

Regional Inshore Fisheries Group Network

RIFG Chairs' Meeting Note

24th January 2022, via Microsoft Teams – 1pm – 3pm

Attendees

Present		
Jim Watson	JW	Head of Domestic Fisheries Management
Helen Downie	HD	Marine Scotland
Stuart Bell	SB	Marine Scotland
Gordon Taylor	GT	Marine Scotland
Duncan Macinnes	DM	Outer Hebrides RIFG
Simon Macdonald	SM	West Coast RIFG
Jennifer Mouat	JM	North and East Coast RIFG
Donald Nicholson	DN	Outer Hebrides RIFG
John Robertson	JR	Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO)
Kate Rydzkowski	KR	Orkney Sustainable Fisheries (OSF)

1. MS Update – Jim Watson – 1pm

Introductory roundtable from the chairs to welcome the new Shetland Chair – John Robertson into his new role.

Very busy first quarter with the Bute House agreement dominating the work of Marine Scotland.

Scotwind announcement - Sets out high ambitions for offshore renewables. Meeting with Miss McAllan MSP last week, at which the fishing industry aired some concerns about the marine squeeze.

MPA'S/HPMA'S – As part of the Bute House agreement, the MPA delivery plan is to consult towards end of 2022 for introduction in spring 2024. HPMA's are at very early stage of development, with this commitment to be delivered by the end of the current Parliament.

End of year negotiations involved new learning as to how we work as part of the UK as an independent coastal state. Mixed bag of quota outcomes, with Cod in particular remaining a challenge.

Joint Fisheries Statement – This consultation has just launched and sets out the aims and objectives for all UK administrations to work towards. For Scotland deliverables will be informed by our Future Fisheries Management strategy and our new catching policy.

Future Fisheries Management – REM consultation is going through final internal clearance and will be launched in a matter of weeks. Aligned with this, the consultation on future catching policy, which will cover all sectors of the fleet and replacing the existing landing obligation is also being prepared for launch this quarter.

Inner Sound Judicial Review – Delighted to win the appeal on 23rd December 2021 and pleased to see comments regarding the correct procedures used by MS.

Clyde Cod – The situation regarding the proposed seasonal closure is fast moving with lots of industry talks ongoing. Further work being undertaken, with an announcement expected soon.

MS will have catch up with chairs over coming weeks/months on various projects, to help with the resourcing of priority work-streams and ease capacity issues. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the RIFG's role in helping communicate priority projects.

2. Updates from Chairs – 1.20pm

North/East Coast

Renewables – There was surprise regarding the scale of the Scotwind announcement, though it is noted that not all of the sites will definitely come to fruition. Fair spread around the coast and expectation is that not all will come to fruition. Crown Estate are talking of a second round with more details to follow. Developers have been looking for individual meetings, however looking for a more coordinated approach, so that everyone is kept in the loop together and better outcomes achieved.

Commercial Fisheries Working Group – JM has been attending these meetings to discuss the bigger issues surrounding renewables and has found them beneficial.

Scottish Fishermen's Federation – Elspeth Macdonald set up a key fisheries stakeholders meeting to look at best practices on working with the renewables developers.

HPMA/MPA meetings in Dundee and Inverness – First meeting went well, while second one contained some challenging discussions. JM will collate and feedback and share with MS.

Mara Seaweed Project – Plans are gathering momentum, and there has been liaison with

the Aquaculture Work Group that SM chairs. It is to be included on the next agenda, where policy for planning/consenting and working with developers will be discussed.

2020 Under 10 Mackerel season has been discussed. Positive feedback from stakeholders regarding feeding into plans for next year's season.

Aid to Navigation Project – Cant refine this anymore and will discuss further with MS on how to change/refine for acceptance.

Orkney

Marine Planning Partnership (December and January) – There have been a number of subcommittee meetings, focusing on general policy, nature conservation and water quality environment.

The Sectoral Policy Working Group is starting in February, with commercial fishing on the agenda.

Liam McArthur MSP has said that he would like more regular meetings with fishing industry representatives..

Reasonable crab catches have been reported for December and the fleet are now mostly tied up for January.

An alternative certification to MSC is being considered and there is scope for other RIFGs to get involved. KR is hoping to access the UK Seafood Fund for application costs.

Question from SB about crab tagging – KR will set up a meeting soon to discuss further.

Shetland

SSMO board meeting on 2nd December.

