

# Scotland's Scallop Sector Working Group (SSSWG)

## Note of Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Online via Microsoft Teams

<b>Present</b>		
Jim Watson	JW	Marine Scotland
Lynda Blackadder	LB	Marine Scotland
Stuart Bell	SB	Marine Scotland
Helen Downie	HD	Marine Scotland
Ellen Huis	EL	Marine Scotland
Chloe Aird	CA	Marine Scotland
Femke de Boer	FdB	Scottish Whitefish Producer's Association (SWFPA)
Foster Gault	FG	Scottish Whitefish Producer's Association (SWFPA)
Malcolm Morrison	MM	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)
Elaine Whyte	EW	Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance (CIFA)
Andrew Brown	AB	Macduff Shellfish
Claire Pescod	CP	Macduff Shellfish
Kate Rydzkowski	KR	Orkney Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
Carole Laignel	CL	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)
Donald Nicholson	DN	Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Group (OHRIFG)
John Hermse	JH	Western Inshore Scallop Group (WISG)
Hannah Fennell	HF	Head of Orkney Fisheries Association
Sheila Keith	SK	Shetland Fishermen
<b>Apologies</b>		
Alasdair Hughson		

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Jim Watson opened the meeting and gave an update on current matters:

- Apologies for the back and forth with the agenda – we have had a team member sick and that affected preparation for this meeting.
- On the subject of membership, the group was informed that Ally Hughson was invited to join, as we are keen to increase involvement of the hand dive sector.
- Last minute additions to agenda were:
  - Gear Loss form
  - The news reports of a Scottish scallop vessel being detained in France.
- The minute of the last meeting was reviewed with the only live action point being that JW would check that the Jess Sparks SEAFISH report had been fully circulated.

## **2. Marine Scotland Update on the Cooperation Agreement (Helen Downie)**

- SGP coop agreement covers the following elements relating directly to inshore fishing:
  - Inshore cap – consult early next year (intending to limit activity to existing levels within 3 miles).
  - Review of latent scallop entitlements (considering removal of all scallop dredge entitlements where it is considered that there is no genuine intent to utilise it).
  - Extending tracking and monitoring via REM across the inshore fleet.
- Other priority work streams from the Agreement include
  - Introducing Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) covering at least 10% of our waters by 2026.
  - Delivering fisheries management measures for existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), where these are not already in place, as well as for inshore Priority Marine Features (PMFs) identified as most at risk from bottom towed fishing gear outwith MPAs.
- While it's a step-change in protecting the marine environment, these commitments are in line with the FFM strategy.
- There was general discussion about engagement on the economic assessment. HD advised that Marine Scotland are refining our socioeconomic impact assessment (SEIA) methodology to ensure we consider all relevant factors. The methodology is being refined with support from key representative organisations and will soon be shared more widely amongst stakeholders for comment.
- There was discussion whether the HMPAs would include current MPA areas, and it was noted that there will likely be some overlap.
- HD stressed that the consultation process would tease out a lot of the points surrounding the various types of vessels and marine uses that would be able to access HPMAs.
- This point was expanded, discussing the impact of the many thousands of mooring points used by the yachts on the west coast alone. JW responded that their comments were noted and would be fed back.
- There was suggested that Marine Scotland should be studying the cumulative socio-economic impacts of the marine squeeze on the fishing industry and that fishing as a low carbon food source should be portrayed in a better light.
- It was noted that Scottish Government has made clear that we will undertake a programme of work to consider the impacts of affected industries.
- There was a fear that discussion has now moved away from fishing coexistence with other industries to an understanding that fishing is being 'just-transitioned' out.
- It was suggested that the Cooperation Agreement has created a lot of uncertainty and clarity is required. The industry wants all additional

restrictions to take stock of the evidence base and consider the technology that the government have invested in.

- JW stated that the forthcoming consultations would dictate what happens next.

### **3. Update on Modernisation of the Inshore Fleet (Ellen Huis)**

Ellen gave a short update focussing on positive progress made with voluntary REM installations for active Scottish registered scallop dredge vessels:

- All active >10 metre vessels have been written to encouraging them to volunteer for installation of REM system.
- Response has been very good and considerable. Progress is being made.
- Almost 60% of vessels currently utilising a scallop entitlement are now kitted up with REM and there are a number of installations scheduled/pending.
- We have also had a handful of <10 meter scallop dredge vessels volunteering. The remaining <10 metre fleet will be written to shortly.
- EH thanked the SSSWG for their help in generating the progress being made.
- The SG will shortly consult on general principles of using REM in Scotland. The consultation will also consider mandatory scallop dredge REM in Scottish waters in the context of current requirements under the 2017 Scallop Order. EH explained that the intention is that REM will be required on vessels deploying scallop dredge gear in Scottish waters, regardless of nationality of vessel or scallop species

### **4. Ongoing Scallop Matters**

- JW opened a general discussion on current scallop-related groups across the UK and reports including recent interest in the MRAG report, the SSSWG baseline paper, UK-focussed initiatives like the Joint Fisheries Statement, FMPs, and Western Waters effort management. He also noted the marine elements from the Cooperation Agreement including the review of scallop latency, and new stock assessments were due soon, and commented on the uncertainty that exists.
- There was discussion about the international aspect to scallop management as they are now part of EU negotiations under non quota stocks.
- There was general discussion about the RIFG role and structure including whether to strengthen the RIFGs and give them more resources like the English IFCA model.
- There was general discussion about whether current fishing capacity now outstrips opportunity and whether a better approach might be to look at something akin to transferrable TACs for scallops.
- It was asked if there would be a decommissioning scheme for scallop vessels.

- There is an industry appetite for exploration of different types of gear / lighter types of gear. Could the process of getting permission to do this be simplified?
- It was also noted that new restrictions on dive teams from HSE is making hand diving for scallops less profitable.
- JW asked the group what they thought our priorities should be when considering scallop management in the context of the considerable uncertainty that exists, and asked them to formalise these thoughts before the next meeting.

#### **5. AOB**

- Gear conflict – The new system of reporting gear loss is supposed to make this easier and open up channels of communication but it does not compel fishers to give up the relevant information. SB recapped the genesis of the scheme and related the difficulties in sharing data. He said that he would speak with Compliance colleagues and respond formally on this matter but with current priorities there are no plans to introduce legislation to underpin this.
- AB gave an update on the scallop vessel detained in France. The vessel was fishing with a valid licence, held on board the vessel. Vessel has now returned to sea. The owners hope to resolve these issues as quickly as possible.
- JW gave an overview of the current situation regarding Isle of Man scallop consultation. Marine Scotland have set out our concerns – including representation, trust in policy development, technical measures and grandfather rights. We did agree on some matters like REM. The importance of measures being non-discriminatory was also stressed. We will continue to engage and bring in DEFRA regarding their responsibility for Crown Dependencies.