**Project UK Fisheries Improvements Stage One: Crab and Lobster**

**(Facilitated by the MSC)**

Tuesday 13th August 2019 10:00 – 14:00

Jurys Inn, Exeter

**Attendees**

Sarah Clark Devon & Severn IFCA  SC

Theresa Redding Natural England  TR

Chloe Smith Southern IFCA  CS

Robyn Cloake Labeyrie RC

Hubert Gieschen MMO  HG

Gus Caslake Seafish  GC

Jenny Murray Defra  JM

Tim Huntington Poseidon  TH

Karen Attwood MSC  KA

Jo Pollett MSC  JP

Matt Spencer MSC  MS

## Introduction

JP welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced MS to the group as the new Fisheries Outreach Officer for MSC UK/PUKFI, with the group allowing MS to use a Dictaphone to aid with minuting. JP lets the group know that the previously discussed sub-group has been formed, which TR has agreed to chair. JP also announces to the group that GC has been working on bait recently and will provide more information on that topic in Action 6.

The group starts by talking about China and the current market. Uncertainty into the strength of the market in China for Crabs and Lobster; however, SAGB crustacean committee states that China is still a strong market although there are growing concerns over cadmium levels in the brown meat. Ireland currently has a problem with quality as they thought China was an open market and would take any crab. However, currently if a crab has lost more than one leg per side China aren’t interested in it.

Issue stems from the fact that the market in China mixes both white and brown meat, whereas in Europe they are separated. It is a context specific as well, the levels are low per crab but if eaten 6 times a week per year then the contamination adds up.

**Action:** **MS to get next subgroup meeting set up.**

## Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR

The respective IFCAs have been updating the HCRs document and there are apparent differences between each region. Overall, the group is in agreement that the remaining gaps need to be filled before proceeding to a full comparison. The group raises the fact that there are differing management processes, but this has been raised since the start. TH reflects on the work thus far and states that we know its effort limited and that the differences aren’t too bad. The group (once the information has been gathered) could do a cluster analysis to identify the differences in the management strategies.

**Action: Sub group to understand which HCRs are common across all regions and then draft sub strategy for each region**

Southern IFCA is currently undergoing a potting management change, which is now under review. TH believes that this could impact the PUKFI management plan but as FMP are living documents SIFCA can update and incorporate this new information back into the FMP.

Members in the meeting would like to see another example of a what a certified fishery’s HCRs looks like. The Shetland Crab harvest control rules have been circulated to the group already. TH states that reference points are needed for each fishery and that these reference points need to be appropriate. TH develops on this stating that you can also use proxy reference points which can be set by fishery managers but stipulates that Cefas contribution would be needed. These reference points can be precautionary, and set based on historic trends. TH stresses the importance of getting them in and then monitoring how these progress and revaluated if necessary- the fishery just needs a starting point.

The group questions and ask for clarification on whether all IFCAs need to agree on the same reference points. TH states that this is NOT needed so long as the various IFCAs’ reference points are not contradictory or in conflict with one another’s. TH states that this is because the fishery of interest is one stock and is effort based, allowing for slight differences but these differences need to be within reason allow for the fishery to be harmonised. TH mentions a report Poseidon did for Southern IFCA that he recommends as worth reading for the group.

**Action: Tim Huntingdon to find this report and distribute.**

SC announces that Dev & Sev IFCA are involved with the Marine Pioneer project that is looking into natural capital and pot limitation. SC lets the group know that she is keeping an eye on how it progresses, with the focus of the project on permits, size of crew and pots within the fishery of interest. The group asks what the local buy in to the project had been to which SC states that fishermen were motivated to co-create and deliver this project due to excessive effort on the ground and observable catch reductions. The group discusses the scalability of such a project but CS states that it is unlikely as fishermen in the Southern IFCA area are not keen of any extra management in place.

