

Minutes for Channel scallop Steering Group meeting

Meeting Date: 11 August 2020

Location: MS Teams

Attendees	Organisation
AB: Andrew Brown	Macduff
AT: Adam Townley	New England Seafoods International
BS: Bryce Stewart	University of York
FB: Femke de Boer	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
FN: Fiona Nimmo	Poseidon
HS: Hayley Swanlund	WWF-UK
JH: Jan Geert Hiddink	Bangor University
JM: Jenny Murray	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
JP: Jo Pollett	Marine Stewardship Council
JPO: Jim Portus	South Western Fish Producers Organisation
LP: Lauren Parkhouse	Devon and Severn IFCA
KK: Katie Keay	Marine Stewardship Council
MS: Matt Spencer	Marine Stewardship Council
RL: Rebecca Lyal	Marine Stewardship Council

Purpose of the meeting

This meeting was for the Steering Group to agree roles and responsibilities for drafting the Channel scallop Fishery Management Plan (Item 1); and to review catch composition data and endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species interactions in the Channel scallop fishery (Item 2).

Item 1: Fishery Management Plan discussion

Macduff is leading on drafting the Channel scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP) on behalf of the Steering Group with MS providing support with version control. AB explained that the FMP is a 'living' document summarising the progress of the FIP, which would support an assessor should the fishery enter full MSC assessment. AB noted that the text in the FMP should be succinct with detail added as references, annexes or links to more extensive data and reports. AB presented a new FMP tracking document which will be used to assign roles and responsibilities to specific Steering Group members, who will be responsible for maintaining their respective sections.

The FMP includes a timeline for implementation, and AB said that Covid-19 is slowing the progress of the Scallop Industry Consultation Group's (SICG) management discussions with Defra. This may impact the FIP's timeline as these discussions with Defra will be key to achieving the MSC Standard requirements for robust fisheries management. The Steering Group discussed whether an extension to the FIP timeline is needed. JPO believed that an extension would be necessary if discussions between SICG and Defra are delayed further, and recommended that members who sit in both the SICG and Project UK contribute to the management sections of the FMP. AB agreed and explained that the Channel scallop FMP would be nested within the UK-wide scallop management approach

being developed by the SICG and Defra. This is because this FIP focuses on regional management and has direct references to MSC requirements. JM agreed with AB and mentioned there is a specific FMP team within Defra who are developing a national FMP strategy. Defra's scallop FMP is more advanced than most other fisheries due to the progress made by SICG and Project UK.

AB talked through each section of the Fishery Management Plan:

Section 1.1 - fishery name and plan

This provides a description of the fishery, such as its Unit of assessment (UoA), and an overview of the FMP. As Secretariat, MS and JP agreed to maintain this section.

Section 1.2 – description of the fishery

AB suggested Natural England and Seafish as the appropriate Steering Group members to update this section. As neither organisation was represented on the call the Secretariat agreed to ask Natural England whether will lead this section. AB agreed to ask whether Hazel Curtis at Seafish could also contribute information. The Steering Group discussed including MMO raw data but agreed that Seafish input, which is modelled from the raw data, would be more suitable.

Section 2.1 – governance

AB suggested Defra lead this section to show how the goals and objectives outlined in the FMP align with wider national legislation and future the Fisheries Bill. Future policy is being developed by Defra and the Devolved Administrations as the UK transitions away from the EU. JM noted there will be requirements in the Fisheries Bill that - when ratified - will need to be considered to ensure the FMP aligns with these policies. JM told the group that Defra's FMPs are based on FAO guidelines and offered to share these. JM offered to provide a short summary of the Defra process to add to the FMP.

As the MSC Standard is based on FAO guidance for fisheries management, the FMP template for this FIP should also incorporate FAO guidance. The Secretariat agreed to clarify this with the Science and Standards team.

JPO mentioned that section 2 needed to be representative of the FIPs Unit of Assessment (UoA), including management in French waters. JM recognised the need to include wider management within this section and agreed to find out how overlapping stock management could be accounted for in the FMP until the Fisheries Bill is formalised. FN added that section 2 will need to include the French fishery specific management objectives and how UK vessels operate in French waters. This would relate to the shared obligation principle in the Fisheries Bill when ratified and JM offered to include an explanation of how this would work in section 2.1

Section 2.2 - fisheries specific management objectives

AB believed that this section cannot be completed until Brexit and the UK Fisheries Bill are finalised, as the Steering Group will not know what management will apply to UK vessels in French waters. JPO mentioned that the SICG – Defra meeting on the 4th September may provide more information on what future management may look like and detail could be inserted into the FMP after this meeting takes place. The Steering Group agreed that SICG and Defra should fill in section 2.2 with AB, Claire

Pescod (CP), and JPO to lead from the SICG and JM (until her secondment ends in September) to lead from Defra.

