



UK Fisheries Improvements Channel Scallop FIP Steering Group

Tuesday 17th October 2017, 10.00 – 13.00
Conference call & webinar

Welcome, introductions & apologies

Attendees:

Andy Lawler (AL)	Cefas
Bill Badger (BB)	Defra
Bryce Stewart (BS)	University of York
Chloe North (CN)	MSC
Claire Pescod (CP)	MSC
Femke de Boer (FB)	SWFPA
Jim Portus (JPo)	SWFPO
Joseph Prosho (JPr)	Morrisons
Juliette Hatchman (JH)	Macduff Shellfish
Nathan de Rozarieux (NR)	Falfish
Rhiannon Holden (Rhol)	Imperial College
Ruth Hoban (RHob)	New England
Sarah Birchenough (SB)	Southern IFCA
Tim Huntington (TH)	Poseidon

Apologies:

Adam Green	Lyons
Ally Dingwall	Sainsburys
Charlie Samways	Samways
Colin Trundle	Cornwall IFCA
Gus Caslake	Seafish
Hannah Macintyre	M&S
Iain Spear	Coombe Fisheries
Mark Webber	Oceanfish
Michael Kaiser	Bangor University
Paul Trebilcock	CFPO
Sarah Clark	Devon & Severn IFCA

Minutes & Action Points

CP explained the difference between the short-term actions that arise out of each meeting, called Minutes Actions, and the longer-term Actions that make up the Action Plan, called Action-Plan Actions.

There were no comments on the minutes from last time, so they were signed off and will be uploaded to the Seafish website.

All of the ongoing minutes actions from the January meeting were completed. Below is the summary of status of minutes actions from the July meeting.

Number	Lead	Action	Status
1	CN	circulate the year1 funders update when ready	Ongoing
2	CP	update group after meeting with Seafish	Update at meeting
3	MK	circulate an advance draft of genetics paper	Complete
4	CN	clarify the word 'consultation' in the action plan. Who are we consulting?	Complete
5	CN	map out Venn diagram of who needs to be consulted that is not in either project group. Where is the value chain vertically? Seafish have done something similar.	Complete
6	CN/JH/JP	follow up with Juliette and JP about project overlap exercise and circulating update on the scallop stock assessment project	Complete
7	CN	pull MSC requirements out for the stock assessment Performance Indicators (PIs) to assist Cefas in making sure its covered and set up a meeting with Ewen and Andy	Have set it up
8	CN	write in the link between ETP action and ecosystem action in the action plan	ongoing
9	MK	send a paper about the inshore fishery to Rhol	Complete
10	CN	to circulate MK's papers round group	Complete
11	MSC & TH	review the milestones in the action plan for M&E and then send round the group	Ongoing
12	CN	capture a risk assessment of different management regimes in year 2 in Action 2	Ongoing

CP updated the group her meeting with Seafish and the decision on Seafish's involvement since Tom Pickerell left.

Under Tom Pickerell, Seafish was in charge of Workstream 1 for Project UK, this was the workstream that was aiming to do a large-scale mapping and pre-assessment for all key commercial fisheries in the whole of the UK. They now have Aoife in Tom's position and have been discussion Seafish involvement internally. They will make a decision and tell everyone at the CLG meeting in November, as to whether Seafish will commit resources to push Workstream 1 forward in whatever capacity, which may take the form of hiring an external project manager. If steering group members want to highlight their opinions on Seafish's involvement with Seafish, they are encouraged to do so as Seafish is currently in discussion for its new corporate plan. Bill will represent Seafish for the plaice and lemon sole group, and Gus will represent Seafish for the other FIPs.

CP updated the group on the plans for expansion of the project to cover Sottish and Irish Sea scallops and nephrops.

The aim of this meeting today is for action leads to get clarification on actions, to update the group on whether they are on track, and to seek support from other members of the group if necessary.

Statement from Defra

CN explained that the group aims to create a proposed management plan for the fishery and some members are concerned that it will not be in Defra's work plan, to consult on and implement the management.

