**Project UK Fisheries Improvements Stage two: Environment sub-group**

**(Facilitated by the MSC)**

**Sub-group committee dial in**

Monday 30th September 2019 13.30 – 14.30

Emily Gibbs WWF EG

Fiona Nimmo Poseidon FN

Annika Clements Seafish AC

Helena Delgado-Nordmann Tesco HD

Mike Kaiser Heriot-Watt University MK

Bill Lart Seafish BL

David Donnan Scottish Natural Heritage DD

Cass Bromley Scottish Natural Heritage CB

Katie Keay MSC KK

Jo Pollett MSC JP

Matt Spencer MSC MS

Apologies:

Calum Duncan MCS CD

Kenny Coull SWFPA KC

Mike Park SWFPA MP

**Welcoming**

JP beings by introducing new members of staff – KK (Senior Fisheries Manager) & MS (Fisheries Officer) and briefly goes over the key actions that are to be addressed in the call: primary and secondary species & ETP, workload involved and the capacity to accomplish them. JP also informs the group that we will also be discussing which, if any, of the actions could be completed by MSc student projects and/or commissioning external consultants.

*Nephrops action 1: Collate and analyse catch composition for each FU to confirm primary and secondary main and minor species (trawl and creel)*

FN highlights the importance of better understanding the EU database for landings and discards, and the need for Scottish input for data. Suggests we may have to request data for catch composition and other specific data. FN believes that right now it is important to get a feel from the group for what data is needed- a gap analysis could be used to patch information gaps. Whiting and discards are deemed as a significant issue in this fishery by ICES but there needs to be evidence to back this up. BL states that Mike Park did some work on discard reduction plans and wonders if there’s anything he could provide on that.

BL states that we should get a hold of the discard reduction plans as MP has referred to it in the past. BL believes that KC & MP are working them up but might not be publicly available yet, to which FN confirms. BL suggests going straight to the reduction plan as opposed to contacting Marine Scotland for their data as the reduction plans come from Marine Scotland information anyway. FN asks the group whether they had a timeline on publishing date for the work MP and KC are doing as they need to let people know what needs doing, it will also be important to know the coverage, whether it’s across all FUs.

**Action: MSC to follow up with MP for reduction plan document.**

MK believes SFF have their own on-board observers and so there is the possibility of collecting their data. BL asks whether the data is already publicly accessible, to which MK is uncertain. BL suggests reaching out to Mike Montgomery for more on the groundfish trawl survey.

**Action: MSC to peak to SFF for their observer data**

**Action: *BL* to reach out to Mike Montgomery for more info on the groundfish trawl survey**

*Nephrops action 2: Establish bait species used within the creel fishery and determined outcome status*

FN states that this was an action for industry, and it is worth following up with them. JP states that she has already reached out to Alistair Sinclair - Scottish Creel Fishermen’s Federation (SCFF) – to get an understanding of what they use, quantities and species.

**Action: MSC to follow up with SCFF, and ask the same question to CIFA**

*Nephrops action 3: Source available shapefile for ETP species distribution*

The group discusses whether there had been any progress on shapefiles. AC has sent over some JNCC work to FN. Previously CD had provided good input on this action and FN is waiting for the ETP list to be firmed up before working any further. AC states that this was an area she was not entirely clear about, she gives the example of Scottish PMF’s being included and wonders if there is a Northern Ireland equivalent to be added in? Reaffirms FN’s need to define what is on the list and AC informs the group that there is also creel fishing in Northern Ireland that would sit in FU15 that will need addressing. They don’t have a federation but AC states that she is happy to reach out on that front. FN states the importance of including the Northern Irish creel fishermen and getting some data from them. In terms of an ETP list it is important that the group brings information from all the relevant UK bodies. Critically, FN states it will be important to understand how a fishery will deal with vessels operating in various areas, where a species is listed as ETP in one area but not the next.

**Action: AC to reach out to NI creel fishermen for information.**

JP asks EG if she has the capacity to develop the ETP list – she is currently undertaking similar work for the Stage 1 Plaice and Lemon sole FIP. EG informs the group that she currently awaiting information from Marine Scotland. She could also try speaking with JNCC to provide information from other areas to provide a list for the group to discuss. EG asks for a contact in Northern Ireland? AC has a well defined list from 2013 she could share and suggests reaching out to DERA – where AC has a contact.

**Action: EG to reach out to JNCC for ETP information around the UK.**

**Action: AC to share list and contact with EG.**

*Nephrops action 4: GIS based risk assessment*

FN states the the EDPR funding for ETP work has already been paid to SWFPA, and will assist in designing a recording protocol.

**Action: JP to follow up with Femke for update.**

JP informs the group that on this action for stage 1 an MSc student was used, but it would be great if the group had internal capacity to take this on. BL says that Euniceworks as a part time lecturer at University of Aberdeen and has supervised an MSc student to do similar work – static gear and interactions with porpoises – this summer. Seafish have the experience of doing/supervising this, but the work will need someone dedicated full time to it. BL states that an issue with MSc students is that they might not want to do it as there is little fieldwork; inducement might be necessary such as offering bursaries and don’t expect people to volunteer. JP states that previously the opportunity for MSC experience was enough, but acknowledges that there may need some extra incentives.

