

Minutes: UK scallop Steering Group meeting (Principles 1 & 3)

Meeting Date: 25th January 2022

Location: Online

Attendees	Organisation
AH: Adam Holland	SeaSource
AB: Andy Boulton	Waitrose
ADH: Anton Dietschel-Buehler	Flatfish
AL: Andy Lawler	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture (Cefas)
BC: Ben Collier	Northern Ireland gear trials
BL: Bill Lart	Seafish
CD: Calum Duncan	Scottish Environment Link
CM: Carrie McMinn	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
CP: Claire Pescod	Macduff Shellfish
FN: Fiona Nimmo	Poseidon
JD: Jon Davies	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
JE: Jack Emmerson	Isle of Man Government
JH: Juliette Hatchman	South West Fish Producers Organisation
JP: Jo Pollett	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
JPo: Jim Portus	Scallop Industry Consultation Group
KK: Katie Keay	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
LB: Lynda Blackadder	Marine Scotland Science
MF: Mairi Fenton	Herriot-Watt University
MK: Mike Kaiser	Herriot-Watt University
MP: Mike Park	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
MS: Matt Spencer	Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
RW: Robert Whiteley	Natural England
SC: Sally Chamberlain (<i>prev. Stewart-Moore</i>)	Seafish
Apologies	
Kenny Coull	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
Hannah Fennell	Orkney Fisheries Association
Stuart McLanaghan	Seafish
David Donnan	NatureScot

Purpose of the meeting

The meeting will focus on Principle 1 and 3 actions. This is the last meeting in Year 3 of the FIP before the Annual Review in April 2022. There is an opportunity of making score changes in some of the actions highlighted today before the review takes place.

Agenda Item 1: Reminder of intended Year 3 score changes

Eleven score changes are expected in the next Annual Review across the three principles, predominantly in Principle 2. During this meeting discussions will focus on score changes in Principle 1 & 3. The performance indicators (PIs) expected to move from SG<60 to SG60-79 are harvest strategy (PI 1.2.1) and harvest control rules and tools (PI 1.2.2). Expected score changes from SG60-79 to SG>80 are: assessment of stock status (PI 1.2.4), decision making processes (PI 3.2.2) and compliance and enforcement (PI 3.2.3).

Discussion

CD asked what the timescales are for scrutinising these score changes, as some of the actions that are expecting score changes, he felt would require more time. JP and FN clarified that differences may occur between actual score progress, and the one denoted in the Action Plan and Benchmark Tracking Tool (BMT), as they were created in Year 0 (during the pre-assessment). FN noted that timelines can be updated in the Action Plan when necessary, but the BMT scores remain fixed. The Annual Review compares progress against the BMT score and concludes the progress status for that year.

Agenda Item 2: Information and assessment (Marine Scotland Science and AFBI)*Survey updates*

The Clyde survey took place in October but only completed five days fishing due to a covid outbreak. The report is not yet available; LB will share the link when it is published. The Marine Scotland marine lab had extreme storm damage, which has restricted access to survey equipment. However, the team is preparing for the Shetland survey on 26th January 2022. LB expects confirmation in March/April for the scallop dredge survey dates for 2022/2023. Marine Scotland has applied for their usual round of surveys (Shetland, East and West coast, the Clyde). LB will notify the Steering Group when there is confirmation of the survey areas.

Damage data

All Marine Scotland survey data is held inhouse on a database. The majority of their catch have been assessed for damage since 2014. The bycatch paper draft is complete but not yet public because (1) senior staff sign off is required and (2) librarian services currently have reduced staff capacity. In the meantime, LB can share the draft with some Steering Group members for feedback (not to be shared beyond that group) and will continue to progress the internal publishing process. Building damage has meant priorities have been redirected, slowing the review and publication of this report'.

JP asked AL and CM if damage data was also collected in AFBI surveys. CM started collecting damage data since 2018/19, scoring damage on a scale of 1 (perfect) – 5 (completely crushed). Approximately 95% of scallops scored were level 2 (slight chipping around the edge), which corresponds to findings in Marine Scotland's surveys. AL confirmed that Cefas does not collect damage data.

Stock assessment updates

LB informed the Steering Group that there has been slow progress towards stock assessment updates, largely impeded by limited staff resources. LB's current focus is on catch estimations.

