

DARD/AFBI Inshore Fisheries Strategy Project Steering Group

AFBI HQ Thursday 06th October 2011

Present: - **Dr Matt Service** **AFBI** (Chair)
 Paddy Campbell **DARD**
 Dr Carrie McMinn **AFBI**
 Dr Lynn Gilmore **Seafish**
 Dick James **NIFPO**
 Ricky Devlin **Marine Task Force**
 Jade Berman **UWT**
 Peter Archdale **CNCC**
 Myrtle Ferguson **DARD**

Welcome and Background

Matt Service welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially to Peter Archdale, Jade Berman and Ricky Devlin

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

- Stake Holder engagement – Carrie was continuing to make contact with groups and individuals both here and GB;
- Charter Boats/Sea angling – It is still the intention to attend the Holiday Show in Belfast to make contact with sea anglers and charter boat skippers. Peter Archdale suggested contacting the Loughs Agency and Gary Gregg as further sources of information.

Project Progress

Carrie McMinn gave a progress report by way of a PowerPoint presentation. The following points need to be noted in conjunction with this.

Pot Fishing

- Observers aboard fishing boats have been collecting data which has been placed on a database for analysis;
- data loggers have been purchased and will be attached to pots
- 1200 lobster tags have been purchased. Plan to tag undersized/v-notched lobsters. Training will be received through BIM/IFCA;
- tagging will be advertised through publications as well as meetings with fishers
- fishers will fill in form and entered into prize draw; if this is agreeable through DARD finance
- crabs will follow lobsters when more funding becomes available
- Paulo Prodahl(QUB) had been contacted to discuss money in project for v-notching genetics who has suggested to (a) use funding to test samples being held from 2009 as no alternative funding or (b) to take tissue samples at time of tagging to examine movement of lobster around coast.

Comments arising: -

Dick James – concerned that only v-notched and undersize lobsters targeted. Suggested that compensation could be paid for landing tagged lobsters.

Lynn Gilmore – suggested using “key” potters to begin with;

Peter Archdale – Perhaps an “App.” for GPS system could be developed.

Matt Service – important to identify problems from the outset.

Peter Archdale – on subject of lobster genetics – It is DARD’s responsibility to fund sustainable fishing.

Paddy Campbell – No issue with that but data needs to be produced when funding has been given.

Matt Service agreed. He felt that the QUB project may have questions which had not been asked and emphasis needs to be based on producing management advice.

With regards QUB funding, it was agreed that option (b) would provide the most beneficial data for the whole of Northern Ireland.

Scallops and Cockles

- AFBI survey data and the monthly shellfish returns will be used for data analysis which will begin by mid October;
- The April and August surveys of the Holywood bank cockles now complete and the report is due for completion any time;
- Fishermen are unwilling to divulge information regarding potential sites for razor clams as they are concerned that the difficulties found with the cockle fishery will happen again.

Comments arising:-

Paddy Campbell – there are concern about viability of the queen scallops fishery but unfortunately regulators have to play catch-up.

Peter Archdale – inquired if DARD had now a better understanding of cockle growth.

Matt Service – explained that there was no funding for an in depth project but would continue to use surveys. He agreed with Dick James that the Holywood Bank animals were very big due to not having been fished.

Sea Angling

- The sea angling questionnaire will be made available in the near future. It is in process of being analysed by an AFBI economist.
- Irish *elasmobranch* tagging scheme will also used as a potential tool in Northern Ireland.

Comments arising

Peter Archdale – There is an absence of baseline data. It is important to have the data. He will speak to the Loughs Agency re possible recipients as they have the tourist remit.

Intertidal Harvest

Apparently no one in NI has a Gangmasters Licence although 2 cases are going through the courts contact will be through the processors to collect data on the intertidal harvest. Food Standards Agency (FSA) will also be used to gather information.

Comments arising:-

Peter Archdale – He had spoken to a processor in Ardglass who thought there was a problem with undersized whelks. As there were a number of sources feeding in it was difficult to get a handle on the problem. It is market driven therefore not easy to control. Matt Service advised the DOE were looking at drafting a Regulation on intertidal harvesting.

Lynn Gilmore – Advised that whelks were perhaps the easiest to tackle. It may be possible to look at the survey which was done of Gunns Island.

Strategy Development

- The current management of the inshore fisheries will continue to be reviewed through discussions with institutes and organisations such as BIM, the English IFCAs and Welsh and Scottish inshore groups along. Local fishers will be also contacted probably through small coastal groups;
- the services of a PHD student will be used to work on MPAs;
- Website still in development. Any comments should be sent to Carrie.

Comments arising

Dick James – North Coast groups will not be a problem but Co Down could be. Leslie Coffey may be a good contact. Dick has also offered to be contact for scallop fishers.

Lynn Gilmore – Suggested a project developed in South Down may help to get a group organised.

Jade Berman – asked how much research will be done on larvae.

Matt Service – Trying for funding, Carries project is tightly tied to Inshore Fisheries Review.

AOB

Peter Archdale – Though it might worth commissioning someone to look at the legal side of the intertidal fisheries as there is no point in developing policy if it is going to be challenged. He also asked if there was any baseline survey of sand eels.

Matt Service – replied that there was no fishery for sand eels although AFBI was looking at all fish stocks including juveniles.

Peter Archdale – Perhaps this was an opportunity to show willing and look at other areas. Matt Service replied that this was something the science strategy should address.

Matt Service thanked everyone for their participation. All were agreed that this was the start of the management of the inshore fisheries which was important economically all around the coast. It would also be important for future offshore renewable licensing.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 12 January 2012 in Dundonald House.