

## Minutes: UK Scallops, Principle 1 and 2

Meeting Date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Location: Teams

Attendees	Organisation
AH: Adam Holland	Sea Source
AB: Andrew Brown	Macduff Shellfish
ADB: Anton Dietschel-Buehler	Flatfish
BL: Bill Lart	Seafish
CD: Calum Duncan	Scottish Environment Link
CL: Carole Laignel	Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation on behalf of the Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
CP: Claire Pescod	Macduff Shellfish
EW: Elaine Whyte	Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance
FdB: Femke de Boer	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
HF: Hannah Fennell	Orkney Fisheries Association
MF: Mairi Fenton	Heriot-Watt University
FN: Fiona Nimmo	Poseidon
JM: Jennifer Mouat	North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
JPo: Jim Portus	South West Fish Producer Organisation
JP: Jo Pollett	Marine Stewardship Council
JH: Juliette Hatchman	South West Fish Producer Organisation
KK: Katie Keay	Marine Stewardship Council
KC: Kenny Coull	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
LB: Lynda Blackadder	Marine Scotland Science
MS: Matt Spencer	Marine Stewardship Council
MP: Mike Park	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
RL: Rebecca Lyal	Marine Stewardship Council
SM: Simon Macdonald	West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
RW: Rob Whiteley	Natural England
<b>Apologies</b>	
Andy Boulton	Waitrose
Bryce Stewart	University of York
Ben Collier	Northern Ireland Gear trials
David Donnan	NatureScot
Carrie McMinn	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
Andy Lawler	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

### Purpose of the meeting

This call was an opportunity to update the Round 2 UK scallop Steering Group on progress from the annual review, and discuss actions for Principle 1 and 2. Some actions for Principle 1 were also discussed in the next meeting held on 21 September.

**Agenda Item 1: Review of this year's main action points**

FN presented the latest progress on Principle 1 and Principle 2 actions in the UK scallop fishery improvement project (FIP). Poseidon conducted the annual review of the FIP earlier in May, and FN stressed the importance of Year 3 in delivering progress on the actions.

Principle 1:

- a score change is expected in the assessment of stock status (PI 1.2.4) in the Clyde, Orkney, North Sea and Dogger Bank from SG60-79 to SG>80. The change to scoring is based on ensuring the stock assessment is appropriate for the stock and harvest control rules (HCRs).

Principle 2:

- the score for secondary species outcome (PI 2.2.1) is expected to move from SG60-70 to SG>80.
- the scores for endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species outcome and management (PI 2.3.1 and 2.3.2) are expected to increase from SG>60 to SG60-79, and for information, SG60-79 to SG>80.
- The scores for habitat outcome and management (PI 2.4.1 and 2.4.2) are expected to increase from SG>60 to SG60-79, if evidence can be provided that shows dredging is not likely to reduce the structure and function of encountered habitats, including Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs).

*Discussion*

FN explained the annual review was undertaken before recent Cefas surveys in the North Sea and Dogger Bank were available. The Dogger Bank scallop stock was not included in the pre-assessment for this FIP, and FN recommended a full review of stock assessments for the unit of assessment (UoA) at the end of Year 3. CP reminded the group that the stock assessments are discussed at the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) Project Steering Board meetings and reiterated the importance of having FN and JP attend these meetings.

BL commented on the secondary species actions, noting that his alternative measures report showed that secondary species may encounter the gear while it is deployed but are not hauled on deck. FN explained that this would be considered as unobserved mortality.

KK concluded the section by reading out the outstanding actions from the last meeting with the following to be carried over to the next meeting:

***Actions from Item 1:***

1. BL to ask Jess Sparks about any availability of Seafish budget to support the ETP wheelhouse guide development.
2. JM to share the Scottish Fisheries Sustainable Accreditation Group (SFSAG) benthic interaction report with the Secretariat.

**Agenda Item 2: Endangered, threatened and protected species**

The FIP action plan requires the development of a recording protocol to record, analyse and monitor ETP species interactions with the fishery. JP has been in discussions with Clean Catch about trialling their app on Macduff scallop vessels, and invited other Steering Group members to also participate in

this trial. JP has also received feedback on a similar app used to record bycatch, called BATMap, which is currently being trialled in the Scotland. JP asked if any attendees had used the BATMap app, and if so, to share feedback on its functionality.

#### *Discussion*

JM confirmed that BATMap was being used in the Western Isles pilot project, and took an action to feedback skipper use of the BATMap from the Western Isles to the Secretariat. CP suggested that if BATMap and Clean Catch are both being trialled by vessels in the FIP, then the Steering Group can compare functionality to ensure the most appropriate tool is being used. The BATMap app may be limited in the extent it can be adapted for specific use by the FIP vessels. FdB submitted a request for volunteers to the Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFPA) scallop committee and will let the Secretariat know if anyone is interested.