In the October ICES Scallop Assessment Working Group (WG Scallop) meeting, LB was voted in as Chair for 2022 – 2025, and has requested a co-Chair. The Terms of Reference (ToR) are being drafted and LB noted that stock reference points have been integrated into Year 2 (2023) of their updated workplan, which will be published here https://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WG_Scallop.aspx. There have been workshops that include simulations and discussions on ICES reference point formation, with a follow up workshop proposed (date TBC).

Discussion

KK asked LB who the bycatch report draft should be circulated to. FN volunteered, and suggested Cefas and AFBI for a Principle 1 perspective, and the scallop environmental sub-group for a Principle 2 perspective. MP volunteered, and offered to share with his scallopers. LB agreed, on the basis that feedback from the scallopers is given direct to MP rather than distributed more widely. JPo volunteered himself, CP and JH, having had reviewed similar information in relation to the Channel scallop FIP. CP suggested the SWFPA Scallop Committee review it. LB suggested giving the Scottish Scallop Sector Working Group (SSSWG) an opportunity to review. BL volunteered to review through the lens of his Alternative Measures report on scallop dredge bycatch.

Actions from Item 2:

1. LB to share:
 - a. the Clyde survey report link with the Steering Group when it is published.
 - b. a notice to with Steering Group when the Terms of Reference are published on the ICES [WG Scallop webpage](#) the draft bycatch paper with relevant Steering Group members for feedback.
2. Secretariat gather distribution list for bycatch report draft review to share with LB.

Agenda Item 3: Fishery Management Plan (FMP) updates

Draft FMP for this FIP

CP and BL are leading on the draft FMP, with support from MS. The FIP's draft FMP is an evolving document, intended to be completed within the five year FIP timeline. CP suggested an FMP specific sub-group from the Steering Group to review the drafted sections when completed, including input from FN. CP informed the Steering Group that MS will contact specific members to coordinate the next meetings.

CP and BL presented the following updates followed by discussion in bullets:

Section 1: Description of the fishery

This is largely complete. MF provided text on the biology of scallops, ecosystem and habitat, and will contribute to the ETP section. Next steps will be to update the distribution of Priority Marine Features and scallop dredging activity to the whole of Project UK FIP area when the data becomes available (likely before the March FIP annual review). MF has already contacted RW for data on fishing activity and VMS data for English waters.

Section 3: Fisheries management structure

CP and BL plan to arrange focussed calls with industry representatives in the Steering Group, followed by a round of meetings with NGO representatives.

Section 6 (stock assessment and methodology) - good progress

Targeted interviews with science bodies from each of the Devolved Administrations as well as JE from the Isle of Man are complete. A brief summary for each stock assessment area has been provided, including links to online stock assessment reports where available. The stock assessment map in Section 6.1 has been created and still requires the Irish Sea stock assessment area adding.

- CM noted the Irish sea stock designation is part of the current WG Scallop workplan. There is a subgroup for the Irish Sea assessment, which meets every three months, and they are trying to pull their collective information on Northern Ireland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Bangor and Scotland to do an assessment for the north west Irish Sea. The subgroup attempted a SPiCT assessment on Irish and Isle of Man data, the latter of which has more VMS data available. Regarding the Cardigan Bay area, CM said Adam Delargy has now left his Fisheries Research Post at Bangor University; there is funding for two more years for the Welsh survey, but currently no one in post to manage the surveys.
- JE explained that the Isle of Man king scallop long-term management plan is expected to be published in June, and will contain information that can be used in the FIP FMP.
- MK noted that MF ran a study on characteristics of MSC certified scallop fisheries around the world, which found a core suite of management measures across the fisheries, with variables subject to the fishery. MK suggested a direct call with MF and BL, as the analysis shows the core requirements needed for a sustainable scallop fishery. CP welcomed this update and noted the information could also inform the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) discussions. The SICG has several areas of focus, including the development of a UK wide FMP; the Western Waters Effort Regime alternatives, and the Cefas reports that looked at case studies of best practice in Western Waters for crab and scallops.
- On Section 6.2 (fisheries-dependent monitoring and reporting) AFBI has observer data and self-sampling information, which CM will share with MS.

