

Minutes: UK Scallops Steering Group meeting

Meeting Date: 11th October 2023

Location: Edinburgh Zoo, Edinburgh

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Agenda Item	Presenter
1. Summary: Where we are	Lisa
2. Meeting with Marine Directorate - update	George
3. PhD update on understanding the consequences of scallop dredging	Mairi
4. JNCC: Presentation on Quality Status Report 2023 Q+A	Liam & Kirsty
5. Update on other current scallop research	Mike K
6. SICG overview of FMP process	Claire
7. English and Welsh waters FMP - response	Lisa
8. Northern Ireland FMP update	Patrick
9. ETP prioritisation and Wheelhouse advisories	Fiona & Rebecca
10. Marine Conservation Society Good Fish Guide ratings	Charlotte
End	

Attendees – online & in-person	Affiliation
AB: Andrew Brown	MacDuff Shellfish
AH: Adam Holland	Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation (NIFF)
BC: Ben Collier	Northern Ireland Gear Trials
BL: Bill Lart	Seafish
CC: Charlotte Coombes	Marine Conservation Society
CD: Calum Duncan	ScotLINK
CP: Claire Pescod	MacDuff Shellfish
EW: Elaine Whyte	Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance (CIFA)
FN: Fiona Nimmo	Poseidon
GC: George Clark	Marine Stewardship Council
HW: Harry Wick	Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation (NIFPO)
JE: Jack Emmerson	Isle of Man Government
JH: Juliette Hatchman	Southwestern Fish Producer Organisation (SWFPO)
KC: Kenny Coull	Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFPA)
KW: Kirsty Woodcock	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LB: Lisa Bennett	Marine Stewardship Council
LM: Liam Matear	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
MF: Mairi Fenton	Heriot-Watt University
MK: Mike Kaiser	Heriot-Watt University
MP: Mike Park	Scottish White Fish Producers Association (SWFPA)
PS: Patrick Smith	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
RL: Rebecca Lyal	Marine Stewardship Council
RW: Rob Whiteley	Natural England
SC: Sally Chamberlain	Seafish

Agenda Item 1: Summary: Where we are

[Click here for a pdf of the presentation.](#) This high-level presentation provides a summary of the FIP scores and indicates the work that is required to increase remaining scores from SG<60 and continue to progress the FIP in its final year.

Agenda Item 2: Meeting with Marine Directorate – (GC)

GC, FN and AB met with Marine Directorate to discuss the progress of the FIP, share MF's habitat research and how the outputs on habitat and VME interactions can inform Steering Group dialogue on potential management options. The Marine Directorate updated on:

- The re-tooling of the regional IFGs, with up-to-date website available at: <https://rifg.scot>.
- The Fisheries Management and Conservation (FMAC) and inshore FMAC groups will develop a workplan for delivery of Non-Quota Species FMPs.
- Progress on the bycatch report, which has been delayed due to resource constraints.
- An updated scallop stock assessment, as the last one was published in 2016. Six years of data is being analysed, though reference points will not be part of these assessments. Results are expected October 2023. Lynda Blackadder noted the improved data availability with crew survey reports now available online (https://www.bodc.ac.uk/resources/inventories/cruise_inventory/) and catch rate data will imminently be available on the National Marine Plan Interactive (NMPi).

Actions from Item 2:

1. LB contact Helen Dobby to check the six year timeseries the scallop advice is based upon i.e does it include data up to 2022 or 2023.

Agenda Item 3: PhD update on understanding the consequences of scallop dredging (MF)

[Link to presentation here](#)

Research topic: Management measures of MSC certified fisheries vs non-MSC: Adaptive management, stock assessments and some kind of TAC were found to be the top 3 measures used in MSC fisheries.

- The analysis showed the variety of potential scallop fishery management tools, and arranged fisheries by the management tools they had in common. The primary management difference between MSC and non MSC certified fisheries is the use adaptive management, stock assessments and TAC in MSC certified fisheries. Non-quota fisheries were predominantly from the British Isles. A resulting paper will describe the management measures of scallop fisheries globally and identify management typographies within quota and non-quota systems.
- Noted that non-quota management is not equivalent to unsustainable fishing; just that the fisheries that have quota have typically gone through a more rigorous management processes to get to a quota stage – this has knock on benefits.

