

**Note of Common Language Group (CLG) meeting held at Friends House, London.  
Wednesday 27 June 2018**

For the CLG minutes and meeting presentations see:

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/discussion-forums/the-common-language-group>

**1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

Mike Kaiser (Bangor University and Chair of the CLG) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Attendees**

Adam Green	Lyons Seafood
Aisla Jones	Co-op
Alex Olsen	Esperson
Alison Austin	Seafish Board
Andy Smith	Cefas
Angela Fredericks	British Plastics Federation
Aoife Martin	Seafish
Cameron Moffat	Young's Seafood
Catriona Power	Vericatch
Charlotte Johnson	Natural England
Chris Sweeting	Marine Management Organisation
Chloe North	Marine Stewardship Council
Claire Sammons	Lovering Foods Ltd
Clive Truman	University of Southampton
David Jarrad	Shellfish Association of Great Britain
David Parker	Blue Ventures
Debbie Cook	Seafish
Doug Beveridge	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Ekaterina Zerilli	New England Seafood
Estelle Brennan	Lyons Seafoods
Hannah MacIntyre	Marks & Spencer
Hirohiko Matsukusa	Caistor Seafoods Limited
Inge Verwoerd	Agricultural Industries Confederation
Jack Clarke	Seafairer
James Brown	Defra
James Robertson	Joseph Robertson (Aberdeen) Ltd
Jess Sparks	Seafish
Jim Gray	Pew Charitable Trusts
Jim Portus	South Western Fish Producers Organisation
Joanna Eames	International Pole and Line Foundation
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafoods
Leonor Fishman	LDH (La Doria) Ltd
Marine Cusa	University of Salford
Michaela Archer	Seafish
Mike Berthet	Global Aquaculture Alliance

Mike Kaiser	Bangor University (Chair)
Mike Mitchell	Fair Seas
Mike Short	Seafood Industry Alliance
Nigel Edwards	Seachill
Oliver Tanqueray	ClientEarth
Owain Wynn-Jones	Offshore Shellfish
Peter Kemple Hardy	World Animal Protection
Sam Stone	Marine Conservation Society
Sarah Johnson	ASMI
Scott Johnston	Young's Seafood
Stewart Whitehead	Oritain

### **Apologies**

Andy Hickman	Tesco
Anya Hemsley	LDH (La Doria) Ltd
Caroline Bennett	Sole of Discretion
Catherine Whitley	Blue Marine Foundation
Claire Pescod	Marine Stewardship Council
Dan McGlynn	Authenticate
Huw Thomas	Pew Trusts
James Hind	Greenwich Forum
Jonathan Shepherd	Seafish Board
Lucy Blow	New England Seafood
Malcolm Morrison	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Martin Jaffa	Callander McDowell
Mike Brummitt	Regal Fish Supplies Ltd
Mike Platt	RS Standards Ltd
Neil Auchterlonie	IFFO
Nick Neeld	Big Prawn Company
Nicki Holmyard	Offshore Shellfish
Walter Anzer	FRUCOM

### **2. Minutes from the last meeting held on 20 March 2018. Mike Kaiser, Bangor University. CLG Chair.**

The final minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting and have been added to the CLG web page. Attendees were asked to take note of the meeting guidelines. In the following minutes Seafish will provide a link to the various presentations given at the meeting but not summarise the whole presentation. In the main we do not attribute the comments made at the meeting. Papers were sent round and tabled covering the activities of the other Seafish groups (Aquaculture, Discards, Ethics and Skates and Rays). A list of forthcoming seafood events can be found on the Seafish website: <http://www.seafish.org/about-seafish/news-and-events/events>

Mike Kaiser is stepping down as Chair of the Common Language Group. Seafish had invited nominations for this role and Mike invited everyone in the room to indicate their acceptance of Mike Mitchell as the new Chair of the CLG, using the forms which had been left on each table. These forms were later collected and there was unanimous acceptance of Mike Mitchell as the new CLG Chair.

