a public consultation on measures to address latent capacity in the shellfish fleet.

Pot fisheries in the Isle of Man are already managed using a range of measures, including:

- Pot limitations specified by sea area, e.g. a maximum number of pots attached to a specific license with a limited number of pots that can be fished inside 3nm;
- Pot tagging requirements, anchor buoy marking, and mandatory escape hatches;
- Log books recording pot lifts per day, and;
- Moratorium on new crab and lobster licenses in 2016.

20. The work sought to address two forms of latency:
 - a. Latent licenses, i.e. licences which are not in use, and;
 - b. Latency within licences, i.e. pot allocations which are not fully utilised.
21. A reference period was set by a government-industry working group based on the availability and quality of evidence, this determined what licenses were deemed latent. A process was created to allow vessel owners to appeal decisions on latency if there were able to show significant investment in the industry since the end of the reference period; the working group will determine an acceptable level of secondary evidence.
22. There is a risk that efforts to reduce latency could incentivise remaining fishers to increase effort to avoid future management interventions on latency. The Isle of Man government intends to monitor effort via logbooks and respond to changes in fishing effort accordingly.

CMG science-group update (Colin Bannister, SAGB)

23. The CMG science sub-group is tasked with developing a scientific research plan that outlines the research needed to help achieve the objectives of the CMG. The research plan will form part of the crab and lobster chapters of the NSFP.
24. The CMG science sub-group met in early-July to discuss key fisheries management questions around crab and lobster, and specific research activities that would be undertaken to answer these questions. Work on finalising scientific research objectives is ongoing.
25. There is need to develop an overarching universal data collection strategy that covers all shellfish species, devolved administrations, and fishing metiers and allows data to be best used for management, economic and scientific purposes.

Bait provisioning

26. Bait provisioning was not discussed due to time constraints but will be added to the agenda at the next meeting. Members are encouraged to contact Lewis Tattersall (Seafish) if they have a specific interest in the topic and/or any comments on the bait provisioning paper circulated. Bait provisioning will also be discussed at the next meeting of the Whelk Management Group as this is a cross-fishery issue.

Non-Quota Stocks (Phil McBryde, Defra)

27. The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement sets provisions for reciprocal access for UK vessels to non-quota stocks (NWS) in EU waters, and vice versa.
28. Negotiations between the UK and EU culminated in agreement of tonnage limits for NQS (based on the 2012-16 reference period) however there is no intention to enforce NQS tonnage limits in 2021, instead Defra will monitor catches in 2021 only. This decision was made due to difficulties in implementing tonnage limits halfway through 2021.
29. Monitoring UK catches in EU waters to date suggests catches are broadly in line with expectations based on the 2012-16 reference period, however whelks and king scallops are exceeding/close to exceeding the tonnage limit.
30. Defra is exchanging data with the EU on uptake and are creating a mechanism for data sharing going forward. Defra currently only has information regarding UK effort in EU waters.
31. Defra is committed to developing a sensible and long-term management measure for NQS. A specialised committee for fisheries is the new mechanism for discussing in-year fisheries issues with the EU.
32. Members with an interest in non-quota stocks are invited to feed into NQS work via both Claire Pescod and Aoife Martin. If you have specific concerns about the longer-term implications of the TCA on NQS please contact Phil McBryde.

AOB

33. Funding for replacement pots via the MMO Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) has been paused due to the potential for misuse. Concerns were raised to the MMO that improper use of funding for replacement pots could lead to an increase in capacity of the potting sector.
34. The intention is to work on re-opening the FaSS fund to pot replacement initiatives however industry input is required regarding challenges and possible solutions.

Actions

Action no.	Action	Responsibility
5.1	Circulate suggested dates for Western Waters Effort Regime workshop.	Defra/Seafish
5.2	Animal sentience/welfare issues to be added to the SIAG agenda	Seafish
5.3	Circulate resources to CMG members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defra Call for Evidence on latent capacity in the over 10m scallop and shellfish fleets 2. Information on the likely timeline of the Animal Welfare Bill progressing 3. IoM presentation on latent capacity management measures 4. CMG science sub-group slides 	Seafish

	<p>5. Contact details for members interested in discussing NQS</p> <p>6. Contact details for members interested in the work of the RFGs</p>	
5.4	Bait provisioning to be added to the agenda of the next CMG and members to contact Lewis Tattersall (Seafish) regarding anything related to the paper circulated.	Seafish/All members
5.6	All CMG members are invited to contact Defra (Helen Hunter) if they have views on the issues impacting the FaSS fund for replacement pots and any potential solutions	All members
5.7	Claire Pescod and Aoife Martin to convene pre-NQS meetings with CMG members as required.	All members to contact Claire Pescod/Aoife Martin