Defra confirmed its support for this project and has demonstrated this in relation to the PUKFI by agreeing to be observer members of the steering group. It will be important to be able to continually demonstrate how the objectives of the project contribute to the Government's objectives in order to justify and protect Defra's continued commitment and involvement. By attending the steering group meetings Defra can advise on how best to do this and offer support where appropriate. With regards to being able to take the management proposals into account, it will help if they are presented with the right accompanying information to allow Defra to do the impact assessment that they have to do before consulting on anything. This impact assessment must assess multiple options such as the impact of the status quo, of the ideal option and of a compromised option. Defra will work with the group to help them provide the right information, and present the proposed management in the correct format. Defra will also know when it is likely to come up, so they can prepare the relevant authorities within government. The fact that Defra will be present at these meeting, means that they can tell us if we are going down a wrong track with the management plan that would never be accepted. This all makes it more likely that the aims of the project will be met.

Minutes action 1: BB to consider consultations and this project, and provide some information to the group about how best to proceed.

Action updates, Principle 1, Action 1 – Stock status

AL updated the group that Cefas had just attended the ICES Scallop Working Group, at which, they presented the stock boundaries that they are proposing. The proposal was well received and accepted, there were some constructive comments and dialogue from other scientists.

JH pointed out that the stock units will be used in the stock assessment from next year, so they will be accepted used in management much sooner than our timeline. Tim said that this was ok. 'and incorporated into routine stock assessment'

There was discussion about the 'consultation' in the year 2 milestone, and what kind of consultation this would be. It was agreed that the most appropriate consultation for this kind of information is scientific consultation with presentation to industry, and that this should be reflected in the Action Plan. TH confirmed that minutes of scientific meetings and the SICG would suffice to prove that the sock units and assessment had been reviewed externally in the wider scientific community and presented to industry representatives.

Minutes action 2: AL to provide the minutes of the scientific meetings where the stock units and assessment are consulted upon, such as the ICES WG Scallop.

Minutes action 3: CN to create dropbox for the Steering Group members to upload documents to.

Action updates, Principle 1, Actions 2 & 3 – Harvest strategy and harvest control rules

JH requested that the lead for these actions be changed to 'JH and JP representing the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) as it captures a wider group of the industry. It was also agreed to clarify that the consultation on these actions is a public consultation, as it is to do with management.

At the moment the English waters stock assessment project only has funding to carry out the first stock assessment. They are currently trying to secure funding to maintain the stock assessments over time however, there is no plans at the moment to try to develop the management plan after that; so that is when this group could step in. Next year we will create a break-out group that will work on developing management options.

Action updates, Principle 1, Action 4, stock information

AL at Cefas wants to properly assess the information that we have against the MSC standard so that we are sure there's no other data we should be collecting. AL and CN have already put plans in place to have a meeting to explain the Principle 1 requirements of the standard in more detail.

TH suggested that AL should also try to speak with the P1 scallop assessor from the Shetland scallop MSC assessment.

Minutes action 4: CN to have P1 meeting with AL and set up contact between AL and Shetland P1 assessor.

Minutes action 5: AL to write a document showing that Cefas has assessed whether they need further info for P1.

Action updates, Principle 3, Action 9 – Roles & responsibilities

BB from Defra sought clarification from Tim about the action because Defra is the action lead. Some of this action will be addressed collaterally as part of Action 1 when the stock boundaries are defined and incorporated into management. The gap that was highlighted in the pre-assessment was that it is unclear who has primary responsibility for reducing exploitation rates if stocks were to decline. Once the stock units are defined and some potential HCRs have been developed, it will be more obvious who should implement those. This will then be made explicit in the management plan.

Action updates, Principle 2, Action 6 – Endangered, Threatened & Protected species

Rhol presented the results of her research, this included which species are the highest risk from scallop dredgers in the Channel, and some suggested management actions.

