

## North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group meeting

Minute of Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – 1pm – 3pm

### Microsoft Teams

Jennifer Mouat introduced herself as Chair of the North East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (NERIFG) and welcomed the group before inviting all present to identify themselves.

Attendees		
Jim Watson	JW	Marine Scotland
Stuart Bell	SB	Marine Scotland
Chloe Aird	CA	Marine Scotland
Gordon Taylor	GT	Marine Scotland
Lynda Blackadder	LB	Marine Scotland Science
Sam Wolmsley	SW	St Andrews University
Thomas Goetz	TG	St Andrews University
Vincent Janik	VJ	St Andrews University
Jennifer Mouat	JM	Chair
Simon MacDonald	SM	West Coast RIFG Chair
James Macpherson	JM	Scottish White Fish
Sandie Ritchie	SR	Anglo Scottish Fish Producer's Organisation
Malcolm Morrison	MM	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Jack Dale	JD	Fisherman / registered buyer
Claire Pescot	CP	Head of Sustainability & Science – Macduff Shellfish
Malcolm Fraser	MF	Nature Scot

Charles Milne	CM	Whitehills Inshore Fisherman's Assoc.
David Whyte	DW	Rosehearty Harbour Inshore Fisherman's Assoc.
Andrew Whiston	AW	St Andrews Inshore Fisherman's Assoc.
Luke Duffy	LD	North East Creel Line Association
Foster Gault	FG	Scottish White Fish Producer's Assoc.
Gordon Pattison	GP	Fisherman
Chris Pattison	CP	Fisherman
Charlie Hill	CH	Fisherman
Elaine Whyte	EW	Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance

<b>Apologies</b>	
Femke de Boer	Scottish White Fish Producer's Assoc.
Natalie Palmer	Moray Firth Coastal Partnership
Billy Wood	Fisherman's Mutual Assoc. (Pittenweem)
Sandra Turnbull	Fisherman's Mutual Assoc. (Pittenweem)
Euan Thompson	Fisherman

### **Review & Actions of Previous Meeting**

- Most previous actions have been discharged, however there are a number of matters arising to bring up.
- 'Aid to Navigation' project – Proposal complete and discussing with Charlie Hill on the number of devices to purchase as a pilot project.

- Sea Corp Project – Slow moving due to a change of personnel at the Forth Forum. This was an information gathering project along the East Coast.
- Diversification – There have been a number of enquiries about the possibility of gill netting in the Moray Firth and will liaise with Marine Science and Nature Scotland on this.
- Possibility of a new fishery for sprats. Malcolm Fraser advised that for any new sprat fishery application, Nature Scot would have no objection to this and recognise the value of diversifying and reducing the pressure on other stocks. He advised there might be interactions with MPA's, sea birds and other protected species, as with any new fishery and would have to give Marine Scotland advice on that.

### Marine Scotland Report - Modernisation of Inshore Fleet –

#### Jim Watson

- Discusses impact of Covid and EU exit on fleet and industry, shellfish market and value.
- Spoke about the huge uncertainty as an independent coastal state now working as part of the UK, and dealing with other independent coastal states in the EU
- New Ministers for Marine Scotland – Welcomed and explained roles of Mairi Gougeon, Michael Mathieson, & Mairi Mcallan .
- Fishing Strategy – Commitment to work with the fishing industry to develop fisheries management responsibility and sustainability. Delivery plan is currently being worked on for this. Main aim is to maximize the economic and social benefits to all communities.

- Top priorities for next 6 months discussed – MPA developments, renewables, 2 forthcoming consultations on developing a new catching policy and REM. For the latter it was stated that roughly 30-35% of Scallop dredgers have cameras installed now.
- Inshore fishing – Indicated that the RIFG's are here to stay and are the vehicle to develop policy and improve the fisheries.
- 2 pilots on west coast –we are learning from these pilots and how we can implement strategy elsewhere in the country to tackle managing fishing effort and spatial separation etc.
- Shellfish policy – Discussed Scottish Scallop working group and developing a strategy in Scotland while engaging across the UK sector.
- Question on when the scallop fleet will have cameras on board and advised we are aiming for the end of this year.

