

Minutes: Crab and lobster Steering Group meeting

Meeting Date: 09 March 2022

Location: Teams

Attendees	Organisation
BP: Beshlie Pool	South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen
CP: Claire Pescod	Macduff Shellfish
CR: Chris Ranford	Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation
CS: Chloe Smith	Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
DM: David Markham	Blue Sea Food Company
EB: Ella Brock	Seafish
ER: Emily Roebuck	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
GC: Gus Caslake	Seafish
HG: Hubert Gieschen	Marine Management Organisation
HH: Helen Hunter	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
JB: John Balls	North Devon Fishermen's Association
JP: Jo Pollett	Marine Stewardship Council
KK: Katie Keay	Marine Stewardship Council
MB: Madalein Bradshaw	Marine Management Organisation
MF: Mike Fitzpatrick	Verifact
MJ: Matt Johnson	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
MS: Matt Spencer	Marine Stewardship Council
NdR: Nathan de Rozarieux	Falfish
RC: Robyn Cloake	Labeyrie Fine Foods
RI: Rachel Irish	Marine Management Organisation
SC: Sarah Clark	Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
TH: Tim Huntington	Poseidon
Apologies	
MY: Martyn Youell	Waterdance
RM: Ros McIntyre	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

Purpose of the meeting

This call was an opportunity for the Steering Group to review progress made against each of the actions in the lemon sole Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) action plan and discuss the timeline of the FIP in relation to the recently agreed extension.

Agenda Item 1: FIP Extension

JP updated the group on recent discussions (December 2021) with the funders of the Round 1 fishery improvement projects (FIPs). This FIP was due to finish in April 2022 but has been delayed because of Brexit and the pandemic. There are 13 funders able to contribute to the Round 1 FIP extension, which for the South West crab and lobster FIP will be for one year.

The additional year will allow time:

- To hold crab management workshops with fishermen in the South West, and work with the Crab Management Group and Defra on the learnings.
- For Steering Group members to identify a client group if they want to move the fishery into full assessment for MSC certification.

JP highlighted the Fishery Standard Review (FSR) currently underway. The new version of the MSC Standard is expected before the end of 2022. New fisheries entering the MSC program can choose whether to use V2.0 or V3.0 for six months after the release of V3.0, at which point they must be assessed against V3.0. The Steering Group discussed the importance of delivering the FIP actions within the next year to allow the fishery to be assessed against the current standard that the FIP has been working towards. JP said the Secretariat intends to arrange a pan-Project UK webinar to review the impact of V3.0 on the FIPs.

The annual review is due in April this year and Poseidon will review progress of actions for all relevant performance indicators. They will draft a new FIP Action Plan that only includes remaining actions; all closed actions from the initial five years will not be included. This will be uploaded to FisheryProgress.org with the new extension deadline. Additionally, the MSC as Secretariat will write an online statement to be published on the MSC website, to ensure the extension process is transparent and clearly explained, and this can also be used to support any communications with other stakeholders.

Discussion:

CP asked whether the other Round 1 FIPs will be extended and JP confirmed that the lemon sole, crab and lobster are being extended for one year, and Channel scallops and monkfish for two years as the actions for those FIPs require a longer timeframe to be delivered.

Action from Item 1:

1. Secretariat
 - a. to share link to blog on the FIP extensions once this is published.
 - b. Secretariat to arrange for a pan-Project UK webinar to review the impact of V3.0 on the FIPs once the Standard has been finalised.

Agenda Item 2: Harvest Strategy

Western Waters Alternatives (MJ):

Defra met with the Crab Management Group (CMG) to discuss outcomes of the crab industry Western Waters Alternatives Workshop. HH noted that there is also a South West Crab Group, which is currently led by MMO, and was created to discuss Western Waters days at sea and allocations. Defra is currently in discussions with the South West crab group to join the CMG but it is not clear whether they will do so. Defra is planning to meet with the other devolved administrations to discuss their involvement with the Crab Management Group. MJ also reminded the group that stakeholders can submit any feedback by email: shellfish@defra.gov.uk.

The plan for Western Waters Alternatives is to engage widely enough to identify an approach that can then be included in the harvest strategy section of the national Fisheries Management Plan (FMP).

FIP Management Workshops:

JP updated the group on the planned crab management workshops throughout Devon and Cornwall in March and April. These will take place around high spring tides as this was one of the requests from the fishermen's survey earlier this year. JP asked the Steering Group to share the sign up link as widely as possible with their stakeholders to increase attendance.

A draft agenda was shared:

- Part 1: Background and objectives; survey results (main issues in South-West and ideas to manage these); presentation of a management in other fisheries.
- Part 2: Break-out sessions including proposed solutions for the biggest management issues and identifying pros and cons for management solutions.
- Summary, next steps and results.

