

Crab & Lobster Management Group (CMG) Meeting

11th July 2022

Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish (Chair)	Hubert Gieschen
Aoife Martin, Seafish	Jim Evans
Adam Holland, Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation	Jo Pollett, Marine Stewardship Council
Alison Freeman, Fishmongers Hall	John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association
Arina Motova, Seafish	Julian Roberts, MMO
Barrie Deas, NFFO	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
Beshlie Pool, South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen's Association	Martyn Youell, Waterdance
Chris Ranford, The Cornish Fish Producers Organisation	Mike Roach
Colin Bannister, SAGB	Molly Meadows, Cefas
Ella Brock, Seafish	Natalie Hold, Bangor University
Eleanor Holford, MMO	Patrick Smith, DAERA
Ewen Bell, Cefas	Rebecca Treacy, Seafish
Fiona Birch, Mindfully Wired Communications	Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
Gwladys Lambert, Cefas	Sarah Hussey
Helen Hunter, Defra	Trevor Bartlett, Devon Crab

Apologies

Andy Wheeler, Andy Wheeler Fisheries Consultancy Limited	Juliette Hatchman, SWFPO
Annabel Stockwin, Defra	Matt Johnson, Defra
Carl Davies	Rachel Irish, MMO
Chloe North, Western FPO	Richard Stride
	Rosslyn McIntyre, Cefas

General comments from members

1. A member raised that they have been seeing declining crab catches in the past five to six years in the North Wales coast/Liverpool Bay Area. They estimated catches are a third or less of what they used to be. This is partly attributable to an MLS increase applied to a naturally smaller population of crab, but that is only part of the explanation for a loss of marketable crab.
This member asked to run this by the group due to it raising a question around offshore wind farms and electromagnetic fields of buried or non-buried cables, going out to those arrays.
2. Concerns were raised about seabed light cables and that there is a meeting in Barnstaple on 12th July regarding offshore floating wind farms and this concern will be raised.
3. More information will be retrieved from the NFFO on this and will be dispersed to members.
4. HGIF reported that declines are being witnessed in the inshore crab fishery around that area, but fishermen are predominantly putting that down to the expansion of the offshore crab fishery rather than effects of any other anthropogenic sources.
5. Reduction in crab catches is something that the science subgroup is trying to address through the FMP development and potential management interventions which may reduce that.

Update on annual review for southwest FIP, pre assessment for North Sea crab fishery and overview of the crab management workshops (Jo Pollett, MSC).

6. A high-level overview was given on the annual review for the southwest FIP.

7. FIPS use the MSC standard as a way of measuring sustainability in a fishery - looking at the impact of the fishery on the target stock, the impact of the fishery on the wider environment and then ensuring that there's robust management measures in place. The MSC have independent consultants who score the fishery against the MSC standards.
8. Just finished year five of the FIP. The FIP was expected to go for five years because of Brexit and the pandemic, it was agreed with the funders and the steering group that it would be extended for another year to try and complete all outstanding actions.
9. After the 5-year review, assessors had concerns around IVMS and not having a full understanding of the inshore fisheries and where vessels were fishing, but the hope is that by the end of this year with the IVMS install, that will be addressed.
10. FIP set to finish next April, at least in draft form.
11. Crab management workshops – 57 responses on what to include for discussion in the workshop. Had five in person workshops across Devon and Cornwall, one online and five written submissions. The preliminary findings: Only retain high quality crab, increased enforcement, management of larger vessels and identified knowledge gaps.
12. FIPs received more funding from MMO and some of Project UK core funders to support some additional round 3 pre-assessments. Have undertaken one for brown crab in Southern North Sea and working with NIF in Northern Ireland on a Brown Crab pre-assessment, funded through Daera.