Section 3.1 – legal framework

CP has inserted a lot of information in this section. MS agreed to review this to include only details related to the English Channel.

Section 3.2 – regional IFCA management

JPO highlighted the importance of the IFCA contribution to this section, as the SICG does not want to disrupt regional management processes. FN agreed to share LP's summary of IFCA management measures for AB to insert into the FMP.

Section 3.3 - consultation and co-management arrangements

The Steering Group agreed that an SICG member and Defra should lead on this section due to the ongoing management discussions between the two groups.

Section 4 – harvest strategy and harvest control rules

JPO suggested that Defra should complete the harvest strategy part of this section, and that LP's IFCA management measures document would contribute to the harvest control rules (HCRs). AB explained that there isn't a formalised harvest strategy in place as Cefas still need to determine a fishing mortality indicator (Fmsy) for scallops. The Steering Group requested an update on this at the next meeting, after members of the Steering Group had met with Cefas.

Section 5 - ecosystem management strategies

AB suggested Cefas and Natural England would be appropriate Steering Group members to update this section. As neither organisation was represented on the call this would need to be agreed with them later.

Section 6 - stock assessment, fishery monitoring and research

CP has already added information and MS agreed to add links to the methodologies referenced in the text. AB suggested Cefas should also contribute information on this subject. JPO recommended referencing the ICES scallop working group reports to demonstrate that Cefas methodologies are approved by international organisations. AB, FN and JP agreed to arrange a meeting with Cefas to discuss this topic further.

Section 7 - compliance & monitoring

The group agreed that the MMO, Defra and IFCA's would be most suitable to lead this section as they are responsible for local and national compliance and monitoring.

Section 8 - fishery performance evaluation

AB questioned whether the focus of this section was on future evaluation of the fishery, or how the fishery was currently performing. FN clarified that it should incorporate both current and future evaluation processes. FN thought this section should be drafted alongside sections 4 and 5 and will need to lay out how these reviews will take place, how often and by who. FN suggested the review could be undertaken by the ICES scallop working group.

JPO recommended reviewing other fisheries FMPs, in particular some of the whitefish management put in place following recovery plans. The Secretariat will ask other Project UK Steering Groups if they would share their FMPs with this Steering Group.

Section 9 - resources needed to implement the plan

JPO agreed to write up a summary of any learnings that can be shared in relation to the cost sharing and recovery discussions that have recently taken place between SICG and Seafish.

Summary

AB asked that relevant Steering Group members complete their sections by October, allowing time for review and edits ahead of the next meeting in January. KK suggested circulating the action tracker along with the draft minutes so Steering Group members are clear on which sections they have agreed to contribute to.

Actions from Item 1:

1. AB, CP, JPO and JM to amend section 2.2 on fishery specific management objectives after the Defra-SICG management meeting in September
2. AB and FN to ask those they think are appropriate to take responsibility for section 5 (ecosystem management)
3. AB to:
 - a) arrange a meeting with JP, FN and Cefas to discuss stock assessment methodologies for section 6 of the FMP
 - b) follow up with Hazel at Seafish for their input to section 1.2
4. FN to share LP's IFCA management measures document with AB, to include in section 4
5. JM to:
 - a) share with the group any relevant FAO guidance principles as required under the Fisheries Bill;
 - b) provide AB with a short summary of the policy framework being developed along with the joint fishery statement for section 2.1;
 - c) draft text for sections 2.1 and 2.2 for AB to insert into the FMP and share with the Secretariat how the shared obligation principle would apply to this FIP
6. JPO provide AB with a note on cost-sharing from Seafish discussions for section 9 (resources needed to implement the plan)
7. Secretariat to:
 - a) check with Science and Standards team for FAO FMP guidance
 - b) check with Natural England for their input into Section 1.2
 - c) check with the other Project UK FIP Steering Groups about sharing their draft FMPs with this Steering Group
 - d) circulate the FMP action tracker with names of individuals/organisations as agreed in this meeting as well as draft minutes to Steering Group in two weeks
 - e) send reminders in early October for Steering Group members' FMP responsibilities

Item 2: Catch composition and Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species (ETP) discussion

KK reviewed the progress of actions from the minutes of the last meeting. BS had not yet shared Rachel Brown's paper and would do so if this is still required; JP said that Theresa Redding (Natural

England) clarified that there are no plans to introduce Priority Marine Features in English waters; and Cefas' actions are still outstanding and the Secretariat will follow up on these.