The outputs from these workshops will be submitted to Defra and relevant management bodies for their consideration. There will be regular feedback to the CMG to align with their plans nationally and avoid duplication of effort. The outputs can also support the development of the harvest strategy needed for the FIP.

Discussion:

- CP reminded the group that everyone is welcome to be involved in the Crab Management Group and to contact her or EB if interested.
- Outputs from the Project UK management workshops should also be shared with Seafish as well as the broader CMG so this can feed into the development of the Fishery Management Plan. EB offered to share these outputs with members of the CMG.
- There was a discussion on the difficulty of alignment across different stakeholder groups, even with several rounds of stakeholder consultations. TH noted that the harvest strategy for the FIP will likely be a mixture of different approaches (for example for inshore and offshore); as long as these approaches allow adaptive management then different views can be accommodated and meet the requirements of the MSC Standard.
- Discussion on using an iterative 'strawman' approach to develop the harvest strategy across the Project UK management workshops. However, the industry representatives are keen on having a forum to submit ideas without management involvement at this stage.
- Discussion that the MMO and IFCA's can help raise awareness of the Project UK management workshops with the industry by sharing invites. Not all fishermen are members of representative organisations so may not otherwise receive this information. The Secretariat could also consider using printed posters to raise awareness in relevant ports.

Actions from Item 2:

1. All stakeholders can submit any feedback for Defra on Western Waters Alternatives via the group mailbox: shellfish@defra.gov.uk
2. All Steering Group to share links to the Project UK crab management workshops with industry representatives in the South West (once received from Secretariat).
3. Secretariat to share the report from the workshops with Crab Management Group for review.

Agenda Item 3: Harvest Control Rules

This relates to Action 2 in the FIP Action Plan, which required information of catch per unit effort (CPUE) in the crab fishery. JP summarised the information already received, including data from Cornwall IFCA on effort and catch landings from 2016-18. MS agreed to follow up with other IFCAs for equivalent data in their regions. JP reminded the Steering Group that effort data would be required if the fishery wanted to go down the route of effort management. The group was asked whether there are any other data sources and whether the MMO or IFCAs will be gathering more data.

Discussion:

- CS said Southern IFCA will soon begin to collect data on pot fishing management measures through the implementation of a new byelaw.
- There was a discussion on the MMO data on vessel class breakdown and whether effort data is required for the Unit of Assessment as a whole or per vessel size. Currently, the data separates $\leq 10\text{m}$ and 10-15m as two categories. SC commented that the offshore vivier boats that are 14.99m should be split out from the inshore vessels in the same size category since these have very different activities (the effort of the vivier boats is much greater).

Actions from Item 3:

1. Secretariat to ask the MMO statistics team if data on vessel class breakdown takes other size classes (e.g. 14.99m vivier boats) into account.
2. CS to update the group on progress with the SIFCA pot fishing byelaw.

Agenda Item 4: Primary and secondary species management and outcome

This relates to Actions 3 and 4 in the FIP Action Plan. MS updated the group on progress to date.

Last year, catch composition was analysed to look at which primary and secondary species interacted with the fishery. No endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species were recorded. Only one species was found as a 'main' component of bycatch – spider crab (6.4% of total catch). Bait was also investigated with four species listed as 'main', three of which required productivity susceptibility analysis (PSA): red gurnard, Dogfish spp, and mackerel.

The current scores for the FIP in these performance indicators (PIs) meet SG80 except for PI 2.2.2. (management), which scores 60-79. The group discussed what is needed for this PI to meet SG80 and whether this was already included in the draft fishery management plan (FMP).

Discussion:

- There was a discussion on whether the FMP should discourage the use of small sharks (such as dogfish) being used as bait in this the fishery. One option is to include a recommendation in the FMP for fishermen to use more sustainable alternatives. TH thought this might be sufficient to meet SG80 in PI 2.2.2. However, it was also raised that dogfish are extremely common and selling it as bait is an important source of income for the fishermen. Spurdog is a prohibited species and is not being used for bait. Smaller boats in particular do not have the diversification to move away from this as a source of income so this recommendation could be problematic.

- Another possible approach would be to assess the stock of Dogfish spp. and if the stocks are stable then this might help meet the requirements for this PI. CR said that Cefas has recently done a benchmark assessment of spurdogs and results showed the stock may be increasing. CR will share these results with the group as this might be relevant, although spurdog are not used for bait.

Action from Item 4:

1. CR to share Cefas spurdog benchmark assessment results with the group.

Agenda Item 5: Endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species

This relates to Action 5 in the FIP Action Plan. BP previously updated the group on this action and noted there is now a reporting form on the South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen's website for the fishing fleet to report any interactions with ETP species. There have been zero reports of interactions in the past 12 months.

