

Crab & Lobster Management Group (CMG) Meeting

27th October 2020

Remote meeting via Zoom

Attendees

Barrie Deas, NFFO (Chair)
 Andrew Wheeler, North Eastern IFCA
 Anna Woodhead, Defra
 Aoife Martin, Seafish
 Beshlie Pool, South Devon and Channel
 Shellfishermens Association
 Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish
 Colin Bannister, SAGB
 Damien Chapman, Devon Crab
 Gary Hodgson, Venture Seafoods
 Harry Wick, Northern Ireland Fish
 Producers' Organisation
 Helen Hunter, Defra
 Jim Evans, Welsh Fishermens Association
 Ivan Bartolo, Seafish
 Jim Portus, South Western Fish
 Producers Organisation

Joanna Messini, Defra
 Les Lawrence, Dorset Fish and Shellfish Ltd.
 Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
 John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association
 Mark Moore, Darnmouth Crab Company
 Marta Moran-Quintana, Seafish
 Matthew Johnson, Defra
 Mike Roach, Holderness Fishing Industry Group
 Monty Gould, Defra
 Martyn Youell, Waterdance
 Natalie Hold, Bangor University
 Paul Trebilcock, The Cornish Fish Producers
 Organisation
 Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
 Sarah Horsfall, SAGB

Apologies:

Anne Freeman, Defra
 Neil Robson, Genesis Fishing
 Nick Bright, Brown & Bright Shellfish Ltd.
 Paul Brown, Brown & Bright Shellfish Ltd.
 Richard Hoskins, MMO
 Simon Dixon, MMO
 Trevor Bartlett, Devon Crab

1. CMG update

The minutes of the previous CMG Meeting (22 July 2020) were agreed as correct.

The meeting was opened to all members to raise issues or concerns that should be taken into account by the WMG. The following point was raised:

- At the previous meeting it was agreed that lobsters should be included in the scope of the CMG due to overlaps in the fisheries. However it was acknowledged that whilst overlaps exist there are some important distinctions between the fisheries; namely exploitation rates, stock dynamics, and likely management recommendations.
- Some lobster fisheries are considered to be overexploited; as such some lobster fisheries may be considered a higher conservation priority than crab fisheries.
- To date most of the CMG's thinking has been around brown crab so the inclusion of lobsters means that work is required of establishing baseline information on lobsters (as is already being carried out for crab).

No further issues were raised.

The CMG reviewed the live actions document to assess progress against the actions taken from the previous meeting. Detailed updates were given on actions as follows:

Action 1.6 – Assess effectiveness and appropriateness of existing management tools (Matthew Johnson, Defra)

The aim of this action is to build a baseline of information on management tools used – at an EU, national, devolved administration, and IFCA level – to manage crab and lobster fisheries. This part of the action is now complete and work is ongoing on assessing the effectiveness and appropriateness of management tools.

Next steps for the work:

- Defra is collecting information from regulators on effectiveness of management tools including the following questions:
 - Why was the management tool introduced in the first place;
 - Has the tool achieved its fisheries management objective;
 - Have there been any unintended consequences as a result of the management tool, and;
 - Have there been any difficulties in enforcing the tool, or difficulties to industry in complying.
- Defra is developing an assessment tool to review management tools implemented at an EU, UK, and regional level. The tool will be presented to the group for comment at the next CMG.
- To date, eight of ten IFCAs have responded to Defra's request for additional information (it was noted that this work does not only focus on management within IFCA jurisdiction, but to crab and lobster management in the entire EEZ. Defra is engaging with devolved administrations on this action).
- An update will be presented at the next meeting of the CMG on the ongoing progress of this work;
- Views of the CMG will be sought on this action, particularly from industry members on their perspective of the effectiveness of management tools.
- Members noted that the [Future Management of Brown Crab Management in UK and Ireland report by Nautilus Consultants \(2009\)](#) includes a detailed assessment of management measures, including industry perspectives, and that the Southwest Crab and Lobster FIP will be able to give information on management measures.

Economic analysis of crab-dependent vessels (Marta Moran-Quintana, Seafish)

An update was provided on Seafish economic analysis following the CMG's request for more information on economic performance by fishing area and vessel length.

Economic analysis was presented for vessels for which more than 60% of the value of landings was from crab and focused on four sea areas: ICES area 4.a, 4.b, 6.a and 7.e: these four areas accounted for ~80% of all crab caught by UK vessels in the period 2008-2019.

Data was presented on the proportion of crab landings from each sea area and by length of vessel (<10m, 10-15m, >15m). In most sea areas vessels over 10m take the majority of landings.

Between 2008-2019 area 4.b saw the biggest increase in landings from 4,000 tonnes to over 12,000 tonnes. The increase in landings is largely attributed to vessels over 10m.

CMG members were invited to provide feedback on the economic analysis. The following points were raised:

- Moving forward analysis of data of activity in regional seas in terms of devolved management may become more important. Economic analysis can be carried out at ICES rectangle resolution (approximately 30x30 nautical miles) but this requires data from the MMO. Seafish will prepare a document on the types of analysis the Economics Team can undertake and the data required for each analysis, this will be circulated to the CMG.
- Some trends in the data may be a result of changes in structure of the fishing fleet. Seafish are to do more work in this area looking at changes to the structure of the fleet and potentially undertake a joiners and leavers analysis.

- Data quality may be an issue for some sectors: it was acknowledged that there may be uncertainties around data reliability for the under-10m fleet and the relative lack of data may be problematic moving forward, particularly around management and allocation of fishing opportunities.
- Some IFCA's collect fine-scale data as part of their permitting schemes. The CMG should explore opportunities to access other data sets, potentially using Cornwall as a case study.

