

Project UK Fisheries Improvements Stage One: Channel Scallops (Facilitated by the MSC)

Thursday 5th September 2019 10.30 – 15:30
MSC, 1 Snow House, London, EC1A 2DH

Attendees

Tim Huntington	Poseidon	TH
Fiona Nimmo	Poseidon	FN
Iain Spear	Coombe Fisheries Ltd	IS
Ewen Bell	Cefas	EB
Theresa Redding	Natural England	TR
Claire Pescod	Macduff	CP
Lauren Parkhouse	Devon & Severn IFCA	LP
Steve Newstead	Bangor University	SN
Andrew Brown	Macduff	AB
Hubert Gieschen	MMO	HG
Nathan de Rozarieux	Falfish	ND
Gus Caslake	Seafish	GC
Jenny Murray	Defra	JM
Adam Townley	NESI	AT
Jo Pollett	MSC	JP
Katie Keay	Independent	KK
Erin Priddle	MSC	EP
Karen Attwood	MSC	KA
Matthew Spencer	MSC	MS

Welcome and Introductions

EP welcomes all and begins the proceedings by stating how impressive the work of the FIP in the 3 years it has been going for; in particular EP is happy to see alignment between Scallops in PUKFI 1 and 2 occurring and goes on to introduce KK as the new member of the UK fisheries outreach team.

Minutes and Action Points

Minutes were circulated and no comments were received so they will be taken as signed and added to Fishery Progress.

Action 1 Stock Status

TH states that the action is pretty much complete with Cefas completing work on defining stock boundary, which industry and science has broadly accepted. TH goes on to state that the last benchmarking exercise scored over 80 and as such the group can almost close this action. TH interested to hear what EB has to say.

EB states that by and large the stock areas are broadly agreed and Cefas will discuss it at the ICES scallop working group at start of October to see if we can have scientific consensus around those

areas. EB goes on, stating that the latest assessment is available on the .gov website with Cefas moving into an established routine of data gathering through the year, which is agreed with SICG then published. 2019 data gathering ongoing, eastern channel data gathering starts today (5/9/19). EB then goes on to state how science for stocks is gathered- harvest rates are determined as the catch that's taken over 12 months period divided by total biomass that could be harvested. Previously we have used a calendar 12 months but we believe it is now 12 months immediately after the survey.

Action: EB to feedback information to JP after ICES report is published.

Concerns raised that if the situation becomes tricky financially then industry support for observers might get pulled. He is wondering if the option of a levy at point of sale to help support the work being done and believes there is a conversation to be had with Seafish. IS states that there is less enthusiasm for support this year due to pressure in the industry, lower landings per unit of effort (shown by relatively high prices), and fuel has gone up against a challenging background of Brexit.

NdR agrees with this statement- in 2017 scallops were the 3 or 4th most valuable seafood but had no stock assessments provided by government. ND wonders whether the burden should fall on industry as it is something that needs to be discussed, and states that there needs more thought as we move away from EMFF. ND informs the group that there is a new fund of approx £30 million available in the new replacement fund and the group needs to work out if there is any way they can access it.

AB is interested in this and says it is something that should be taken to the SICG Project Steering board (PSB) in Edinburgh next Tuesday. We can raise the new EMFF as a possibility, this FIP could have sway with Defra.

Action: MSC to organise a separate meeting on topic of funding and observer program

Discussions over the Seafood Innovation Fund (SIF) and application. Next round open in January, Cefas have put in their own bid. TH states that it would be important for this application to be with industry partnership, and the group would need to be clear on what's being funded by who and important to have in the FMP.

Action: MSC to follow up with EB on SIF funding

Action: MSC to consider alternative funding pathways

EB states that gathering information about the French re: level of activity in their 12nm zone has proved difficult. Cefas have approached them directly, fishing information is sensitive at the moment and they haven't received anything back yet. Cefas are now requesting through ICES working group so EB is hoping we can get something through them. In terms of joint observer programmes – Cefas and Marine Scotland – nothing has progressed with this and he doesn't see this being resolved in the near future. Marine Scotland don't want to treat scallops separately, they want to take stock of the whole observer programme. EB goes on to state that he is unsure why we have observers in the action and discards aren't an issue. He believes observers are needed mainly for secondary species and ETP.

