

South West Inshore Fisheries Group

Executive Committee Meeting - Minutes

2nd December 2014

Europa Building, Glasgow

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| Chair | Alastair McNeill, SWIFG Chair |
| SWIFG Attendees | Dick James (NIFF), Patrick Stewart (CFA), Bill Wiseman (SWFPA) |
| Also attending | Greg Allan (Marine Scotland contractor), Mark Caldwell (Marine Scotland Compliance), Calum Duncan (Scottish Environment LINK), Alan Forbes (Razor Group), Joanna Holbrook (Marine Scotland Compliance), Dr Nick Lake (Marine Scotland contractor), Chris Leakey (SNH), Fiona Mills (SWIFG secretariat), Pam Taylor (Solway Firth Partnership), George White (National Liaison Officer), Ally Young (Marine Scotland Compliance) Kyla Orr and Ali McKnight (Seafish Inshore Fisheries Project) Clive Fox and Andrea Veszelszki (SAMS) |
| Apologies | Tom Bryan-Brown (Mallaig & North West FA), Iain Gatt (Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association), John Hermse (Scallop Association), Andrew & June Lochhead (independent), Sandy Ritchie (Anglo Scottish FA) |

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| 1 Welcome/Introductions/Apologies |
| The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and all attendees introduced themselves Apologies were noted |
| 2. Minutes of Meeting of 9th September 2014 |
| The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed with a change noted under item 3 from SIFAG to IFMAC With this change the minutes were approved |
| 3 Matters Arising |
| Issues surrounding the IFG Remit should now be picked up under the IFG review that will be running between now and March The Draft Action Plan has now been changed to reflect discussions at the last meeting and will be circulated by the Secretariat Sub-group meetings have taken place for Solway and Mull but not yet for the Clyde – see item 4. Whilst it is difficult to get access to fishermen on the Clyde this is due to the size and geography of the area and also that fact that fishermen are normally out working during the day – an evening meeting would therefore be appropriate The last 2 actions for the CFA are carried forward, also see item 10 |
| 4 Sub Groups Update |
| The sub group meeting on 6 th November on Mull was very well attended by a mix of creelers, trawlers and divers The main discussion was around the MPA/SAC management proposals for sites in the area and there was also a presentation on the Inshore Fisheries Projects. Solway has 3 projects underway – data collection, lobster v-notching and creel panel There is a daytime meeting on Friday 12th December to roll out the v-notching project Agreement has been reached with Queens University Belfast to undertake genetic analysis of the notches Three IFG members are also involved in the data collection project. The two applications that were in for funding of lobster v-notching projects in Mull and the Clyde have been deferred until the outcome of the Solway project is clearer. In any case, there has been a large distribution of clippers through the Fisheries Officers and so v-notching is happening on a voluntary basis around the SWIFG area, although uptake has varied across the area with good uptake in Islay and Galloway and low uptake in the Clyde. Hobby fishing is an obstacle to encouraging fishermen to undertake notching There could be an option |

to bring all those fishermen who are notching into the DNA analysis scheme at some point in the future, but they are not currently required to retain notches. Results of DNA analysis in Northern Ireland show localised recruitment with a slightly northern drift but larvae may be able to swim against the current. It seems that there are important local recruitment pathways that need further understanding. Marine Scotland confirmed that fishermen should continue to send in the forms indicating the numbers of lobsters they have notched.

5 Action Plan Developments

The Action Plan has been amended per the minutes of the SWIFG meeting of 9 September 2014 to address the point on 'restore'. A main purpose of sub groups is to facilitate the process of meeting the objectives of the action plan and thus the management plans. Parts of the Action Plan are being picked up within the sub groups, others by the Inshore Fisheries projects and others through consultations. These include data collection, lobster v-notching and creel panels. Potential fisheries research in the Clyde could come about via Clyde 2020 and the Chair advised the meeting that he had contacted Sarah Brown (Firth of Clyde Forum) indicating that the SWIFG would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership on fisheries research opportunities. Current consultations on gear conflict and king scallops offer opportunities for IFG members to seek to have issues in the Action Plan on these topics highlighted in responses to Marine Scotland.