Discussion:

- There was a discussion on the lack reports and where there had been encounters but perhaps these were not reported.
- Update from CR on the Clean Catch UK project which is made up of various initiatives to reduce bycatch including use of an app for reporting.
- There was a discussion on whether ETP interactions could be added to the elog books for the reporting protocol. MMO representatives did not think this approach would be possible. It could be added for paper logbooks but then someone would need to collate the data.
- There was a discussion on ghost gear requirements which might be included in the new version of the MSC Standard and might require a management response. Update from BP that work is ongoing with Ghost Fishing UK to help disseminate their ghost gear reporting tool.

Action from Item 5:

1. SC to circulate bycatch tool from Natural England.

Agenda Item 6: Fishery specific objectives

CP and EB updated the group on progress towards fishery specific objectives. This relates to Action 6 in the FIP Action Plan.

Crab Management Group (CMG)

- The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) lists crab in the Annex on agreed FMPs, meaning that crab will be a chapter of the National Shellfish Fisheries Plan. This will sit alongside other chapters for whelk and scallops as part of this national plan. Defra has commissioned Seafish to be part of that management through CMG, which is the group that will help deliver that FMP.
- There is a CMG science sub-group that meets quarterly to address four key work areas: defining issues/research needs; prioritisation of research needs; research design; and drafting funding applications. The group is hoping to send a draft of the research needs to Defra by

the end of March 2022. Slides were shared with details on research needs and how these relate to FMP Objectives 5 and 6.

- The next steps are to develop proposals, commission research, seek peer review and sign-off, report annually.
- The group will apply to the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) funding. Part A funding – tbc; Part B funding (crustacean research) – £250,000 to develop AI tech and on-board camera systems to improve data on quantity, size and sex of crustacean catches.
- For more information on the research plan to get involved in CMG meetings, please contact ella.brock@seafish.co.uk

Draft national FMP:

- CP shared the draft crab and lobster chapter (FMP). She noted that 10-11 objectives have been drafted and high-level content was shared with the group. CP is aiming to send this out for review by the broader CMG soon.

Action from Item 6:

1. EB to share CMG draft objectives with the FIP Steering Group when available.

Agenda Item 7: Fishery Management Plan update

MS updated the group on the draft FMP for the FIP as follows:

- **Section 1: Identification and description of fishery**
CS volunteered to review and shorten this section (additional content can be moved to annexes where relevant).
- **Section 2: Goals and objectives**
Defra (MJ) has provided text. Additional text on long and short term objectives is still required.
- **Section 3: Fisheries management structure**
 - Section 3.1: Some text needs revising (e.g. references to Common Fisheries Policy).
 - Section 3.3: Volunteer needed to add detail on the co-management arrangement.
- **Section 4: Harvest strategy and control rules**
Overarching strategy still required.
- **Section 5: Ecosystem management strategies**
MS to follow up on additional management initiatives from individual fisheries/districts and how these can be included.
- **Section 6: Stock assessment, fishery monitoring**
Request for any other relevant research that would be worth including e.g. ICES, research in Wales, more novel topics (e.g. offshore wind and cabling).
- **Section 7: Compliance and monitoring**
Action for IFCA/MMO representatives to share further information on this with the Secretariat.
- **Section 8: Fishery performance evaluation**
No progress on this section yet.
- **Section 9: Resources required to implement the plan**
No progress on this section yet (formation of a client group required).

Actions from Item 7:

1. All participants to contact the Secretariat with any other relevant research to include in Section 6.
2. Secretariat to highlight sections that require review by IFCAs and MMO and to circulate to relevant representatives for a targeted review.
3. TH to review FMP content as part of the annual review.
4. MMO/Madalein to support on harvest strategy strawman.

Agenda Item 8: Update on the Irish Sea crab FIP

MF provided an update on the Irish Sea crab FIP. The FIP has reached the end of its five year timeline but is not in position to go forward with MSC certification. Significant changes in the science, effort on the stock and the status of the stock have made the process challenging. There concerns for the crab stock in Ireland with excessive mortality and potential recruitment issues.

There will also be significant changes to management in Ireland over the next 12-14 months. Public consultation on management changes expected and lots of concern on what might be in these proposals (e.g. quotas based management).

The harvest control rules (HCRs) and harvest strategy are proving challenging. Catch per unit effort (CPUE) was considered as the basis of HCRs, but there is uncertainty with regards to the state of the stock so management that decisions on HCRs are not possible at this time.

