

## North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group meeting

### Minute of Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019

#### Discovery Point, Dundee

1. Alistair McNeill introduced himself as Chair of the West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (WCRIFG) and that he would be standing in in that capacity for the North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (NECRIFG) until a new chair was appointed. He welcomed the group and invited all present to identify themselves.

Attendees		
Diane Buchanan	DB	Marine Scotland
Stuart Bell	SB	Marine Scotland
Anne McLay	AM	Marine Scotland Science
Lynda Blackadder	LB	Marine Scotland Science
Hannah Ladd-Jones	HLJ	Marine Alliance for Science and Tech.
Mark James	MJ	Marine Alliance for Science and Tech.
Alistair McNeill	AM	Chair
Eddie Shearer	ES	Fisherman
Billy Wood	BWo	Fisherman's Mutual Assoc. (Pittenweem)
Sandie Ritchie	SR	Anglo Scottish Fish Producer's Organisation
Malcolm Morrison	MM	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Bill Wiseman	BWi	Scottish White Fish Producer's Assoc.
George West	GW	Scottish White Fish Producer's Assoc.

Femke de Boer	FdB	Scottish White Fish Producer's Assoc.
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.
Robert Souter	RS	Fisherman
Foster Gault	FG	Scottish White Fish Producer's Assoc.
Albert Ritchie	AR	North East Creel and Line Fisherman's Assoc.
Gordon Pattison	GP	Fisherman
Chris Pattison	CP	Fisherman
Gordon Lockhart	GL	Fisherman
Elaine Whyte (phone)	EW	Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance

<b>Apologies</b>	
Bob Teviotdale	Arbroath and Montrose Static Gear Assoc.
Charlie Hill	Fisherman
Jack Dale	Fisherman / registered buyer
Ian Gatt	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
John Swankie	Fisherman
John Hoggan	Fife Creel Fishermen's Assoc.
Kevin Birse	Fisherman

<b>Actions of Previous Meeting</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Further information on Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Data System (SIFIDS) requested.	To be addressed at this meeting.
Advice sought from Marine Scotland Science on discarding of berried lobster.	Marine Scotland Science report (Returning [All] Berried Lobsters) to be circulated at this meeting.
MM raised the updated 'guide to opening a fishery' document.	DB advised that a draft has been received and can be circulated.
Sandy Ritchie raised his aspiration to open a part of the St Abbs Marine Protected Area (MPA) to benefit the seasonal squid fishery.	He confirmed that he was continuing to progress this matter but that nothing had, so far, been done.

### **Presentation on Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Database System (SIFIDS) from Mark James**

1. MJ introduced the environmental backdrop to SIFIDS – the use of technology to establish workable, sustainable, fisheries management systems worldwide. The main features and components of the SIFIDS system were as follows:
  - Prototype shellfish imaging unit for sexing and sizing.
  - Field solar tracker for position reporting.
  - Teltonica Global Navigational Satellite (GNSS) System (GNSS) – runs on multi-network sim card and provides low cost communication. Lithium ion battery lasts 4-6 days and will continue to record if severed. Ingress Protection (IP) 67 compliant.
  - FISH1-style reporting functionality as well as map data and sightings reporting. Mapping function is able to auto-populate the form.
  - PC-based control and configuration of multiple units possible via satellite communication.

- Statistical analysis of speed, turning angle etc. enables high degree of accuracy estimate of where fishing is taking place. Duration of fishing can produce a lower and upper estimate of number of creels in the water.
- Tiers of access – fishermen could ensure privacy of their own data, with Marine Scotland also able to gain access. Fishermen could specify who they wish to give access to, e.g. agent, buyer.

### **Modernisation of the Inshore Fleet**

2. DB gave an introduction to the modernisation programme and an update on progress. Marine Scotland are out to tender for 2 lots, the first of which aims to extend monitoring to the scallop dredge sector. The second involves identifying a project manager to facilitate roll out. Subsequent, more complex parts of the programme will roll out SIFIDS-type tech to the wider fleet. We intend to begin with an early adopter programme that will create positive links with the smaller vessels.
  - On data usage and privacy Marine Scotland are being advised legally, ethically and via analysis on these very important aspects.
  - We want to improve on the detail of the data we get from the fleet and we want fishers to feel a sense of comfort that we are going to get somewhere new in fisheries management.
  - It will be coming to all Scottish-registered vessels and for non-Scottish vessels in our waters, we will evolve legislation to encompass them as well.
3. Feedback from the group included the desire that the Modernisation technology encompasses the entire fleet. Questions regarding the scope of the programme, included whether data would continue to be gathered, even when vessels were fishing outside of 12 miles and whether whelk potters were within scope as well as crab and lobster creelers.

