



Fisheries Management and Conservation (FMAC) Scallop Subgroup – Initial Meeting

Note of Meeting

16 MAR-2023 10:00 – 12:00 - online via Microsoft Teams

Attendees		
Jim Watson	JW	Marine Scotland
Lynda Blackadder	LB	Marine Scotland
Stuart Bell	SB	Marine Scotland
Jo Holbrook	JH	Marine Scotland
Duncan Macinnes	DMac	Western Isles Fishermen's Association
Foster Gault	FG	Scottish Whitefish Producer's Association / Seafood Ecosse
Andrew Brown	AB	Macduff Shellfish
Clare Pescod	CP	Macduff Shellfish
Mark Griffin	MG	South West Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
Alasdair Macleod	AM	Outer Hebrides Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
Hilary Burgess	HB	Shetland Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
Nick Underdown	NU	Open Seas (on behalf of Phil Taylor)
John Robertson	JR	Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation
Alastair Hamilton	AH	North West Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
Michele de Noia	MdN	NatureScot (on behalf of David Donnan)
Alistair Philp	AP	Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation (representing hand dive members)
Sheila Keith	SK	Shetland Fishermen's Association
Hannah Fennell	HF	Orkney Fisheries Association

Not Present		
John Hermse		
George Jack		
Elaine Whyte		

Apologies		
Alasdair Hughson		Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation
Phil Taylor		Open Seas
David Donnan		NatureScot
Ellen Huis		Marine Scotland
Oana Racu		Marine Scotland
Jennifer Mouat		North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
Mike Park		Scottish Whitefish Producer's Organisation

1. Welcome and Introductions

- JW welcomed the group and requested round table introductions.
- JW summarised the purpose of the redeveloped FMAC model:
 - Our approach to sea fisheries management in Scotland has for



several years focussed on the principle of 'co-management,' working alongside stakeholders to develop policies and solutions to management challenges in a cooperative way which takes account of a range of stakeholder views and input.

- This was reaffirmed in our Fisheries Management Strategy-made commitments to improve engagement and transparency. Membership and frequency of FMAC has been fluid over the years, but in line with our aims we believe membership, structure and meeting schedules should be formalised enabling FMAC to engage at a strategic level to facilitate co-managing of fisheries.
- This subgroup replaces the Scottish Scallop Sector Working Group (SSSWG), which ran for 3 years. Its last meeting was in August 2022, and it covered some prominent issues including the economic strain on the industry, REM, Scallop science, and the FMP. General intentions and remit of the group were:
 - To bring knowledge and experience to help understand options to improve management of the King scallop sector and provide appropriate support whilst delivering on objectives.
 - To work together in a productive and collegiate way to generate and deliver actions.
 - To support the development of policy solutions and help inform recommendations to Scottish Ministers.
 - To identify priorities and develop a programme of work for the group.
 - To consult and engage with members and be willing to take responsibility for delivery of some aspects of the work programme.
 - There will be no votes and no right of veto.
 - There will be openness and transparency and all outputs will be published.
- AB asked whether the group would have a focus on matters beyond Scotland, for example interactions with the EU.
- AP said that he would be interested in having a focus on considering other approaches to stock assessment (besides the current sampling plan) and whether a group could be established to define 'just transition' for fisheries.
- JW said that we would take note of these points and consider them.

2. Terms of Reference



JW referenced the draft ToR which had been shared with the group ahead of the meeting and made the following observations:

- The ToR is deliberately high level and we have sought a degree of consistency of language between it and the FMAC ToR.
- We want this group to help drive, develop and implement policy in line with the 2020-2030 Fisheries Management Strategy.
- The intention is to keep membership as broad as possible, but membership small enough to enable agile discussion.
- 2-3 meetings per year is desirable, aligned with the main FMAC Group.
- MS would ideally like to see volunteer Chairs from the wider group.

- AB expressed support for the ToR and invites the group to consider its scope. He suggested that the third bullet under 'scope' could be expanded to include scallop processing and retailing. He noted that there are forces coming down the supply chain that could have impacts at a fishing level. JW agreed, especially given the nomadic nature of the scallop fleet.
- HF raised the inclusion of queen scallops. JW said Marine Scotland would be glad to take the view of others and widen the scope to cover all subspecies of scallop.
- There was broad support for inclusion of the dive sector in the ToR.
- NU queried who else has been engaged with, who has been invited and who has been unable to attend. JW responded that the SSSWG and FMAC were canvassed for notes of interest to join this subgroup and that attendees and those unable to attend would be made public with each meeting's outputs.