There has been open meeting with licence holders, including a presentation about stock assessment from 2020.

New SSMO proposed regulations to ban berried lobster landings and to limit Buckie pot numbers have been noted to Marine Scotland.

Licence renewals for 2022 – 105 applications have been sent out.

Stakeholders reporting ongoing issues with getting RSS inspection work done. The nearest inspector is in Glasgow.

SSMO Funding – The levy is being increased to £400 per year. Shetland Islands council are still to commit to future funding.

MSC accreditation for King Scallops and Brown Crab – An audit was due January 2022, however it has been delayed until March 2022.

West Coast

Clyde Marine Planning Partnership – Had recent AGM and Simon Macdonald was re-elected.

Aquaculture Work Group – More representatives from the Seaweed and Salmon sector are being sought for this group. Other faces still to confirm attendance, especially from Seaweed sector. Hamish McDonald from Salmon Scotland confirmed he will be a regular attendee at future meetings.

Scotwind Project – West coast side not as big an impact as East coast, however north west side of Isla is causing some concern with stakeholders.

Brexit Work Group – Has now been renamed to PISCES which will be examining customs ports, security issues with drivers leaving lorries and issues, such as getting product into the European market, which is proving difficult. Marketing for the United States is increasing where shellfish are proving popular.

Solway Sub Group – Great to have a face to face meeting and hear first-hand issues. Will report ideas for the proposed fisheries diversification in that area to Marine Scotland. SM is looking for 12 people to obtain permission to hand rake the cockles and assess the viability of the fishery via a means of rotating the fishing beaches.

Clyde Cod Spawning Closure – Hugely unsettling for fishers, due to exemptions being withdrawn – loss of income worries and uncertainty for processors. Elaine Whyte has been actively working with fishers to have this decision reversed.

Cabinet Secretary meeting with Ms Gougeon – Generated a good discussion, explained it was unacceptable and worrying for the fishers/industry in reference to Clyde Cod Closure.

Outer Hebrides

Outer Hebrides RIFG Committee meeting on 03 December 2021 - Good turn out and lots discussed, including problems with FISH1 forms being completed correctly.

Duncan Macinnes – Secretary of Outer Hebrides met with the Cabinet Secretary on 19th January 2022 along with Alasdair Allan MSP and representatives of three of largest fish processing concerns in the Western Isles. Discussion focussed on the inshore cap. Macduff Shellfish have invested £4.2 million in Stornoway on the basis of catch increasing over time. Other smaller processors expressed concerns regarding the cap.

Pot Limitation Pilot is progressing well. Visit from Dr Mark James team at USTAN expected in February.

First time vessel owners – Submitted two applications from area to Marine Fund Scotland. Hopeful these are accepted.

Cockle and Winkle fishery resumed – the usual problems exist with trying to monitor and record outputs from these fisheries.

Prawns – Good catches reported especially in the pilot area.

Blue Fin Tuna Project – Not successful last year due to the weather. Trying to tag Blue Fin Tuna, so that they can trace their seasonal patterns. Hoping funding will be rolled over for next year for the evolution of this as a catch and release fishery.

Shellfish prices are very good, despite velvet crab oversupply. Lobster has seen the best ever prices.

Actions

1. **Kate Rydzkowski requires some preparatory advice for attendance at the Sectoral Policy Working Group/Commercial Fishing on 14 or 21 February 2022.**
2. **MS to setup meeting with KR to discuss crab tagging further.**
3. **KR looking for advice on developing/funding – Orkney's Fisheries Management Plans.**

3. Inshore Cap Update – Stuart Bell – 2.20pm

Progress is being made with developing a narrative for our consultation on the Inshore Cap, review of scallop entitlements and inshore tracking and monitoring.

February – March for launch of consultation.

We are assessing the fishing fleet with the best data available, and have a good idea what types of questions will be asked. The cap establish a baseline and other policy developments will flow from this.

The cap will be kept under review and not set in stone. Scientific evidence could be used to modify at a later date.

Island Communities Impact Assessments – Will be carried out, and key first step is to look at communities most at risk. We are seeking to discuss through the RIFG chairs, what questions we should ask and this will be incorporated into the consultation paper.

SB was asked if the 3 mile limit ties in with the cap and responded the consultation will detail a proposed approach to the definition of this area and seek stakeholder views on our proposed approach.