The group’s conversation now changes to pots and limits with SC stating that commercial fishermen in North Devon have 1200 -1600 pots per vessel and they are out for approximately 5 days at a time. Many members of the group have concerns that if there is a set limit, people will race for it. i.e. if there is a limit per boat, people will just buy more boats. Many members present believe the buck ultimately rests with the MMO, Hubert mentions a joint Defra-MMO scheme on vessel licence, in which fishermen had to prove they were active, but reporting catches was an issue. He wasn’t sure how much it actually reduced effort.

**Action: SC to keep the group informed on the progress of the pioneer project**

*Update on Defra work- results of research*

JM’s first meeting she has attended since taking over from Alex. Begins by mentioning that Defra intends to roll over the Western Waters Regime when we leave the EU. However, JM states that Defra is unsure whether it will stick with effort management or move towards quota-based management. Data is needed before any decision is made. Cefas is working on a model which is being progressed through September.

**Action: JM to check with Cefas on stock modelling data and at next meeting. Also circulate details of project to steering group.**

JM informs the group that the lobster cam project is moving forward, nothing has changed on this front since the last PUKFI meeting. They are still deciding on what cameras to use and are in discussion with various Universities and Marine Scotland. The project is aiming to get a better understanding of the spatial resolution of the surrounding area adjacent to the pot, to see what’s around the pot not just what’s in the pot. This project seeks to improve the data – escape rates etc. with trials currently being conducted in tanks, and Defra having internal discussions whether they can present the data. JM states that Defra hope sea trials will begin in mid-Jan.

JM announced that there is a Defra scallop project running at the moment that will form a part of their shellfish management strategy. TH enquires how much the PUKFI FIP will be recognised by Defra as PUKFI’s plan is to have this project driven and accepted by this group & FPOs and accepted by Defra as part of a whole management strategy. JM acknowledges that it is work like PUKFI that will feed in further down the line, as well industry input to their overall thinking. JM doesn’t see why it wouldn’t be incorporated, however she states it will take time for Defra to get all the information together: lobsters, crabs and scallops. JM also presents a map to the group with IFCA by-laws on. Will need reediting before the next group meeting.

**Action: JM to update on this strategy (Defra) and timeline at next meeting.**

SC asks whether Cefas are doing any crab and lobster surveying onboard as fishermen are telling the Dev & Sev IFCA that they are seeing lots of juvenile crab and lobster. SC states that the fishermen want officials to see this. Having onboard surveys is important as it will allow for catch data not just landings data. Some members of the group comment on this suggestion and believe that Cefas don’t have the capacity for any of this work.

**Action: JM to circulate by-laws map (after editing).**

**Action: MSC to find pre-assessment in a word document for TR to cut a paste**

**Action: MSC to follow up with Defra in October to see if data can be distributed**

**Action: JM to double check with Ros whether lobster cam project is for lobsters AND crabs.**

## Action 3 Primary and Secondary Management

GC updates the group with this action and states that he has spoken to Sam in regards to the work she has done and is waiting to hear back from Cole. This action has been passed on to the management sub-group which is now being led by the IFCAs. Gus states it would be great to get some direction with how to finish this action off. TH asks GC to put his work in the FMP, to which GC asks to be sent the FMP from TH.

**Action: MSC to send GC the FMP and GC to fill it in.**

The group then raises their concerns with the use of dropbox. Some members can’t access it and others have concerns around security. The group suggest Huddle, MS to investigate the feasibility of moving away from dropbox.

**Action: MS to check out huddle for the group.**

**Action: Sub group to review Gus’ alternative measure document and provide feedback**

## Action 4 Secondary Information

GC need to ground truth and summarise Matt Voller’s report. The ground truthing is deemed important for PUKFI as some of the data might have been misinterpreted e.g. tables are ambiguous.

**Action: MSC to recirculate Matt Voller’s report again**

TH outlines to the group that work has been done in Cornwall that is in a similar vein to Matt Voller’s work and he suggests reaching out to to them on the topic. Once Matt Voller’s report has been summarised it needs to be put in the FMP. GC agrees to summarise it.