Exporting crab to China (Ivan Bartolo, Seafish)

An update was presented on the ongoing issues around exporting UK crab to China. Chinese authorities are consulting on new export regulations for food products (including crab). Defra, SAGB, and Seafish are working to progress this issue.

Discussions are ongoing around exporting crab to China.

Western Waters effort regime (Helen Hunter, Defra)

At the end of the EU exit transition period the Western Waters effort regime (WWER) will roll over into UK legislation, applying in UK waters only. Defra are taking steps to introduce legislation to enable changing or revisiting the WWER. This could only be achieved if the regime is replaced by UK legislation.

The primary concerns around the WWER are:

- Appropriateness for shellfish, and;
- Basis on historical activity and not science-based.

Future discussions will not only focus on vessels >15m. CMG members noted that there may be a need for an interim measure as the WWER is replaced.

The CMG will engage with Defra to discuss options around amending or replacing the WWER with UK legislation. The CMG welcome this opportunity to engage and will host a dedicated meeting before the end of 2020 to address this issue.

To inform this discussion Defra will create a summary document covering the following items:

- Basic background information on the WWER;
- Areas of regulation up for consideration/parameters for discussion;
- Wider objectives and what we want from the resource in the WW area, and;
- Details on any interim or long term considerations.

Latent capacity in the crab fleet

Unfortunately Simon Dixon (MMO) was unable to attend the CMG at this time so it was agreed that this item should be added to the agenda of the next CMG meeting.

2. CMG priorities

Draft priority areas and actions were presented to the CMG, as shown in table 1. This prioritisation of actions will be used to create a draft work programme for the group for the short-term (12-36 months). All CMG members are asked to review the draft and answer the following questions:

1. Are the proposed priority areas and actions suitable for the short-term (12-36 months) work programme of the CMG?
2. What does success against each of these actions look like?
3. How should the CMG fund the delivery of these actions?

Priority area	Actions
1. Establish baseline	Improve understanding of crab and lobster fisheries as they currently are, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing activity and economic performance of the pots and traps sector, and; • Available biological information on stock status, life cycle, and stock boundaries. • Identify information gaps which will inform a data collection and research plan under

	Priority Area 2.
	<p>Improved understanding of the range of tools currently used to manage crab and lobster fisheries including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness: are the tools currently applied appropriate to the biological traits of the stock and activity of the fishery? • Effectiveness: do they deliver the intended fisheries management objectives? • Unintended consequences (positive and negative) of management measures. • Establishing the most appropriate tools for future management
2. Data and research	Support development of stock assessment models better suited to the life history of the target species and fishery exploitation patterns.
	<p>Improve understanding of how crab and lobster fisheries interact with other fisheries, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions with non-target species; • Bait provisioning for other fisheries (e.g. whelk fishery); • Displacement of fishing activity between sectors, and; • Gear conflict and spatial considerations between sectors.
3. Managing effort	Explore opportunities to limit fishing effort in the short-term, either at a local or national level, to safeguard the fishery.
	<p>Develop a management toolbox for crab and lobster fisheries. Build upon improved understanding of management tools to design fit for purpose' measures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve specific fisheries management objectives; • Address issues around latent capacity in the fishing fleet, prevent over-exploitation of stocks, and harmonise key measures (e.g. MCRS); • Are implemented at an appropriate spatial resolution (e.g. national, regional, or local), and; • Take into account changes in national legislation (e.g. Western Waters Effort Regime).
	Agree on a programme of management to ensure fishing effort is aligned with likely/actual stock status.

Next steps for the CMG

- At the most recent Whelk Management Group (WMG) meeting the group discussed options around commissioning research akin to the report “The UK scallop fishery: current trends future management options and recommendations” carried out by Poseidon Consultants for the Scallop Industry Consultation Group in October 2018. It was agreed that this approach was not currently appropriate for whelks given the lack of data available; however this type of approach may be more appropriate for crab and lobster fisheries.
- Seafish will collect feedback on the draft priorities and can begin creating a more refined work programme for the CMG.
- The CMG stressed that it is preferable to see tangible actions and decisions made using the best available data, as opposed to attempting to address all potential data gaps before making decisions.
- To maintain momentum around the CMG, it is important to build proposed timelines into the work programme.
- An item on spatial planning should be added to the priorities document/work plan.

3. Actions

Action no.	Action	Responsibility
2.1	Defra to present at next CMG on the management measure assessment tool and progress against action 1.6	Joanna Messini & Matthew Johnson, Defra
2.2	Seafish to circulate a document detailing the types of economic analyses the team can undertake and the data requirements for each option.	Marta Moran-Quintana, Seafish
2.3	Undertake a joiners and leavers analysis to look at changes in fleet structure over time.	Marta Moran-Quintana, Seafish
2.4	Liaise with IFCA regarding finer scale data they may collect as part of permitting schemes, and their willingness to share data.	Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
2.5	Host a dedicated CMG meeting focused on discussing options around amending or replacing the Western Waters effort regime.	All CMG members
2.6	Create a Western Waters effort regime summary document to circulate prior to a dedicated CMG session on the WWER	Helen Hunter, Defra
2.7	Item on latent capacity in the crab fleet to be added to the agenda of the next CMG meeting	Simon Dixon, MMO
2.8	Collect feedback on draft priorities for the CMG and create a refined work programme, including timelines, for the next 12-36 months.	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish