

AFBI/DARD Inshore Fisheries Strategy Project Steering Group

Newforge Lane, 4th February 2013

Present:	Dr Matt Service	AFBI (Chair)
	Dr Carrie McMinn	AFBI
	Dr Lynn Gilmore	Seafish
	Dick James	NIFPO
	Marguerite Tarzia	Marine Task Force
	Peter Archdale	JNCC
	Ian Humes	DARD
	Ronnie McBride	DARD

Apologies: Jane Berman
Chris Weir

Welcome

Matt Service's chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. It was agreed that the focus of the meeting would be on Agenda item 4 – discussion of the strategy document.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

- Sea Angling – An additional question has been added to the survey to collect respondents e-mail address to produce a contact list of recreational sea anglers
- A draft shorter strategy document has been circulated to the steering group

Project Progress

Carrie McMinn gave an update on the project. In terms of pot fishing, there has been another observer/lobster tagging trip which resulted in approximately 90 lobster being tagged. In addition, samples were taken from these lobsters for genetic analysis. Dick James questioned where the lobsters had been tagged in the latest pot fishing survey. Carrie McMinn confirmed the location. Carrie advised that Prof. Paulo Prodohl would be performing DNA analyses on lobsters which had been tagged. Whilst initially only samples from north of Belfast Lough would be tested, it had been decided that all tagged lobster should have DNA analysis carried out. Peter Archdale asked why there was a backlog of DNA analysis for the lobster v-notching scheme. Carrie McMinn confirmed that it was not a backlog but a lack of funding for the 2009 v-notching samples. These samples could not be tested until compensation to the fishermen had been secured. Carrie advised that a bid was in to fund the testing of 1000 samples from the 2009 scheme.

Carrie McMinn provided an account of the procedure used to process and disseminate information from tagged lobsters which have been recaptured in response to a query by Lynn Gilmore. Lynn suggested that she could send round a reminder e-mail to fishermen regarding the tagging scheme

Action Point: Carrie McMinn to prepare a reminder notification for Lynn Gilmore to circulate to fishermen

Work is ongoing on the scallop data (i.e. by-catch data and changes over time etc) with some initial interesting results appearing. The next scallop cruise is scheduled for 20th –

25th February which aims to use new dredges which will replace the old system and bring it up to date with industry spec. A comparison between the old and new system will be carried out during the February survey. Matt Service advised of a dedicated Queen scallop survey to occur in response to DARD and other industry. Dick James raised the issue of lateness of this survey.

The Sea Angling Survey has now had over 200 responses online. As suggested by several anglers, paper copies of the survey have been circulated to a number of tackle and bait shops however there has been no response by this method. Whilst there have been respondents from the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and England, as would be expected, the majority of respondents have been from NI. The sea angling survey will run until the end of February with a report to follow in March. Matt Service explained that meetings had occurred between AFBI and a selection of sea anglers in order to dispel any concerns regarding the Sea Angling Survey.

Peter Archdale stated that he could take copies of the survey to the Lough's Agency Forum.

Action Point: Carrie McMinn to provide Peter Archdale with copies of the Sea Angling Survey form.

Draft Strategy Summary Document

Matt Service led an interactive discussion on the progress of the draft strategy summary document with Carrie McMinn editing this document via PowerPoint presentation. The following points were discussed:

Peter Archdale suggested that the version be changed from 1.0 to 2.0.

Action Point: Summary document to be titled as version 2.0.

Peter Archdale queried the usefulness of Figure 1 and Carrie McMinn responded in that it is useful to show a change in structure over the Northern Ireland fleet over time, with the majority of vessels now under 10m in length.

Dick James asked that 2011 data be included in Table 1. He asked when 2012 would be available. Ronnie McBride confirmed that the relevant 2012 data will be available in Spring

Action Point: Table 1 to be updated to include 2011 data.

Marguerite Tarzia suggested that more detail should be included about the Northern Ireland Marine Bill paragraph (i.e. more on by-laws, fishing restrictions and MCZs). Peter Archdale commented that there is little information on this topic in comparison to the rest of the UK. Ronnie McBride added that this document is to serve as a summary and that more detail will follow in the full document.

Action Point: more detail to be added to the Northern Ireland Marine Bill section.

Dick James commented that the information referenced on the Scottish inshore management structure was a little dated. Carrie McMinn added that she would be soon attending the Scottish Inshore Fishing conference where she will be able to receive up to date data for this section. Discussion was had by Dick James on the reasoning behind the 6 regional Inshore Fisheries Groups and their coverage.

Action Point: Update information on the Scottish management system

Marguerite Tanzania suggested that more detail may be required on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as a key piece of guidance and that the main aims and objectives of this piece of legislation needs to be emphasised and referenced throughout the document.

Action Point: more detail to be added to this paragraph.

Dick James pointed out that in reference to the “FisherMap” this was not just a Devon map, but also included some Northern Ireland vessels as well.

Dick James suggested that the word “could” should be replaced by “will” in the sentence regarding development of renewable energy sites and loss of available fishing grounds. Dick also debated that the concern is regarding stocks rather than market saturation.

A discussion was had on the implications of governance for DARD and the incorporation of various bodies in the IFAG. Comments included that the ownership over governance was between DARD and others, with DARD proposing various actions and others inputting their views on these.

Peter Archdale questioned the absence of intertidal fishing and voiced his worry that others will question this absence. Discussion followed on this and the difficulties of intertidal regulation. Carrie McMinn pointed out that the intertidal is covered in Appendix 1 on page 24, to the same extent as the other fisheries. More in depth information could be found in the in depth strategy document. Lynn Gilmore added that Caroline Nolan was beginning work on intertidal harvesting.

Dick James suggested the input of buyers and processors in the IFAG representatives was needed to eliminate bias. Dick also added that a group from the Lecale and Mourne area should be part of the IFAG membership. Ronnie McBride countered that this document did not contain a definitive list and that this document will initiative representatives from more specific groups. Lynn Gilmore proposed that an initial “kick-off” event be hosted in various areas to highlight the Strategy, to encourage transparency and to initiate working groups. A debate followed by Ronnie McBride on the issue of this summary being a Northern Ireland based document and in order to not bias any group of people, specifics should be left to the full document.

Matt Service summarised that an initial meeting could discuss who or what will represent groups, planning and intertidal harvesters. Lynn Gilmore said that a few people from the SNIAC group could represent inshore harvesters.

Action Point: the suggestion of a “kick-off” event to be mentioned in the document.

A discussion was had on monitoring systems, their operation and general opinions to it. Ian Humes debated the usefulness of real-time requirements with a discussion following on geo-fencing. Matt Service stated real time would be important in some areas giving the example of Red Bay with Dick James mentioning Torr Head. Matt Service talked about geo-fencing and tidal resource areas and Rathlin Island. Lynn Gilmore suggested the benefit of geo-fencing for moorings with regard to breakaway boats and implications for fishermen. Maguerite Tanzania mentioned the use of following fishing close to boundaries with Carrie McMinn quoting the Lyme Bay example. Dick James commented that it was not a straight line issue and Matt Service discussed the difficulties with irregular ecosystem boundaries.

Dick James discussed the issues associated with electronic logs and whether they are beneficial or not in light of recent disasters. Dick commented on electronic logs removing the data filtering element that paper logs provide, the issue with faulty checking and mis-data uploads using real-time. He also explained the role of local fish salesmen in the filtering process and improvement in accuracy. Ian Humes explained that there are currently no electronic logs on the under 12m fishing fleets but this process is being reviewed. Dick James proposed that there might be scope for using both paper and electronic formats. Ian Hume suggested that there be options for both with an eventual phasing to being completely online. Matt Service indicated that areas and by-catch areas could be useful to collect electronically. Matt also suggested the use of nanotechnology and waterproof tablets. Ian Humes further added that in terms of accuracy and completion, it would be possible to pre-programme the electronic logs to automatically reject certain input errors. Ronnie McBride proposed that the issue of electronic logging and review of the process and data returns. Dick James added that the buyers can provide useful and accurate information in terms of actual weights etc. Lynn Gilmore suggested that this is a task for the Inshore Fisheries Group.

Action Point: review the wording used in this section.

In relation to improved enforcement, Dick James suggested that the wording should reflect that it is a vibrant process and that it is an informal process at the moment which requires formalising with scientists working alongside the industry. A discussion followed on the process of improving enforcement within Northern Ireland and the position of individuals, groups, fishermen, processors etc. Dick James gave the example of the berried crab. Ian Hume mentioned berried crab alongside hobby fishermen and monitoring. Marguerite Tarzia questioned if a description of collaboration between government departments should be cited here. Peter Archdale mentioned the issue of fishing activity across the border and Dick James commented on the issue of where they situated. Ian Humes commented that new legislation is needed to improve the enforcement. Lynn Gilmore mentioned white crab being used as bait in relation to this. Ian Humes suggested that alongside the correct legislative framework a plan should be in place including; what the problem is, what the aim is and these are the proposed options alongside the favourite option with IFAG having input to this. Ian further added that this is mainly a DARD enforcement issue but that other areas may have other bodies involved.

With regard to ecological sustainability, Marguerite Tarzia said that local providence was discussed at the last meeting. Peter Archdale proposed that local providence be included in the list of bullet points. Peter also said that the issue of sustainability should be brought out in the section. Ronnie McBride commented on the importance of socio-economic sustainability. Ian Humes added to this by debating if communities are dependent on inshore fisheries to much of an extent. Dick James countered that it is an issue in areas of economic decline. Lynn Gilmore added that 39% of people are involved in the fishing industry in Portavogie.

Maguerite Tarzia suggested that in the section on other opportunities, fishing for litter could be addressed. Peter Archdale proposed the use of the term “diversification” and gave some examples. Matt Service commented that litter could be a data point within the log books. Ronnie McBride confirmed that fishermen would not be compensated for fishing for litter but that prizes could be awarded. Ian Humes discussed the issue of litter and inshore legislation.

Ronnie McBride explained that this document represents the important points to get from the consultation. Ian Humes suggested that the document should present questions throughout with a template that can represent the responses. Lynn Gilmore suggested that there should be cross-referencing of tables throughout the document. Ronnie McBride reiterated the

format of having a summary document which is cross-referenced throughout and includes links to specific sectors (i.e. pot-fishing) and includes a questionnaire style template. Marguerite Tarzia questioned if the full document will be available online. Carrie McMinn assured that it would. Ian Humes commented that as the summary is a strategy with supporting documents online, it needs to be readable and accessible.

Peter Archdale questioned if it should be explained that issues such as Salmon netting etc. will not be discussed in the strategy. Matt Service said that this could be discussed in along with other issues (i.e. aquaculture).

Action Point: creation of a questionnaire/return-form template.

Action Point: cross-reference tables within the document.

Action Point: note on areas that will not be examined in the strategy.

The way forward

A discussion followed on the timeline for the strategy document project.

Ronnie McBride explained that the following things needed to be completed: summary and background papers assimilated, cover letter and questionnaire created. It was agreed that all the documents will be circulated to the steering group by the 1st March 2013 with all comments to be received by 8th March 2013.

Action Point: documents package to be distributed to group by 1st March and comments returned by Friday 8th February.