**Action: GC to ground truth and summarise the report**

**Action: Group to review also review Matt Voller’s report again**

## Action 5 ETP

Beshlie had sent out her report the evening before the steering group meeting (12th), comprising of a comprehensive review of ETP mitigation measures. The group has no objections to the paper but request longer to review it fully.

**Action: MSC to recirculate paper for comment**

In terms of ghost gear, TH describes the Canadian approach of plastic pots with a biodegradable fastener, so that lost gear will eventually erode and become ineffective in the marine environment. The group acknowledges there is very little interaction with birds in this fishery and that entanglement unlikely. GC states that the issue for entanglement (with cetaceans) in Scotland is that they are channelled between the islands where large fishing activity takes place. The SW is a lot more ‘open water’ fishing.

**Action: GC to review potting buoy interaction in Scotland and compare to area in SW to show why it is not an issue**

Group acknowledges that there is currently a poor, non-centralised reporting scheme on mammal interaction with static gear, with engagement with skippers being poor. SC states fishermen have been telling her that fishermen have been going past pods of 200+ dolphin, no interaction, just swimming.

Currently no obligation to report, but group acknowledge it is much more likely to be nets than pots that interact. Beshlie has put her name forward as the contact if any interactions to occur.

Gobies are a shallower water issue, and pots are in deeper water shouldn’t have interaction with them. Floaty rope is primarily an issue for the recreation fishing sector, as the commercial fishermen know how to set properly. However, issue arises as there are 3-4 times more recreational fishermen than commercial.

As a commercial fisherman you can catch 2 lobsters and 3 crabs in Dev & Sev. but these cannot be sold on so are for personal consumption only. Level of recreational fishing effort for Dev and Sev is recorded in the HCRs document (number of fishermen x number of pots = rough estimate of effort).

Noted that Isles of Scilly may have recently changed their management.

**Action: MSC to follow up with Tom IoS IFCA for any updates.**

**Action: All to review Beshlie’s document and provide feedback**

**Action: Add Jenny to the distribution list.**

**Action: JP to pass on comments to Beshlie.**

**Action: Follow up add Cefas and Beshlie report to FMP**

**Action: MSC to follow up with BDLMR for any entanglement data they might have**

## Action 6 Fishery Specific Objectives

TH informs the group that he has had a conversation with Ollie Tulley at the Marine Institute Ireland (MIR), who are currently working on reference points for Crab (TH lets us know that Ollie himself not working on that specific project). Developing on this TH lets the group know that MIR have v notch, minimum and maximum sizes for lobster, with the maximum size being set at 127mm. After TH has raised the topic of Ireland the group then discusses whether crabs and lobsters are a shared stock with other areas of the British and Irish isles (particularly in North Devon), and that we should be reaching out to counterparts in Wales so we at least understand their management measures.

**Action: TH to share his email from Ollie Tulley with group**

**Action: MSC to reach out to Welsh counterparts to fill in HCR document.**

The group goes on to discuss that the North West Waters AC are setting up a group with relevance to this action and feel that PUKFI should be involved. Many individuals state that it is critical that we get on board with this as the C+L group is currently missing industry involvement and it would be good to know what their strategic thinking is going forward.

**Action: MSC to follow up with NWW AC for engagement in their crab group.**

## Bait

GC informs the group that he had found an interesting report on Landing obligation (LO) and another on items that can’t be used for human consumption. Nathan (Falfish) did a report in 2014 which estimated the bait requirement for English fleet in Western Approaches and Celtic seas. Results indicate that it is approximately 12,500 thousand tonnes. GC states that smaller vessels will use anything that’s available - and preferably – free (fish frames etc.)