- **ACTION POINT (all)** – The group has two weeks from today (30-MAR-2023) to provide written feedback on ToR.
- **ACTION POINT (SB/JW)** – consider wording in 'Scope' of ToR considering comments above.
- **ACTION POINT (all)** – invited to express interest in being chair of this group.

3. Marine Scotland Science Update

LB gave an update and presentation to the group. The presentation will be



circulated with the meeting outputs.

- Market sampling:
 - MSS have a team of samplers who go to the main ports around Scotland to measure scallops (and other species) as part of an integrated sampling scheme.
 - A summary of king scallop sampling from 2014 to 2022 was provided.
- Surveys:
 - Dedicated scallop dredge surveys continue with four surveys planned for 2023.
 - LB will ensure the survey report for Shetland and West Coast is available to the group.
- Stock assessments:
 - We acknowledge they are overdue.
 - There have been numerous difficulties over the past few years. High staff turnover, lack of resources, changes to internal databases, and prioritisation of work areas have contributed to significant challenges with preparing the data required for stock assessment.
 - We understand the importance of these fisheries and are making progress with this work.
 - The plan to ensure the full model configuration and the data will be publicly available – ensuring the process is much more transparent for everyone.
- PhD students:
 - MSS staff supervise two students working on scallop projects right now.
 - LB to provide a link to a questionnaire that would assist one of these projects - [Potential management scenarios: modelling impact on seabed habitats \(google.com\)](#)
- ICES Scallop Working Group and WKSA2:
 - A report is now available on this work - [WGScallop \(ices.dk\)](#)
 - MSS carried out some work on the use of scallop images for training purposes. This is relevant as REM and cameras continue to be more widely used for scientific data collection purposes.
- AP asked whether there are any plans to use non-dredge survey methods? LB responded that MSS attempted to utilise a [drop-down pyramid camera for surveying in the past](#), but it did not perform well in our waters as scallops could not be seen on the substrate. We agree the validity of alternative methods and are always open to such things. This is something that is



frequently discussed at WGScallop and we are aware of the other methodologies being used and explored for other scallop fisheries.

- JW noted it would be worth revisiting the SIFIDS research and consider possible other approaches to surveying.
- AB expressed frustration with the speed of progression, saying that he knows there is good science being done but we are not able to use it. The creation of this group surely should support the progression of work on stock assessment date, so it can be used to develop policy. He said that MS needed to prioritise this, but asked if there is anything industry can do to help.
- JW agreed this group has a role to play in relaying frustrations at the speed of science and noted that the RAINE committee had flagged gaps in the science for inshore shellfish stocks. He noted that MS are also alive to better use of external academia, like the MASTS network to fill gaps.

4. UK Development of Fisheries Management Plans (CP and AB)

CP provided a summary from the drafting group for the King Scallop FMP for England and Wales. Her presentation will be shared with the group. It covered:

- A summary of the stakeholder engagement process.
 - The main points of agreement and contention.
 - The DEFRA gateway review.
 - Future timeline.
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- CP invited all to feed into the upcoming consultation on the Scallop FMP.
 - AP questioned how the FMP would handle the commitment to achieve good environmental status and the incentivisation of more selective/lower impact fishing methods. CP responded that Natural England had fed into the plan (through DEFRA) to consider good environmental status. Regarding incentivisation of selective fisheries - there is no detail yet. However, the spatial squeeze is acknowledged in the plan and one emerging aim is to deliver 'smarter fisheries'. Smarter fisheries are defined as those that are more efficient and/or less impactful on habitats. So, in a situation where it is decided that fishing can remain and the same level, it might be possible to maintain fishing effort but enable the fishers to generate less impact.
 - NU noted that there was not full support for TAC-based approach and asked whether there was any indication of why that was. CP said she felt that some felt there was not enough information to inform a decision and others just wanted to retain the *status quo*. She noted that the drafting group got into detail on approaches taken in other areas and countries.