### **3. Seafish Corporate Plan 2018-2021. Debbie Cook, Seafish.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782851/clg\\_june2018\\_seafishcorporateplan201821.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782851/clg_june2018_seafishcorporateplan201821.pdf)

Debbie explained the structure of the new Seafish Corporate Plan for 2018-2021 which groups Seafish work programmes under five key challenges

1. A changing political, economic and regulatory landscape as the UK exits the EU.
2. Stagnant consumer demand and strong competition from other protein and non-protein foods.
3. A sector that competes with other food production industries to attract and retain a suitably skilled workforce while addressing complex challenges around workplace safety.
4. Sourcing sustainable seafood in an increasingly competitive global market, alongside continued public concern over practices that compromise human welfare and the environment.
5. Successfully accessing the data, information and knowledge that will ensure the sector is equipped to understand and respond innovatively to a changing environment.

The consumption challenge was presented as an example with the UK falling significantly short of seafood consumption recommendations. Examples were given to show how Seafish is helping to turn the tide with events and campaigns, including Seafood Week from 5 - 12 October 2018, and the new Shellfish Week from 1 – 8 March 2019. Action on Seafood 2040 is also underway and will include a Seafood Industry Leadership Group and a Seafood Marketing Experts' Group; discussions with Public Health England and the All Party Parliamentary Committee on Fisheries; as well as a growth strategy for aquaculture with development zones, and a review of regulations and water quality legislation.

#### Discussion

- **Question.** What is the timeline for 2040? **Answer.** We are awaiting the final confirmation of an EMFF grant and are also in the process of recruiting a Chair for the group and looking internally for a project manager. You will see quick action on the areas that fall directly to Seafish.
- **Q.** What has happened to the Strategic Investment Fund? **A.** We no longer have the fund as before but we do have budget for strategic projects that crop up that don't sit within the Corporate Plan. There will also be a more direct approach with no 'call for applications' process.

**Action:** Circulate link to delivery report and 2018-21 Corporate Plan.

#### **Product integrity - effective science-based fish traceability systems**

##### **4. Trust, Transparency and Traceability. Stewart Whitehead, Oritain.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782889/clg\\_june2018\\_oritainscientifictraceability.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782889/clg_june2018_oritainscientifictraceability.pdf)

Consumers expect brands to be totally transparent about where products are made. Oritain provide a business to business service with a tool to scientifically verify the origin of seafood, by creating profiles (identifying 43 different trace elements) for their client's products. Retail and foodservice are rapidly requiring greater traceability and are concerned about misrepresenting products to consumers. They are acutely aware of issues around food security, safety, supply chain transparency and authenticity and want to mitigate the risk of damage to company/brand reputation. To provide this Oritain has created unique product profiles (origin 'fingerprints') with salmon used as an example. In market audits can be applied to this model, to determine if a sampled product is true to its' claimed country of origin, or if misrepresentation has occurred. Salmon has been mapped to specific lochs in Scotland and some even back to the actual farm. This can also be applied to wild caught fish.

## Discussion

- **Question.** How stable are those trace element signatures, particularly when there is significant environmental change? **Answer.** Variances can be captured.
- **Q.** Determining country of origin can be very challenging. Can you be certain, or do you have to be consistent with sites sampled in that country? **A.** We will capture the variance within a country and understand different production areas. It is about designing and capturing the right data.
- **Q.** What would you do if you detected toxins or heavy metals? **A.** We specialise in origin identification but would report back any findings such as this.

### **5. Stable isotope tools for traceability. Clive Truman, University of Southampton.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782892/clg\\_june2018\\_stableisotopes.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782892/clg_june2018_stableisotopes.pdf)

Stable isotopes provide a greater opportunity to measure than trace elements to answer three questions: Did this fish come from here? Which of a few possible places did this fish come from? Where did this fish come from? Simple case studies have been completed with samples from a known origin to assign them back with 80% success. As an example 90% of 150 scallops were accurately assigned to areas 40% of the size of the UK shelf. Stable isotopes are a promising tool for retrospective forensic tests of the origin of seafood. The signal derives from predictable spatial variation in the open ocean food chain and less predictable coastal effects. Large (good quality) reference databases are needed for reliable forensic testing. It is likely to be a probabilistic test rather than an absolute test – better for directing investigation than as sole evidence. Tool is not appropriate for all species or all areas. It will be better for farmed species, demersal, crustacea and shellfish but more problematic for migratory and high trophic species. In the right setting isotope provenance performs well with quantifiable accuracy and precision. The more accurate you want to be the more susceptible you will be to temporal variability and spatial variation is constantly being monitored.