Further discussion

- FN will follow up with AL on the format required for the UK scallops FMP when transposing information from Channel scallops.
- BL raised document management and the issues in using Dropbox and identifying versions. BL, CP and MS are addressing the issue.
- CD asked for clarity on how the FIP FMP will interact with the roll out of the Fisheries Act. CP explained that the FIP's draft FMP is intended to meet the requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard by the end of the timeline of the FIP, and to align with national requirements.

Fishery Specific Objectives

JP said there are high level objectives from the Fisheries Act which CP and BL have added into the FIP FMP. In addition, CP added the SICG WG have been working on: the SSSWG objectives; a key objective around sustainable king scallop fisheries; and nested delivery objectives. CP explained that the SICG working group has an FMP sub-group, which will take the SICG 2019 management

recommendations in the Defra FMP strawman format. She added that several actions from the SIAG's national shellfish fisheries plan will also be included as a set of objectives.

CD suggested alignment with the Fisheries Act FMP in areas where the FIP FMP overlap. CP agreed, noting there is no Scottish scallop FMP mentioned in the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) table, but expects it will be developed by the Scottish Scallop Sector Working Group (SSSWG). Marine Scotland sit on the SICG working group, and have asked to keep the Scottish part high level so they can integrate the SSSWG into the SICG FMP.

There are also objectives from the Scallop Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) National Shellfish Fisheries Plan, which can be shared when presented to the SIAG (before end of March). The most relevant can be brought into the UK scallop FMP. CP suggested contacting Marine Scotland to understand their approach to drafting an FMP for stocks in Scottish waters.

Legal framework and Roles and responsibilities

JP said that in the action plan, the legal framework is currently scoring SG60 – 79. To support a score increase between Year 1-3 the action plan requires the Steering Group to identify relevant stakeholders for Irish Sea defined stock units, and to review the legal framework when the UK is an independent state.

- AH listed the Irish stakeholders he has gathered for Northern Ireland. There are a few groups heavily involved with management as well as the Inshore Fisheries Partnership Group. Within it, there are the two POs (Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Organisation and Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation), DAERA and AFBI, then local groups: Northern Ireland Scallop Association, North East Lobster cooperative, and then smaller groups such as the various Fishermen's Federations. Seafish's Northern Ireland Advisory Committee is also involved in defining the stock units. The Committee funded scallop research in the past, and is currently chaired by Harry Wick. For Irish stakeholders, AH can contact Mike Fitzpatrick, who has joined Project UK FIP meetings before. CP agreed to follow up with AH and MS.
- FN added that these performance indicators did not meet SG80 in the pre-assessment because the Irish Sea is a shared stock, and the stock boundaries are unclear. There is no bilateral cooperation between UK and Ireland, though there is in the ICES group.
- FN said that before this section can be completed, the Defra FMP and the Scottish management plan both needed to be further developed, and the ICES Scallop WG still needs to define Irish Sea stocks. The roles and responsibilities in AH's Irish stakeholder list need to be determined, and how stock management advice is adhered to by all countries operating in the area. On the *Roles and Responsibilities* action JP summarised that progress is being made through the FMPs and Defra consultation.

National FMPs and JFS consultation

JD updated the group on the JFS consultation and Defra's 'front runner' fishery management plans (FMPs). There are 45 FMPs listed in the Joint Fishery Statement draft that opened for consultation in late January 2022. Under the Fisheries Act (2020), Devolved Administrations are responsible for determining their own FMPs, and in some cases, will draft joint plans across administrations. Defra's approach to drafting FMPs is through a co-design process that adopts existing initiatives where possible.

There will not be a single UK-wide scallop plan, as Scotland and Northern Ireland will develop their own regional plans. JD emphasised Defra's interest in progressing plans for shellfish and scallops this year. JD highlighted that the Trade and Cooperation Agreements (TCA) requires multiyear strategies (known as "MYS"), with scallops being considered as a MYS candidate.

Front runner plans:

- The plan structure is similar to the FMP required for the MSC.
- Six 'front runner' plans selected for shellfish, and four for finfish.
- Strong support from English fishing and seafood sectors.
- Initial public consultation on the draft FMPs is expected by 2023. After public consultation there will be final approval by the Secretary of State.