Research topic: Areas for management consideration, based on >12m vessel fishing pressure maps and sensitive habitat recovery.

- Information that has been included: ETP species, sensitive habitats and their recovery time against fishing pressure. Steering Group are to consider how this research can inform management decisions? While <12m vessel data is unavailable, it's noted that there are only

one or two <12m vessels in the Scottish scallop fleet out of ~100 vessels (excluding Northern Ireland waters). MF will finish the management scenario paper by Jan 2024.

- Agreement that dialogue between industry and government is needed on iVMS data ownership, resolution, and access in parallel to the roll-out of iVMS devices.
- Work on Relative Benthic Status habitat maps is ongoing and individual maps showing sensitive habitats, recovery time and fishing pressure have been created. Steering group members noted it was interesting that much of Southern English Channel fishing pressure is beyond UK jurisdiction.

Actions from Item 3:

2. MF to share MSC vs non-MSC management report with Steering Group (expected November 2023).
3. MF to connect with Liam and Kirsty at JNCC regarding benthic survey data.
4. MF to share higher resolution fishing pressure and habitat sensitivity maps with interested members of the Steering Group
5. RW to share the publication of the Natural England species sensitivity tool when available (initial work is focussing on the English Channel).
6. FN to share Stuart Bell's figures on proportion of scallop vessels sizes under and over 12m.
7. Secretariat to look at Northern Ireland scallop vessel length from information sent through social policy vessel lists.
8. Secretariat to raise at next Marine Directorate meeting: the resolution and access of iVMS/REM data for <12m vessels.

Agenda Item 4: JNCC Presentation on Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023 (LM, KW)

The decadal QSR includes results from risk-based indicator "BH3" that aims to assess the spatial extent and magnitude of potential seafloor physical disturbance caused by human activities; outputs have relevance to assessments of potentially adverse effects on benthic habitats under Descriptor 6 of the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive. OSPAR assessment methodology has changed significantly between the surveys as surveying tools improve.

- LM said creating a histogram of annual fishing intensity per year would be a good way to compare the changing impact each year. If a fishery is being managed well, the environmental footprint should be decreasing. Swept Area Ratio could also be a good indicator.
- QSR is live on the OSPAR websites, and soon the spatial data and associated statistics will be too. This is all done through open-source software.
- JNCC could do a piece of work on gear specific impacts on a UK scale looking at seabed integrity.

Actions from Item 4:

9. Secretariat to contact JNCC if interested in commissioning work on gear specific impacts on a UK scale. If there's a good reason to do the work that's in the interest of JNCC, they may not need to be commissioned.
 - a. Secretariat talk to FN about the kind of work that could add value to the FIP.
10. MK to share with JNCC a tool from the Journal of Industrial Ecology on gear penetration depending on gear modifications.

Agenda Item 5: Update on other current scallop research: (MK)

The following projects are underway:

- Genetic variation of scallops around the Scottish coast: population divergence; variation and composition of scallop shell chemistry based on location. To date, research has found genetically distinct populations between the spring and autumn settlements in the Clyde. Future work will test whether this is consistent around Scotland, and if there are local management implications.
- Seafood Innovation Fund: The consequence of using skids to lift belly-bags on catch composition and seabed impact. Gear with skids increased catch, and more juveniles. The skids reduced bounce, drag, gear consumption and ring damage. The next trial will test flexible teeth on the dredge bar to reduce seabed impact, with results expected Spring 2024.
- Macduff: shucking at sea trial in the channel. Shucking at sea reduces wastage, transport costs, on-land processing recruitment challenge, and review of advancing from using shell size as proxy for maturity. UK regulations on shucking at sea are under review.

Actions from Item 5: none.

Agenda Item 6: SICG overview of FMP process (CP)

CP gave a brief update as a representative from Defra could not attend. Defra will be gathering responses and feedback from the live consultation events with Welsh government. Key themes are then shared with the SICG WG. Feedback is checked by the legal team at Defra before approval. Final version of the first iteration is expected by December 2023.

