

## Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) Meeting

6<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Remote meeting via Zoom

### Attendees

Barrie Deas, NFFO (Chair)  
 Andrew Wheeler, North Eastern IFCA  
 Anne Freeman, Defra  
 Aoife Martin, Seafish  
 Beshlie Pool, South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen's Association  
 Claire Pescod, Macduff Shellfish  
 Colin Bannister, SAGB  
 Cordelia Bagley, Defra  
 Ewen Bell, Cefas  
 Gary Hodgson, Venture Seafoods  
 Harry Wick, Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation  
 Helen Hunter, Defra  
 Jim Evans, Welsh Fishermen's Association

Jim Portus, South Western Fish Producers Organisation  
 Joanna Messini, Defra  
 John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association  
 Mark Moore, Dartmouth Crab Company  
 Martyn Youell, Waterdance  
 Mike Roach, Holderness Fishing Industry Group  
 Patrick Smith, DAERA  
 Paul Trebilcock, The Cornish Fish Producers Organisation  
 Richard Hoskin, MMO  
 Ros McIntyre, Cefas  
 Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA  
 Trevor Bartlett, South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen's Association  
 Victoria Prentis MP, Defra (part meeting)

### Apologies:

David Jarrad, SAGB  
 Julian Bray, Welsh Government  
 Paul Brown, Brown & Bright  
 Sarah Horsfall, SAGB

## 1. SIAG Update

The minutes of the previous SIAG 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 SIAG. The following points were made:

- In light of recent government announcements regarding expansion of offshore wind, there is an increased risk of areas being closed to fishing, for example parts of the Bristol Channel. This is of particular relevance to inshore fishermen as there are fewer areas into which displaced vessels can move;
- Jim Portus, Chair of the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) welcomed the formation of the SIAG and the opportunity to bring shellfish groups together under a central umbrella. The importance of maintaining good lines of communication with the component parts of the wider SIAG was stressed;
- Access to both EU waters and EU markets was discussed (detailed further in section 3), and;
- Comments were raised on both the landing page copy and draft joint press release circulated prior to the meeting; members were encouraged to send feedback to Lewis Tattersall at Seafish directly.

## 2. Update from Victoria Prentis MP

Victoria Prentis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs joined the meeting.

The Chair introduced the SIAG and stressed that UK shellfish fisheries are valuable in economic terms but at times have been overshadowed by other sectors. The aim of the SIAG is to provide balance and a forum through which industry can meaningfully engage with regulators towards co-management of fisheries.

Members were asked to discuss concerns and raise issues pertinent to shellfish fisheries.

Points raised by members include:

- Safeguarding transport of shellfish to the EU;
- Export documentation and health certificates and the challenges for businesses to get ready for the End of the Transition Period (see section 3.3);
- Industry taking action to proactively engage in the development of management measures that are effective, appropriate, and easily understood, and;
- The importance of groups like the SIAG having meaningful engagement with government.

### **3. International work programme**

#### **3.1 Update on fisheries negotiations and implications for shellfish fisheries (Anne Freeman, Defra)**

Negotiations are ongoing; as a result it is difficult to give definitive answers to some questions regarding future trading relationships and fisheries access with the EU.

Fisheries are one of the last areas to be resolved; the area is being taken very seriously.

The UK has a future fisheries agreement in place with Norway; this shows the willingness of the UK to cooperate. Negotiations are progressing well with both Iceland and Faroes.

#### **3.2 Western Waters effort regime: what it is and why it is important (Helen Hunter, Defra)**

The Western Waters Effort Regime is an EU regulation limiting effort (days at sea) for vessels targeting scallops and crab in Area 7.

After the end of the transition period (1<sup>st</sup> January 2021) the Western Waters regime will be rolled over in UK legislation so will still apply in UK waters. The aim of this roll over is to provide continuity and certainty in the period immediately after the transition period until UK specific measures can be implemented.

Defra is seeking powers through the Fisheries Bill to make required changes to the Western Waters regime and will adopt an approach based on science, not historic fishing patterns.

Defra would like to discuss options for changing the Western waters regime with the shellfish industry. All options, from adjusting existing legislation to revoking or replacing legislation are up for consideration. A survey will be shared with members later in the year to collect industry views on the Western Waters regime.

Concerns were raised about the potential divergence in the Western Waters effort regime after the transition period ends as both the UK and EU will have their respective versions of the regime. The way in which different regimes interact will have to be taken into account in future fisheries negotiations. For example, increased effort by French vessels in Area 7 would limit the scope to increase effort by UK vessels on shared stocks.

It was suggested that, in general, effort restrictions in terms of vessel days at sea may not be the most appropriate tool for the management of static gear shellfish fisheries. There is a need to begin thinking about management of non-TAC fisheries and potential displacement of vessels into non-TAC fisheries in response to quota reductions in other sectors.

