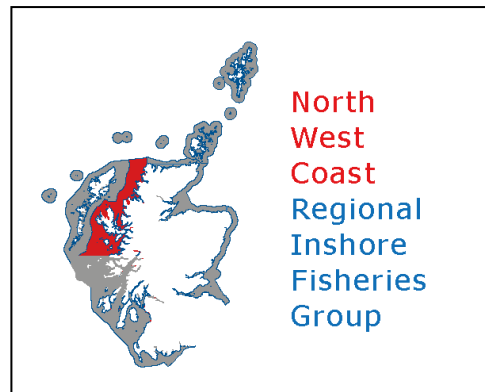


MINUTE OF MEETING

held in

The MacPhail Centre, Ullapool,
at 18 00 on 24th May 2023



Present:	R Hughes, J MacDonald, I Macleod, R Kinnaird, A Macleod, R Dutton, S Coleman, M Macleod, D Forbes, S Bell (Marine Scotland, Policy), J Pringle (Marine Scotland, Compliance)A Hamilton (Chair).
Apologies:	None.

1. Welcome and apologies:

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees

2. Introduction of Chair and Purpose of the Group.

The Chair spent five minutes outlining the purpose of the re-formed NWRIFG, referring to the various policy changes which were emerging and that the purpose of the group was to provide cohesive input from fishers into these changes.

3. Marine Scotland Update:

Stuart Bell provided a update on relevant policy matters to the fleet. He specifically referred to:

- The recently published 2016-19 stock assessment results:
- The future catching policy:
- Proposed consultation on limiting fishing effort within the three mile zone, review of latent scallop capacity and extension of tracking to all vessels under 12 metres.
- The recently closed consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas:
- The likely direction of travel regarding vessel tracking solutions for inshore vessels.
- The refreshed RFIG network.

Following this a discussion took place on local Skippers opinions on vessel tracking systems being rolled out to all vessels under 12 metres. There was general support for such initiatives and those present expressed interest in establishing a reference fleet if such an opportunity became available.

Following this there was a short presentation by Jeff Pringle (SFO, Ullapool) regarding the imminent and voluntary introduction of online uploading of landing data and a discussion of the technicalities of the programme.

4. National Marine Plan 2:

The Chair advised the meeting of the commencement of the revision of Scotland's Marine Plan and encouraged participants to seek it out online and respond to consultations within it wherever possible.

5. Opportunity for Discussion of Issues facing the Creel Sector:

A wide-ranging discussion on the issues facing the creel sector took place. In particular that skippers were facing a financial squeeze. It was reported that, while demand was back to pre-Covid levels, the European market remained soft and prices are falling short of previous years. Costs, on the other hand were continuing to rise with a bait increased by 50% since last year.

6. Opportunity for Discussion of Issues Facing the Dredge Sector:

There was only one person from a trawler attending the meeting and he was based Durness and operated from Kinlochbervie. He spoke about the threat of HPMA's and other restrictions to trade in the very fragile communities with limited opportunities for alternative work.

7. Opportunity for Discussion of Issues Facing Other Sectors:

None

8. Any Other Competent Business:

The Chair raised the potential of project funding via the Marine Fund and Stuart Bell gave examples of the types of projects that could be considered.

9. Date and Venue for Next Meeting.

A discussion took place about the plan to hold meetings in different ports by rotation. The Chair said that, while it was democratic, it may impede continuity in the meetings. It was agreed that, in future there would need to be remote access to future meetings.

No alternative to the proposed of the evening of 20th September 2023 in Mallaig was tabled.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20 00