

Outer Hebrides Regional Inshore Fisheries Group

Inshore Fisheries Pilot Sub Group

Minute of Meeting 27th February

Council Buildings, Stornoway

1. Donald Nicholson, Chairing the meeting welcomed the group at 13:05.

Attendees		
Diane Buchanan	DB	Marine Scotland – Head of Inshore Fisheries
Stuart Bell	SB	Marine Scotland – Project Manager
Donald Morrison	DMo	Marine Scotland – Compliance Liaison
Donald Nicholson	DN	Outer Hebrides Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (OHRIFG)
Duncan MacInnes	DMac	Western Inshore Fisheries Association (WIFA)
Anne McLay (by telecon)	AM	Marine Scotland – Science Liaison
Mark James	MJ	University of St Andrews
Pete Middleton	PM	Outer Hebrides Council

Apologies	
N.A.	

Actions of Previous Meeting	
Action	Outcome
N.A.	

2. Permit Eligibility
<p>A discussion on who would be eligible to apply for a permit under the OHRIFG Inshore Fisheries Pilot (IFP).</p>
<p>Main points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group discussed the reference period used to compile the list of vessels eligible to apply for the IFP - which was drawn from those who had deployed creels within the proposed area during 2019. • It was agreed that in order to take account of inactive/dormant vessels we should extend the reference period to 1st January 2016 to 31st Dec 2019. • At any given time there are as many as 20 vessels entering, exiting and changing hands in the district (DMo).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that the IFP is not a barrier to buying and selling vessels and that enforceable financial commitments are respected (DMac). • The group discussed the Scottish Marine Regions existence in legislation and there was agreement that it would be best if the eastern boundary of the IFP could be modified to mirror it as opposed to the RIFG boundary.
Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB to explore with Liam Mason the possibility of redrawing the eastern boundary of the IFP to mirror the Scottish Marine Region (<i>completed 04-Mar-2020</i>).

3. New Entrants Procedure
<p>Discussion on how new entrants to the IFP would be considered in the future.</p>
<p>Main points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sub-group will consider the criteria for new entrants and how the OH Fisheries Investment Scheme guidance could be used as a template (DMac). • It would be desirable to link relevant professional qualifications to eligibility for the IFP (DMac). • The preferred outcome regarding vessel ownership would be that if you decide to buy additional boats (in order to obtain more creel capacity), you would not be able to fish with them in the IFP area (DMac). • DMO stated that there are a number of stakeholders who have legitimate reasons for owning multiple boats at present. DMac responded that he was content to accept existing multiple vessels owners provided they have a track record of fishing in the area. • If you are trying to limit creel numbers you don't want to leave the door open to extra vessels. Entry to the IFP should perhaps be considered on a case-by-case basis (AM). • MJ asked which criteria the IFP would attribute success to. DN answered that the overarching aim was to introduce an effort control to combat declining CPUE.
Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB to draft new entrants procedure.

4. Vessel Monitoring Systems

Modernisation of the Inshore Fleet (MotIF) integration with IFP is a vital facet of its development and one that sets it out as a pioneering initiative. MJ from University of St. Andrews was present in the capacity of a technical advisor in this discussion.

Main points

- DB said that she would like to explore trialling Anchorlab systems on bigger non-scallop dredge vessels in response to the observation that there are 3 >12 meter shellfish vessels working in the pilot area.
- You don't need a CCTV feed to attribute number of pots to a vessel, however it is beneficial if you wish to gather evidence to the required legal standard (MJ).
- We want these systems to aid effort control, not to pursue retrospective prosecutions.
- If you want a greater level of detail than a signal denoting shoot and haul, then you will have to mark the creels – for example using methods such as an RFID tag or the proposed Bluetooth coin.
- We have considered setting a max number of creels per fleet for the IFP to aid ascertaining total creels in use (DMac).
- From a vessel track you can predict, to a high level of precision, whether or not he is fishing, but even if you tag the creels you are still reliant on the fisherman passing each one over a sensor (MJ).
- We should categorise vessels according to risk to inform the kind of equipment we deploy (DMac).
- As this is a pilot – it would be good to take the opportunity to trial different kinds of systems. In the ordinary course of operations, it might not be possible to pick and choose who gets which equipment solution (DB).
- MJ described the Bluetooth coin system, saying that it involves putting a tag on either end of the fleet and estimating the number of creels in between using an algorithm. Each tag currently costs £30 and has a battery lifespan of 5 around years.
- DN suggested we write into the permit that high-risk vessels may be required to be equipped with a CCTV-based system.
- A rationale for trying camera systems might be that visual data could be combined with existing sensor data to substantiate calculations on the number of creels in use (MJ).
- DMO expressed concerned about the enforcement side of MotIF applications in the IFP and that he would like to have something robust enough that he could challenge individuals on the pier-side.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group discussed the fact that the IFP would be enabled through a licence permit and that enforcement would be brought about by either revocation of suspension of said permit (depending on offence).
Actions
None.

5. Early Adopter Lists
SB confirmed that a list of those who had volunteered to be early adopters of MotIF technology within the IFP had already been obtained from DMac.

6. Compliance Monitoring and Penalties
SB to liaise with DMO as well as John Brownlie on creation of an Enforcement Policy Instruction (EPI) to support the IFP.

7. Data Analysis
The group discussed management of the data arising from vessels carrying the MotIF technology.
<p>Main points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AM suggest we appraise how easy it is to match up fishing data with landing data first before we go into any greater detail. MJ pointed out that from his work to date, data mismatch is a huge problem and he suggested that we would need to alter FISH1 submission to enable daily reporting of fishing effort to get the best results. There was strong agreement that daily completion of FISH1 forms was highly desirable. At present FISH1 forms require a daily entry but submission to Marine Scotland is only mandated weekly on a rolling basis starting each Sunday.
Actions
None.

--

8. Gear Marking Requirements / Unmarked and Unfished Gear

DB gave an update on the static gear marking SSI and the group discussed the wider issue of fishermen leaving gear in the water unattended for long periods of time.

Main points:

- The OH RIFG IHP sub group had previously discussed writing a limit on soak time into the permit scheme (SB).
- Despite delays, the static gear marking SSI is progressing and will be laid in parliament soon.
- There was general agreement that mitigating circumstances for unfished gear would have to be considered – poor weather, vessel breakdown, lost gear etc.
- It was agreed that 3 weeks was considered a reasonable period after which enforcement action / removal of creels would be considered.
- MJ said that when Marine Scotland take delivery of the SIFIDS database, we will find that determining the length of time gear has been fished is quite easy.

9. Promotion of pilot and Implementation Date

The group discussed general provisions for commencement of the IFP – which is currently set for 1st April. It was agreed that further stakeholder engagement with the fishing fleet (in addition to the Harris event in the evening), should be carried out in both Barra and Uist and could be tied together with the Cockle survey events.

It was also agreed that, prior to the start date, we would have information on the IFP available through the RIFG and Fishery Office as well as online.

Actions

- New proposed start date to be agreed prior to the Barra and Uist events.

Meeting adjourned.