

DARD/AFBI Inshore Fisheries Strategy Project Steering Group

AFBI, Newforge Lane 27th March 2012

Present: -**Matthew Service** **AFBI (Chair)**
 Carrie McMinn **AFBI**
 Paddy Campbell **DARD**
 Jade Berman **NIMTF**
 Peter Archdale **CNCC**
 Noelle McAuley **AFBI**

Welcome

Matt Service welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies: Lynn Gilmore and Dick James send their apologies. Prior to the meeting Carrie McMinn has met and discussed the strategy with them.

As Myrtle Ferguson has now retired, Noelle McAuley will be taking the minutes until a permanent secretary is appointed.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Matters arising from the last minutes

- Cockle report has been forwarded around the group and there will be a survey in the near future.
- Jade Berman needs copied into all future emails regarding the steering group.
- Sea Angling questionnaire still with the economist.

Project Update

- Recreational Sea Angling

Carrie McMinn raised the concerns of anglers over previous angling questionnaires which have been carried out with no feedback being shared or published. To get a high number of respondents to the questionnaire it is important to promote the questionnaire on a number of platforms including using websites, survey monkey and relevant publications. General consensus about the questionnaire is to ensure the questions being asked are clear and direct and the boundaries of where the questionnaire will stop need to be decided. The questionnaire must also include tourists who come to NI to participate in angling.

- Scallops

Carrie McMinn - scallop survey will be taking place in April. It is planned that in addition to the historical areas, samples will be collected from the commercial fishing grounds adjacent to Rathlin Island.

A Scallop Working Group is being held in March in the Isle of Man. Carrie McMinn and Matt Service will not be able to attend the conference but will provide information about the Northern Ireland fishery.

- Pot Fishing

Carrie McMinn has met with the NCLFA to discuss the lobster tagging program, receiving a positive reaction and a general interest in the movement of lobsters. Carrie has been in discussion with Colin Nelson from NELCO regarding lobster tagging and has prepared a letter for him to provide to his members.

A major concern at the minute is the funding situation for the NELCO v-notching scheme. Carrie McMinn explained that without a continuation of the v-notching scheme and testing of the 2009 samples (for which there is no funds) the peak in recruitment cannot be identified.

- Intertidal harvesting

The group agreed that this is a difficult area to obtain information on, but more data needs to be collected. This work should not become involved with the illegal gang situation but should remain focused on the science.

Peter Archdale suggested that legislation may have changed regarding the harvesting of gastropods and this should be reviewed in the strategy (he provided Carrie McMinn with notes). He also suggested that triploid oysters be mentioned in the strategy as should the issue of alien species.

Jade Berman mentioned the proposed intertidal PhD project through the University of Ulster. Jade Berman offered literature on the highly regulated intertidal zones of New Zealand.

Jade Berman brought up the issue of no minimum size for winkles- currently it is only discriminated by buyer size. Undersized periwinkles being relocated was then discussed at length alongside the proposed periwinkle aquaculture sites in Belfast and Kilkeel.

Draft Strategy

Comments arising;

Need to highlight the move from highly regulated offshore fisheries to more lightly regulated inshore fisheries and the importance of governance in inshore areas. It was stated that inshore management needs to be explained more in the strategy. What type of organisation will it be? What powers will it have? Who should be involved?

Paddy Campbell stated that marine spatial planning needs to be carried out to identify areas where fishing currently takes place. Prior to moving to a new area for commercial fishing, an impact assessment would then be required.

Paddy Campbell suggested that the scallop and cockle sections be merged into one and that intertidal cockle raking should be removed from the cockle section of the strategy and only discussed in the intertidal section.

Jade Berman added that finfish had not been mentioned and although they are already regulated through quotas it should be mentioned in the strategy.

Paddy Campbell stated that a permit system is outlined as a recommendation to protect the marine environment in all sections except pot fishing. Carrie McMinn stated that the fishermen do not want a permit. Carrie suggested a limitation on pot numbers and size of vessels allowed inshore. It was then raised that there is nothing to stop a “father” getting his “son” to land another set of pots if there is a pot limit. Paddy Campbell suggested capping the fleet and researching the capacity of certain areas.

Paddy Campbell stated there cannot be a ban on dredging queen scallops without one on king scallops. However the others believed that a ban on dredging for queen scallops would make the fishery more seasonal and allow the bottom to recover from dredging thus protecting the bed and reducing the environmental impact.

Paddy Campbell explained the Western Waters effort regime. He felt that in the strategy the western waters effort recommendation should be under the heading sustainability of stocks. He stated that by removing NI from the UK western waters effort may have no effect as, if UK use up their effort allowance, Area VII could be closed to everyone, including NI, even if NI still had allowance left.

Next meeting to take place

To be confirmed