



## Scotland’s Scallop Sector Working Group (SSSWG)

### DRAFT Note of Meeting

25<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Online via Webex

Present		
Jim Watson	JW	Marine Scotland
Stuart Bell	SB	Marine Scotland
Lynda Blackadder	LB	Marine Scotland Science
Ellen Huis	EH	Marine Scotland
Chloe Aird	CA	Marine Scotland
Femke de Boer	FdB	Scottish Whitefish Producer’s Assoc. (SWFPA)
Foster Gault	FG	Scottish Whitefish Producer’s Assoc. (SWFPA)
John McAllister	JM	Scottish Whitefish Producer’s Assoc. (SWFPA)
Malcolm Morrison	MM	Scottish Fishermen’s Federation (SFF)
Andrew Brown	AB	Macduff Shellfish
Claire Pescod	CP	Macduff Shellfish
Hannah Fennel	HF	Orkney Sustainable Fisheries
Sheila Keith	SK	Shetland Fishermen’s Association
Carole Laignel	CL	Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO)
Leslie Tait	LT	Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO)
Simon MacDonald	SM	West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (WCRIFG)
Jennifer Mouat	JM	North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (NECRIFG)
Duncan MacInnes	DMac	Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Group (OHRIFG)
John Hermse	JH	Western Inshore Scallop Group (WISG)

Apologies		
Domhnall MacLachlainn		Vessel owner
George Jack		Vessel owner
Elaine Whyte		Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance (CIFA)

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

JW welcomed the group and requested round table introductions. He recapped the intent of the group, indicating that he wanted it to be a sounding board to help inform future policy and Marine Scotland advice to Ministers, as well as aid discussions with other Administration’s. He also stated that the group should be broadly representative of scallop interests in Scotland, have an open membership, with no voting function or right of veto. And that it should be a forum to discuss national issues facing the sector, and also complement existing groups such as the RIFGS, and SICG.

JW asked if there were any further agenda items that should be added at the last minute. FG responded that SWFPA wished to raise the Future Fisheries Management (FFM) Strategy and that this had already been raised with SB ahead of time.



<b>Actions</b>
None

## 2. Update on the Modernisation of the Inshore Fleet Programme (EH)

JW recapped the history of the Modernisation Programme from its announcement as a 2018-2019 manifesto commitment and Mr Ewing’s first meeting with the scallop sector in January 2019 regarding use Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM), including cameras. The Modernisation Programme was further mentioned in Mr Ewing’s Parliamentary statement of February 2020 and then in the Scottish Government’s FFM papers<sup>1</sup> published in October 2020. The FFM strategy states that installation of REM amongst the scallop dredge sector will remain voluntary until summer 2021, with legislation making it mandatory by the end of 2021.

EH addressed the group:

- The recently published FFM Policy Intent Paper sets out that 2021 will be a key year for REM technology in Scotland’s fishing industry.
- The intention and reasoning for prioritising the scallop fleet in the Modernisation Programme includes to promote sustainable and responsible fishing, address reputational damage and unwanted criticism of the scallop dredge sector.
- The use of cameras on board fishing vessels enables monitoring and is a corroborative device when used in addition to sensor and positional data i.e to prove or disprove fishing on location.
- The priority is to ensure that stakeholders engage with this programme, and make sure that active scallop dredge vessels, with no REM currently on board, have a fair opportunity to take advantage of the funding that is currently available to get the Anchorlab system on board before legislation comes into force making it mandatory. Those present at the meeting have a key role to play in terms of helping to timetable this and avoid any bottlenecks in installations between now and summer 2021. EH welcomes a coordinated approach with industry, accepting that cameras will raise concerns for some.
- A risk based approach is used to determine whether a short sequence of camera footage needs to be downloaded from a fishing vessel. This is not done as a matter of course and only once other information has been considered first. If no risk is highlighted by logbook and position / winch data, there should be no need to download camera footage.
- In the case of multi-purpose vessels, other information used by analysts e.g. logbook data will make it obvious when they switch gears. The FFM paper is clear that by using camera-based systems for scallop dredgers we are not setting a precedent how we will deploy REM on the wider industry.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/future-fisheries-management-policy-intent-paper/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/future-fisheries-management-discussion-paper-analysis-report/>