**Action: Gus to circulate these reports and summarise the content**

Larger vessels need a constant supply and utilise pelagic stocks such as mackerel and sardines, with GC informing the group that a larger vessel will utilise 240-300 tonnes a week – lot of fish. This equates to approximately 255 of the outgoing cost of large vessels is their bait. The group then asks what the Shetlands bait requirements are.

**Action: MSC to circulate Shetland (and Jersey?) bait details from the their certification**

GC continues, stating that the majority of bait will be non-tac species priced roughly at 60p/kg. Gurnard from trawlers in particular for the larger vessels. Bait is often more than 5% of catch, and in some large vessels the bait is almost the same as the catch. Assessment teams will need to look at bait data, TH suggests it is important to know the volumes and whether there are 2.1. or 2.2. species being utilised but acknowledges this will be complicated. GC believes that Scad (horse mackerel) is the predominant bait. TH develops this rationale of thinking and gives an example of bait provenance within the Greenland fishery using squid. Argentinean vs Falklands, with the fishery having to change bait source to Falklands for certification as it is more sustainable. According to GC, the average bait per pot is 800g/0.8kg and there are issues if bait is to be changed due to many fishermen having long standing relationships/ contract with providers. Member of the group feel that if PUKFI starts telling fishermen where they can get their bait there will be issues. Dogfish in particular might be a big issue. TH states that this will then need to go back to Action 3 on principle 2.

**Action: GC to share report and draw summaries.**

**Action: Beshlie to speak with large vessels and ascertain bait used and provenance.**

## Reminder on action & updates

* *Fishery Progress- 6 month update*

Fishery Progress 6 month review has been completed and will be updated again in November.

MSC are looking into a branding / comms programme for PUKFI, and will inform more on that as it develops, group seems on board with this.

**Action: MSC to set up doodlepoll for next meeting for Jan/Feb**

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| **Task** | **Action referred to in A.P**  | **Action lead** |
| Get next subgroup meeting set up. | - | MS |
| Gain an understanding of which HCRs are common across all regions and draft sub strategy for each region   | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | Sub-group |
| Distribute report Poseidon did for Southern IFCA  | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | TH |
| SC to keep the group informed on the progress of the pioneer project   | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | SC |
| Check with Cefas on stock modelling data at next meeting. Also circulate details of project to steering group. | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | JM |
| Update on this shellfish management strategy (Defra) and timeline at next meeting.  | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | JM |
| Circulate by-laws map (after editing). | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | JM |
| MSC to find pre-assessment in a word document for TR to cut a paste | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | JP/MS |
| MSC to follow up with Defra in October to see if data can be distributed – lobster cam project  | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | JP/MS |
| Check with Ros whether lobster cam project is for lobsters AND crabs. | Action 1 and 2 Harvest Strategy and HCR | JM |
| MSC to send GC the FMP and GC to fill it in with work he has conducted thus far. | Action 3 Primary and Secondary Management | JP/MS |
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| Review potting buoy interaction in Scotland and compare to area in SW to show why it is not an issue | Action 5 ETP | GC |
| MSC to follow up with Tom IoS IFCA for any updates into management alterations  | Action 5 ETP | JP/MS |
| Add Jenny to the distribution list. | Action 5 ETP | MS |
| JP to pass on comments from review of her work to Beshlie. | Action 5 ETP | JP |
| Follow up add Cefas and Beshlie report to FMP | Action 5 ETP | TH |
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| TH to share his email from Ollie Tulley with group | Action 6 Fishery Specific Objectives | TH |
| MSC to reach out to Welsh counterparts to fill in HCR document. | Action 6 Fishery Specific Objectives | MS |
| Circulate papers on Landing obligation (LO) and another on items that can’t be used for human consumption and Nathans 2014 report into bait requirement  | Action 6 Fishery Specific Objectives | GC |
| MSC to circulate Shetland (and Jersey?) bait details from their certification | Action 6 Fishery Specific Objectives | JP/MS |
| BP to speak with large vessels and ascertain bait used and provenance. | Action 6 Fishery Specific Objectives | BP |
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