

Minutes: Monkfish meeting

Meeting Date: 23rd February 2023

Location: Online

Attendees	Organisation
Adam Townley (AT)	New England Seafood International
Chloe North (CN)	Western Fish Producers Organisation
Jo Pollett (JP)	Marine Stewardship Council
Juliette Hatchman (JH)	South Western Fish Producers Organisation
Lisa Bennett (LB)	Marine Stewardship Council
Nathan De Rozarieux (NDR)	Falfish
Philipp Böni (PB)	Co-op Switzerland
Rod Cappell (RC)	Poseidon
Apologies	
Andrew Pillar (AP)	Interfish
Linda Wood (LW)	Marks and Spencers
Lisa Readdy (LR)	Cefas
Sophie Jenkinson (SJ)	Morrisons

Purpose of the meeting

- 1) To update on stock assessments and the addition of black-bellied anglerfish to the mixed fishery plan and implications of this
- 2) To update on progress with Principle 2 actions covering secondary species, ETP species and habitat management
- 3) To discuss ongoing action in relation to compliance and enforcement of the Landing Obligation
- 4) To discuss the In-Transition to MSC program, and upcoming deadlines for Fishery Progress social policy actions

Agenda Item 1:

LB updated on behalf of Lisa Readdy (Cefas). Last meeting Lisa Readdy informed the group that both monkfish species are now considered Category 1 species, as full analytical stock assessments had been undertaken for both. The mixed fisheries advice was published on the 10 November 2022 and includes the two monkfish species under two ecoregions (Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay, and Iberian Waters ecoregions). All mixed fishery management scenarios presented with the exception of the 'Max scenario' (i.e. fishing stops when all stock shares have been caught) do not present an issue for either stock in terms of exceeding their respective ICES catch advice. To note, both stock management areas extend in to both the Irish Sea and Greater North Sea ecoregion where they are not included in those mixed fisheries advice.

The proposed total allowable catch (TAC) for the two species is 57976 tonnes (ANF/07.: 45724 Subarea 7, ANF/8ABDE.: 12252 Divisions 8 a, b ,d and e) This tonnage corresponds to the combined ICES advice.

Discussion

CN and JH are attending an ICES Mixed Fishery Workshop in February and may be able to ask about the issue Lisa Readdy raised with the stock management area not aligning with the ICES advice area. They also agreed to ask whether separate TACs are needed for monkfish if both stocks are considered healthy.

Harvest Control Rules (PI 1.2.2) scores 60 - 79, because black bellied monkfish was not included in the mixed fisheries advice. As both white bellied and black bellied monkfish are now included in the mixed fisheries advice, this score will be reviewed at the annual review. RC reflected that the ICES individual species advice still states that a combined TAC prevents effective control of single species exploitation rates, however, the mixed fisheries advice seems to suggest this is not an issue. The group needs clarification from Lisa Readdy on whether a joint TAC is a sufficient management tool in this case, and therefore the harvest control rule is effective.

Actions from Item 1:

- CN to let the Secretariat know if they manage to speak to a monkfish scientist at the upcoming ICES Mixed Fishery Workshop about the stock management area of monkfish not aligning with the ICES advice area
- RC to clarify the remaining actions for harvest control rules ahead of the annual review in April
- Secretariat to clarify with Lisa Readdy about the mixed fisheries advice which suggests the combined TAC of monkfish is not an issue, and whether that can be used to update the statement in the individual species advice regarding the need for single species TAC

Agenda Item 2: Secondary species (Action 5, 6)

CN updated on 'GeoFish', the heatmapping project being run by Cefas, which combines landing data and VMS data to achieve high resolution fishing activity and catch data. It can also be used to show core fishing grounds and activity statistics by gear and month, and compare fishing intensity by gear and month.

LB had an action from the last Steering Group meeting to contact the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for information on the mesh sizes that are being used on monkfish vessels. This is to demonstrate that mesh sizes used in the fishery are a similar size (or bigger) to those that were trialled during Project 50%, which increased selectivity of the fishing gear. A request has been drafted, and LB sought feedback from the group on the wording.