FN lets the group know that she is working on PUKFI 2 scallops and that herself and TH had done a harmonisation of the two action plans. She has a general question on stock status and biological reference points, does the group have these for stocks in the English Channel, and if so what are they? EB responds by stating that Cefas are using harvested biomass rates not mortality. One of the

reasons for biomass reference points is that it can provide data after a few years, three years perhaps, with the reference points dependant on growth rates.

AB enquires into confidence limits and how they track the confidence estimate. Does the science get more certain with time and can we demonstrate this? EB responds that there are ways to demonstrate- with biomass estimates Cefas try and ascertain the uncertainty through bootstrapping procedures. Cefas already have some estimates on this side of the process, with each assessment year being almost completely independent of the previous year. Several years of data will provide a more dynamic model and this will further reduce the uncertainty. TH recommends that the group gets this information written up - stock status methodologies and status in to the FMP at some point, it could be 2 page summary.

Action: EB to write 2 page summary on stock assessment methodologies and status for FMP and send to TH/JP

Actions 2 and 3 Harvest Strategy/ Harvest Control Rules

AB informs the group that SICG had established two groups, management and fleet capacity (which was subsequently subsumed by the management group). SICG have developed a series of management options: freezing of licence, closed areas etc but they are unable to present them at this stage. SICG have also recently met with Defra to develop the measures a bit further and are in the process of working these up towards specific proposals. SICG's plans are to have a coherent package of measures that have been agreed by Defra and other fishing authorities, with the next step in the process is the SICG meeting in Edinburgh next week where the proposals will be presented.

EP asks what the timeline is and whether these measures are to be rolled out UK wide? IS confirms they are UK wide and that after going through this process they will be able to have good indicators of proposals by end of the year. Member of the group suggest that it would be useful to have JP start attending meetings to help could bridge the gap between SICG and the FIP.

Action: JP to follow up with SICG re: updating on PUKFI progress as the next SICG meeting

IS states that Defra are invited to meeting but there is difficulty in travel for them and there is some resistance in some quarters. TH believes that we need to get this harmonised strategy formalised at a UK level, and it will need to be considered in PUKFI 1 and 2 as to whether we adopt the same strategy. This will have to be agreed by industry and government, then tier down for the respective FAs. Need strategies which translate into the HCRs. EP adds that when they are to present to SICG, at a minimum you need to think of it at a UK level which overarches the more local level. Scotland will fiercely defend its opportunity to set its own strategy. TH believes this is fine in terms of harvest strategy; stating that the strategy itself is fairly high level, but how it is implemented is another matter. Regulations are difficult to make adaptive but that's more for the harvest control rules.

Action: AB + CP to report back at next meeting on SICG progress.

FN asks the group whether they had thought of making the year 5 action more ambitious, as she believe PUKFI 2 scallops has stronger milestones. In PUKFI2, there needs to be evidence of the harvest strategy has to be working. IS states that stage 2 can be more ambitious as the group is further down the line with biological reference points. EB confirms this to the group, highlighting that in Scottish waters they have been monitoring for a much longer time. However, in the Irish Sea

and south of Scottish line in North Sea it will be a bit more questionable. FN lets them know that if there isn't evidence that the harvest strategy is working then it won't get a score of 80.

TH believes it is worth changing the wording of year 5, that the group could look for some evidence that it is working. Might be a condition in future assessments, expect it to be a 60-79 pass. However, EB has some concerns over whether it will make a difference between year 4 and 5 as you'll need a few years of getting this strategy in place to get any understanding. FN states this is mainly about making a point to the group that might not be completed by PUKFI 1. FN illuminates that there are things that are currently working – HCRs but there needs to be some thinking into what evidence can be used to demonstrate to MSC. This action should be reflective of what is feasible to achieve.

Action: TH to update language around evidence of the HS actually working and add to Action Plan

FN brings about a discussion on the high survivability of scallops. Is there evidence of this in English Channel that PUKFI 2 could use? FN refers to P1 unwanted catch with Bill Lart's name given as a name to chase up on this front. TH states that this wasn't raised as an issue in the preassessment. GC states that maybe we can draw a line under it if there's a review by Bill Lart on survivability (eco dredge)? The group believes that Bill could do the work on this topic for both PUKFI groups. GC believes its just a case of reviewing what has been done thus far. EB informs the group that no governmental work has been done on this front as its not a L.O species.