- Camera footage will not be shared, except by the Police when there is evidence of criminality.
- AB asked whether cameras were being used purely to measure proximity to restricted areas. EH responded that the use of cameras so far has focused on ensuring vessels do not exceed prescribed dredge number in inshore waters but going forward it's also about fishing on location, particularly ensuring no illegal dredging in restricted areas.
- AB asked which vessels and in which waters the camera requirement would apply to. EH responded that this Programme is for the Scottish fleet but that the intention of legislation would provide a level playing field in Scottish waters. FAs might be taking different approaches/priorities but the anticipation being that REM becomes a fairly standard piece of kit.
- DMac asked EH to clarify use of the word 'criminality', noting that accidental instances of gear conflict frequently occur.
- LT said that he was supportive of REM systems but that cameras had not been mentioned at previous meetings and that such systems might not be suitable for multipurpose boats. EH assured him that use of cameras, under this phase of the Programme, was for scallop dredge operations. REM solutions for demersal fishing operations were being considered as part of the Future Catching Policy work.
- JW made the point that if our goal was to achieve confidence and accountability, there is no reason for us to consider a 'halfway house' -type solution to REM.
- FG asked whether other administrations would have access to the REM data, stating that SWFPA would wish to be assured of consistency of approach UK-wide. EH responded that access is only for Marine Scotland but that we expect that REM is likely to become more common place and that a joined-up UK wide approach might follow e.g. for vessels in the Channel or other areas
- HF expressed concerns about the costs involved and EH responded that the installation costs would be borne in their entirety by Marine Scotland, including the first year of maintenance. An aim of the Programme is to keep developing the technology and reduce costs.
- DMac asked whether VMS (which is an EU requirement) would be necessary for over 12 metre vessels after January 2021, once new REM systems had been fitted. The greater frequency of position reports provided by the new systems would make VMS obsolete and therefore the additional costs of VMS would seem an unnecessary.
- SK asked if the fishermen would be notified when data was being downloaded. EH said she did not think that was the case but that there is a facility for the fisherman to have a screen installed which presents a live view from the cameras.
- JH expressed concerns about how the data might be used against the fishermen. He said that it was essential that any access to this data could only be given with fishermen's explicit approval. There was general industry agreement with and acknowledgement of this statement.
- LT said that he believed sensor and position data alone should be sufficient to provide an accurate record of shoot and haul.



- CL observed that SSMO required VMS data in a timely manner to help with any objections to planning applications and to inform our MSC certification. This would require a 3-way data sharing agreement between SSMO the fishermen and Marine Scotland.

**Actions**

1. JW thanked everyone for their comments and questions, and suggested that a follow up meeting on the technical aspects of this discussion would be helpful and should ideally take place before Christmas.

**3. Update on voluntary agreements between mobile and static gear sectors (FG)**

FG introduced the topic, explaining how the idea of industry-led voluntary agreements between the mobile and static sectors were based on a template that had been used in the English channel and that the groups made use of both the RIFG Chair and Marine Scotland in an observational capacity.

- **Arbroath** – There have been 6 meetings with 95% of stakeholders in agreement about a 2 mile lane system. Discussions regarding the pattern of rotation remain unresolved.
- **Fraserburgh** – The objective here has been to formalise the loose agreement that is already in place involving a box which the static gear sector remain within from April to September.
- **Peterhead to Stonehaven** – No agreement reached, but there has been recent interest in reconvening this group.
- **Burghhead to Gamrie** – A code of conduct has been established. There has also been discussion about a geofencing pilot in this area.
- **Wick to Scrabster** – Gear conflict appears to be on the increase in this area and local factions have approached FG about assisting.

**Actions**

None.

**4. Update from ICES Scallop Working Group (LB)**

LB gave an overview of ICES Scallop Working Group (WGScallop) from the perspective of her position as Chair. She shared the group Terms of Reference and a short presentation. The WGScallop report will be available soon and LB will ensure the group are aware.

- As a scientist, accessing fisheries (landings and effort) data is not always straightforward.
- WGScallop conducted a data call this year and requested scallop data from 2000-2019.



- One of the key facets of the group this year has been increased focus on queen scallops.
- AB asked if there was anything further on North Sea survey work that could be shared. LB replied that there was no MSS scallop survey this year but the hope was that a stock assessment could be conducted next year.

**Actions**

1: LB to contact members of the group regarding their input on the maps shared in her presentation. JM said that he was willing to engage with this as there was a lack of data coming back about areas to the north of Scotland and to the west of Orkney.

**5. Discussion on SSSWG in the context of other scallop groups**

JW opened the discussion, noting how he saw the SSSWG fitting in alongside other groups like the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG), Project UK and rIFGS.

- JW said that he, SB and MM, would continue to engage with these groups on behalf of Marine Scotland, and the importance of being joined-up.
- CP said she felt there was a lot of scope for Marine Scotland to further feed into Project UK and encouraged this.

**Actions**

None.

**6. AOB**

**Future Fisheries Management (FFM)**

- FG and AB asked what would be the next steps and whether we were moving into a consultation phase.
- JW responded that our strategy document will be launched shortly, and would outline our approach for the next 10 years – some elements we will progress immediately, others will require more time.
- Certain elements arising from the strategy will be consulted on in due course, and further research will certainly be required.
- AB asked how the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) will sit alongside the FFM. JW responded that all UK Fisheries Administrations are feeding into the JFS, but that we are in the early stages, with lots of moving parts, and that this will move forward at pace.

**Frequency of Meetings**



- There was general agreement that SSSWG should meet 3-4 times per year.

**Actions**

None.