## Discussion

- **Question.** Could the databases be shared and potentially used for governance? **Answer.** This will depend on who is carrying out the work. If it is a commercial company then they own the database, if it is a University then it can be shared.

### **6. Past, Present and Future of DNA Traceability Tools for the Seafood Sector. Marine Cusa, University of Salford.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782895/clg\\_june2018\\_dnatraceabilitytools.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782895/clg_june2018_dnatraceabilitytools.pdf)

Species or population level ID is critical for seafood authenticity and traceability. Morphological characteristics are difficult/often impossible to use. DNA-based tools are well adapted to forensic science and there have been rapid advances which are transferable between disciplines, it is constantly growing and becoming faster and cheaper. Mention was made of the Barcode of Life Database (BOLD) and Labelfish which has created a standardised protocol for the use of DNA-based methods in seafood authenticity which has been adopted by Defra. A 2015 study has shown the mislabelling rate is now lower than in 2010 and in Europe the situation has improved, but there are still issues in North America and even in Europe the picture is nuanced (ethnic stores) with issues in certain areas (snapper was highlighted). The problem is increasingly recognized and yet still prevalent around the world. The severity of species mislabelling varies depending on the sector and species of interest. There is the need for portable and faster ID methods taking DNA-based methods for seafood traceability outside of the lab, as well as establishing standardized methods for the assigning fish to population/stock of origin using genetic tools.

## Discussion

- **Question.** It is great that this is being taken out of the lab but to do this we need real time technologies. To what extent can you access or build a database?  
**Answer.** We will not be using a central database and will focus on specific species. At the moment we have 25 species covered.
- There are always going to be potential issues over intellectual property rights and who owns the databases and the hope is that this could all work together.
- Testing like this acts more as a deterrent than a means to influence behavioral change.
- **Summary.** The landscape is improving in Europe and it would be interesting to know why Canada performs badly. The issues in ethnic stores are interesting – could this be because the samples did not have scientific names, even though required by law? We need to be clear whether we are dealing with the common name or the scientific name. There is a difference between the intent to deceive and ignorance – but do we need to differentiate.

### **7. Five minute update: Project UK latest developments. Chloe North, Marine Stewardship Council.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782898/clg\\_june2018\\_projectuk\\_fisheriesimprovements.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782898/clg_june2018_projectuk_fisheriesimprovements.pdf)

Project UK Fisheries Improvements is a collaborative stakeholder partnership working towards an environmentally sustainable future for UK fisheries. It is facilitated by the MSC and builds on the outputs and methods of Project Inshore using pre-assessment as a tool to inform improvements and ultimately certify key commercial UK fisheries by facilitating FIPs for priority species identified by the supply chain. 12 UK species/regions are currently involved in the pilot. Key achievements are: Cefas is conducting research across all FIPs; a two-year postdoc research on scallop fishery habitat impacts is underway, as well as research into endangered, threatened and protected species; a fishery managers group is developing a regional crab and lobster management plan; and there are reviews into alternative gear and management measures to reduce bycatch. The priority species assessed for Project UK FI were identified under Project Inshore.

### **Marine litter, microplastics and ghost gear - addressing the risks and mitigation measures**

#### **8. Defra – the problem with plastics. James Brown, Defra.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782901/clg\\_june2018\\_defra\\_microplastics.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782901/clg_june2018_defra_microplastics.pdf)

James highlighted the scale and the impact of the problem. It is estimated that: over 150 million tonnes of plastic is in the seas, and that between 60-90% of litter that accumulates on shorelines, sea surface and the sea floor is made of plastic polymers. Whilst we know the scale of the issue we do not have the data to evidence the concerns. Domestic action has been taken in the UK and on the international stage, and the Global Ghost Gear Initiative and Fishing for Litter were mentioned. Marine litter is also covered in the 25 year Government plan to improve the environment.