Action: MSC to reach out to Bill and find out how much work he has on survivability, and if there is any other data elsewhere- add this to the FMP

Action 3 requires that SICG develop credible trigger points with Cefas, IFCA's and FA's. As we move more towards HCRs, we need to start aligning adaptive management measures. IS believes that SICG has not considered in any depth as - from industry perspective – it is voluntary use of time. GC states that what SICG are doing with Defra should be enough for this action as it should have enough coverage of the fleet. Mentions a 50% threshold in the sardine sector. FN states that we need to have HCRs across the whole fleet rather than just 50% of the effort. GC says that there is no quota so this could be why.

Action: GC to circulate latest sardine audit as an example of HS/HCRs

[Actions 9 & 10 Consultation/ Fishery specific objectives/ Decision making](#)

CP updates the group as Femke De Boer (FdB) not available. FdB had be working on SICG management options and the project steering board. Work is being done to firm those up, CP now has FMP template and will now lead on this action. Recognises the FMP is critical space to store all that's gone on. Developing a draft FMP is a Year 3 action so the group are in a good place with this right now.

Action: EB to send over Cefas info to CP so she can update the FMP.

Action: CP to keep working on the FMP add in and highlight what's been done.

[Action 4 Information and Monitoring](#)

EB provides an update on ToR for larval distribution oceanographic modelling to put out to tender. Cefas have done some writing on this, there are a few things that the group will need to make some decisions on. It should be linked to Stage 2, as they will also be looking at larval connectivity. There is

the potential for some cost saving if we were to address this as a single action across the UK rather than just focus on Channel. English Channel and Irish Sea are likely to have finer scale models ready built for those areas. Scale and resolution dependant on what PUKFI is asking for. How much open boundary you've got will affect the quality of the info. Once you start getting to North Sea – Atlantic boundary you have a lot more boundary.

Who is going to review the resulting applications as we are asking for a technical, bespoke piece of work. Cefas would be definitely putting in, Bangor would want to do it, Southampton, various bodies etc. so PUKFI need to work out how we review the various submissions. We can be very subjective – guidelines, or we take a step back and ask them how they would do it and why their model is the best? If Cefas are doing the review, then it's not fair on an open competition. PUKFI might be better saying this is what we want, how will you go about doing it? How we review applications could be a bit more complex.

TH suggests taking a backward step and taking stock to get a bit of context. Who does the work and who reviews it. TH would prefer that Cefas were to review the work and whether it complied with the information gap. Would Cefas take a step away from the action work so that someone in Cefas to review it objectively? TH doesn't believe we have the expertise in PUKFI to review the tenders. CP suggests bringing in an external party, use of Marine Scotland to review tender and Cefas to do the work possibly?

Action: EB to contact Marine Scotland to see their availability to support on this

Action: EB to frame work required and timeline

Discussion as to whether the group could use a French organisation – EFRAmere (double check this). Group then asks EB what the projected timeline would be. EB advises that it would take quite a few months of computing time to run this. From commissioning whoever to run the work you would have to give them 6 months. EP acknowledges that the funding will have to be found and we will have to draft terms. Suggests CP, TR and EB to work together on this together. CP lets the group know about SIF funding opening again in January.

Action: TR, CP and EB to work on the ToR and the potential panel for review of applications

Action: ToR to be reviewed by the group

Action 5 Primary/Secondary Species Information

This area is critical as there are specific issues in those PIs to be scored and explored. Determine whether it is practical for them to be implemented. TH states that this is an action not picked up in the pre-assessment. Question is what we want to do with it. Additional action or not? The work needs to be gear and species specific but not area specific so could align this with PUKFI 2 and just use that to update this group.

This could work as it fits in the timescale, and there is no need to duplicate the work. GC asks whether it is an important point due to low bycatch in the fishery and the inability to alter the gear, e.g. French dredge. EB notes that at times cuttlefish will be above the 5% bycatch threshold and so it is relevant. TH states that the assessment will need to see proof of bycatch levels being low, and this will also be needed for secondary and ETP species as well. FN suggests using steering group discussions as the review to this action.