Compiling the Productivity Susceptibility Assessment, Relative Impact Scores (RIS) based on spatial, temporal and intensity interactions and evidence of capture from bycatch datasets, five Raja species were found to be at the greatest risk with the Sandy ray and Blonde ray achieving the highest predicted risk scores.

There were some queries from the industry members of the group about whether the risk assessment takes into account amount caught of these species. They suggested weighting to include the amount caught.

All of the ETP species achieving the highest risk scores, excluding the European Eel, were elasmobranchs, therefore management recommendations proposed for the Channel Scallop Fishery will mainly revolve around benefiting these species. Rays and skates are currently managed as a mixed fishery with little species-specific measures in-place, whereby landings are capped at 1,256 tonnes for all ICES 7 subareas (inclusive of the English Channel encompassing VIIe and VIId). Byelaws implemented in each IFCA region prevent the landings of skates and rays smaller than 40cm disc width. Of the species identified as ETP only the Undulate ray, Tope shark and Spiny dogfish have

bycatch quotas limits at zero tonnes despite population trends and red-list status of the other ETP species.

From the results generated in the study and management strategies issued by the ICES Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF), the Shark Trust and CEFAS led initiative Shark-By-Watch UK; three main guidelines for improvement have been devised for the Elasmobranch species with a high potential susceptibility to scallop dredging activity:

1. Improve the survivability of ETP species

Concluded in the risk-analysis, the likelihood of survival of Elasmobranch species is high biologically and mainly hinges on practices employed on-board vessels and the discard rate. Consultations with skippers found that species caught were mostly handled with care, released within 'reasonable' time periods and sorted for juvenile species. It was expressed that early release and the use of conveyor belts would make the biggest difference to improve survival of species and reduce post-capture mortality.

2. Fisher-led Research to Improve Spatial and Temporal Management

Elasmobranch species are highly mobile and hence are likely to benefit less from the protection delivered hypothetically from spatial reserves compared to epifaunal organisms. Factoring ETP species vulnerable timings and areas into the assessment and contrasting this with fishing effort, demonstrated potentially high interactions. Therefore, avoiding specific habitats and sites during reproductive timings may provide the necessary protection to ensure the reproductive capacity of each ETP species is maintained. This could be achieved through voluntary schemes, whereby vessels that adhere to spatial restrictions would receive additional days at sea known as 'Conservation Credits'. However, during this stage of mapping SDMs, high-resolution observational data for species was significantly lacking. Engaging skippers in an incentive based 'real time' data collection process reporting any daily sightings of ETP species could help support the identification of essential sites and allow for more precise advisory mapping. Participatory training and identification workshops could improve the reliability of data logged on-board vessels, of which rays and skates are frequently misidentified.

3. Reducing Bycatch, Mortality and Disturbance

To enhance the environmental sustainability of the ETP species, stronger policy measures need to be implemented for species in terms of total allowable catch (TAC) limits and encouraged release. This could be achieved at a consumer level reducing demand for ray and skate species. Gear modification of the traditional Newhaven dredge using the 'hydrodredge' and 'low profile excluder dredge (LPD)' could negate any indirect effects ensued by ETP species such as injury, habitat loss and egg-case removal.

Some Steering Group members request to hear about the results in more depth, in particular JP, NR and JH

Minutes action 6: CN to set up another more in-depth presentation of the ETP research for those interested.

There is a need to get this research peer reviewed to assess the robustness of the results, and potentially then published. The first avenue to try would be Rhols supervisor. After that we could ask Cefas or BS if they would be able to get involved.

Minutes action 7: RHol to progress getting the ETP research peer reviewed

Action updates, Principle 2, Action 5 – Secondary species information

The successful EMFF funding application included funding for Cefas to do the assessment of whether the current observer data is sufficient, and to design a potential observer program if not. The group agreed to extend the timeline for this action because we had not taken into account the resourcing of the research i.e. doing the EMFF application.

Action updates, Principle 2, Action 7 – Habitats

BS told the group how he presented PUKFI and the scallop postdoc project to the ICSE WG Scallop.

