# **Project UK Fisheries Improvements**

# **Southwest crab & lobster Steering Group meeting minutes**

Wednesday 18th January 2017

Brixham Laboratory, Brixham

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

**Attendees:**

Adam Green (AG) Lyons

Beshlie Pool (BP) South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

David Marcombe (DM) Blue Seafood Company

Doug Hoult (DH) Scilly Isles IFCA

Emma Rowse (ER) Rowse Fishing/The Real Cornish Crab Company

Ewan Bell (EB) Cefas

Gus Caslake (GC) Seafish

Laky Zervudachi (LZ) Direct Seafood

Nathan de Rozariaux (ND) Falfish

Neville Pittman (NP) Seafood and Eat It

Mark Rowse (MR) Rowse Fishing/The Real Cornish Crab Company

Robin Masefield (RM) Cefas

Rosanna Ourens (RO) Cefas

Sarah Clark (SC) Devon & Severn IFCA

William Harvey (WH) W Harvey & Sons

**Apologies:**

Andy Hickman Tesco

Colin trundle Cornwall IFCA

Estelle Brennan Lyons

Helen Hunter Defra

Juliette Hatchman Macduff

Mark Webber Oceanfish

Simon Dixon MMO

Trevor Bartlett Blue Seafood Company

1. Minutes & action points

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action point number | Steering group member | Action  | Status |
| 1 | CN | To explore the options of meeting at different times of day | Completed |
| 2 | All | Members to consider ways they will be able to disseminate info on the project as it moves forward | Completed |
| 3 | CN | To explore additional outreach around future meetings to increase the input from industry and provide updates direct to fishermen such as drop-in sessions | Completed |
| 4 | SD&CS + All | Members of the group unsure of the name Project UK Fisheries Improvements to suggest alternative project names | Completed |
| 5 | CN | A new project name to be put to the other FIP Steering Groups, PUKFI Advisory Group and PUK | Completed |
| 6 | CN + All | To explore how to inform and engage the French and Irish | Ongoing |
| 7 | CN | To invite CPNMEM to the next meeting | Ongoing |
| 8 | CN | To include specific information about the IPA area in the specification of services that the consultants will work off | Complete |
| 9 | CN | To progress PA updates for Celtic Sea and Western channel crab pots and for SW lobster | Completed |
| 10 | CN | Confirmation of Action 9. | Completed |
| 11 | CN/CP | To tender this work for consultants and commission it, before convening a meeting to discuss the results | Completed |
| 12 | CN/CP | To develop a draft ToR and CN to circulate if for discussion and input by email | Ongoing |
| 13 | All | To input to ToR development once received by email | Ongoing |
| 14 | CN | To add EB to the Scallop & Monkfish Steering Group | Complete |
| 15 | CN | To circulate link to Doodle Poll for next meeting | Complete |

CN explained what has been completed and why some actions are ongoing. She has started engaging with the French & Irish but this work is continuing. No comments on the minutes, these were signed off

1. Terms of Reference

CN sent round the ToR to the steering group prior to the meeting, no comments were received via email. The group considered the ToR together at the meeting. The ToR is the same as the scallop and monkfish one. CP explained the comments on the ToR from last group:

Bullet 25 – add in the words ‘and adopt’. LZ said that this change would clarify the bullet.

Bullet 14 about chair – the other group wanted to review annually and rotate. LP thinks better to review annually rather than force people to take on responsibility. The group decided to review annually.

The group decided to leave the table of representatives as it is.

There were no further comments. The group is happy to sign up to ToR.

*Minutes action 1:* CN will make changes and send it round the group for final sign off dated today, CN will bring it to the next meeting.

1. Recap of aims and objectives

CP gave an explanation of Project Inshore and where PUKFI has come from for the new people in the room.

We have separated the 3 strands of Project UK mainly because of applying for funding and progressing this one quickly. This strand is the where we are carrying out the 6 FIPs, proving the FIP model. The second strand involves a large-scale pre-assessment like was done for Project Inshore but this time, assessing the offshore fisheries around the whole of the UK; and the third strand involves another round of FIPs on fisheries identified by the second strand.

1. Crab & lobster pre-assessment results and discussion

CP introduced TH and explained to the group that he is going to present the results of the pre-assessment and present the action plan. We changed agenda from discussing crab and lobster separate, to discussing them together because all the actions in the action plan are shared between the two species.