Action: This action will be tackled in the Stage 2 sub-group, bringing in GC experience when needed

Action: GC to collate data and info already available on gear and bycatch to discuss at next meeting

Action: TH to update the action plan to acknowledge how this work is being done

Action: EB to request secondary species information from French

GC has nothing to update on area 7d but suggests looking at Bill Lart's work on ecodredge as a lot of that work was in 7d. CP also suggests we could ask Andy Brand, who developed scallop work on the Isle of Man.

Action: MSC to follow up with Bill Lart for data from ecodredge in 7d

EB hasn't had a chance to go over ToR for fully designed and resourced observer program it yet, but might be able to do it in 3 weeks. EB states it could be quite an expensive procedure. In 7e what we have is broadly alright and it equates to approximately 20 trips per year so we will need 20 in 7d. EB estimates this will require 80 days of work, which gets expensive pretty quickly. Technology is deemed not up to task as it would be difficult to identify organisms to species level, plus estimates of biomass will be an issue. Members of the group enquire into the possibility of involving fishermen in the collection of data, asking them to keep a box per trip to be used for analysis and gather the information from there. GC recalls something like this occurring in beam trawling sector before: box kept separate from other catch. Problem will be confidence in whether the fishermen are putting everything in the box. EB states that PUKFI we will have to speak with MMO about what would be allowed to be brought back e.g. rays etc. need to be put back overboard. This idea will certainly cut cost. PUKFI will need to ask industry first what is feasible.

Action: MSC to check in mid-October on EB for the ToR for fully designed and resourced observer program

Action: GC to circulate report on self sampling scheme (bagged up discards and landed to review content)

Action: CP to ask SICG whether this work would be feasible re: self sampling

Once we know what the expense is likely to be it could be covered in a FSP submission in Jan/Feb next year? Other members of the group think that this research would make a good masters project but it would need a strong ToR and a good supervisor – preferably one who is involved with PUKFI. SN suggests Feb might be too late to target masters students as they may have submitted their ideas. The group believes the action will still be tracking forward and wouldn't be too bad if it runs past the end of this year. GC stresses the need for skipper buy in before work starts. ND suggests letting MSC do a scoping exercise and then industry lead off the back of it. FN describes the MSC process to the group, stating that the certification only asks for some information so at this stage it does not need to be full and comprehensive. The group just needs to get to 80.

Action 6 ETP

AB asks for clarifications on the data used as ETP species made up 4.3% of unwanted catch, is this by weight or individuals? TH states it is by number of individuals, FN states that there is also no way to reference this against the total catch and with a lack of data on survival rates in the dredges it means that this cant be signed off just yet. Would be good to have this work signed off and into the FMP before the end of the year.

Action: MSC to follow up with FdB to finalise the report by clarifying

- **4.3% - is this by number of species or weight, and add the reference for this data**
- **How has 'rare' been qualified- need to expand as survival rates are high**
- **Is there more data available for skate and ray survival rates**

Action: Once report agreed, FB to summarise for FMP

Action 7 Habitats

SN explains the data used, its processes and the aims of his project. Key facts include the identification of 68 vulnerable and sensitive organisms, and that bottom trawling is higher in areas with long lived species. There are a range of issues with the work, with sampling bias present and large areas missing representation.

GC asks what the resolution of each data box is and goes on to explain the issues of ping rate per box giving you a skewed perspective of the data. SN informs the group that at this stage he is just working on providing an overview of what the data looked like and that the next stage will dive into this and increase resolution. Issue arises over landings from vessels over 12m and uncertainty of how much effort is put in. Data not currently there. SN says he is on track with the timeline, and the model just needing fine tuning.

Cameras:

The group believes that more footage would benefit the FIP as it would increase presence and abundance data; and help address estimates of size and biomass. TH suggests that if we use this technology then the observer data needed from Cefas would only need to be for finfish – saving cost to the FIP – and FN thinks it will also help to define primary and secondary species habitats. The conversation then moves on to the equipment and its use. SN informs the group that it is proving difficult to find fishermen willing to have camera on board. CP states it is useful to know how focussed the cameras are on the catch and that no vessel information is shared, suggests footage be deleted after 6 months and mentions that the POs had all signed up but maybe this link had been lost.