Actions from Item 3:

1. FN will follow up with AL on the format required for the UK scallops when transposing information from Channel scallops for "Section 6: Stock assessments" of the FMP.
2. BL and CP to schedule a call with Mairi Fenton to look at the sustainability requirements she had found in MSC certified scallop fisheries.
3. JD requested Steering Group members to respond to the consultation on the Joint Fisheries Statement: [Draft Joint Fisheries Statement \(JFS\) – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-joint-fisheries-statement)
4. AH to:
 - a. review the Irish stakeholder list and attribute role and responsibilities where they are known
 - b. share the list of Irish stock unit stakeholders with the Secretariat and CP, and subsequently develop a communication plan.
5. JE to continue to support the development of the FIP's FMP by providing published information from the Isle of Man, once it is available.
6. MS, BL and CP to address Dropbox version editing and sharing issues.
7. Secretariat to contact Marine Scotland for an update on their approach to contributing to the development of the National Shellfish Management Plan.
8. CP to share SIAG objectives when signed off

Agenda Item 4: Stock status

CM updated that annual Irish survey will go out in February which covers the whole Northern Irish coast (41 stations). There is currently no stock assessment, rather trends in standardised CPUE. Inshore summary advice sheets have been approved and published on the AFBI website. Bycatch information from scallop survey information is available from 1992, but improves in quality from 2000.

The AFBI scallop observer program is operating as an enhanced inshore project. There are a limited number of observer trips on scallop boats on an annual basis, which AFBI hope to increase. AFBI have also started a self sampling scheme where a sample of boats from each ICES rectangle bordering Northern Ireland are being asked to bring an unsorted sample of catch in on a regular basis. Another project planned in 2022 is 'Seascape', which looks at genetics of scallops around NI (king and queen), and also brings in oceanographers and modellers to look at connectivity of scallop populations.

FN asked if there was any reporting from the self-sampling scheme that could be referenced in the Annual Review. CM said it will start in early February and that there will be a report on the overall enhanced inshore project which will include the self-sampling information (publication expected end of 2022). The aim is for the enhanced inshore project to grow into routine sampling.

AL updated that Cefas have been focusing on the inshore North Sea. Dredge surveys started annually in 2018, and have continued to date. In 2021 there was dredge survey work in central North Sea, that covers the Dogger Bank SAC. The assessment report draft is ready, though needs to reviewing by the SICG steering board before publishing in early April 2022. The last published assessment was April 2021 based on 2020 dredge survey data. There was additional work in connectivity between dredged/und-dredged beds though that has not been released yet. FN confirmed Cefas report publication could be used in the Annual Review publication.

Agenda Item 5: Compliance and enforcement (Action 14)

MS presented a summary of the implementation of iVMS across the devolved administrations.

Management Body	Start date	Fleet component	Note
MMO	15/02/2022	10m to 11.99m	Concluded by end of 2022
MMO	16/03/2022	8m to 9.99m	
MMO	18/05/2022	6m to 7.99m	
MMO	17/08/2022	Below 6m	
Natural Resources Wales/ Welsh Government	Expected mid – February 2022	U12m vessels in Welsh waters	Introduction of Welsh iVMS statutory instrument to occur in 2022
Marine Scotland	Due-2022	Varies across the fleets. Scallop sector nearing completion	New Scottish Nationalist Party and Scottish Greens formation might have amended timeline
DAERA	Due-2022	All vessels u12m	End of 2022. Unknown whether it will be a licence condition

Discussion

MS asked whether anyone had further information that could be added to the iVMS timeline summary. SC commented that DAERA had been working on a public consultation in Northern Ireland. JE commented that the last time he caught up with DAERA officials, they were still intending to consult on iVMS. He added that Isle of Man will also be shortly consulting on the same, though VMS for u12s has been required for some time.

Actions from Item 5:

1. CD offered to ask the Marine Conservation Society team if they are available to present or share the Good Fish Guide scoring process for FIPs.
2. JE to send MS information on Isle of Man iVMS timeline.

Agenda Item 6: Decision making process

The Year 1 – 3 action was to propose the establishment of management groups that are appropriate for each Unit of Assessment, and then during Years 3 - 4 the management groups agree on decision making processes. JP informed the Steering Group that a score change was expected for end of Year 3, though given the impacts from Covid and EU Exit on progress with this action, it is not expected to be met in the next Annual Review.

FN clarified that the two management groups are the SICG and SSSWG. An action would be for Marine Scotland and DAERA to provide insights on their involvement with the JFS and the role out of FMPs, similar to the Defra update today from JD. FN said she understood the intention of the SICG is to cover all Devolved Administrations, but further information on how it works with the SSSWG would be useful, especially if it is in the Terms of Reference. CP agreed to send FN the information.