CP explained that we have spreadsheet showing the Bench-Marking & Tracking tool and that we hadn’t sent it out because they are complex to understand without explanation and because we didn’t want to pile too much paperwork on people before the meeting, both of which could put people off reading the key reports. However, we will explain the BMTs at this meeting and make them available on the website.

CP stressed that these pre-assessments and action plans are drafts and that people should please flag up if there is information missing. After this meeting, we will make the changes required and have final reports and action plans in 4 weeks’ time.

1. Crab & lobster action plan presentation & discussion

TH gave a presentation on the results of the pre-assessment.

The pre-assessments and action plans for crab and lobster were almost identical. TH explained what a pre-assessment is – it is to benchmark the fishery and to identify gaps. Pre-assessments are a precursor to FIPs because the standard is a good benchmark for fisheries. There are roughly 5000 FIPs in the world. It is a useful way of pulling fisheries up to a recognised global standard.

TH explained the difference between Unit of Certification and Unit of Assessment. UoC is the target species, gear type, geographical area and fleet. UoA looks at whole stock, all vessels and all gears. We will be looking at the UoA – wider level.

The UoA for crab is 7e mainly. The pre-assessment shows maps of extent of fishery for the <10 & >10

TH explained some MSC terms:

* Target species: The species you are considering under Principle 1, that you want to eventually carry the MSC certificate.
* Main: Non-target species that comprise 5% or more, by weight of the total catch. Or 2% is the species is less resilient.
* Minor: All other species not considered ‘main’, are considered minor.
* CR 2.0: The most recent version of the Certification Requirements (the standard) that we are using as the basis for these pre-assessments.
* Primary species: All non-target species that are managed via limit or target reference points.
* Secondary species: All non-target species that are not managed through reference points, and all out-of-scope species unless considered ETP.
* ETP: Endangered, Threatened & Protected.
* Out of scope: Birds, mammals & Reptiles.

For example, in the crab fishery, Lobster, cod and whelk are main species and Lobster and cod are primary. In the lobster fishery, there are similar Principle 2 species but it is a smaller fishery.

A harvest strategy is where managers look at a fishery and decide what broad tools will they use – input vs output etc. Harvest Control Rules are where the managers decide what rules and tools they will use to apply the strategy for example - if we are going to use quota we need rules about what to set it as and what to do if it drops to a certain trigger point.

TH showed us the pre-assessment summary score table and explained the principles and scoring. Principle 1 (P1) is stock status, Principle 2 (P2) is habitats and ecosystem and Principle 3 (P3) is management. The principles contain different Performance Indicators. A score below 60 is not passing, 60-80 is passing with conditions and above 80 is an unconditional pass. TH explained that FIP action plans contain milestones and annual and thus demonstrate show progression up scale. He explained that Performance Indicators with 60-80 scores will be included in FIP but may be quick wins.

The two Performance Indicators that aren’t passing for crab are Harvest Strategy & Harvest Control Rules. TH explained what adaptive management is. For the crab fishery, there are biomass ref points but not used in adaptive management system.

SC – There is move towards in adaptive management in D&S IFCA. The Inshore Potting Agreement isn’t managed by the IFCA but by MMO because it extends beyond the 6. However, the IFCA enforces it and it might be managed by the IFCA in the future.

*Minutes Action 2:* SC to work with TH in updating the PA. CN to facilitate this.

GC asked the question - do all the UoAs need to agree when working on P1? E.g. 40% is taking by non-English vessels. The wider fishing impact of French and Channel Islands needs to be recognised.

EB – We don’t have the data from other countries. The biomass estimates are proportional to the amount of UK landings. There uncertainty to as the true extent of the whole stock. Fishing mortality estimates comes from size distribution and catch composition. We need to move towards a full international assessment for this. He hopes we can push ICES towards convening a crab assessment group over the next few years rather than just crab biology group.

CP explained that she wants this group to be the mechanism that can push that.

It was highlighted that we need Defra and the MMO as well because the IFCAs are not responsible for the whole fishery. The group can suggest what Harvest Strategy and Harvest Control Rules that it think would be best however, it is up to Defra to input it. This group can try to push it up Defra priority list. CN explained that Defra wanted to be present but were unable so MSC is meeting Defra after which any steering group member is welcome to join. This action plan could, if necessary, span over 5 years so even if there are delays with Principle 1, we can work on Principle 2 and use a stage approach.

