

Crab Management Group (CMG) meeting minutes 22/07/2020

Chair: Tony Delahunty (NFFO).

Attendees: Aoife Martin (Seafish), Holly Kaiser (Seafish), Barrie Deas (NFFO), Claire Pescod (Macduff Shellfish), Colin Bannister (SAGB), Ewen Bell (Cefas), Harry Wick (NIFPO), Jim Evans (WFA), Joanna Messini (Defra), John Balls (NDFa), Andrew Wheeler (Wheeler Consulting), Les Lawrence (Dorset fish), Martyn Youell (Waterdance), Mike Roach (HFIG), Patrick Smith (DAERA), Sarah Clark (Devon and Severn IFCA), Sarah Horsfall (SAGB), Richard Hoskin (MMO), Helen Hunter (Defra), Stella Bartolini (Defra), Beshlie Pool (South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen), Tony Delahunty (NFFO), Paul Trebilcock (CFPO), Brian Pawley (NFFO), Jon Davies (Defra).

Apologies: Andrew Brown (Macduff Shellfish), Mark Moore (Dartmouth crab), Paul Brown (Brown and Bright), Jim Portus (SWFPO). Don Thompson (Jersey Fishermen's Association), Bill Brock (BNFS).

Action number	Description	Responsible	Timeframe
Crab Management Group Actions			
1.	Circulate minutes from previous meeting along with the agendas so that members can review prior to the meeting.	Seafish	Future meetings
2.	Review the current membership of the CMG and invite new members to join to ensure we have appropriate representation.	All	Immediately.
3.	Draft paper on scope of CMG in terms of the species that will be included in its remit, for discussion at the next meeting.	Seafish	Before next meeting.
4.	Consider the possible management measures for each individual crab stock around the coast.	Sub-group	Before next meeting.
5.	Compile a list of easy wins/priority actions that could be implemented relatively quickly for discussion at the next meeting.	Defra	Before next meeting
6.	Using the criteria developed as part of the Whelk Management Group meeting, expand the Defra shellfish legislation summary document to include an assessment of management tools including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness - Unintended consequences (positive and negative) - Are rules delivering fishery management objectives? 	Seafish/Defra.	Ongoing.
7.	Setup a dropbox to enable the sharing of documents between the group's members.	Seafish	Before next meeting.
8.	Next meeting to be arranged for September/October.	Seafish	

The Crab Management Group met immediately after the SIAG and consisted of the same attendees.

Minutes from the last meeting were not reviewed. However it was agreed that they should be circulated in advance of future meetings and discussed at each meeting along with the actions (a similar approach will be adopted for the SIAG).

Scope of the CMG; who is involved and what is included e.g. lobsters?

Membership: The group discussed the possibility of increasing representation from each of the IFCAs. Sarah Clark is already a member of the group and provides CMG and SIAG updates to the chief officers of the IFCAs. However, there are other IFCAs with a strong interest in crab management, particularly the Eastern IFCA, and there could be benefits in having their input in discussions.

Concerns were raised that this would mean that CMG may be too heavily weighted in favour of government/regulators. There were also concerns that IFCAs have a specific remit (0-6nm) and the CMG has a broader focus. As an interim solution it was agreed that IFCA reps would be invited to join meetings on a case by case basis.

The membership of the group should be assessed and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure we have the right participants to help the group achieve its goals. It was agreed that the CMG would benefit from having more active fishermen involved, particularly when we start to discuss how crab fisheries should be managed. However engaging fishermen is always difficult because of their existing work commitments; members were encouraged to use their contacts to promote the group to prospective members.

The option of also funding fishermen to attend meetings was raised. This is something that could be looked into again once we return to 'face to face' meeting.

Scope: The group discussed whether the remit of the CMG should be revised to also include lobsters. It was acknowledged that this could be useful but it did raise the issue of where other species (paddle crabs) would fit in terms of co-management. A short paper will be drafted setting out the scope of the CMG which will be discussed at the next meeting.

Overview of action 10 from last meeting: Complete a baseline review of UK crab fisheries.

Action 10.1 current crab stocks, available information and their management status (Ewen Bell)

- The most recent Cefas stock assessments undertaken for crab and lobster were published in 2017. The 2019 assessment has been finalised and the group will be notified once this is available.
- The assessment completed in 2017 did not differ considerably from the 2014 assessment in terms of likely stock status.
- The assessment highlights that stocks are significantly exploited and therefore some measure to cap effort should be implemented in the short term. The assessment also indicates that there are common problems that apply to crab stocks across the UK and therefore some national measure to limit effort could be considered.
- The assessment method for crab is not best suited to the characteristics of the species, and due to this, a new method is being developed to better track changes in exploitation status. Cefas hope that the new assessment model will be able to compare stock status across different areas.
- The group acknowledged that Cefas stock assessments are only applicable to England, other data and research will have to be looked at for the other devolved administrations.

- The group agreed that mapping the possible management measures for crab stocks around the country for review by the group would be useful to help the group discuss management objectives and measures.
- CMG discussed the trade-offs between a local versus the national approach to management interventions. The primary goal is to implement ‘fit for purpose’ management measures; at times these may be national measures and at others, local measures may be more appropriate. The group should strive to build on existing good practice and should apply the most appropriate management tool for the correct circumstances.

Action 10.3 economic profile of the UK’s crab fisheries

- Marta Moran-Quintana (Seafish) presented an economic profile of UK crab fisheries which will be circulated with the group. The analysis identified that there has been an upward trend in the number of active vessels in the fleet, the total weight of landings of crab (tonnes) and the average fishing income per vessel for the years 2009-2019. It also highlighted that the majority of crab landed in the UK is caught in the North Sea. The average price of crab has also shown an upward trend, suggesting that the value of crab has increased from 2009-2019.
- Requests for additional data include:
 - More detail into landings of crab by vessel length and fishing area.

Action 10.4 assessment of crab management measures and approaches used beyond the UK to manage potting effort

- Joanna Messini (Defra) presented a summary of the shellfish regulations in place that apply to crab. There is a wide array of legislation in place at a national level and local level with many IFCA-specific management measures across the UK. It would be useful to know which measures are still relevant and of use to the industry in the current landscape.
- It was agreed to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing regulations/management measures and to test whether they are still applicable. A similar task was actioned by the Whelk Management Group meeting.

Next steps

Considering the amount of work and the complexity of the issues faced by the CMG and SIAG, it was decided that, in future, meetings will be held on separate days.

Seafish will arrange the next meeting for late September or early October and will be held over Zoom.

Meeting close