### Marine Scotland Science Update – Lynda Blackadder

- Lynda presented some of the work Marine Scotland Science will be focusing on this year and this will be shared alongside the minutes being sent. Advised of the retirement of Anne McLay within this area and knock on effect of this until new staff are recruited.
- Jennifer Mouat thanked Lynda for all the assessments particularly on scallops, crab and lobster and how they are progressing.
- Asked question on why squid are not being assessed. Advised as it's not a fishery that's being regularly managed at the moment, there hasn't been a requirement for this data yet. Explained data is collected on squid, however this does not go through a formal assessment.

## Acoustic Deterrent Project Presentation and final report – David Whyte & Thomas Goetz

- David Whyte started the seal deterrent presentation which will be shared alongside these minutes. This contained an example of the deterrent in action alongside the movements of mackerel and the seal when the fisher was active.
- Dr Thomas Goetz gave the technical breakdown of the presentation and welcomed any questions.
- Thanked Lynda Blackadder for contributions and project management.
- Question – Asked how this project will progress from current progress – Explained how they would like to continue with this however the funding has finished.
- Gave explanation on the differences between a dolphin and seal deterrent, explaining the different frequencies they work at.
- Nature Scot asked what's next with project and are keen to be involved with it. Explained would be delighted to continue with it , however this will be determined if funding can be achieved. Open to ideas or suggestions to continue with this project.
- DW – Thanked Lynda Blackadder again for over a year's work and keeping the project going. Explained time for a new leader and hopefully funding to progress project.
- Comment on Scottish Fisherman's Trust - May be able to help with some of the funding to continue this project.

**Action required – look at funding/support options and set up meetings to help maintain the Mackerel Fisheries.**

## Renewables Update – Malcolm Morrison

- MM gave a general update on renewable matters. Some key points included, impending constructions at Forth and Tay, dumping of rocks on seabed at Kincardine, advice for mobile gear fishers that Peterhead floater is a no go area and currently no creel fishers are working this area.
- Question was asked have we ever as an industry managed to obtain access to fishing and they have moved to allow this to happen? The response was no and that fishing may continue post construction and this leaves fishers having to prove it cant.
- Comment – so much paperwork, mostly inshore fishers who do not have time. Try and support inshore, maybe compensation schemes available?
- **Action required – Fishermans data will be reviewed and hopes for another meeting soon to discuss this.**

## Management of Static Gear Sector – Open to Attendees

- JM – Advised no paper put round for this as keen to open this up to the attendees for their comments on how this should be managed.
- Comment on upcoming DEFRA legislation that may mean Crab & Lobster not being shipped abroad alive. JW replied advising we are aware of this and had some discussions with our sea food trade team. Will follow up with advice when in a position to do so.
- Comment on tackling unlicensed fisherman who are catching under size lobsters and working more than 6 creels. Feels this needs to be tackled before any talks of creel limits, quotas etc are discussed.

- Comment on not one size fits all for all the different diverse areas .
- Comment on a special separation agreement having to be agreed between the mobile and static gear fishers.
- SB replied explained that Marine Scotland recognise the scale of this problem. Feels that unlicensed fishers falls more into the longer term strategy for MS. Short term goals while appreciating the one size does not fit all, is to keep feeding in suggestions to Jenny. Advised of the marking of gear order success to help tackle the unlicensed fishers etc, and encouraged fishers to keep reporting issues to their local fishery office.
- Comment on looking into the market where the unlicensed fishers are selling their product with there being a legal obligation for buyers of first sale fish to be registered.

### Gear Conflict Meetings – Foster Gault

- FG commented on the difficulty arranging meetings due to the recurring gear conflict that is happening from Arbroath to the Moray Firth.
- Advised in his opinion that mobile gear effort will increase due to white fish boats limited quota and west coast boats fishing for squid. Reiterated the need for meetings to help stop conflict from happening.
- Also advised of contact numbers being distributed when issues arise. Touched on the geo fencing project and the need for patience while this is developed.
- Advised fishers to mark their boxes on the Scottish Whitefish website, but to make these readings realistic. Instances where this is not being done properly is not helping the mobile gear sector.

- Comment advised of the live position reporting system for gear, used in Norway and how this would help the Scottish sector. JM replied saying it was an interesting idea and will note this.

### Date of Next Meeting – Jennifer

- This will be arranged by Jennifer soon to further talks on the management plan, acoustic deterrent and other projects planned.