Discussion

RC said the score for PI 2.2.2 (secondary species management) was reduced from >80 to 60 – 79 at the Year 5 annual review. Having information of where secondary species are caught will be useful for considering the potential for any spatial or seasonal management. However, the action plan scoring

explanation for PI 2.2.2 relates to the Landing Obligation which is only relevant to quota species; RC will check this with Tim as part of his handover from this meeting.

The actions plan states that a report should be produced for inclusion in the FIP FMP on the spatial intensity of the main secondary species catches within the Unit of Assessment. The GeoFish project could be useful for secondary species information. For secondary species management, the Western Waters Multi-Annual Plan may have information in relation to management of bycatch species. Defra clarified that the WWMAP remains in place until it is superseded by other management measures (i.e. FMPs in English waters).

The Steering Group agreed the wording of the request to the MMO on mesh sizes was accurate. A response from MMO is expected on the 3rd March. JH flagged that her members have said they often use larger mesh sizes than they declare in their logbooks in order to account for any shrinkage with new nets. David Warwick, the gear technologist at Seafish, may also be able to help gather data on mesh sizes; he is intending to get a small project signed off to undertake the work. CN suggested the netmakers could be approached directly for anonymised data on mesh sizes, and that it is important to know what part of the net the size was taken from. Cod end mesh size is not actually where a lot of the selectivity is, but JH said it is only the cod end mesh size that is recorded in the logbooks. Ed in Brixham could also potentially help the group gather this type of information if necessary.

Actions from Item 2:

- RC to speak to Tim Huntington about the use of the Landings Obligation in the scoring justification for 2.2.2, and whether the Western Waters Multi-annual Plan has relevant information on the management of bycatch species within this Unit of Assessment
- Secretariat to share response from the MMO on mesh sizes with the group, when available
- CN to follow up with David Warwick on her previous request about gathering information on mesh sizes

Agenda Item 3: Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species (Action 8)

LB updated on the Clean Catch UK app (CCUK) being developed by Cefas. The app has undergone significant work to rebuild the different 'groups' after testing last year revealed a number of technical errors. Group 1 is focussed on wildlife bycatch, and extensions have been made to the app to make it suitable for use on trawl and dredge vessels. Final internal testing should be complete by the end of February 2023, after which it can be trialled by fishing vessels.

Discussion

The group discussed that the Cornish hake vessels are using the CCUK app already, and RC speculated the score for this FIP for ETP information (PI 2.3.3) may not meet SG80 because the vessels in the hake fishery are using pingers to deter cetacean interaction. NDZ said Cornwall Wildlife Trust funded some trials for banana pingers for <12m vessels in Cornwall, but that the issue of ETP interactions inside of 12 nautical miles is extremely low. Al Kingston completed some work on inshore vessels which should support that. CN said the Cefas CCUK Steering Group is working with the inshore fleet in Cornwall, so

the group could ask Chris Ranford or David Warwick for an update on their progress with CCUK and if any ETP interactions have been recorded.

Actions from Item 3:

- Secretariat to contact Al Kingston and see if he has any reports or data which support the anecdotal evidence that there are very few ETP interactions with the monkfish fishery inside 12 nautical miles
- Secretariat to contact David Warwick and Chris Ranford to seek any data they have on ETP interactions through the work done with CCUK

Agenda Item 4: Habitats (Action 9)

CN has already summarised the Scale, Intensity, Consequence and Analysis report for the FIP Fishery Management Plan. The remaining action is for site-specific management measures to be in place in designated Marine Protected Areas. This work is being led by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), with management measures due to be fully implemented by 2024.

The rollout of inshore Vessel Monitoring System (I-VMS) devices on all English vessels <12m in length is expected to be complete by May 2023; the only remaining vessels to have I-VMS installed are those <6m in length.

