

Crab & Lobster Management Group (CMG) Meeting

11 November 2021

Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Aoife Martin, Seafish (Chair)	John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association
Andrew Brown, Macduff Shellfish	Kevin Favis, Favis of Salcombe Ltd.
Andrew Wheeler, North Eastern IFCA	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
Anne Freeman, Defra	Lydia Osbourne, Defra
Barrie Deas, NFFO	Marta Moran Quintana, Seafish
Beshlie Pool, South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen's Association	Martyn Youell, Waterdance
Carl Davies, Gwen Paul M BS115	Matthew Johnson, Defra
Chris Ranford, The Cornish Fish Producers Organisation	Natalie Hold, Bangor University
Colin Bannister, SAGB	Neville Pittman, Seafood Processing Cornwall
Ella Brock, Seafish	Patrick Smith, DAERA
Emma Plotnek, Fishing into the Future	Paul Brown, Brown & Bright Shellfish Ltd.
Hannah Fennel, Orkney Fisheries Association	Rebecca Treacy, Seafish
Hubert Gieschen, MMO	Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA

Apologies

Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish	Terence Studley, SD&CSA
Richard Stride, SD&CSA	Andrew Rooney, Rooney Fish
Mike Roach, Holderness Fishing Industry Group	Jim Portus, SWFPO
Trevor Bartlett, Devon Crab	Sarah Hussey, Sea Fresh
	Phil McBryde, Defra

General updates

1. The group agreed that future CMG meetings will be recorded for the purpose of taking minutes and will be deleted once minutes are completed. There is the option to make recorded meetings available to members, who cannot always attend meetings, but the group did not reach consensus on this.
2. It was brought to the attention of the group that dead and dying crabs have been found washed ashore on beaches in northeast England, mainly around the Tees Estuary. There's an ongoing investigation to determine the cause of this, and samples are being taken by Cefas and the Environment Agency for analysis. Defra will coordinate an update accordingly, but any questions in the meantime should be directed to your local IFCA/MMO/Environment Agency.
3. Members were reminded that the group is an open forum and stakeholders are welcome to join. New members are welcome and should contact Seafish: Holly.Kaiser@seafish.co.uk

Update on licensing (Anne Freeman, Defra)

4. Defra provided an update on their evidence-based approach to licensing EU vessels fishing in UK territorial waters. There is recognition that access to the 6-12nm is sensitive to the UK and the EU, but there is a treaty obligation to provide access. The UK requires evidence of fishing for one day in four years of the track record period and when this threshold is met, a license is issued.

5. Discussions are ongoing with the EU Commission, France, Jersey and Guernsey and the UK are continuing to try and diffuse tensions in the Channel area and to work through the issues. The UK is working within the limits of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
6. Any members who experience changes or issues in the supply chain are encouraged to feed them back to the Defra team.

Update on work in Northern Ireland (Patrick Smith, DAERA)

7. Patrick Smith (DAERA) provided an update on ongoing work in Northern Ireland as summarised below:
 - a. DAERA will be consulting on a proposal to increase the Minimum Landing Size of brown crab to 150mm.
 - b. Separate legislation to amend current edible crab conservation regulation to prohibit the landing of detached crab claws is in development.
 - c. Both measures are planned to be in place by December and operational by the end of January 2022.
 - d. There is a draft consultation prepared on the landing of soft-shell crab for whelk bait, which will go live before 2022.

Crustacea welfare

8. Crustacea welfare is an issue that is likely to grow in importance in upcoming months with the expected publication of a number of reports. Shellfish welfare will remain an agenda item on all future CMG meetings as required. Ongoing work that the group were made aware of includes:
 - a. A paper by the London School of Economics (commissioned by Defra) looking into the issue of sentience in crustacea and cephalopods. This report was published in November 2021 ([LSE - Sentience-in-Cephalopod-Molluscs-and-Decapod-Crustaceans-Final-Report](#)). Additional note: Seafish have published their response to the paper here: [Response to sentience in cephalopod molluscs and decapod crustaceans review \(seafish.org\)](#)
 - b. The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill 2021. This is currently going through the House of Lords.
 - c. Ongoing work by Seafish on a report detailing good handling and dispatch practices for crustacea and cephalopods.
 - d. SAGB guide on crustacea transport practices.

