

Shellfish Industry Advisory Group

Meeting minutes - 03.03.20

Attendees:

Barrie Deas (NFFO), Aoife Martin (Seafish), Anne Freeman (Defra), Helen Hunter (Defra), Holly Kaiser (Seafish), Claire Pescod (Macduff Shellfish), Martyn Youell (Waterdance), Colin Bannister (SAGB), Beshlie Pool (SDCSF), Brian Pawley (NFFO), Dom Thompson (JFA), Ewen Bell (Cefas), Harry Wick (NIFPO), Jim Evans (WFA), John Balls (NDFA), Les Lawrence (Dorset Fish), Mark Moore (Darmouth Crab), Mark Rowse (Rowse Fishing), Mike Roach (HFIG), Neil Robson (Genesis Fishing), Nick Bright (Brown and Bright), Paul Brown (Brown and Bright), Paul Trebilcock (CFPO), Sarah Clark (Devon and Severn IFCA), Trevor Bartlett (SDCSF), Bill Brock (BNFS), Lydia Osbourne (Defra).

Apologies: Iain Spear (Coombe fish), Gary Hodgson (Venture Seafoods), Tony Delahunty (NFFO), David Jarrad (SAGB), Patrick Smith (DAERA).

Action Number	Description	Responsible	Timeframe
Strategic Shellfish Issues			
1	Advise Tony Delahunty that he has been nominated as chair of the SIAG	Barrie Deas	Immediately
2	SIAG members to send any further chair nominations to Holly Kaiser	All	By 2 April 2020
3	Invite MMO, Marine Scotland and Welsh Government to attend SIAG meetings	Anne Freeman Aoife Martin	Before the next meeting
4	Invite the Fisheries Minister to attend the next SIAG meeting	Barrie Deas Anne Freeman	Early April
5	Map/List the current legislative measures that apply to shellfish	Defra	By next meeting
6	Set out the governance principles that will apply to the SIAG (in lieu of a formal ToR)	Aoife Martin	To be tabled at the next meeting.
7	Prepare an outline structure of the Shellfish Fisheries Plan which will include associated species management plans	Helen Hunter Claire Pescod Anne Freeman Aoife Martin	To be tabled at the next meeting
8	Circulate a short paper summarising the next steps from the Future of Our Inshore Fisheries Project	Aoife Martin	By end of March.
9	Ensure that an update on the Whelk Management Group (WMG) is provided at each SIAG	Bill Brock Aoife Martin	Ongoing
Crab management issues			
10	Complete a baseline review of current information relating to UK crab fisheries that captures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current crab stocks, available information and their management status. 	Defra/Seafish Beshlie Pool Ewan Bell Colin Bannister	To be tabled at the next meeting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Vessels and landing data at a national level and then at a stock level. 3. Economic profile of the UKs crab fisheries. 4. Assessment of crab management measures and approaches used beyond the UK to manage potting effort. 5. Assessment of possible/available management actions. 	<p>Martyn Youell Claire Pescod Sarah Clarke Trevor Bartlett Mike Roach</p>	
11	Establish an on-line file storage system (e.g. dropbox) for relevant documents	Holly Kaiser	In time for next meeting
12	Arrange the next meeting of the SIAG for 3 June (day after the WMG meeting)	Holly Kaiser	Meeting invite circulated

Chair: Barrie Deas

Part 1

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair of the group:

Barrie Deas will continue to act as interim chair of the group until a decision has been made for a more permanent candidate.

Seafish requested members of the group to provide suggestions for the chair, on the basis that the potential candidate has agreed to be nominated. The appointment of the chair will be a formal agenda item at the next meeting.

Suggestions to date have included Tony Delahunty and Seafish to act as chair.

2. Overview of meeting format

It was a deliberate decision to separate the meeting into two parts to reflect the species specific groups, including the crab group and the Whelk Management Group, which will feed into the SIAG.