Discussion

The group discussed having Fiona Nimmo rerun the SICA. The SICA had lower scores due to the amount of fishing on sub-tidal coarse sediments. Some of the now-designated MPAs encompass those coarse sediment grounds, and the group questioned whether protection from fishing pressure as a result of closing those grounds to trawling (a presumed outcome of the future MPA management measures) would be sufficient to increase the score.

RC will speak to Fiona to discuss this action, and whether it would be possible to look at a number of different scenarios such as (a) assuming all MPAs were closed to bottom trawling, (b) if none of the MPAs were closed to trawling, and (c) a middle ground where some MPAs were closed to trawling.

It is important to understand whether the current management measures being proposed by the MMO are sufficient to meet SG80 in the MSC Standard, or whether there are other things the Steering Group needs to consider in the final year of the FIP to improve the scores. CN said the WFPO vessels are also doing another trial of the sum-wing gear to make it more useable across the whole beam trawl fleet. The sum-wing is designed to reduce the weight of the gear on the seabed.

Actions from Item 4:

- RC to contact Fiona Nimmo and discuss the ongoing habitat actions, and whether rerunning the SICA with multiple scenarios is an appropriate option, or if she could suggest an alternative approach to address the action

Agenda Item 5: Compliance and enforcement (Action 13)

This action relates to the Landing Obligation (LO), CN spoke with her members about discard reporting but it is difficult for skippers to see what is happening on deck from the wheelhouse. Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) may provide a solution, and Defra are shortly planning to consult on, and then trial, REM on various vessel and gear types. Defra are working with the discards policy reform team to ensure the REM policy is compatible with the discards policy. CN said there will be a call for volunteer vessels to trial REM when Defra get to that stage, and industry representative should encourage vessels in this FIP to participate.

Discussion

RC said the issue remains with the LO that there is no evidence of effectiveness of enforcement due to the inability to show that the LO is being complied with.

Actions from Item 5:

- Steering Group to encourage vessels in this FIP to participate in any upcoming REM trials with Defra

Agenda Item 6: Fisheries Improvement Project Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

LB gave an overview of the FIP FMP and where information or review is still required:

Section 1: Description of the fishery - Good information

Section 2: Goals and Objectives - Long and short term objectives required – input needed from Steering Group

Section 3: Fisheries management structure - Good information, paragraph needed on 'specific mechanisms' under allocation of resources

Section 4: Harvest strategy and control rules - HS is good, HCR needs updating with Category 1 stock information

4.3 Decision making frameworks – needs update – Secretariat can check other FMPs for similar wording, or Defra/MMO could update

Section 5: Ecosystem management strategies - Some more information needed on ecosystem management and other considerations

Section 6: Stock assessments - Updated stock assessment, Secretariat can possibly cut/paste from latest advice

Section 7: Compliance and enforcement: - Good information

Discussion

If there are any sections that the supply chain could assist with, that might help redistribute the workload from industry. If industry need to contribute, an email can be sent to CN, JH, Chris Ranford, and Andrew Pillar, who can distribute the work between themselves. CN offered to assist with any small sections that need finalising.

Actions from Item 6:

- Secretariat to email relevant members of Steering Group with requests for remaining information needed for FIP FMP

Agenda Item 7: In-Transition to MSC program

JP reminded the group that the FIP finishes in April 2023, and that the new version of the MSC Standard 3.0 will be applicable for any new fishery entering the programme from April 2023. The Steering Group have been working towards Version 2.0 for the last five years. An option available to the FIP could be to enter the MSC's 'In-Transition to MSC' program, which would enable the FIP to enter full assessment using Version 2.0 of the MSC Standard and have until November 2028 to transition to Version 3.0. Poseidon will undertake a gap analysis for the FIP with this year's annual review, which will indicate how the FIP is currently scoring compared to the requirements of V3.0. JP will circulate a memo to the Steering Group, which will provide more information on the requirements to enter ITM and the various steps involved, and the group are invited to decide on the course of action following the gap analysis and annual review in April.