6 Consultations

The consultation on controls in the King Scallop Fishery will finish on 6th Jan (*NB this has since been changed to 26th Jan*). The consultation on MPA/SAC Management will close on 5th Feb. There are also consultations out on Gear Conflict and Scottish Fish Quotas. Local FAs should respond individually to the consultations as they see fit. The Mull sub group suggested that they may want the SWIFG to submit a response on their behalf. A Solway sub group has suggested that they might be interested in the SWIFG submitting a response in relation to Luce Bay. Any proposed responses will be sent to the Executive Committee for agreement before being submitted.

There was some discussion around the fact that the Clyde is part of the Irish Sea in terms of a biogeographical region and that the MPA/SAC network will be assessed from a UK perspective. Greg Allan to contact Eamonn Murphy to get clarity.

For the consultation on Gear Conflict it would be worth highlighting the voluntary agreement which has been operating very well in the Solway for a number of years. There was also a Mull voluntary agreement in place at some point. The Chair will draft a letter to be circulated to the Executive Committee for agreement. However, it was noted that, due to differences around the coast in the details of codes of conduct, it may not be straightforward to produce a national code. It was not clear whether adherence to the codes can lead to a reduction in insurance. Police Scotland are now sending officers for training so that cases put before the procurator fiscal are presented in the correct legal manner and offenders are therefore more likely to be prosecuted.

ACTION

- Greg Allan to contact Eamonn Murphy to get clarity on review process of MPAs/SACs (in the Clyde) from a UK perspective
- Members to send comments to the Chair on Gear Conflict by the 16 January 2015 eg highlighting voluntary codes in the SWIFG area in order that a draft response to the consultation can be prepared and circulated to the ExCom before the February 2015 consultation deadline

7 Razor Fish/Electrofishing

Alan Forbes gave a talk about the move to legalise electrofishing for razor fish in Scotland on behalf of the Razor Forum. The Forum wants the fishery to be officially derogated and managed. There are strong markets established overseas for Scottish product and it could be an important resource for rural communities and smaller vessels of the inshore fishing fleet. Unfortunately much of the activity is currently happening under the radar and illegally and there is therefore no management. Fishing can be undertaken by hydraulic dredging, however this is seen to impact the benthos as it can displace sand 1 metre wide and 18 inches deep and is usually only an option for larger vessels. Handfishing, often using salt, is a small niche market but international (Dutch and Irish) competitors using other methods keep the prices down. The Razor Forum support electrofishing as the least environmentally harmful and due to the opportunities for small under 10m boats. They believe that it should be a locally managed fishery within a local area at a limited level with weekly

landings data analysed to build up a stock assessment through fishing (doing it in advance would be costly, time consuming and would open up the area for other competitors). The IFGs may be a way to manage the fishery locally The Fishing Industry Science Alliance has undertaken a study of electrofishing for razor clams and this was published in October 2014 This study concludes that the effects on other species are negligible and that as long as the correct gear and voltage/ampage are used then it is safe for divers The study recommends that there should be stock assessment and management It is available on the Marine Scotland website

There will probably be a consultation on this by Marine Scotland next year, however the following points were raised

- Need to convince EU to change legislation and that can only happen through UK membership which could take a long time
- Toxicity testing for ASP may need to be at the cost of each fisherman A dispatch note would need to follow stock from boat to the dispatch centre These species are difficult to deplete. Any reputational issue with razor fish could have an impact on the reputation of Scottish shellfish in general.
- It is easy to overfish locally so it is important to include a proposal on how to manage the fishery.
- There is a worry that Irish hydraulic boats may head to Scottish grounds and some Scottish boats are getting set up with hydraulic gear
- Marine Scotland Compliance are prosecuting boats and following the law They also report boats to the FSA They are pushing for MMO to ensure boats coming to Scotland are operating under the Scottish system to enable a level playing field.
- The classification of each area is by species.