Another initiative in the Irish FIP is a project to develop a replacement bait in the whelk fishery. The main bait currently used is crab, and this is contributing to fishing mortality of the crab stock overall. An 18-month project was launched in December 2021. The first step is research to identify what the attractant in brown crab is and then developing an alternative bait for whelk.

Discussion:

- There was a short discussion on the decision to restart the process versus applying for an extension for the existing Irish Sea FIP. MF said that with the number of changes coming in the preference would be to start the FIP process from the start again.
- Update from EB that FISP funding has been secured for whelk bait alternatives through the Seafish Whelk Management Group.

Action from Item 8:

1. MF to update the Project UK secretariat on the Irish crab FIP extension progress.

Agenda Item 9: FisheryProgress.org social policy reminder

In mid-2021 FisheryProgress.org introduced social policy requirements for all FIPs reporting on their website. MS provided the Steering Group with an update of progress to date, and upcoming actions and deadlines.

Prior social standards:

- A landscape analysis of social standards that the catching sector members of the FIP already adhere to was previously conducted.
- The Secretariat requested FisheryProgress.org conduct a gap analysis between their new requirements and the content of ILO-188.

Policy statement (ex-Code of Conduct):

- Previously the FIP needed to review and sign up to the FisheryProgress.org Code of Conduct.
- However, this requirement has been revised (March 2022) and now requires a fishery to demonstrate they have a public policy statement outlining a commitment to respect human and labour rights and to provide a description of their policy statement via a template.
- This requirement becomes active in January 2023.

Awareness of fisher rights:

- This requirement has also been revised and requires FIPs to make fishers aware of the fisheries own policy statement.
- This policy statement will be in a template format which FisheryProgress.org will share with FIP implementers.
- This requirement becomes active in January 2023.

Self-evaluation criteria & workplan:

- A general set of risk criteria was listed by FisheryProgress.org which, if met, triggered the requirement of a risk-assessment for the FIP and a workplan to address any issue found.
- The self-evaluation has been completed and a risk assessment triggered due to more than 25% foreign crew in the fishery.
- Next steps are for the Secretariat to identify a consultant to review the FIP's social dimension in more detail and produce a workplan. MS asked the Steering Group to provide suggested consultants.

Vessel lists:

- Key action due in May 2022 is to have accurate vessel lists for each of the FIPs.
- This FIP has had information from the Producer Organisations (POs) and the Steering Group will need to think about how best to get vessel information from any vessels not represented by POs.

Grievance mechanism:

- The fishery needs to have a publicly available grievance mechanism in place for fishers and crew to report human rights abuses.
- This policy does not require the FIP itself to have its own grievance mechanism. Rather, this policy requires the FIP to demonstrate the existence of one or more grievance mechanisms that cover all fishers in the FIP.
- This requirement becomes active in May 2022.

Any Other Business

- The Secretariat will submit a response to the Joint Fisheries Statement consultation on behalf of Project UK. The response will be based on agreed action plans for Project UK FIPs.
- MS will be leaving MSC and Project UK at the end of this week.
- The draft minutes will be shared with the Steering Group for review in a few weeks.

Meeting Closes

15:50

Actions Arising	Responsibility
<p>Action from Item 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to share link to blog on the FIP extensions once this is published. ○ Secretariat to arrange for a pan-Project UK webinar to review the impact of V3.0 on the FIPs once the Standard has been finalised. 	Secretariat
<p>Actions from Item 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders can submit any feedback for Defra on Western Waters Alternatives via the group mailbox: shellfish@defra.gov.uk • All Steering Group to share links to the Project UK crab management workshops with industry representatives in the South West (once received from Secretariat). • Secretariat to share the report from the workshops with Crab Management Group for review. 	<p>All</p> <p>Steering Group</p> <p>Secretariat</p>
<p>Actions from Item 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat to ask the MMO statistics team if data on vessel class breakdown takes other size classes (e.g. 14.99m vivier boats) into account. • CS to update the group on progress with the SIFCA pot limitation byelaw. 	<p>Secretariat</p> <p>CS</p>
<p>Action from Item 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR to share Cefas spurdog benchmark assessment results with the group. 	CR
<p>Action from Item 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC to circulate bycatch tool from Natural England. 	SC

<p>Action from Item 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB to share CMG draft objectives with the FIP Steering Group when available. 	<p>EB</p>
<p>Actions from Item 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants to contact the Secretariat with any other relevant research to include in Section 6. • Secretariat to highlight sections that require review by IFCA's and MMO and to circulate to relevant representatives for a targeted review. • TH to review FMP content as part of the annual review. • MMO/Madalein to support on harvest strategy strawman. 	<p>All</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>TH</p> <p>MB</p>
<p>Action from Item 8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MF to update the Project UK secretariat on the Irish crab FIP extension progress. 	<p>MF</p>