Action: SN to send powerpoint to the group

Action: SN to send CP information on the project to give to SICG

Action: CP and AB to follow up internally re: cameras on vessels and get back to SN and the group

Action: SN to meet IS and Jim Portus re: cameras on vessels

Action 8 Ecosystems

LP gives an update on the tech trial with D&S IFCA. iVMS is now no longer a trial it has now become a by-law in this district with the technology now mandatory for all mobile fishing vessels 6.99m to 15.25m. EU regulations states mandatory two hour reporting whereas in D&S IFCA it is 10min minimum, and in sensitive areas becomes 3min reporting. This is all done over mobile phone network rather than satellite position, cheaper and more effective thus far.

D&S IFCA worked with Common Seas to secure funding and roll out 87 units and 2 years of airtime. Funding sources included MMO, IFCA, EMFF and private funding sources that Common Seas had secured. Since the first 87 have gone on board, any new vessels have to pay for it themselves. Now have 136 vessels in the district using VMS or iVMS with 100% coverage. If the technology fails or they don't have it then they can't fish in the district. If it breaks at sea then they have to come back to port until it is working again. There are currently two different units that have been officially been signed off to use – AST Marine Services and Suckerfish. The roll out has been successful and that the system to monitor the vessels is hosted by Globavista. Importantly, there is the ability to look at data

retrospectively – allowing for retrospective enforcement. LP states that since the introduction there has been a noticeable increase in compliance in terms of spatial and temporal restrictions, allowing D&S IFCA to use the technology for enforcement and also for monitoring control. This has the ability to be used in determining whether to keep a fishery open.

LP updates the group on gear in/out technology. Tried for scallops but has not been very successful- have had more successful with trawlers. The technology is done by Bluetooth, sends a signal when gear is deployed or not which allows us to know when they are fishing or not. Success on smaller scallop vessels. Enforcement done on vessel speed previously, gear in gear out provides evidence for statements. The technology produced by suckerfish is in its infancy, but if successful can be put into a by-law. TR informs the group that in Lyme Bay they all have iVMS but nationally there is a pause on the roll out of iVMS use. She believes it has something to do vessels without engines, but Wales are still going ahead. GC states that he used to use RFID reader which gave temp and depth sensors, he believes this could be more accurate as sometime trawlers open the cod end to remove seagrass. The group enquires into iVMS use in Scotland and whether all vessels are required to have iVMS.

The Cefas SICA report suggested the best way to scallop sustainably is to spatially limit the area of fishing using geofence areas. TR was looking into this work until the pause in iVMS rollout and can't do too much in this area until there is progress on the rollout.

Action: TR to keep watching brief on iVMS consultation

LP states that AIFCA (Association of IFCAs) has a project running on inside the 12nm, and ND adds that there is also a Kingfisher project in the works and that Seafish information should be available soon, suggests speaking with Aoife.

Action: GC to keep tabs on Kingfisher report and update the group

Action 11 Monitoring and Evaluation

FN and TH believe that the SICG review counts as independent, but that PUKFI2 hasn't addressed this topic yet. There is concern that the FIP could get into year 4.5 and a new benchmarking comes through. TH believes we will need an independent review of FMP, possibly find a CAB to do a preassessment. Group believes that with SICG review and benchmarking by a different CAB this review would be complete.

Action: Consider having FMP reviewed by CAB in the future for external independent review

French engagement update and ToR

ToR was translated into French and they have come back with a couple of comments. They have agreed that the working language should be in English and that there should be one market actor from each side to keep that perspective for the group. The French are very keen to tackle P2 issue as part of the work, as well as info sharing of scientific data. This relationship will be important for P1 and P3 factors if either us or the French want to go for certification.

The main concern is the requirement that they are in a FIP as they don't want to officially become part of a FIP until after Brexit. They suggested having a meeting before Brexit. The group believe it seems sensible and could perhaps request that they agree to a FIP within six months of the meeting (and after Brexit).

Action: MSC to request names of industry and retail to sit on this working group

Action: MSC to set up a date for the first meeting

[Next steps + AOB](#)

The next Fishery Progress update is due for October. Once all of the relevant documentation is signed off MS will upload to Fishery Progress.