During the February 2020 meeting, the Steering Group agreed to undertake a full review of the catch composition of the fishery and any endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species interactions. This was undertaken by RL who presented her findings to the group. She provided definitions of all relevant terminology and outlined the MSC Standard requirements at SG80 to ensure the data presented was understood in the context of the MSC Standard.

Catch composition

To obtain catch composition of the fishery, RL reviewed Cefas catch composition records, MMO iFISH landings, EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) data and Szostek 2015 paper (natural vs. fishing disturbance: drivers of community composition on traditional king scallop, *Pecten maximus*, fishing grounds). To update the FIP's ETP list, RL revisited Rhiannon Holden's ETP report, that was conducted for this FIP in 2017 as well as reviewing Szostek's 2015 work and included relevant national and international legislation.

Results of the catch composition according to sources used by RL are below:

MMO iFISH 2018 landings

- **7d:** showed 34 species interacting with the fishery, 16 primary, 18 secondary and 2 ETP.
- **7e:** showed 30 species interacting with the fishery, 15 primary, 15 secondary and no ETP.
- Main and minor not derived due to lack of weights.
- *N.B Monkfish re-assigned into primary.

EU DCF 2019 landings

- **7d:** 34 species interacting with the fishery, 20 primary, 13 secondary and 1 ETP.
- **7e:** 59 species interacting with the fishery, 29 primary, 26 secondary and 4 ETP.
- Main and minor not derived due to lack of weights.

C. Szostek 2015

- **7d and e**
- 99% of bycatch caught is a composition of 6 primary, 10 secondary and 1 ETP species.
- 63 other species constitute the remaining 1% of bycatch weight.
- Main and minor species were calculated as weight was provided.
- One main species identified - queen scallops at 6.1% of weight of total catch.
- In 7d 172 tonnes of primary species were landed and 98 tonnes of secondary species.
- In 7e 380 tonnes of primary species were landed and 326 secondary species were landed.

ETP

The MSC Standard requires a full list of all ETP species present in the area of assessment, whether interactions occur or not, and data on number of interactions where they do occur. This demonstrates to the assessor that all potential interactions have been considered by the fishery.

RL's review of Holden's ETP research

Holden's thesis formed the base of RL's review of ETP species in the Channel scallop fishery. Holden derived an initial ETP list from UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2007, CITIES 2017, IUCN 2016 and OSPAR 2015. This list was filtered against Szostek (2015) and MMO and Cefas databases to calculate risk scores based on catchability and survivability for each species. Finally, the filtered ETP list was reviewed and signed off by industry.

Results from this process indicated a total of 28 ETP species with possible interaction with the fishery. Seven species were considered high risk of interacting with the fishery (all skates and rays with the exception of dogfish), two were medium risk (common skate and pink sea fan), and 14 were low risk due to either being small enough to escape the gear, low temporal or spatial overlap with the fishery, and being resilient to capture.

RL's updated ETP list

RL reviewed updated international conservation lists and academic papers to identify any species that may have been missed in Holden's work. RL produced an initial list of 262 species, including 21 of Holden's 28 ETP listed species. Through industry and academic research, RL considered 49 of these species to be 'at risk'. However, this updated list includes species with TACs, such as thornback ray, so will need further discussion by the Steering Group.

RL mentioned that within Szostek's 2015 paper no ETP species catch was observed. RL noted that noise created when dredge gear interacts with the substrate has potential indirect impacts on ETP species, in particular cetaceans.

Discussion

In relation to catch composition, JPO thought it would be useful to know the total weight of scallops landed to better understand the proportion of primary and secondary species in the total catch. BS noted that similar work had been done in the Round 2 scallop FIP and that it might be helpful for the Steering Group to review the catch composition list from that FIP as a next step.

Regarding the ETP list, JPO questioned why species such as hake and haddock from the Western Channel were included – this is because the ETP list should include all interactions. He noted that 'eel' is not species-specific and more likely to be conger eel as he had not heard of any interaction with a European eel within the scallop fishery. The Steering Group discussed the inclusion of commercial fish stocks that have Total Allowable Catches (TACs) on the list. FN explained that in an MSC assessment, if a species is IUCN red listed it should be regarded as an ETP regardless of it having a TAC.

FN reminded the group that the ETP list can be further reviewed based on additional feedback. She noted that to meet SG80 of the MSC Standard the focus of the catch composition should be on 'main' primary and secondary species. Minor species are only assessed at the SG100 level. For ETP there isn't the distinction of main vs minor as all ETP species are treated equally. FN believed it was good that the impact of noise had been considered as an assessor would look for this extra information to provide confidence that the ETP list is robust.