Crab & Lobster Chapter of the National Shellfish Fisheries Plan (Aoife Martin, Seafish)

9. Seafish are working closely with teams within Defra to ensure that the structure and contents of the plans are on track to deliver the needs of industry, alongside meeting government requirements. Any members of the group with queries should contact Rebecca Treacy (Seafish): Rebecca.Treacy@seafish.co.uk
10. Collaboration with the Devolved Administrations is ongoing, but their level of involvement in the FMPs has not yet been decided. It is possible that Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland may progress their own FMPs with likely overlap between species and objectives. Despite this, there is appetite to ensure that alignment and consistency in the FMP process remains as far as possible. Further clarity on the process is expected with the publication of the Joint Fisheries Statement later in the year. It was agreed that more representation from Scotland (specifically static gear fishers) was required on the group and current members representing this area will invite additional stakeholders to join.
11. There are two sub-groups progressing work on the plan for crab and lobster:

- a. CMG chapter working group: this group is tasked with developing the FMP objectives that will align with the objectives laid out in the Fisheries Act 2020 and the broader aims of the CMG. Crawfish, spider crab and velvet crab will be incorporated into the plan as secondary species that do not have species-specific objectives. Discussions on inclusion of common prawns in the FMP will be revisited by the working group as it was acknowledged by a member of the CMG that this is a valuable fishery in Wales.
 - b. CMG science sub-group: tasked with developing a research plan to address the science and data needs for crab and lobster fisheries.
12. Both groups will draw on work that is already happening in the IFCAs, Fisheries Improvement Projects and research institutions. There is also the intention to hold a crab and lobster workshop in Spring 2022 to provide the group with an opportunity to go through the details of the plan.

Regional Fisheries Groups (Lydia Osbourne, Defra)

13. 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.
14. Each RFG has identified specific areas of scientific work they would like to see being progressed, but applications for funding have not begun yet. Concerns were raised regarding the focus the RFGs have on collaborative science and the difficulty of accessing funding through the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships scheme (FISP). The FISP application process requires a public procurement process involving a consortium of industry and research institute members, potentially jeopardising the ability of industry to acquire funds for smaller projects due to the administrative burden. These concerns will be passed back to Defra.
15. Membership of the RFGs is open and CMG members are encouraged to engage with the groups in their respective areas. Whilst the RFGs are not defined as “inshore”, the current membership of the groups is more representative of the inshore rather than the offshore. More information can be found here: [Regional Fisheries Groups - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regional-fisheries-groups) or get in touch with Lydia Osbourne at: Lydia.Osbourne@defra.gov.uk
16. The work of Fishing Into The Future and the Fishmongers Company was brought to the attention of the group. A support network is being developed to connect industry and researchers to help industry access funding. For more information get in touch with the Fishing Animateurs team: fishing@cornwallrcc.org.uk

Latent capacity (Joanna Messini, Defra)

17. Defra held a call for evidence over the summer to gather views on latent capacity in the over 10m scallop and shellfish fleets in England. The summary of responses will be posted on the government website once they are available. Responses provided no consensus on how to address latent capacity and there is the need for further discussions with industry.
18. Perceived issues with Defra’s approach to consultations and calls for evidence with the industry were raised as summarised below:
- a. The timing of consultations requires consideration of the seasonal nature of the industry i.e. avoid holding consultations in the summer or when fleets are busy.
 - b. Industry have contributed to many consultations in the past and there is a feeling of fatigue towards the process. Defra should review the responses from past consultations on similar topics to ensure the context of the issue is fully understood.