EP explains that PUKFI is getting greater in-house support from MSC, deciding whether we have annual meeting, logo and branding etc. AB states the importance of not taking our eyes off this, especially after Brexit as British products will come under greater scrutiny.

Action: MS to set up doodlepoll for next meeting

Tasks	Responsibility
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<p>Action 1 Stock Status EB to feedback information to JP after ICES report is published.</p> <p>MSC to organise a separate meeting on topic of funding and observer program</p> <p>MSC to follow up with EB on SIF funding</p> <p>MSC to consider alternative funding pathways</p> <p>EB to write 2 page summary on stock assessment methodologies and status for FMP and send to TH/JP</p>	<p>EB</p> <p>MSC</p> <p>MSC & EB</p> <p>MSC</p> <p>EB</p>
<p>Actions 2 and 3 Harvest Strategy/ Harvest Control Rules JP to follow up with SICG re: updating on PUKFI progress as the next SICG meeting</p> <p>AB + CP to report back at next meeting on SICG progress.</p> <p>TH to update language around evidence of the HS actually working and add to Action Plan</p> <p>MSC to reach out to Bill and find out how much work he has on survivability, and if there is any other data elsewhere- add this to the FMP</p> <p>GC to circulate latest sardine audit as an example of HS/HCRs</p>	<p>JP</p> <p>AB + CP</p> <p>TH</p> <p>MSC & BL</p> <p>GC</p>
<p>Actions 9 & 10 Consultation/ Fishery specific objectives/ Decision making EB to send over Cefas info to CP so she can update the FMP</p> <p>CP to keep working on the FMP add in and highlight what's been done.</p>	<p>EB</p> <p>CP</p>

<p>Action 4 Information and Monitoring EB to contact Marine Scotland to see their availability to support on this</p> <p>EB to frame work required and timeline</p> <p>TR, CP and EB to work on the ToR and the potential panel for review of applications</p> <p>ToR to be reviewed by the group</p>	<p>EB</p> <p>EB</p> <p>TR, CP, EB</p> <p>Group</p>
<p>Action 5 Primary/Secondary Species Information This action will be tackled in the Stage 2 sub-group, bringing in GC experience when needed</p> <p>GC to collate data and info already available on gear and bycatch to discuss at next meeting</p> <p>TH to update the action plan to acknowledge how this work is being done</p> <p>EB to request secondary species information from French</p> <p>MSC to follow up with Bill Lart for data from ecodredge in 7d</p> <p>MSC to check in mid-October on EB for the ToR for fully designed and resourced observer program</p> <p>GC to circulate report on self-sampling scheme (bagged up discards and landed to review content)</p> <p>CP to ask SICG whether this work would be feasible re: self-sampling</p>	<p>MSC</p> <p>GC</p> <p>TH</p> <p>EB</p> <p>MSC & BL</p> <p>MSC & EB</p> <p>GC</p> <p>CP</p>

<p>Action 6 ETP MSC to follow up with FB to finalise the report</p> <p>Once report agreed, FB to summarise for FMP</p>	<p>MSC & FB</p> <p>FB</p>
<p>Action 7 Habitats SN to send powerpoint to the group</p> <p>SN to send CP information on the project to give to SICG</p> <p>CP and AB to follow up internally re: cameras on vessels and get back to SN and the group</p> <p>SN to meet IS and Jim Portus re: cameras on vessels</p>	<p>SN</p> <p>SN & CP</p> <p>CP + AB</p> <p>SN, IS, Jim Portus</p>
<p>Action 8 Ecosystems TR to keep watching brief on iVMS consultation</p> <p>GC to keep tabs on Kingfisher report and update the group</p>	<p>TR</p> <p>GC</p>
<p>Action 11 Monitoring and Evaluation Consider having FMP reviewed by CAB in the future for external independent review</p>	<p>Group</p>
<p>Next steps and AOB MSC to request names of industry and retail to sit on French working group</p> <p>MSC to set up a date for the first meeting</p> <p>MS to set up doodlepoll for next meeting</p>	<p>MSC</p> <p>MSC</p> <p>MSC</p>