FN said she would ask Cefas whether the EU Data Collection Framework database showed bycatch in weight or number of individuals, as the MSC Standard requires information to be by weight. The next

step is to convert the Cefas datasheet RL had used for catch composition into weights, and the Secretariat will discuss this with Cefas when a meeting is arranged with them to go over the FMP.

RL's catch composition review separated the English Channel into Eastern and Western regions. FN recommended that the Channel should be considered in its entirety, especially when considering the ecosystem component of the MSC Standard. BS agreed that there is no ecological reason to separate the English Channel into two regions, as this would complicate any assessment. BS acknowledged that the scallop stocks do vary slightly between the two areas but thought it unlikely that other species caught in the fishery do. JPO said that fishermen identify the Channel scallops as one stock. ICES recognises 4c and 7d as a unique area for species such as plaice and cod, and FN explained that if a species in 7d was considered a 'main' species by an assessor then it could be listed as two unique stocks and assessed separately within a whole Channel assessment.

The Steering Group discussed whether they need to commission Cefas to convert catch composition records into biomass, which is required to meet SG80. FN believed that providing costings to conduct this work was listed as one of Cefas' previous actions; and JPO suggested Defra might be able to financially support this work as they were funding the 2020 scallop stock assessments. JM agreed to speak with Defra on behalf of the Steering Group to see if they could contribute funding for Cefas to provide biomass information for non-target species in the Channel scallop fishery.

FN offered to review the ETP and catch composition work and then industry (JPO, FB and AB) and the conservation bodies (WWF, Natural England and JNCC) should review it.

Actions from Item:

1. FN to:
 - a) review ETP and catch composition work, then share with Steering Group members
 - b) discuss with Cefas whether EU DCF data is in tonnes or number of individuals
 - c) determine if Rachel Brown's research data is still needed; if so, BS can provide this
2. JM to check potential Defra funding for Cefas biomass work
3. JPO, FB, AB to review updated ETP list from industry perspective
4. HS to review updated ETP list from NGO/conservation perspective and the Secretariat to follow up with Natural England for their input

Any Other Business

JPO informed the group that aggregate extraction was currently occurring – under MMO licence – in the Eastern Channel. Fishermen were asked to leave the area for dredging activities and were reporting high presence of juveniles on the ground prior to the commencement of aggregate dredging. JPO said he would follow up with MMO and industry further and get back to the Steering Group with more information.

KK thanked the Steering Group for their time and informed them that the draft minutes will be circulated in the next couple of weeks.

Meeting Closes

16.30

Actions Arising	Responsibility
<p>1 Catch Composition</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AB, CP, JPO and JM to amend section 2.2 on fishery specific management objectives after the Defra-SICG management meeting in September 2. AB and FN to ask those they think are appropriate to take responsibility for section 5 3. AB: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c) to arrange a meeting with JP, FN and Cefas to discuss stock assessment methodologies for section 6 of the FMP d) to follow up with Hazel at Seafish for their input to section 1.2 4. FN to share LP's IFCA management measures document with AB, to include in section 4 5. JM to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d) share with the group any relevant FAO guidance principles as required under the Fisheries Bill; e) provide AB with a short summary of the policy framework being developed along with the joint fishery statement for section 2.1; f) draft text for sections 2.1 and 2.2 for AB to insert into the FMP and to share with the Secretariat how the shared obligation principle would apply to this FIP 6. JPO provide AB with a note on cost-sharing from Seafish discussions for section 9: resources needed to implement the plan 7. Secretariat: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> f) to check with Science and Standards team for FAO FMP guidance g) to check with Natural England for their input into Section 1.2 h) to check with the other Project UK FIP Steering Groups about sharing their draft FMPs with this Steering Group i) to provide the document tracker with names of individuals/organisations as agreed in this meeting as well as draft minutes to Steering Group in two weeks j) Secretariat will send reminders in early October For Steering Group members' FMP responsibilities 	<p>AB, CP, JPO & JM</p> <p>AB & FN</p> <p>AB</p> <p>FN</p> <p>JM</p> <p>JPO</p> <p>Secretariat</p>
<p>2 ETP</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FN: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) to review ETP and catch composition work, then share with Steering Group members b) discuss with Cefas whether EU DCF data is in tonnes or number of individuals c) FN to determine if Rachel Brown's research data is still needed; if so, BS can provide this 2. JM to check Defra funding potential for Cefas biomass work 3. JPO, FB, AB to review updated ETP list from industry perspective 4. HS to review updated ETP list from NGO/conservation perspective and the Secretariat to follow up with Natural England for their input 	<p>FN</p> <p>JM JPO, FB, AB</p> <p>HS</p>
<p>3 AOB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. JPO to update group on outcome of query to MMO re marine aggregate sector impacting the scallop stock 	<p>JPO</p>