Wheelhouse guide update:

To support skippers in the identification of ETP species, the Steering Group agreed that a wheelhouse guide should be produced which aims to cover the likely ETP species encountered in the *Nephrops*, scallop, plaice and lemon sole FIPs. A sub-group has been formed to deliver this wheelhouse guide and are collecting imagery and data for a draft guide to present at the next Steering Group meeting.

#### ***Actions from Item 2:***

1. JM to provide skipper feedback on the use of BATMap in the Western Isles pilot scheme to the Secretariat.
2. Steering Group members to let the Secretariat know if they would like to volunteer for Clean Catch trial.

#### **Agenda Item 3: Habitats**

This action requires understanding the scale and impact the fishery is having on habitats. MF provided an update on her PhD research project and the low impact scallop gear (LISG) trial she is supporting. MF informed the Steering Group the sea trials of the new gear were underway. The gear uses skirts on the belly bags to reduce interaction with the seabed in the Moray Firth. MF offered to present the final report at the next Steering Group meeting.

MF has been working on species distribution models for Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) susceptible to damage from towed bottom-contact fishing gear. As part of this work, MF supervised two masters projects which focussed on sea fan and sponge communities and horse mussel beds. Conceptual PMF distribution maps were modelled based on the species' life histories. The masters projects also looked potential community shifts under different climate change scenarios, which can also be applied to PMFs.

The next phase of MF's PhD project will use the Bangor habitat impact tool to analyse Relative Benthic Status. When MF has the predicted distribution of commonly encountered habitats and VMEs, she will analyse the relative benthic status of the seabed in terms of overlap with the scallop fishery. MF has also agreed to extend this research to cover habitat suitability for ETP species, with the aim of reporting it to this group in December 2021.

#### *Discussion*

RW asked if the scope of MF's PhD can be transposed to non-Scottish areas, and MF said it will only give partial coverage across of activity the UoA, and even in Scotland won't give a full picture.

FN provided an update from David Donnan on participation in the Scottish Governments "Fairer, Greener Scotland" program that runs from 2022 – 2024, and relates to ETPs and Marine Protected Areas. The program commits to protect >10% of seas, above the current MPA measures, by establishing protected sites, and using evidenced based approaches to protecting the inshore area. The project is within the timeframe of the FIP and is led by Marine Scotland, so FN asked if there was opportunity and interest from the Steering Group to engage. KC noted that the project has not yet been fully defined, but SWFPA will be working with Marine Scotland, and currently meet regularly with Nature Conservation Team. KC expects stakeholder engagement to start when the policy details have been clarified.

CD asked how the FIP could engage due to the diverse organisational priorities and perspectives on the Steering Group. KC added that that most Steering Group members will be involved with the stakeholder engagement process for the new policy, through their own organisation. FN reflected that Marine Scotland should be made aware of the work MF is undertaking on PMF distribution modelling and mapping.

AB suggested that the FIP could be a useful mechanism to support the delivery of some of Marine Scotland's sustainability objectives. He noted that Steering Group members share aligned goals for sustainable fisheries and economies, and this forum is a good space for stakeholders to share their views. There are various forums in which to update Marine Scotland on the progress of the FIP, and the Secretariat can provide Steering Group members with details of where the FIP action plan overlaps with Marine Scotland's strategy.

*MPA mapping for fisherman project update:*

JP provided an update from Eleanor Michie on the MPA mapping for fishermen project conducted by Kingfisher, which is on track for completion in October 2021. A meeting will be arranged in November for a presentation of the final version of the tool to all Project UK Steering Groups.

**Action from Item 3:**

1. MF to present results of the LISG project at the next Steering Group meeting.
2. Secretariat to update Marine Scotland on PMF distribution modelling and mapping by MF.

**Agenda Item 4: Ecosystem**

To understand more about the interaction between the fishery and the wider ecosystem a scale, intensity, consequence analysis (SICA) workshop was held in March 2021. A wide range of experts were invited to the workshop to provide evidence for their understanding of the ecosystem impacts of the fishery. FN has drafted a report based on the workshop discussions, which she presented to the Steering Group.

*Findings:*

- No agreement was made on the number of ecosystems to consider in this fishery, but biological and physical indicators suggest the presence of more than three. Until a final decision is made, the areas will remain as the North Sea, West of Scotland and Irish Sea.