#### **9. Riding the wave of plastic - Cefas work. Andy Smith, Cefas.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782904/clg\\_june2018\\_cefas\\_microplastics.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782904/clg_june2018_cefas_microplastics.pdf)

Andy highlighted the scale of the issue; the National, Regional and International drivers; policy development and microplastic risk assessments; the science and advice; monitoring; and contamination. But the only way to resolve the marine litter pollution issue is by limiting the input—changing ways and behaviors on the land that cause marine litter to enter the environment, and in particular the marine environment. There

has been a lot of work looking at the risk to shellfish but so far very few impacts have been found. Most studies are on occurrence rather than impact. There have also been studies into microplastic contamination but there is no compelling evidence these are causing a problem for the marine environment or impacting on growth. This year two Interreg projects are underway and CLiP is developing National Action Plans on Marine Litter across the whole Commonwealth.

#### **10. Work that WRAP/British Plastics Federation (Marine) is doing. Angela Fredericks. British Plastics Federation.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782922/clg\\_june2018\\_bpf\\_microplastics.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782922/clg_june2018_bpf_microplastics.pdf)

Discussed the problem - 88–95% of plastic in the ocean comes from just 10 rivers and 82% of the plastics from land come from Asia. Attendees at a marine litter event in the UK in February 2018 agreed to take collaborative action to reduce waste and litter entering our ocean including: collaborating to ensure the revision of, and the extension of, the UK producer responsibility system; working with all relevant stakeholders to develop effective best practice measures to curb litter and the effects of its leakage into the wider environment; seeking to collaborate to ensure our products are designed to ensure resource efficiency use and end of life considerations are fully taken into account; openly share and develop best practice to improve waste management systems in the UK and developing world. A forum is being set up to bring experts together from all stakeholders to coordinate action. Every year the plastics industry builds on its commitment to reduce marine litter – there are currently 355 ongoing projects to address this.

**Action:** Circulate links.

- Details of the event held on the 7 February 2018 can be found at <http://www.bpf.co.uk/media/download.aspx?MediaId=2935>
- Details of the event held on the 6 July 2018 can be found at <http://www.bpf.co.uk/article/entire-plastics-supply-chain-and-stakeholders-collaborate-to-s-1334.aspx>
- <https://www.marinelitterthefacts.com/>
- <https://www.marinelittersolutions.com/>

#### General discussion

- **Question.** Why won't Defra help Fishing for Litter with funding? **Answer.** This is a little complicated and we are looking for ways to be able to support them.
- **Q.** Have specific goals/targets been set? **A.** Rather than set target a number of indicators that have been set, and there is a six-year Government commitment to look at the state of the seas around the UK. There is a lot of focus on engagement and education of the public to help drive Government policy, and to ensure that the issues are at the forefront with the hope that society will help drive the change.
- **Q.** Do we export waste, and if so, is this the right thing to do? **A.** We do export waste and the destination can cause some concerns as China has stopped taking waste for recycling. Ideally we do not want to export waste but this is a live issue and we have to find solutions to these waste management problems. Ideally we would like to see 70% of waste recycled by 2025 but to do this we need to have a better recycling infrastructure in place.
- **Q.** Is there any evidence of the impact of this issue on seafood quality, yield and safety? **A.** There could be a measurable impact and there is the possibility we could demonstrate an impact on shellfish growth, but there is very little concrete

evidence. Most of the research is on the occurrence and distribution of the problem, but industry really needs to know about potential solutions. We need to know about the broader ecosystem effects - the role of microplastics in the marine ecosystem, what impact this is having in the open sea.