It is vital that the SIAG gets industry involved and makes sure all sectors (and all vessel sizes) are taken into account in this type of work. Industry should be strongly encouraged to bring ideas to the table regarding fisheries management and use the SIAG/species groups as a forum through which to do this.

### **3.3 International trade and EU exit (Aoife Martin, Seafish)**

Seafish has published updated guidance for businesses, the *Preparing your business for the end of the UK's transition period* document is now live on the Seafish website. This is considered a "live" document and sections will be updated as the situation changes, users are encouraged to check back regularly for updates. The guide is focused on food safety, traceability, and trade. Key points discussed included:

- The Northern Ireland Protocol means that customs checks and controls will apply to goods moving from mainland UK to Northern Ireland to protect free movement of goods between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This will have a direct impact on Northern Irish seafood businesses and on any UK business that features Northern Irish products in their supply chain.
- Export Health Certificates (EHCs) will be required for seafood exports after the end of the transition period. Products must travel through approved premises, to become an approved premise businesses should contact their local food authority. This is an issue for products exported directly from the quayside on *vivier* lorries.
- Catch certificates will be required for seafood exports after the end of the transition period. Exporters from England, Scotland and Wales will need a catch certificate to export products to Northern Ireland. Catch certificates are issued by the Marine Management Organisation; a new online Fish Export Service will be launched in late 2020.
- Businesses trading goods with the EU will require an Economic Operator Registration Identification (EORI) number. These are automatically allocated to VAT registered businesses.
- Under EU law, health and identification marks must be applied to certain food products of animal origin. For more information businesses should refer to the [Food Standards Agency guidance](#).

As the industry navigates these significant changes there are many unforeseen issues. Businesses are encouraged to contact Seafish with specific problems as it is likely that many other businesses are facing the same challenges. Seafish's approach is to work with businesses to understand the issue, collaborate with the relevant regulator to find a solution, and then update all businesses likely to be affected.

In coming months Seafish will undertake further work to support the industry this includes:

- Seafish and government delivering a series of webinars on specific topics (including imports, exports, vessels and ports);
- Supporting industry to access overseas markets through trade promotion work via webinar;
- Regular updates on emerging issues via Seafish newsletters, and;
- Updated guides covering export and trading landscapes, including an updated EU guide in the New Year.

## 4. Fisheries management

### 4.1 Fisheries plan

Following feedback from the Group the proposed shellfish fisheries plan outline will be updated and re-circulated for final comments.

Aoife Martin, Seafish, outlined a proposed three-level hybrid approach to fisheries management actions detailing the remit of the SIAG and subgroups. The approach is as follows:

- Level 1: Strategic objectives (SIAG) - issues relevant to all shellfish fisheries linked to the Fisheries Bill objectives, e.g. collaborative science, international issues, allocation and access, trade and marketing, and overarching environmental issues;
- Level 2: Species-specific management (Whelk Management Group, Crab & Lobster Management Group) – stock management e.g. harvest control rules effort management, addressing environmental impacts of specific fisheries;
- Level 3: Regional fisheries management initiatives – addressing stock specific management and accounting for local needs e.g. MSC certification, minimum landing sizes.

The Chair stressed that groups should not work in isolation and the importance of establishing and maintaining good communications across all groups.

SIAG members were invited to submit information on their priority actions and objectives for the SIAG to Seafish, which will be used to draft the Level 1 content.

### 4.2 Update from regulators

Patrick Smith, Daera, presented an overview of fisheries management developments from Northern Ireland, including the role of Daera and the creation of an inshore fisheries group in Northern Ireland to look at local issues.

### 4.3 AOB

Members asked about the change in export of UK crab to China. Until September 2020 it was possible to export UK crab to China via the Netherlands, however this route has now been closed.

Negotiations are ongoing regarding cadmium limits and testing. China has launched a consultation on a revision of their National Standard on the Limits of Contaminants in Food. Members will be updated accordingly as the situation develops.

## 5. Actions

Action no.	Action	Responsibility
4.1	Members to submit priority issues to Seafish – these will be used to shape the strategic objectives for the shellfish plan.	All SIAG members (facilitated by Seafish)
4.2	Discussion on Western Waters Effort Regime replacement to be added to the agenda of the next CMG meeting	Helen Hunter, Defra Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
4.3	Circulate suite of Seafish resources on trade	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
4.4	Crab Management Group meeting to be postponed by several weeks, all members to be updated by email.	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish
4.5	SIAG members asked to put forward nominations for the Chair of the CMG	All SIAG members
4.6	Next SIAG meeting to be scheduled for early January 2021	Lewis Tattersall, Seafish