ER – Rowse fishing are part of the Western Waters group. The Western Waters regime controls Irish and French boats as well. No one is allowed to fish area 7 except Irish, French and UK vessels. The Western Waters regime is a monthly management tool. One possibility is to move this management regime down to 12m vessels as well, which would cover most boats outside of inshore. Pot restrictions on top of days at sea would make the fishery unviable. Days at sea work well for Rowse Fishing.

For this UoA, a formal strategy needs to be put down to accommodate the interest of different groups. After this strategy has been decided, the group could then discuss Harvest Control Rules and bring in the French and Irish. HCRs can be different for different groups.

The group was interested in finding out the proportion of the stock that is inside and outside of the 6.

BP posed the question how does this project dovetail with Defra’s plans for regional management? Are they leaving SW last in their plans, because of this project?

EB gave an update on the government’s regional management work. In 5 weeks’ time is the first of these regional workshops in the Northeast about regional management. They might set the blueprint for what all other areas must follow. The other issue we haven’t mentioned yet is Brexit. All management measures on this fishery, except for IFCA measures, are EU measures. This project and the regional management work is the opportunity to talk about what management the industry wants Defra and the MMO to bring in. EB recommends this as he thinks it will be very strongly listened to. EB also pointed out that the French and Irish will be complying with MSFD because it is a European directive, so they will also be aiming for MSY. George Eustice has indicated he wants to stick to those principles and maintaining access to the free market may require us to stick to directives such as MSFD.

The meeting then turned focus to the Principle 1 actions in the action plan.

CP Explained that we were going to try to appoint joint action leads with one lead being from the supply chain, this is to assist the industry, scientists and managers who will most likely have the majority of the actions, and to ensure the supply chain are involved in the action plan.

TH explained what MSC standard is looking for in 1.2.1. Strategy is the overarching approach, recognising that there are different management demands on different parts of the water. If the political will is there then it can be easy and quick to get done.

SC suggest that the wording should be changed to reflect it covering whole stock. There are different levels and areas of management on this stock and management within IFCA areas is very strong.

LZ – There is an interest in the market of having third-part assured sustainable product, this would be a positive outcome of this project. He feels that this group can put some political pressure for coherent management.

Some members of the group felt that they have requested Defra to create an overarching strategy in the past but it hadn’t been a priority for them then so it may still be very hard. The question is whether it is now likely or possible?

EB – It is more likely now because Defra are rejigging everything but they do have a lot to deal with especially with Brexit.

LZ – is part of the seafood industry taskforce with Defra and Seafish to create a vision for 2040. He will highlight to Defra that this progression is required for the seafood industry.

**Action-plan Action 1**

The group felt we need to create a position paper first and then the group can take it to Defra

The group sought clarification on whether a strategy brings together what is already in place or whether we need to get agreement from everyone on a new overall strategy?

TH – a strategy needs to be a joined-up approach and be adaptive. The scoring will recognise existing strategies.

It is in the legislation that the effort for the Over 15’s can be decreased but not increased. Even though it has never been decreased.

*Minutes Action 3 - TH to check if the adaptive management of over 15s has been taken into account.*

Cefas usually assesses whether a proposal will work rather than come up with proposal itself. Cefas highlighted that they have data for under and over 10s and for inside and outside the 6. Therefore, they can have a good stab at jurisdictional reported landings.

CN explained that MSC is applying for EMFF funding on behalf of Project UK Fisheries Improvements.

It was agreed that as a first step, a document should be produced which describes the linkages, coherence and issues with stock management across jurisdictional boundaries. Cefas could write that document, they would need funding to do this.

SC highlighted that this document has to be realistic into what managers are able to do. For example, IFCAs are different from each other and there are reasons why each IFCA has chosen to manage the way they have, because it is right for their fisheries in their particular area.

A strategy needs to be coherent and a weakness in the current management may be that different areas are not sufficiently adaptive. The intention of the Cefas document is to demonstrate coherence and tweak management where there are gaps.

**CN to include this work in the funding bids. Cefas will be the action lead with BP representing the fishing industry as joint lead. The report can be produced within 6 months, dependent on funding.**

*Minutes Action 4: GC to pitch to Seafish SW panel about funding*

*Minutes Action 5: CN to get quote from Cefas and put into funding bids*

**Action-Plan Action 2**

Harvest Controls Rules are the second step after deciding on strategy, that is why this action starts in the second year. We need to address Harvest Strategy first. Cefas should bear in mind when writing the paper for Action 1, that the strategy will dictate the HCRs.