Therefore, the first part of the meeting focused on strategic issues and the second part focused on crab management. It was agreed that this would be a useful structure going forward.

3. Update on actions from the last meeting

Appointing chair: see above.

Funding: the group will need to confirm a funding mechanism particularly as actions are progressed, although there is the potential to gain broad support from Fishmongers.

ToR: following on from the previous meeting the group further discussed the creation of a ToR. It was decided that it is premature to draft a full ToR at present and a guiding set of principles is sufficient for our current purpose until a further decision is made.

Representation: the group currently covers a wide geographical spread, but it was agreed that a communication strategy should be created to inform the wider industry of our actions and to gather further expressions of interest from those we may have missed. It was agreed that the MMO/WG/MS would be invited to join the group. If we are to have a wide influence then engagement in international matters is also important; how the SIAG will achieve this will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

SIAG email list: secretariat is maintaining contact details and any new additions to the group will be added to the mailing list.

4. Governance and role of SIAG

It was decided the governance of shellfish requires a two-tiered approach, whereby the SIAG represents a national committee encompassing representation from across the UK, including industry organisations and active fishermen. The species specific management groups will feed into the committee, allowing the wider supply chain to engage with the catching sector on management issues for specific species.

The role of the group is to provide a cohesive forum to engage proactively on fisheries management issues that are common to all shellfish species.

The species management groups will primarily focus on addressing stock specific issues; typically issues associated with data collection, stock assessment science, harvest control rules and the determination of appropriate management measures. Three species groups (crabs, lobster and whelks) will be established initially. The Scallop Industry Consultation Group provides a model for how these groups could be structured and how they could operate.

Effective co-management is evolutionary so it will be important to recognise that it will take time before such groups are fully established and operating effectively.

5. Fisheries Bill and management plans

Anne Freeman provided an update on progress on the Fisheries Bill.

Key points:

- Important to convey a positive message to demonstrate to the new government that the shellfish industry is working together in a different and more effective way – the SIAG, the WMG and the SICG are all excellent examples of this.

The Fisheries Bill:

- The bill has been reasonably well received by government, but there has been criticism that it does not include enough detail about fisheries management. Therefore we need to be flexible, responsive and adaptive, whilst setting a clear direction for fisheries.
- Government are particularly focussed on a sustainability objective creating pressure to hone in on environmental factors, but Defra is aware of the need for long term economic and social sustainability factors to also feature in the bill.
- Opportunity for the SIAG to help draft management plans as we need to decide our specific approach to achieving the objectives set out in the bill.
- The SIAG will invite the new Minister to the next meeting to establish our identity and our level of engagement. It will be important for members of the group and government to understand the magnitude of the objectives we seek to achieve.

6. Fisheries Plans and the Role of the SIAG

Obtaining a strong and improved evidence base is essential for the SIAG to progress management decisions. Whilst the group acknowledges that it is inherently difficult to collect scientific data on shellfish species, actions can begin to be progressed before all data is verified. There is a comprehensive suite of rules that already govern shellfish fisheries management, and it would be useful for the SIAG to understand these existing tools and how they could be deployed or indeed if they are still required. Therefore, before the next meeting a mapping exercise will be undertaken to list the current legislative measures that apply to shellfish.

There are existing fisheries management plans in place around the country that the SIAG could use as templates to draft our own management plan. The group discussed the option of collectively progressing work on a shellfish fisheries plan that is pragmatic and reasonable in the first instance and that helps identify information gaps and the tools needed to fill them. To effectively use all the resources the group provides and to collate all our information, an online file storage system will be created. This will allow members to share examples of specific fisheries management plans and to pool together an information and knowledge base. The latter can be used to draft a rational shellfish management plan and will help create an improved evidence base that supports management decisions.

There is also an opportunity to link the group to academia to provide us with the data we need to create a management plan. The SIAG will need to decide on clear research questions based on our focus and objectives. These questions can be given to academics/PhD students to collate the data which can then be fed into our evidence base which will validate our management decisions.