The postdoc is going to do some camera work to integrate into a GIS dataset that relates to oceanographic variables and biological species distributions (benthos, fish and vertebrates) across the geographic region of the English Channel scallop fishery. The appointee will assimilate vessel monitoring system data to produce fishing intensity maps. This information will be used to undertake modelling to calculate the relative benthic status of the seabed in relation to fishing effort patterns in space and time. The appointee will also liaise with the fishing industry and other relevant bodies in relation to the project. Field work duties will include working with industry to deploy cameras on board scallop vessels to gather data on catch size distribution and age of scallops together with information on bycatch.

Michael Kaiser's group at Bangor University have developed a habitat impact assessment tool which will produce suggested management actions.

The postdoc will cover the year 1 & 2 milestones but due to the time spent getting funding and getting the person in place, they won't start until year 2. So we will be behind target but hopefully we can get some time back.

Action updates, Principle 2, Action 10 – Fishery specific objectives & decision-making processes

The group decided to discuss on lead in the annual January meeting.

Action updates, Principle 2, Action 11 – Monitoring & Evaluation

CN and TH had both investigated and had been told that the standard work of this group isn't rationale for a review mechanism of the fishery management. The review need to be holistic, whereas, the FIP group just review the Performance Indicators that the FIP is working on.

Also, this group reviews the fishery management against the MSC standard, whereas, a review of management has a slightly different aim- Is the management achieving its objectives? Are there other things the fishery could be doing? The review needs to consider other options or examples.

Fisheryprogress.org

CP gave a brief explanation of Fishery Progress to refresh people's memory after the webinars that we ran with Fishery progress in September to tell people about the idea.

Information from Fishery Progress: 'Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) throughout the world bring fishermen, suppliers, retailers, and food service companies together with conservation groups and

scientific experts to address environmental challenges in a fishery. Along with clear sustainability standards, public policy upgrades, and other interventions, FIPs make fisheries more sustainable by harnessing the private sector's power to incentivize positive change. But access to specific information about FIPs' progress has required searching dozens of websites. And even then, prospective buyers or conservation advocates faced inconsistent documentation and questions about the data's reliability.

FishChoice released a first-of-its-kind resource in October 2016 aimed at helping seafood buyers make better and easier sustainable sourcing choices. FisheryProgress.org is a one-stop-shop for reliable information on the progress of fishery improvement projects worldwide, using standard metrics to assess progress, and ensuring that data is independently verified. Recently, FisheryProgress hit the milestone of having 50 FIP profiles. This is critical because it means that more than half of the FIPs worldwide are now using FisheryProgress, making it truly a one-stop shop for reliable information about FIP progress.

In the webinar, FishChoice staff walked participants through the purpose of the website as well as the impact that it has had to date on improving FIP progress tracking and how industry is using it to strengthen their efforts to source sustainably.'

JP from Morrisons and RHob from New England Seafood explained why they supported it and how useful it is for the supply chain.

There were some questions about who is behind the website and a comment that it should be higher on the agenda at the Steering Group meetings, so everyone is around for the discussion. It was agreed that it will be early on the agenda in the January meeting. Another webinar was suggested to provide the background information for those who didn't attend the previous ones.

Minutes action 8: CN to organise another FisheryProgress webinar.

Summary of minutes actions:

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1	BB	to consider consultations and this project, and provide some information to the group about how best to proceed.	Complete
2	AL	to provide the minutes of the scientific meetings where the stock units and assessment are consulted upon, such as the ICES WG Scallop	
3	CN	to create dropbox for the Steering Group members to upload documents to.	Complete
4	CN	to have P1 meeting with AL and set up contact between AL and Shetland P1 assessor.	Complete
5	AL	to write a document showing that Cefas has assessed whether they need further info for P1.	
6	CN	to set up another more in-depth presentation of the ETP research for those interested.	Complete
7	RHob	to progress getting the ETP research peer reviewed	Ongoing
8	CN	to organise another FisheryProgress webinar.	Complete