CT pointed out a concern that in the Cornwall IFCA bylaws, there is no mechanism which dictates that they have to use the precautionary principle.

TH – It depends where you set your trigger levels. If you set your trigger point to account for the level of uncertainty, then it is precautionary. The scoping document in Action 1 can look at how precautionary the IFCA bylaws are.

**The group decided to revisit this at 6 months.**

**Principle 2**

The only main (more than 5% of catch) species are lobster and crab. They are both primary as they have reference points.

*Minutes Action 6: TH to remove the retained column in the final pre-assessment because it is not specific to this fishery.*

**Action-Plan Action 3**

**Action lead – Seafish to lead on this and follow up with Mike Montgomery on the gear database. BP to assist on this action.**

*Minutes Action 7: TH to give info on the GGGI to GC on ghost gear.*

BP – Highlighted that this review is to pull information together and advise but to be aware that the fishery here is different to that in Canada and we don’t necessarily have the same ghost gear issues.

GC will highlight in the review what may be applicable to UK and will keep cost effectiveness and safety issues in mind.

Succorfish pot markers should be added to the review.

**Action-Plan Action 4**

The MSC standard is evidence based. The fishery may have no impact on other species but the data is required to prove this.

It was debated whether there was mortality of bycatch for example if it gets used as pot bait. Bait fish isn’t recorded currently.

IFCAs do go out on the fishing vessels but they go out to measure crab and lobster, not to note down bycatch. It would potentially be very time consuming and expensive for the IFCAs to measure absolutely everything. If Cefas were to do observer coverage they would measure the commercial species and give an approximation of benthos.

TH suggested that the fishery can do a risk assessment to assess whether there is any mortality or negative impact.

SD&CS is in the process of developing for a camera project with Seascope. It has been put forward but don’t know on timelines. We could investigate joining with that research.

*Minutes action 8: BP to investigate whether there are synergies with the Seascope work and the data that we are wanting to gather and to investigate if the data exists elsewhere*

*Minutes Action 9: CN to investigate how the other certified crab fisheries have addressed this Performance Indicator.*

**Update in 6 months but 1 year action plan.**

**Action-Plan Action 5**

TH gave an explanation of what Endangered, Threatened & Protected species is. No ETP species were identified by project inshore. The 60-80 score is due to lack of information.

The group wanted a list of the ETP species.

*Minutes Action 10:* *CN to circulate paragraphs by MSC on legislation that is included in their definition of ETP.*

Leatherback turtles have been caught in the fishery in past. The information on this has been gathered in a project funded by alliance and Leicester.

*Minutes Action 11: GC to find the project report*

*Minutes Action 12: CN to pull out the ETP sections of other UK certified fisheries and similar species assessments and send round the group.*

It was agreed to do a Fisher based survey to ground truth a risk assessment but to put this back to next meeting. The risk assessment would consist of plotting area of ETP species over area of fishing effort.

It was suggested that he MMO & JNCC might be able to do this risk assessment.

*Minutes action 13: CN to investigate with the MMO & JNCC if they are able to do the ETP species risk assessment*

*Minutes action 14: to put the fisher based survey and risk-assessment on list to talk about at the next meeting*

BP highlighted that ETP species interactions have to be recorded under the RFS standard as well. Some of the SD&CS boats are undergoing RFS assessment so we could use that evidence to say how many have recorded by RFS boats in the Southwest. We would have to ask skippers individually for their data. we could get a student to analyse the data. We could ask Mick Bacon to flag up in the next 12 months which vessels go through.

ER suggested that we could give the same sheets that the RFS vessels use to the MSC boats.

There was discussion about producing a water proof leaflet of code of conduct for ETP species. It was decided to wait until we get the risk assessment back before we develop.

Natural England only have info about ETP if the ETP species is a site feature. We should look at JNCC to see if they have code of conduct like the Shark Trust have for releasing sharks and rays.

*Minutes action 15: Seafish to investigate this with JNCC*

**Action-plan Action 6 (Ecosystems -** **now taken out)**

The IFCAs have demonstrated through their Habitats Regulation Assessments that potting doesn’t have an impact on the protected areas. These assessments cover various different habitats depending on the features of the sites. All the assessments have been completed as per Article 6 of habitats directive.