- CP said that the FMP is likely to be published in the autumn and will be followed by an 18-month period to develop options for management measures. The group wishes to consider how measures might impact on fishers and then give them opportunity to respond and feed in.
- FG said to NU that there is also a science group that they are using to investigate the different measures we might use and how they might work in practice. This group will be used to convince people who do not want change, why it is needed for the wider benefit.
- NU acknowledged FG in the chat, typing that the fairness and clarity of a process for any transition to a different management framework is particularly important.
- FG added that while groups of stakeholders can input to this process, management measures are for the government to decide.
- JW said that this is a national issue and that consideration of different approaches, like output versus input controls are a key focus for this group.
- JW referenced discussion on FMPs at the Inshore Subgroup and that FMPs in Scotland will be discussed at the next FMAC meeting. He also noted that the intention was to have a dedicated FMP subgroup.
- SK questioned consideration of regional variances within development of FMPs, but JW responded it was too early to say, referring to the FMAC discussions and further stakeholder consultation in Scotland.

AB then spoke about non-quota species discussions in the EU context. His presentation will be shared with the group. The short presentation covered:

- Global TAC (not currently enforced) – based on 2016-2019 historic track record:
 - There are distinct options to developing a multi-year strategy for scallops in response to the global TAC. The principal challenge is trying to encourage meaningful progress with the EU.
 - There is a current commitment to get better data with from the EU.
- The ICES Area VIId closure was also discussed:
 - Historically voluntary.
 - Industry expects this closure to displace fishing effort.
 - There is no mechanism to reduce fishing effort, so the key issue becomes how to manage the displacement.
 - There is a call for evidence at present aimed at informing approaches to displacement.
 - Sensible management is required to avoid this closure being used as a 'policy weapon'.
- Looking forward to the TCA negotiation.



- MG asked that, given the French have traditionally closed this area, what decision did they make about displacement of their own fisheries? AB answered that we do not model displacement of effort. Previously, French legislation simply prohibited scallop dredging. Under the EU, there is no prohibition, so they can go elsewhere. But where they go is not assessed. We should be working with the EU to notify affected parties of measures coming in, but also to analyse displacement.
- AH asked about use of REM. AB responded that there were issues in getting information from the EU.
- NU welcomed awareness of TCA matters and noted that Open Seas are also concerned about the unknown scale and scope of displacement impacts.
- NU acknowledged FG in the chat. The fairness and clarity of a process for any transition to a different management framework is important.

5. REM / New Management Measures Consultation (SB)

- **REM Consultation (scallops):**
 - The consultation is now closed and responses are being considered to advise Ministers. An outcome report will follow in due course.
 - There was broad agreement with the direction of travel in the consultation.
 - There was some support for REM employing more cameras to monitor endangered, threatened and protected interactions, safety and crew welfare, and discards.
- **New Management Measures (scallop latency):**
 - The consultation has been significantly delayed but we hope to soon share news on consultation on New Management Measures for Inshore Commercial Fishing Vessels.
 - Most of those present will have already heard an overview of the three measures that will be consulted on, relating to:
 - Capping (to current levels) fishing activity within three nautical miles.
 - Reviewing latent scallop capacity.
 - Extending vessel monitoring to all vessels of under 12 metres.
- FG expressed concerns about HPM/MPA development and how these things would impact on the sector. SB responded that HPM development was a separate body of work from the proposals discussed here and that they acted as a baseline for the Bute House Agreement, taking stock of the data we had at our disposal.



- There was general agreement that development of HPMAs should for a part of discussion by this group.
- AP said that some of the measures being proposed would further contribute to the spatial squeeze and that that if we ended up in a position where we had 'overcapacity,' it is all the more important that we define what 'just transition' means for fishers.
- There was general discussion that there should not be a presumption that REM is only a tool of compliance, as opposed to tool for gathering scientific evidence.

6. AoB

- The following points were raised but could not be addressed within the time given. JW agreed that Marine Scotland would take note of these points for future consideration:
 - AB asked whether the group would have a focus on matters beyond Scotland, for example interactions with the EU.
 - AP said that he would be interested in having a focus on considering other approaches to stock assessment (besides the current sampling plan) and whether a group could be established to define 'just transition' for fisheries.

Close