JPo noted the Devolved Administrations have a right to manage scallop stocks sustainably, and all participate in the SICG WG to ensure it is fully representative, and presumes a synergy between it and the SSSWG in order to achieve the shared objectives.

Actions from Item 6:

1. The Secretariat to follow up with Marine Scotland and DAERA for more information on their process and priorities for drafting FMPs.
2. CP to send FN the SICG/ SSSWG ways of working Terms of Reference.
3. The Secretariat will include links shared in this meeting with the Steering Group in the meeting minutes.

Any Other Business

- CD discussed the process the Marine Conservation Society uses to assess species in FIPs for the Good Fish Guide (GFG). The credibility and progress of a FIP against the action plan is taken into consideration and he offered to pass any specific queries to the GFG team. JP asked CD for examples on how the MCS rates FIPs. CD agreed to CP's suggestion for a short presentation from the Marine Conservation Society at a future Steering Group meeting on the criteria they use, and their definition of credible FIPs.
- BL reminded the Steering Group of an adaptation to gear that enables standardised torque settings on a scallop dredge to record the spring tension. BL felt it would be useful to circulate while surveys are being conducted. The paper is [Delargy, Adam J., et al. "Potential highly variable catch efficiency estimates complicate estimation of abundance." Fisheries Research 245 \(2022\): 106138.](#)
- MP asked if anyone had [seen the article on new technology from TorTek](#) (Norway) for scallop dredging.
- JPo noted that he was voted as independent chair for the SICG in December.

- FN asked for demonstration of how the SICG and SSSWG work together. CP flagged alignment in the new Terms of Reference for the SICG, and a two pager on the high level objectives of the [SSSWG - Management Sub Group Discussion Paper FINAL.pdf \(rifg.scot\)](#).

Actions

1. CD provide examples of how the Marine Conservation Society rates FIPs, and agreed in principle to arranging a short presentation on the criteria and their definition of credible FIPs.

Meeting Closes

16:10

Actions Arising		Responsibility
Information and assessment		
1	LB to share: a) the Clyde survey report link with the Steering Group when it is published. b) a notice to with Steering Group when the Terms of Reference are published on the ICES WG Scallop webpage the draft bycatch paper with relevant Steering Group members for feedback.	Lynda Blackadder
2	MSC gather distribution list for bycatch report draft review.	The Secretariat
Fishery Management Plan		
1	FN will follow up with AL on the format required for the UK scallops when transposing information from Channel scallops for "Section 6: Stock assessments" of the FMP.	Fiona Nimmo
2	BL and CP to schedule a call with Mairi Fenton to look at the sustainability requirements she had found in MSC certified scallop fisheries.	Bill Lart and Claire Pescod
3	JD request to Steering Group: Please can I encourage everyone to respond to the consultation on the Joint Fisheries Statement: Draft Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	The Steering Group
4	AH to: a) review the Irish stakeholder list and attribute role and responsibilities where they are known b) share the list of Irish stock unit stakeholders with the Secretariat and CP, and subsequently develop a communication plan.	Adam Holland
5	JE to continue to support the development of the FIP's FMP by providing published information from the Isle of Man, once it is available.	Jack Emmerson
6	MS, BL and CP to address dropbox version editing and sharing issues.	Bill Lart, Claire Pescod and Matt Spencer
7	Secretariat to contact Marine Scotland for an update on their approach to contributing to the development of the National Shellfish Management Plan.	The Secretariat
Compliance and enforcement		
1	CD offered to ask the Marine Conservation Society team if they are available to present or share the Good Fish Guide scoring process for FIPs.	Calum Duncan
2	JE to sent MS information on Isle of Man iVMS timeline.	Jack Emmerson
Decision making process		

1	The Secretariat to: a) follow up with Marine Scotland and DAERA for more information on their process and priorities for drafting FMPs. b) include links shared in this meeting with the Steering Group in the meeting minutes.	The Secretariat
2	CP to send FN the SICG/ SSSWG ways of working Terms of Reference.	Claire Pescod
Any Other Business		
1	CD provide examples of how the Marine Conservation Society rates FIPs, and agreed in principle to arranging a short presentation on the criteria and their definition of credible FIPs.	Calum Duncan