Fisheries Industry Science Partnership research project (Mike Roach, HFIG)

13. Involved in five different FISPs.
14. FISP - Fishing Industry Science Partnership fund part of the Seafood Fund, specifically to conduct research between academic partners and the fishing industry. The mandate is it has to have one of each as project partners.
15. FISPs are split into two parts; FISP A is a fund of approximately £20,000 to develop a project proposal with a deliverable from that to submit a full proposal for FISP Part B, which is a full research project.
16. Two FISP A bids awarded;
 - a. lost gear and ghost gear initiative, looking at a holistic approach with a five-month time frame with University of Hull and Ghost Fishing UK.
 - b. Another FISP A bid award came directly from one of CMG members, interested in whether storm crabs are a commercially viable fishery and partners involved include Fishing In to the Future, University of Hull, HFIG.
17. Two part B projects are already running. HFIG have partnered with Orkney sustainable fisheries, The Isle of Man Fisheries, Cefas, Heriot Watt University and Bangor University to take a multi fishery approach in Holderness, Orkney and isle of man. The project will try to identify what happens before animals get caught, by placing cameras on the pots and capture the dynamics within the pot. Bangor and Orkney are taking a different approach, with more underwater video and using a meshless pot with a camera looking at a bait box in the middle and then next season they will look at the catch dynamics.
18. Camera systems will be deployed to several fishermen to get a good spatial picture of each fishery and the hope is that abundance differences to capabilities can be determined, and also try to decouple catch statistics from population assessments. There is a full work package to try and integrate these abundance indices and the catch dynamic information into stock assessments.
19. HFIG are also involved in a lobster project with the Northeastern IFCA, with NEIFCA leading the project and HFIG as co investigators, looking at lobster settlement. This methodology is used in American lobster fisheries for over a decade, where a box of cobble is put on the seabed of a defined volume and is left to wait for lobsters to find it. As they settle out of their planktonic phase and settle onto the seabed, with enough replicates and enough of a time series, it can generate a sermon index which can be used to predict recruitment into the future.

20. Nine different sites along the North Eastern District with Four cages at each site. Three of the cages are left uninterrupted for the entire season and then one of the cages is hauled every 10 to 14 days

Update on progress of the CMG science sub-group (Mike Roach, HFIG)

21. Crab and lobster research plan work still ongoing, to underpin FMP and identify knowledge gaps and research needs. A lot of the FISP proposal are based around these research needs.
22. Cefas drafted first draft of plan This is based on the work we've done in the science subgroup.
23. There is a need to understand ongoing and recently completed research. So prime example, the different FISP projects, to make sure the CMG has a full picture of the crab and lobster science landscape.
24. Discussions on what the science group can be used for once research plan is developed; supporting and developing research proposals, reviewing scientific research and reviewing scientific aspects of FMP delivery and assess whether desired outcomes will be achieved, producing an annual report on crab and lobster research that's been commissioned.
25. Seafish are developing a research proposal this month with a view to submitting an application to the future round of FISP funding, this is all to support crab and lobster research.

Crab management plan & lobster management plan and stakeholder engagement strategy (Lewis Tattersall, Seafish)

26. Seafish drafted a crab & lobster evidence statement (this is a 'live' document until March 2023)
27. Seafish drafted a stakeholder engagement strategy and membership of Defra Comms & Eng. Group
28. Work ongoing with the FMP working group to finalise objectives, particularly around social and economic objectives / benefits and climate change
29. Next steps:
 - a. Completion of objectives and sign off with the working group before sharing with the CMG
 - b. Undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise (stakeholder engagement strategy)
 - c. Ongoing work on draft initial management interventions
30. Seafish has also drafted an overarching stakeholder engagement plan for crab/lobster, whelk, and king scallops
31. Next steps in stakeholder engagement:
 - a. Engagement with the CMG FMP working groups to tailor engagement strategy to the whelk as required
 - b. Begin Phase 0, Historical record and Phase 1 – Stakeholder mapping exercise (beyond the CMG)
 - c. Draft and maintain a record of stakeholder engagement activities for monitoring and evaluation
 - d. Determine how stakeholders want to engage in the FMP process.
32. Members of industry explained how these online meetings suit better than face to face as they can still go fishing and also attend these meetings.
33. Should consider a nested approach to engagement and there was agreement of this within the group. IFCA's hold lists of permit holders and this could be used to engage with smaller inshore fishers who do not engaged with the CMG

Update on the work of the Regional Fisheries Groups (Eleanor Holford, MMO)

34. Groups run by MMO and Defra for the inshore fleet primarily, quarterly meetings and port drop ins.
35. Northwest: working with Seafish in this Northwest initiative where the fleet have various problems with transportation, access to markets, infrastructure problems etc., to look into some of those and a report will be published with recommendations.