- “Composition of species” was ranked the most important ecosystem sub-component. “Composition of species” and “Functional Group” were voted equally as the most affected ecosystem sub-component.
- “Interaction with habitat” was considered the aspect of fishing activity causing the biggest impact.
- Overall, the SICA for ecosystem outcome status meets SG60 requirements for scallop dredge and management should focus on effort/ footprint/ spatial/ and/ or gear technology. FN invited the Steering Group to read the report and provide feedback.

### *Discussion*

Steering Group members previously raised the issue of carbon sequestration, and KK noted that considering this as part of the FIP would require additional resources. AB noted the availability of papers and studies on the topic from the Scottish Government’s “Blue Carbon Forum”, and BL flagged the [House of Commons summary](#) on seabed carbon.

AB surmised the outcome of a recent meeting between himself, CD, KC and WWF to discuss the WWF, RSPB and the Marine Conservation Society report ‘Switching gears: Achieving Climate Smart Fisheries. Issues such as fuel consumption and vessel emission production could be resolved in a shorter time period, whereas carbon sequestration and food web impacts will require further analysis and understanding to inform an action plan.

BL noted a new PhD that will model impacts of gear on blue carbon in the North Sea habitats, which Mike Kaiser will know more about. BL thinks there is interest in understanding how the seabed penetration on *Nephrops* trawls may have bearing on carbon sequestration. KK noted the next Fisheries Management Innovation Group meeting has blue carbon on the agenda.

CP raised concerns about adding additional workstreams to the FIP on top of the MSC standard, particularly if there is limited budget and capacity, so suggested to look where the FIP could support other pieces of work on blue carbon.

### ***Actions from Item 4:***

1. Steering Group to review FN’s SICA report and provide feedback.
2. Secretariat to obtain more details on the blue carbon PhD from Mike Kaiser and share with the Steering Group.

### **Agenda Item 5: Stock status**

Each Devolved Administration conducts its own stock surveys and assessments, and representatives were invited to update the Steering Group of progress. Marine Scotland Science updated in relation to stock status (item 5), and AFBI and Cefas updated in relation to item 6 (see below).

#### *Scotland*

LB informed the Steering Group that there is no update on stock status from Marine Scotland Science (MSS) since the last meeting. The shellfish modelling position at MSS has been withdrawn, so stock assessments will need to be made by existing staff. MSS is going through a project prioritisation phase and recruitment freeze, so a scallop stock assessment is not expected until late 2021 or early 2022. Scallop stock advice is not formally required by ICES, so the surveys are frequently deprioritised.

### *Surveys in 2021*

MSS has completed three surveys with revised procedures as a result of covid. In Shetland, one scientist was on board and 37 stations were recorded. On the west coast there was one scientist on board but there were engine issues and only 20 stations were completed. The east coast survey had two scientists on board and 81 stations were completed. On the 14-26<sup>th</sup> October two scientists will be on board to do the Clyde survey. LB confirmed she would share the cruise reports and that they should be available online.

LB added that Orkney Sustainable Fisheries (OSF) resumed observer trips on scallop vessels in August. Sampling will continue on a regular basis, when safe to do so. Samples will hopefully be kept for laboratory analysis later this year. An OSF representative will join the ICES Scallop Working Group workshop in October. The primary objectives for the OSF scallop project are to determine the relative abundance of king scallop resources around Orkney, and to produce a heat map of fishing effort. The secondary objectives focus determining optimum tow durations and gear efficiency, and assessing the bycatch levels. LB can send this summary to the Secretariat.

### *Reference points*

LB updated MSS's plan for advising on reference points. LB noted that while reference points are useful for fishery management, the priority for MSS is to conduct a scallop stock assessment. ICES is planning workshops in autumn/ winter to look at MSY reference points and LB will share the meeting details with the Steering Group as soon as they are available. These workshops will follow on from work completed for stocks with an analytical assessment, such as cod and haddock.

### *Scallop bycatch paper*

LB said that she had finished the scallop bycatch paper, with feedback now required from Marine Scotland Policy colleagues before sharing with the Steering Group. The paper analyses bycatch species encountered from 2009 -2019, including catch composition by quantity and weight, and some information on the damage index.

### *Discussion*

AB suggested using UK science funds to support the stock assessments in the absence of resources at MSS. If the funds are administered by Defra then it may mean MSS is eligible, despite the money being allocated to internal work at MSS. JP asked if the SICG, or industry could apply for on behalf of MSS, though LB was unsure whether there would be issues with data access. AB noted applications need to have an academic affiliation, though the full details are due to be released on 18<sup>th</sup> October. EW added that partnering with universities and industries can be time restrictive and unachievable in a 12 month period of the financial year, so suggested also working with the Scottish Government for longer term projects.