**ACTIONS** – None

## **Anne McLay – Report on Discarding of (All) Berried Lobsters Paper**

4. AM outlined a 2013 Northern Irish study that followed the progeny of female lobsters calculate proportion that survived to enter the population. The results of this study were never published.
- Returning berried hens to the sea is intuitively good fisheries management practice but Marine Scotland are currently unable to prove the value of it.
  - SR related inconsistencies in the value of V notching. In Northumberland, there is a V notching scheme and the lobster stocks are very strong, however, Lincolnshire have an equally strong fishery, but has never had a scheme.
  - There was a general opinion among the group that buyers are good at rejecting V notched lobster and that a ban on berried lobster being landed would be likely to receive a lot of support from fishermen in the Moray Firth. AM suggested that this might work well as a voluntary measure.
  - There was some feeling from the north east-based members of the group that Marine Scotland Compliance are not visible enough in the summer months when the part time fishermen are particularly active.
  - Mention was made of the Solway Firth V notching scheme and Marine Scotland's prior practice of handing out V notch clippers to the fleet and recording returns. A question was raised as to why Marine Scotland had stopped this practice.

**ACTIONS:** SB to investigate previous system of recording V-notched lobsters with Compliance

### **Transformation of the RIFG Network**

5. DB gave an update on developments towards professionalisation of the RIFGs. This includes recruitment of new mainland Chairs with AM taking on a coordinating role as well as procuring outreach support workers. DB is also working with developers to create a web-based platform to support the RIFG network with intelligent tagging, search functionality etc. A presentation will follow when it's prototyped.

Discussion turned to the formation and use of sub groups within the NECRIFG. FG compared the use of sub-groups to the small groups he is currently convening to address gear conflict. AR suggested that if the locations of the RIFG meetings were more fluid, such sub-groups may not be required.

## **Creel Management**

6. DB introduced the topic of creel management, opening up the floor on this complex and evocative subject. AM also cited his west coast experience, and the example a creel conflict working group being formed. He also mentioned the Mull and Outer Hebrides pilots and how they represent positive steps led by the industry in this regard.
  - FG drew attention to the fact this his organisation is already working the with the creel fleet to avoid conflict. 'If a creel vessel loses creels, there is a 12 month lead-time to replace them new, so it's better for everyone if agreement and harmony can be reached.'
  - AM gave the example of the Solway Code of conduct and how in the last decade it has slashed conflict in Luce Bay, despite the presence of English and Manx vessels. A facilitator was used in this fishery.
  - There are existing compromises between the mobile and static fleets, including 'boxes' posted on the internet and available through the fishery office as well as the 'phone first' approach for nomadic vessels. However it was noted that sometimes creel fishermen do not respond to these calls and mobile fishermen end up wasting fuel on steaming as a result. In some cases this is because creel fishermen are away doing other jobs – working offshore for example.
  - The use of independent coordinators in addressing creel conflict was discussed with some attendees feeling that a significant number of coordinators would have to be used to accommodate the many discrete areas where conflict occurs. It was discussed that this could be mitigated by the use of a dedicated coordinator - perhaps an RIFG member or outreach worker.

- AM questioned what the group thought the level of support for conflict working groups would be. It was generally agreed that there was no way of telling, but that something should be instigated by January - at the latest – when conflict begins to rise.
- AR felt that a coordinator was not needed, instead, just for the people involved to sit down together.
- GP indicated that the biggest concern in static gear sector collaboration with the scallop fleet is that after they have been through their fishing grounds there are no crab or lobster to be caught there for 1-3 years.
- DB used this opportunity to give her vision of how the Modernisation of the Inshore Fleet Programme could feed into the development of creel management systems. She also referenced identifying 'early adopter' groups. There was interest from the group in engaging with this programme.

**ACTION** – DB to identify early adopters groups.

#### **A.O.C.B.**

##### **7. Other matters raised were as follows:**

- SR gave a brief overview of his aspiration that the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in the vicinity of St Abbs head might be adjusted to allow small trawlers to partake in the seasonal squid fishery without coming close to wrecks in the area. He indicated he would circulate his proposal to the group.
- DW requested information from Marine Scotland for rules on deployment of acoustic deterrent devices against seals. DB invited DW to share a paper with the group. He indicated that he will do that once he is finished writing it.
- FG queried Marine Scotland Science's progress on prioritising analysis of crab and lobster stocks. AM indicated that there is an assessment report due out this year and how, in the future, the Modernisation of the Inshore Fleet technology will assist in this kind of work.

- EW relayed the ongoing problems fishermen are experiencing with identifying a point of contact to aid cooperation, consultation and representation in the offshore renewables sector.

**ACTION** - AM to determine existing guidance on acoustic deterrent devices.

8. DB concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions and asking when the group would next like to convene. There is general agreement with a three month period and that Aberdeen would be a good location. Meeting adjourned at 14:45.