The group decided to allow the Secretariat (Seafish) to start developing a broad outline of a fisheries plan to present to the group at the next meeting. The group will then be given the opportunity to feed in their management priorities, research questions and information gaps to refine the plan.

Consequently, management will need to be flexible and adaptive to the information that is gathered along the way.

7. Update on Future of Our Inshore Fisheries project

Since the conference held in October several actions have been progressed and are underway. Firstly, the post-conference report has been put together summarising the thoughts collected on the day and including the feedback on the priorities for the next stage of the project. It is due to be published by the end of April. The project is due to progress over several years; therefore, the steering group has set out a 12-18 month plan covering issues regarding collaborative science, co-management and credible fisheries management – summarised below.

Collaborative science:

The project aims to encourage and enable industry to be active participants in the science and research process which will include opportunities for their expert knowledge of a fishery to inform the science process. Therefore, a mapping exercise of our inshore fisheries will be undertaken to capture the current stock status. Mechanisms will also be established to allow researchers and industry to peer review the science that is used to inform management.

Co-management:

Initially, we set out to look across the UK for successful and unsuccessful examples of co-management to establish a Co-management Standard setting out the different stations for co-management. Included in this is the implementation of a series of successful pilot groups, including the Whelk Management Group and the SIAG.

Credible Fisheries Management:

A key task is to progress the fishing mortality approach to help identify which species and stocks should be managed as inshore fisheries. The project also aims to establish a programme of collaborative fisheries plans and to create a generic approach that will enable groups such as the SIAG to further objectives with the knowledge of what is required.

Part 2 – Crab management

8. Update on Whelk Management Group Meeting

The inaugural meeting of the Whelk Management Group was held in London on 24th February 2020. Discussions were held around the aim, objectives, scope, and representation of the group. The aim of the Whelk Management Group is to ensure the long term sustainability of the UK's whelk fishery. Members acknowledged that, in order to achieve the groups aim, the objective of the Whelk Management Group should be national-level strategic management of the whelk fisheries. However there was recognition that effectively delivery of management measures would take place a regional level.

There was a review of existing data and information on whelk fisheries by Cefas, Seafish and academia to identify key gaps in current knowledge. The group discussed how sampling programmes could be implemented to collect necessary data on the fishery and how knowledge-sharing and collaboration could improve data collection and dialogue with business owners.

Finally the group discussed the mechanics of the Whelk Management Group and specifically, how the group's work would be funded by stakeholders. It was agreed that Seafish would continue to organise and chair the groups meetings and that funding models of other industry groups (e.g. the Scallop Industry Consultation Group) would be reviewed to provide a framework of how the Whelk Management Group could potentially operate in the future.

Considering the links between the WMG and the SIAG, an update on the WMG will be provided at each SIAG meeting and will be a formal agenda item, to prevent an overlapping of actions.

9. Role of SIAG contributing to the management of UK crab fisheries

The creation of a management plan for crab fisheries will provide the group with clear direction of where we want to go, incorporating co-management at the heart of it. Understanding the nature of crab fisheries is important and there are specific pressures on the crab sector that warrant attention. Therefore, it was agreed that stand-alone crab fisheries sub-group, which the SIAG have an important role in, is necessary. The sub-group will act in a similar way to the Whelk Management Group and will feed up to the SIAG.

The discussion focussed on the priorities for specific crab management:

- Data deficiencies: identifying the gaps in the information base, recognising the fundamental issues with the methodology of data collection with regard to shellfish.
- Refining the issues we are initially trying to solve: unregulated measures regarding effort.

To create an informed management plan for crab fisheries a baseline review of current information relating to UK crab fisheries will be undertaken to ensure we capture the state of current crab stocks, vessels and landing data at a national and at a stock level, the economic profile of the UK crab fisheries and an assessment of crab management measures and approaches used beyond the UK to manage potting effort. This will lead on to an assessment of possible/available management actions.

10. AOB: next meeting to be held via Zoom mid-July.