Agenda Item 7: English and Welsh waters FMP – response (LB)

[Link to presentation of Channel Scallop FMP response](#)

The purpose of the FIP FMP is to house the considerable work undertaken by the FIP and can be used as evidence were the FIP to enter MSC assessment, as well as to potentially be used as a reference point for any future national FMP. BL has a 'shopping list' of information still required for the FIP FMP. It was confirmed that there is a recognised stock structure for the Irish Sea, within 12nm of NI, 12nm of the Isle of Man, and a joint area in Irish sea between Wales and Ireland. It was also discussed that the Scottish scallop FMP are being considered by Scottish FMAC, with IFMAC and scallops as subgroups.

Actions from Item 7:

11. Secretariat to support BL to identify remaining information needed for FIP FMP

Agenda Item 8: Northern Ireland FMP update (PS)

[Link to presentation here.](#)

In Northern Ireland, the scallop, crab & lobster FMP's each have a working group, and have started developing a strawman FMP. The current challenge includes Northern Ireland not having a minister, though they are hoping this will be resolved by summer 2024.

AFBI have also been commissioned to look at scallop larval dispersal and the potential for seeding. A verbal report is expected next week, and a written report in October, which should support the FMP.

FN commented that it would be good to know the stock definitions, especially considering the transboundary stocks in the area.

Actions from Item 8: none

Agenda Item 9: ETP prioritisation and Wheelhouse advisories

[Link to examples of advisory cards](#)

The ETP species lists have now been prioritised using input from Steering Group members, and expertise from FN. Elasmobranchs have more specific information about the landing and handling requirements than other, non-elasmobranch species. Therefore, the elasmobranch species will have fishing advisory information, and the non-elasmobranchs will have key identification features. The mock-ups are based on templates from the Shark Trust. Initial suggestions were to exclude invertebrates from the wheelhouse posters, but to include in the A6 ID guides. These guides are for species that will likely be observed on deck, not those that are interacted with but not brought up (e.g., smashed shell, unobserved mortality).

Suggestions for the QR code were to link through to the Clean Catch app for direct log [this is unlikely to work with the app engineering, but could at least, open the app as a reminder to log species?]. A suggested alternative to the Clean Catch app was iRecord.

Actions from Item 9:

- 12. Steering Group to review the ETP card format and feedback suggestions: [Link to card examples.](#)
- 13. Secretariat to look into iRecord functionality and whether it might be appropriate for the use of the FIP.

Agenda Item 10: Marine Conservation Society Good Fish Guide ratings (CC)

[Link to presentation](#)

- GFG scores for scallops in English Channel: North (7dN) stayed at a 4 following this year’s review. It was agreed that the harvest rate is fluctuating around MSY, and so stock score was not changed. However, after their review of the FIP, the MCS found that the Channel Scallop FIP scoring no longer meets the GFG criteria due to key environmental issues they consider are not being addressed.
- The higher scores in the ratings are given to stock status that have an assessment, have reference points (or proxies) such as MSY.

Actions from Item 10: none

Meeting Closes

Actions Arising	Responsibility
Actions from Item 2:	

1. LB contact Helen Dobby to check the six year timeseries the scallop advice is based upon i.e does it include data up to 2022 or 2023.	Lisa
Actions from Item 3:	
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3. MF to connect with Liam and Kirsty at JNCC regarding benthic survey data.	Mairi
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5. RW to share the publication of the Natural England species sensitivity tool when available (initial work is focussing on the English Channel).	Rob
6. FN to share Stuart Bell's figures on proportion of scallop vessels sizes under and over 12m.	Fiona
7. Secretariat to look at Northern Ireland scallop vessel length from information sent through social policy vessel lists.	Secretariat
8. Secretariat to raise at next Marine Directorate meeting: the resolution and access of iVMS/REM data for <12m vessels.	Secretariat
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10. MK to share with JNCC a tool from the Journal of Industrial Ecology on gear penetration depending on gear modifications.	Mike K
Actions from Item 7:	
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