Western Waters Effort Regime (Matthew Johnson, Defra)

19. The WWER alternative measures workshop was held on the 10th October and included attendees from the CMG, the WWER management group, the MMO and Defra. Minutes will be circulated shortly. It was acknowledged that the workshop did not represent everyone interested in the WWER and further workshops will be held.
20. The session included an overview of the WWER as it stands currently, international examples of alternative measures and a discussion on what industry would like to see happen. If anyone has further questions regarding the WWER workshop, please contact shellfish@defra.gov.uk
21. There is the possibility to take forward discussions regarding the WWER within the SIAG, and this will be considered at future SIAG meetings as required.

Crab & Lobster Science Sub-Group (Colin Bannister, SAGB)

22. The science sub-group met on 20th October. The group is developing the first draft research plan of research needs related to the draft CMG FMP objectives. The objectives will be prioritised in line with anticipated resources to ensure they are practical and deliverable. If any members of the CMG have questions relating to research plan development please contact: Ella.Brock@seafish.co.uk
23. The science sub-group group defined the research needs for each crab and lobster FMP objective and is continuing work to determine which of these research needs are common across both crab and lobsters, and which are species-specific. Much of the groups effort to date has been focused on brown crab; a lobster-specific meeting of the science group will be held in early 2022.
24. The science sub-group group discussed the following:
 - a. The importance of acknowledging region-specific knowledge gaps as well as overarching knowledge gaps.
 - b. How existing data gathering, and management mechanisms could be modified to yield better results, as well as how new mechanisms could be introduced.
 - c. Ensuring that stakeholders are not asked to input the same data multiple times through different channels, and that outputs of data analysis are effectively communicated back to stakeholders.

Catch composition monitoring using artificial intelligence (Natalie Hold, Bangor University)

25. Bangor University has developed a data collection technology for crab and lobster using an on-board camera system to gather catch composition data. The aim is to gather evidence with a high spatial and temporal coverage. It is collaborative and participatory research which will hopefully provide long-term improvements for data collection. The technology will hopefully be integrated with existing and future technologies (CatchApp) and with environmental loggers.
26. The purpose of the study is to collect crab and lobster size data for stock indicators and stock assessment, which could in turn be used to calculate CPUE. This type of size data will be essential for all future stock indicator and stock assessment methods. The study uses a sentinel fleet to ensure a good geographical spread and a range of vessel types/sizes, but vessels are only required to collect data once or twice a month to provide a sufficient data set.
27. Cefas are developing a database which is secure and will include a country identifier to allow each administration access to the data on their vessels. No data on spatial coverage will be released on a wider scale i.e., no visual representation of where stocks are.

28. Any members of the CMG who would be interested in contributing to the study or have questions, should contact Natalie Hold: n.hold@bangor.ac.uk

Non-Quota Species (Phil McBryde, Defra)

29. The UK has exchanged data with the EU on UK uptake of NQS tonnage limits from EU waters and EU uptake in UK waters for January-June 2021. Defra is analysing the EU data and hope to publish the UK uptake in EU waters data before 2022.

30. Annual negotiations with the EU started in mid-November and there is agreement that NQS are high on the list of priorities for both the UK and EU. Defra are still waiting for confirmation of an agreed timetable for discussions with the EU on multi-year strategies for the conservation and management of NQS.

31. Concerns were raised from members regarding uncertainty about EU fishing effort in UK waters. Defra will continue to update the group as data become available.

Actions	Description	Responsible
6.1	Northern Ireland proposals on crab legislation to be shared with the group when they are published.	Patrick Smith (DAERA)
6.2	Consider the place of common prawn in the crab & lobster management plan.	Seafish
6.3	Members with queries about Defra's recent call to evidence on latent capacity to contact shellfish@defra.gov.uk	All members
6.4	SIAG to serve as a forum for engagement on the WWER as necessary.	Seafish & Defra
6.5	Members to get in touch with Lydia Osbourne at Defra regarding RFG queries. Contact: regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk Or Lydia.Osbourne@defra.gov.uk	All members
6.6	Any members interested in contributing to Bangor University's catch composition study or have questions, contact Natalie Hold: n.hold@bangor.ac.uk	All members