FN believes this can be delivered as an MSc but there will be points to work up before we offer it e.g. data sources – complete and available. FN states we can open it up to GIS students in general and not just students on marine biology courses. AC states that University of Ulster and Queens Belfast have courses, with many in the group having links to different universities. JP asks MK what the timeline is for masters students taking on a project. MK states that typically (at Bangor and HW) it topics were issued in November and students were selecting around December/January time. Group decides it is important start on this work immediately.

**Action: BL to get hold of Eunice MSc description**

**Action: MSC to investigate funding for students**

*Scallop action 3: Define and agree ETP list and undertake GIS based risk assessment (MSc?)*

This action has significant overlap with Nephrops, and the above discussion also applies here.

*Scallop action 1: Review existing data available to inform catch profile of dredgers including landings, discard data, and observer coverage*

FN states that bycatch data is available and that Lynda was going to look into this as she has a paper in progress. BL believes she is working on it and is currently chairing the WK Scallop group that includes Bryce Stewart and that Peter Duncan (Isle of Man Government) had attended. Says it is worth asking them how much progress has been made.

**Action: MSC to follow up with Linda.**

FN states that this is an issue across all of the PUKFI groups, with ideas floated on data collection and it being industry led. JP enquires into the transferability of data collection from the Stage 1 FIPs, or will we need a pan-UK approach? FN confirms that we would need representative data for each area at a minimum, as there is a need to understand what is occurring in the various areas. BL states that he was meant to write up work on juveniles after the last meeting.

**Action: BL to write upwork on juveniles and consult with Bryce and Stewart Jenkins**

*Scallop action3: Undertake gap analysis on data to determine if the appropriate level of detail is available to provide reliable total catch statistics, including unwanted catch and observed mortality, and under any necessary data gathering exercises based on these gaps.*

BL states that the ecodredge report will give the group some idea of the survival rates of bycatch species in relation to their damage levels, regards it as a rich vein of information that will be useful for this action. BL states that he needs to go back through the report and the papers that contributed to it.

**Action: BL to review ecodredge work and supporting papers for relevant information for this action, and search for any recent or updated work in this area.**

**Action: JP to send over Cefas report to FN.**

BL doesn’t believe that this is an MSc piece of work due to job satisfaction (or lack thereof) with FN stating that November might be too early to get this organised in time. BL will work through his ecodrege work and work out survival rates**.** FN states that this would be really beneficial once we have the ETP species list and states we will need some quantitative data on this.

FN asks MK if there is a template for MSc adverts that he has – JP also offers to dig out what was drafted for PUKFI stage one. MK says he has one, but briefly describes what you need: keeping it short, what the MSc opportunity will entail, where the student will be based, support and what they will get out of it.

**Action: MK to circulate template.**

FN states the importance of having a shared resource area for all of this work, suggests dropbox. JP informs the group that this has been used for other PUKFI working groups. The group confirms that they are all able to access dropbox.

**Action: MS to set up dropbox folder for the group.**

*Mike update on PhD*

The advertisement has just been closed with an interview date set for the 14th October. JP asks whether there is the potential for MScs to operate alongside the PhD, focussing on Nephrops, and if there is anything the group can do to help push this forward? MK says he is happy to try and circulate but suggests it would be sensible to cast the net a bit wider, mentions asking York and Bangor.

*SICA analysis*

JP flags to the group that in year 2 of the action plan there is the SICA analysis. JP informs the group that in Stage 1 this was done using Cefas but if the group has internal capacity to take it on that would be great, especially with the work Seafish have been doing. BL agrees to take this forward with a timescale of starting the work in April 2020. BL believes that Seafish will be revisiting their original SICA around then any way and so this procedure could be quite useful. JP asks BL if he had sent the previous one to FN; which BL says he hasn’t but lets FN know there is a report online so he will ensure she gets the link. BL states that it was all species – which included scallops – which he can circulate. FN offers to check it against other methodology available.

**Action: BL to pass over link to Seafish SICA tool for FN.**

**Action: BL to share all species work.**

**Action: FN to check methodology.**

*AOB*

BL asks whether MK was planning on writing a brief of the Bangor tool for potential MSc students that will not be under his tutelage e.g. if we used a York University student. MK worries about the application of the tool outside of a select few (H-W, York and Bangor). If there is good coordination between Universities MK is happy to write it up for JP to share.

**Action: MK to write up brief on Bangor tool.**

FN asks about the potential for SNH internships instead of MSc students, could we use it for PUKFI 2? DD says there is a possibility but there are internal procedures to follow – bidding process – and it might only be applicable to the Scottish work so the group would need to frame the request well. In terms of timeline, this needs to be done before Christmas.

**Action: DD to confirm the procedure and get back to JP.**

**Action: MSC to draft JD with SNH to fit into internship requirements**

**Action: BL to see what appetite there is for seafish bursaries**

BL also believes it is important to reach out to the creel fishery off Northumberland to see what bait they are using. FN believes it is important to have a formal document we could send out to all industry members. JP states that FN and JP will work together on the questions with MK support.

**Action: JP, FN and MK to work this up.**

*Next sub-group call agreed for November 7th*