8 Scottish Government Update

There are many consultations ongoing

The IFG review will be undertaken between now and end March. The remit, structure and terms of reference have not yet been decided but, as well as input from the FAs, Marine Scotland will probably look for wider involvement Jennifer Mowat will be undertaking the work

Working through cockle management arrangements for the Solway.

9. Chair's meeting Update

- Response is outstanding for the representative from the IFGs on the discards steering group
- The summary update on the EFF has been done.
- Gear conflict task force findings have been reviewed at the IFMAC meeting
- The project deadline was extended but the FISA pot still has £150k available
- Consideration of technical support for the IFGs will be covered under the IFG review
- Inshore Fisheries Conference will take place in Autumn 2015 and will have a format change to enable more fishermen to attend
- A meeting has taken place between Marine Scotland and Seafood on the creel support fund but outcome is pending.

10 AOCB

Inshore Fisheries projects update

WP1 – succorfish trial

- 111 skippers have registered on the west coast and 40 in Shetland The project has been extended to the east coast and there are 55 notes of interest already Any fishermen still wanting to take part from the west coast must get in touch with Kyla or Ali asap
- Installation of first 150 units will take place in Jan. There are information meetings happening at various locations around the coast
- Most of the interest is from the static sector but more mobile have come on board in particular since the MPA management consultation which has highlighted the importance of fishing data

WP2 – monitoring catch for stock assessments

- All 11 vessels have been selected (9 static, 1 trawl and 1 scallop dredge). There was high demand but the selection was made to look in particular at lobsters and crabs for under 10m boats

WP4 – see item 11

There was some discussion as follows

- The message should not be to individual fishermen that it is up to them to provide evidence for the MPA consultation where they are represented by a FA
- Units have 12 month warranty If the device is faulty then succorfish will rectify
- VHF will bounce from any other boats operating VHF in the area but there may be some areas where, as a result of this study, new masts need to be installed on land

CFA Update

CFA will recommend to members that they should wait for the IFG review to take place before deciding whether to continue with membership of the SWIFG

CFA are disappointed with the consultation process with fishermen on the emergency laying of electric cable from Carsaig Bay Mainland to Jura Originally it was intended to lay the cable without burial which is against national policy and despite there being substantial fishing activity in the area It was then going to be buried down to the 50m contour Despite a further meeting of the CFA with SSE and a new agreement being reached, Marine Scotland LOT have not upheld the latest agreement but have given consent for burial from 0m to the 50m contour

11. SAMS project update – WP4 of Inshore Fisheries Projects

Clive Fox from SAMS gave a presentation on WP4 which is due to deliver by July 2015 The project aims to pilot a demonstration system for data presentation and produce a final report It needs to also consider the use of NMPi There was discussion as follows

- Orkney are monitoring sea temps against catch levels so it may be useful to include sea temps
- Need to understand what gear is most effective
- Weather data could be useful
- The idea is to pull data up quickly online through the web
- Mapped data of where fishing takes place for interaction (from vessel data eg succorfish)
- There are some issues zooming in with NMPi and also there are many irrelevant data layers Need to focus on specifically what fisheries in the Clyde need to see the manage themselves and their interaction with other marine users
- Could include change over time
- All licensed vessels submit catch data to MS but the ICES boxes are too big From 2016 there will be a new system so there is potentially the opportunity to change to a small square size for catch reporting
- Gear conflict management
- Access level controls
- Plotter data not easy to use as there are many different formats
- Clive will be visiting Shetland to understand the management system in place there

It was agreed that Clive and Andrea should come along to the June SWIFG meeting to update the group on progress

ACTION

- Secretariat to liaise with SAMS to send out a questionnaire to members for them to feed ideas in to the project

12 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 3rd March 2015 Venue to be confirmed Sub group meetings will be arranged during February

Signed as an accurate minute by Chair

Clive Munn 03/03/2015
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