### ***Actions from Item 5:***

1. LB to:
  - a. share the update from the Orkney Sustainable Fishery.
  - b. share link to the ICES workshop agendas.
  - c. share send the cruise reports from the summer MSS surveys with the Steering Group.

- d. share the bycatch paper once comments from the MSS policy colleagues have been addressed.

### **Agenda Item 6: Information and assessment**

This agenda item focuses on Steering Group members providing updates on the stock surveys in their region and the development of suitable stock assessments.

#### *Northern Ireland*

Carrie McMinn, AFBI, had submitted recent stock survey information to JP via email, which JP shared with the Steering Group. The AFBI scallop survey went ahead in February 2021, with little substantive changes in results from the previous year. AFBI has started a new project “Enhanced Inshore” which will put more concentrated effort in to collecting data on inshore stocks including scallops. One of the ideas of this project is to start a scallop self-sampling scheme which sees scallop fishermen provide AFBI with a bag of unsorted catch, similar to the current *Nephrops* self-sampling scheme. This would provide samples of scallops from across the season and is due to be completed December 2022. AFBI has also started a new project looking and genetic connectivity across the Northern Ireland region. This work will cover both king and queen scallops and is also due to be completed December 2022.

AFBI identified four scallop enhancement sites through public consultation, along with additional inshore MPAs. Whilst there are some issues with the MPAs, the enhancement sites seem to have stakeholder support. AFBI looked at possible enhancement strategies through a Seafish funded project and the report is available at <https://www.afbini.gov.uk/publications/scallop-enhancement-report>. Part of this project will focus on using modelling to determine where larvae from the enhancement areas would settle and if this would benefit the fishing industry. SSM added that *Ichthyop* modelling is being conducted to assess larval dispersal in the Irish Sea, and the results will be available in late 2021.

#### *England*

Andy Lawler, Cefas, also updated via email and informed that Cefas successfully carried out a dredge survey in the central North Sea last week and is due to complete the survey on the English inshore grounds in the North Sea later this week.

#### *Discussion*

In response to Andy Lawler’s update, CP suggested that as a member of the SICG Project Steering Board, it is important to raise that the dredge surveys are a high priority for industry.

JP noted that Action 1 requires stock data from Cardigan Bay. JP received an enquiry from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) asking for more information about the FIP. FN shared the SICA map showing that Cardigan Bay is part of a UoA, so it might be appropriate for NRW to engage with the Steering Group.

### **Actions from Item 6:**

1. JP to speak to NRW about participating in Project UK.

### **Any Other Business**

BL mentioned that Jack Emmerson from the Isle of Man was interested in Project UK. The Secretariat had already attempted to contact him, and CP offered to follow up with Jack to ascertain his interest in joining the next meetings.

The Secretariat noted that the MSC UK Awards will feature the research undertaken by MF and AH showcase the work undertaken in Project UK. Please contact the Secretariat if you are interested in joining the live stream of the Awards (7<sup>th</sup> October 16:30).

## Meeting Closes

15:45

Actions Arising	Responsibility
<b><u>Review of this year's main action points</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BL to ask Jess Sparks about any availability of Seafish budget to support the ETP wheelhouse guide development.</li> <li>JM to share the Scottish Fisheries Sustainable Accreditation Group (SFSAG) benthic interaction report with the Secretariat.</li> </ul>	Bill Lart  Jennifer Mouat
<b><u>Endangered, threatened and protected species</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JM to provide skipper feedback on the use of batmap in the Western Isles pilot scheme to the Secretariat.</li> <li>Steering Group members to let the Secretariat know if they would like to volunteer for Clean Catch trial.</li> </ul>	Jennifer Mouat  Steering Group
<b><u>Habitats</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MF to present results of the LISG project at the next Steering Group meeting.</li> <li>Secretariat to update Marine Scotland on PMF distribution modelling and mapping by MF</li> </ul>	Mairi Fenton  The Secretariat
<b><u>Ecosystem</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steering Group to review FN's SICA report and provide feedback.</li> <li>Secretariat to obtain more details on the blue carbon phd from Mike Kaiser and share with the Steering Group</li> </ul>	Steering Group  The Secretariat
<b><u>Stock status</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share the update from the Orkney Sustainable Fishery.</li> <li>Share link to the ICES workshop agendas.</li> <li>Share send the cruise reports from the summer MSS surveys with the Steering Group.</li> <li>Share the bycatch paper once comments from the MSS policy colleagues have been addressed.</li> </ul>	Lynda Blackadder
<b><u>Information and assessment</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JP to speak to NRW about participating in Project UK.</li> </ul>	Lynda Blackadder