- **Q.** Is there a way that mussels can be screened for microplastics? Is this going to be the way forward? **A.** The question is where any microplastics would be found in fish and whether any would be removed by processing anyway.
- **Q.** Do we need a CLG that just looks at plastic? **A.** This is an area that Seafish is very interested in but there may be some reticence about forming a new group. However we are only really touching the surface today and there may be more of a platform in the future.
- **Q.** Should we look at who we could use as ambassadors? Are there individuals who are leading this in terms of changing behaviors and attitudes? **A.** There are many blogs and Facebook groups but a lot of this is preaching to the converted.

#### **11. Global Ghost Gear Initiative. Peter Kemple Hardy, World Animal Protection.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782910/clg\\_june2018\\_gggi.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782910/clg_june2018_gggi.pdf)

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) is an alliance of NGOs, private sector, fishing industry, academia and governments, all contributing to tackle the problem of ghost gear on a global scale. 2017 saw the launch of a database which allows recording of single reporting events, a reporter app, bulk uploads, collaboration and automatic submission. The GGGI looked at fishing effort by gear type and then at the likelihood and impact of different gear types in terms of their contribution to ghost fishing. Gillnets pose the most risk of ghost fishing, with traps and pots second and FADs third. Hooks and lines, trawls and seine nets pose a relatively lower risk, despite their extensive use worldwide. As a result a best practice framework was developed.

#### **12. Ghost gear and the supply chain. David Parker, Blue Ventures.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782913/clg\\_june2018\\_ghostgearsupplychain.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782913/clg_june2018_ghostgearsupplychain.pdf)

Blue Ventures works to rebuild tropical fisheries. He emphasised the need to take steps, as a business, to address the issue of plastics as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) function, to protect brand reputation and create news of positive engagement with innovative initiatives. This is competition for and a threat to resource.

#### General discussion

- **Question.** How does a business assess whether there is a risk of ghost gear in a particular fishery? **Answer.** The GGGI Best Practice model will help assess risk. However if pots are involved there is going to be a high risk of ghost gear problems simply because there is generally no inventory. Whilst inventories have been considered this would be difficult to manage and control.
- Gear marking is very important as this will pinpoint exactly where gear has come from. Gear marking has been the law for many years but it is still not marked properly. Some gear is so cheap it is essentially lose-able and can't be identified. It can be lost at sea unobserved and very easily and not always easy to retrieve. The FAO is due to issue a consultation on gear marking very shortly. The GGGI best practice guidance would emphasise the need to report lost gear.

#### **13. Five minute updates: Marine Conservation Society ratings. Sam Stone, MCS.**

The Good Fish Guide currently covers 650 species. The MCS has recently consulted on its methodology. To help increase the transparency of MCS ratings they will now be

displaying Criterion Scores for the various sustainability criteria against which they assess the sustainability of farmed and capture fisheries within their ratings. In addition to criterion scoring they have also developed a new Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) rating to recognise those fisheries or farms participating in a fisheries improvement project which would ordinarily be red rated. The new rating (depicted by the addition of a left facing arrow against the normal 5 rating) will serve to recognise that credible work is underway to help improve the fishery and provide an alternative sourcing recommendation. The hope is that this will provide an incentive for businesses to support credible improvement projects. This FIP rating currently only applies to yellowfin tuna purse-seined from the Indian Ocean. The MCS used to ask for advice and guidance from an Industry Review Group but they are now encouraging anyone with knowledge and expertise in this area to comment.

**14. Five minute updates: Sustainable Seafood Coalition. Oliver Tanqueray, ClientEarth.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1782916/clg\\_june2018\\_sscupdate.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1782916/clg_june2018_sscupdate.pdf)

Gave an update on the two SSC codes of conduct on seafood labelling and sourcing which aim to simplify and substantiate seafood sourcing claims on packaging, and provide a means for industry to collaborate.

**15. Close of meeting and date for next meeting**

The group said a big thank you and goodbye to Mike Kaiser who is stepping down as the Chair of the CLG after nearly ten years. The next CLG meeting will be on Wednesday 7 November 2018 at Friends House, London. The Common Language Group Steering Group will be discussing the agenda in due course.