Actions

1. SB/CA to circulate ICIA questions to RIFG Chairs in due course.

4. RIFG Network Improvements – Helen Downie – 2.40pm

An RIFG modification document was sent to all RIFG Chairs in November 2021, to look at ways of improving the day to day administration within the network.

Collective feedback received in December 2021 with all the chairs and looking to action some of the points.

SM asked if the additional quarterly reports were to be published on the website. HD advised will be put on website to be more transparent and work towards their SMART objectives.

SM asked if the progression of laminated posters/topic sheets of your local RIFG Chair to all the Fishery Offices and business cards? This is currently in development and HD is look to share with the Fishery Offices as soon as possible. Furthermore, we can arrange to have business cards made if the individual Chair would like them.

JM commented that this might not work for each area and flexibility is required. Also the wording within the objectives will have to be relevant to each area.

General agreement to progress these actions with the chairs, with time given to the new SSMO Chair to digest this before commenting.

RIFG modification document will contain actions for both MS and the RIFG Chairs to progress as below,

Summary of proposed actions

1. SMART objectives are included within regional fisheries management plans, outlining regional and network level objectives which are in line with Scottish Government (SG) priorities, and published on RIFG website.

1.1 RIFG Chairs to draft SMART objectives for discussion and agreement with Marine Scotland by March 2022.

1.2 RIFG Chairs to review/update Regional Fisheries Management Plans with the addition of SMART objectives by March 2022.

1.3 Marine Scotland to consider best method of publication for Regional Fisheries Management Plans by March 2022.

2. Quarterly reviews to consider SMART objectives and stakeholder engagement strategy.

2.1 Marine Scotland to begin quarterly meetings with Chairs by March 2022, with SMART objectives reviewed at the first meeting and finalised shortly after.

3. Revised template for monthly and quarterly reporting.

3.1 Marine Scotland to consider level of detail required by Scottish Ministers and prepare monthly and quarterly reporting templates by March 2022.

3.2 Upon receipt of reporting templates, RIFG Chairs to use these going forward.

4. Quarterly reports published on RIFG website.

4.1 Marine Scotland to consider best method of publishing reports by March 2022.

4.2 Marine Scotland to share document accessibility guidance with RIFG Chairs for awareness, by March 2022.

4.3 Once publication route established, quarterly reports to be published online and within one month of receipt by Marine Scotland.

5. Development of a stakeholder engagement strategy for each region.

5.1 All Chairs to prepare a regional stakeholder engagement strategy to be agreed with Marine Scotland by April 2022.

6. RIFG Chairs meet regularly, in the absence of officials, to collaborate and provide peer support to one another.

6.1 None, Chairs to continue to consider collaboration opportunities and pursue ad hoc engagement with other regional Chairs as required.

7. Business cards for RIFG Chairs

7.1 Marine Scotland to produce business cards upon request by RIFG Chairs.

8. Better use of RIFG website to ensure we are sharing information and helping people understand role of RIFGs in each region.

8.1 Chairs to regularly consider website content and update as required.

8.2 Chairs to consider breaking regional content into key topics to aid content navigation by March 2022.

9. Laminated notices within Fishery Offices outlining roles and contact details for relevant RIFG Chair.

9.1 Marine Scotland to review existing Topic Sheet and update by March 2022.

9.2 Marine Scotland to consider mechanisms for distributing topic sheets to FOs and Chairs for further distribution, by March 2022.

9.3 Marine Scotland to consider development of A4 RIFG posters outlining contact details for regional Chair, for display in Fishery Offices, by March 2022.

10. Improved coordination with Fishery Offices

10.1 Marine Scotland to consider whether there are opportunities to improve coordination between FOs and RIFGs by March 2022.

11. Improved clarity regarding funding opportunities from the Inshore Fisheries and Coastal Communities Team.

11.1 Marine Scotland to provide advance notice of likely funding opportunities, early in the financial year where possible.

12. Embracing online engagement.

12.1 Marine Scotland to share SG digital engagement guidance with RIFG Chairs by March 2022.

12.2 Chairs to consider guidance and adapt meetings as required.

13. Marine Scotland to consider distribution of internal daily “media digest”.

13.1 Marine Scotland to consider whether RIFG Chairs can be added to media digest distribution list by March 2022. – **Complete – This can be done, let Helen know if you would like to be added to circulation list.**

13.2 If 13.1 is possible, Marine Scotland to add RIFG Chairs to the media digest distribution list, as required.

5. AOB – 2.55PM

No other business discussed.

6. Close – 3.00PM