Discussion

AT asked if it was better long-term for the fishery to try to attain certification against V3.0. JP said the timing is important, because if the fishery enters the MSC program in April 2024 against V2.0, the certificate would be valid for less than the usual five year cycle due to the need to be certified against V3.0 by November 2028. Any additional time taken to gather documents or form a client group after April 2024 would further shorten the length of time left on the certificate before V3.0 became mandatory. JP will contact the Steering Group to arrange another call following the annual review and gap analysis in April.

Actions from Item 7:

- Secretariat to contact Steering Group members to arrange a call following the annual review and gap analysis in April

Agenda Item 8: Fishery Progress social policy updates

LB reminded the group of the FIPs remaining actions for the Fishery Progress social policy requirements. The vessel list is required by June and the grievance mechanism is required by July. The

Secretariat also intends to continue collaborating with Seafood Ethics Action (SEA) Alliance to help complete social policy requirements. The Secretariat will send an email to the Steering Group to finalise the vessel lists, and asked if anyone knew of any local grievance mechanisms that existed within industry already.

Discussion

The Producer Organisations (POs) will be able to provide the information needed about the vessels they represent; however the group should consider how to capture any vessels not represented by POs. Covering the sector (PO) vessels is a good start and the group can continue to look at the best way to engage the non-sector if the FIP decides to go through MSC certification.

CN is aware of a grievance mechanism in place on some of the larger vessels she represents and can share those with the Secretariat. The Fisherman's Mission also have an informal complaints procedure that they can share the details of.

Actions from Item 8:

- Secretariat to confirm with Steering Group members that vessel list gathered so far are representative of their membership
- CN to share examples with the Secretariat of any grievance mechanisms on WFPO vessels
- Secretariat to email JH to see if she is aware of any grievance mechanisms in place on SWFPO vessels
- CN to share a contact with the Secretariat for the Brixham Fisherman's Mission.

Any Other Business

N/A

Meeting Closes

Actions Arising	Responsibility
Secretariat to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarify with Lisa Readdy about the mixed fisheries advice which suggests the combined TAC of monkfish is not an issue, and whether that can be used to update the statement in the individual species advice regarding the need for single species TAC - email relevant members of Steering Group with requests for remaining information needed for FIP FMP 	Secretariat

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contact Steering Group members to arrange a call following the annual review and gap analysis in April - email JH to see if she is aware of any grievance mechanisms in place on SWFPO vessels - confirm with Steering Group members that vessel list gathered so far are representative of their membership - share response from the MMO on mesh sizes with the group, when available - contact Al Kingston and see if he has any reports or data which support the anecdotal evidence that there are very few ETP interactions with the monkfish fishery inside 12 nautical miles - contact David Warwick and Chris Ranford to seek any data they have on ETP interactions through the work done with CCUK 	
<p>RC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarify the remaining actions for harvest control rules ahead of the annual review in April - speak to Tim Huntington about the use of the Landings Obligation in the scoring justification for 2.2.2, and whether the Western Waters Multi-annual Plan has relevant information on the management of bycatch species within this Unit of Assessment - contact Fiona Nimmo and discuss the ongoing habitat actions, and whether rerunning the SICA with multiple scenarios is an appropriate option, or if she could suggest an alternative approach to address the action 	Rod Cappell
<p>CN to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - follow up with David Warwick on her previous request about gathering information on mesh sizes - share examples with the Secretariat of any grievance mechanisms on WFPO vessels - share a contact with the Secretariat for the Brixham Fisherman’s Mission. - let the Secretariat know if they manage to speak to a monkfish scientist at the upcoming ICES Mixed Fishery Workshop about the stock management area of monkfish not aligning with the ICES advice area 	Chloe North
<p>Steering Group to encourage vessels in this FIP to participate in any upcoming REM trials with Defra</p>	Steering Group