MMO have had to do the same assessments outside the 6. Calum Gough is the SW contact.

*Minutes Action 16:* *IFCAs to give TH a list of what has been done on the HRAs. SC to coordinate on behalf of the IFCAs.*

*Minutes Action 17:* *TH to go back to the author of the pre-assessment to get the score changed.*

**Principle 3**

**Action-Plan Action 7 (now Action 6)**

It was agreed that there needs to be some kind of co-management between the countries that fish this stock i.e. the French and Irish as well as the UK.

SC – The IFCAs ensure to harmonise their measures

EB – There’s no consistent coherent management objective across the stock and no objective of what stock level we are trying to achieve.

This group itself could become the forum for getting the different management together if we met consistently over five years. Investigate groups role in this and how that could be taken in to account over the year through the reviews

*Minutes Action 18: CN to look into adding into ToR that the group has a harmonising discussion at each meeting.*

BP highlighted that there is the North West Advisory Group which had its first meeting October 15, with a specific brown crab focus group.

*Minutes Action 19: BP to circulate the minutes of that meeting*

1. Date of next meeting & any other business

CN told the group about website.

Next meeting time in 6 months in June

ER asked the question if any fishery has ever become over exploited because of MSC. CP gave the example of the Loch Torridon nephrops fishery where they had a management plan and didn’t have strong enough management. This fishery is no longer in the program. There was concern in the room that the SW shellfish fishery could have problems with latent capacity.

It was agreed by the group that his project has a potential to strengthen the position of the fishery. MSC is the global gold standard for sustainable fishing. It is also a big driver for the market and is the standard they look for.

CP gave an explanation of Chain of Custody and Traceability requirements which would mean that other fishers not involved in the certification could not benefit from it, even if they fish the same stock. The fishery client group can define who is involved. However, if this group is too small, there is a risk that the rest of the fishery could become unsustainably fished and the certified component may have little influence about inputting management.

There was discussion about the initial and ongoing cost of certification. CP explained that 9/10 times the fishery doesn’t pay for the whole assessment. It can be funded externally or often processors pay for part of the assessment. For example you can set up a levy system on the buyers which feeds into a pot to fund the assessment.

Summary of action points from the meeting

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Minutes Action point number | Steering group member | Action  | Status |
| 1 | CN | will make changes to the Terms of Reference and send it round the group for final sign off dated today, CN will bring it to the next meeting. | Complete |
| 2 | SC | to work with TH in updating the pre-assessment about the IPA management. CN to facilitate this. |  |
| 3 | TH | to check if the adaptive management of over 15s has been taken into account. |  |
| 4 | GC | to pitch to Seafish SW panel about funding |  |
| 5 | CN | to get quote from Cefas and put into funding bids | Complete |
| 6 | TH | to remove the retained column in the final pre-assessment because it is not specific to this fishery. |  |
| 7 | TH | to give info on the GGGI to GC on ghost gear. |  |
| 8 | BP | to investigate whether there are synergies with the Seascope work and the data that we are wanting to gather and to investigate if the data exists elsewhere |  |
| 9 | CN | to investigate how the other certified crab fisheries have addressed this Performance Indicator – secondary species information | Complete |
| 10 | CN | to circulate paragraphs by MSC on legislation that is included in their definition of ETP | Complete |
| 11 | GC | to find the report on the Alliance & Leicester leatherback turtle project |  |
| 12 | CN | to pull out the ETP sections of other UK certified fisheries and similar species assessments and send round the group. | Complete |
| 13 | CN | to investigate with the MMO & JNCC if they are able to do the ETP species risk assessment | Complete |
| 14 | CN | to put the fisher based survey and risk-assessment on list to talk about at the next meeting | Ongoing |
| 15 | GC | to investigate with JNCC whether there are codes of practice for handling ETP species |  |
| 16 | TH | IFCAs to give TH a list of what has been done on the HRAs. SC to coordinate on behalf of the IFCAs. |  |
| 17 | TH | to go back to the author of the pre-assessment to get the score changed for ecosystem PI |  |
| 18 | CN | to look into adding into ToR that the group has a transboundary harmonising discussion at each meeting. | Ongoing |
| 19 | BP | to circulate the minutes of the North West Advisory Group brown crab focus meeting |  |