36. Southwest: Looking at the impact of netting in Lyme Bay, which is linked to the increase in sole quota. A new steering group has been formed and will be looking into this issue. If anyone is interest in getting involved, please reach out to Eleanor.
37. South 7D: a lot of engagement with channel non quota FMP. Some questions on monitoring the MMO sand pumping project and how that's linked to the lobster fishery but haven't got any answers on that at the moment.
38. Northeast: Big issue currently is the Teesside crustacean die off - hoping to have an update on this at the next NE RFG.
39. Next round of meetings kick off in August where discussions will be based around HPMA's and Defra's quota consultation and more specific issues depending on the region.
40. RFGs will provide updates to the CMG, with a slide pack, each quarter.

Crawfish management harmonisation discussion (Julian Roberts, MMO)

41. A proposal was put forward in the Southwest, where industry asked for a harmonization of the rules relating to the minimum landing size of crawfish with a view to extending the current minimum size, nationally.
42. The issue is having a an IFCA byelaw that relates to the jurisdiction of the IFCA, leaves a slight loophole that where, from an enforcement perspective, you need to actually establish that a fish below 110 was actually caught within the district. The main driver is to prevent that loophole.
43. The question is what the next steps might look like if there's if there is broad support for harmonising the minimum size nationally.
44. The assumption is that as with other conservation measures that would obviously apply in English waters or potentially UK waters and apply to foreign EU vessels as well as UK vessels.
45. The CFO carried out full consultation with their membership about two months ago and they are in full support of this.
46. Defra raised the point of how long it may take to bring in a management measure and possibly consider tying it on to another management intervention.
47. For the next SIAG, the group could set out more broadly what the process is going to be for the first tranche of management interventions that we plan to consult on alongside the FMPs.
48. Not a lot is known about the recruitment dynamics of crawfish in the UK waters, but if adjacent species are looked at, certainly in in the global context, they almost all have something between 18 months to two years of oceanic circulation before they recruit to coastal waters. This could mean recruitment is related to temperature.
49. Look for sign off of this from full CMG on supporting this issue.

Non-quota stocks (Helen Hunter, Defra)

50. The multiyear strategy discussions still ongoing with the UK and the EU around the development of these multiyear strategies for shared non quota stock.
51. The next SCF meeting with the Commissioners due to take place on the 20th of July, work underway now on what will be taken to this meeting.
52. Work is underway alongside this to think about what we do in 2023. There's a monitoring approach being taken again this year for the TCA tonnage limits for non-quota species. So, the next round of consultations with the EU take place in autumn to discuss how we approach next year.
53. Defra will put a high-level update together on TCA and non-quota species and will also include what may or may not come out of the next SCF meeting.

Actions

Actions

Number	Description	Responsible
1	Gather resources on EMF and Seafish to speak to Mike Cohen, NFFO	Seafish
2	HPMAs item to be added to next SIAG agenda	Seafish
3	Invite Joe Pollett back to discuss management interventions on the outputs of the Southwest Workshops	Seafish
4	Circulate presentations from SIAG	Seafish
5	Have an initial discussion on linkages between the FMP and the FIPS and Seafish to bring that back to the to the group when we have a clear idea of what that looks like.	Seafish
6	Consider who to invite and give more information on the pre assessment that was carried out as part of the FIP	Seafish
7	Add item on spatial issues to next SIAG agenda	Seafish
8	Circulate Teeside final report	Seafish
9	Circulate Northern Irish management suggestions that came from Harry Wick off the back of the last meeting	Seafish
10	Circulate crawfish management proposal paper	Seafish
11	For the next SIAG, set out more broadly what the process will be for first tranche of management interventions of which will be consulted on alongside FMPs.	
12	Provide a high-level update on TCA and non-quota species and include outcomes of next SCF meeting.	Defra