

INSHORE FISHERIES GROUPS

newsletter

spring 2016



This issue includes:-

- The new regional Inshore Fisheries Group structure and what it means for you
- "Evidence Gathering for Sustainable Fisheries" project – update and next steps
- IFG area updates and focus on Shetland
- Encouraging young entrants and gear technology training opportunities
- EMFF funding 2014-2020 – scheme opens
- Latest fisheries consultations and reports

This newsletter can be downloaded from the IFG website: www.ifgs.org.uk

**Industry led
Working with all sectors
Local management initiatives**

Delivering an integrated approach to sustainable inshore fisheries management for Scotland

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The Regional IFG Structure and What it Means for You

Overview

The 2015 stock-take exercise by Marine Scotland has led to the development of a regional inshore fisheries group structure. This, coupled with changes to the focus and membership of the Inshore Fisheries management and Conservation Group (IFMAC), is outlined below. The announcement on the way forward with this revised structure to accommodate regional marine planning was made by the Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead at the Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference in October 2015.

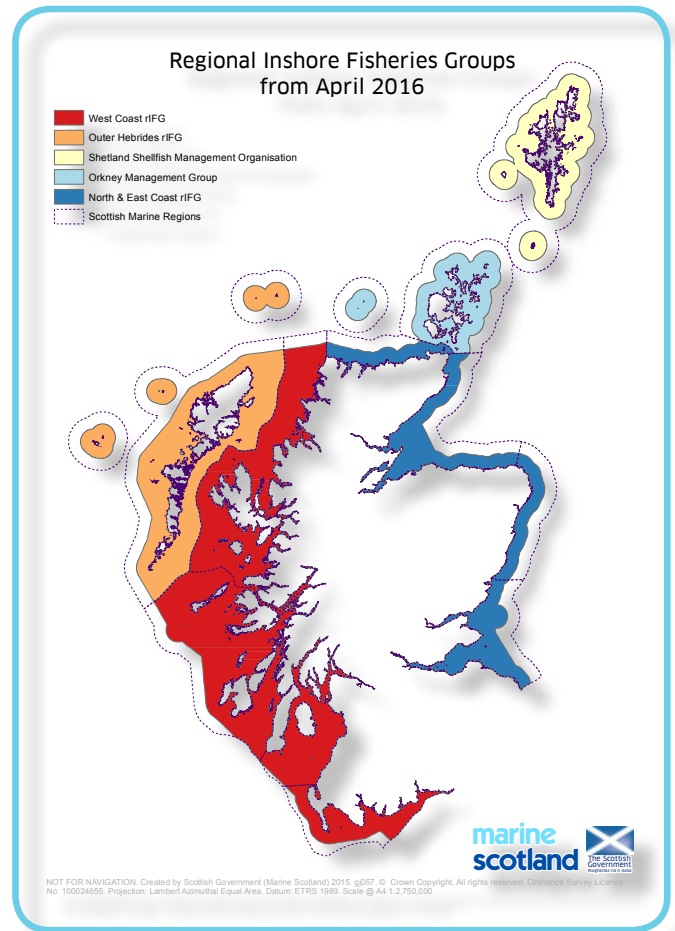
The inshore fisheries management structure, to take effect from April 2016, aims to:

- provide clearer roles and remits for the rIFG groups
- identify the decision-making path for both local and national level issues
- maintain what was working well from the current inshore fisheries groups
- enable more input by fishermen at local level and reduce time, travel and costs
- enable inshore fisheries groups to play a strong role as part of the developing Scottish Marine Region marine planning partnership networks

The refinement of the workings of IFGs has most impact on mainland Scotland. The current four mainland IFGs will be replaced by two regional groups (rIFGs):

- West Coast - covering the whole west coast from Cape Wrath to the border at Solway Firth (former south west and north west IFGs)
- North and East Coast - from Cape Wrath to the border at Berwick (former Moray Firth and North Coast and East Coast IFGs)

The island IFGs in the Outer Hebrides and Orkney will continue as before, as will Shetland operating through the Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO) Regulating Order.



Why was change required?

The industry needs to address the many instances where competition for space in the marine environment is increasingly interacting with daily or seasonal fishing patterns. This is seen as an issue that will become progressively more important as wider initiatives for marine planning are progressed, both at national and regional levels. The new rIFG structure is intended to address such issues, allowing local engagement through sub-groups with the rIFG Chair having more time to spend at the local level. The chairs will also be supported by Outreach Officers allowing rIFG initiatives to be progressed.

Area of Remit

0-6 NM	6-12 NM	12- 200 NM
National Fisheries Issues		
IFMAC main group plus sub groups as required		FMAC
Local Inshore Fisheries		
Five Regional IFGs Plus Local / topic sub groups as required	IFMAC	

One size fits all?

Marine Scotland clearly acknowledged that a "one size fits all" approach to managing Scottish inshore fisheries was not appropriate due to the wide range of activities occurring and the diverse geographic range and scale of fisheries. The new structure shows this diversity:

- Shetland operates under the SSMO Regulating Order for shellfish species out to 6NM;
- Orkney IFG works through the administrative framework of Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd. (with an elected Board and Chairman and all fishermen operating in Orkney waters entitled to become members);
- Outer Hebrides IFG area will continue as before.
- The Scottish mainland will be covered by the North and East coast rIFG and West Coast rIFG.

Each rIFG will host regular meetings with fishermen to discuss management issues and progress local Management Plans, and will be able to operate through sub-groups relevant to local industry issues.

Networking

There have been many successes within the individual IFG areas where either technical measures such as increases in a Minimum Landing Size for a species or operational equipment such as creel escape gaps have been brought forward by industry and trialled (as reported in this and previous Newsletters). What is important is that any lessons learnt in one area can be considered and potentially adopted in other areas rather than each IFG "re-inventing the wheel". The new framework is intended to help areas and individuals to share lessons learnt and work together on common issues, providing a network to progress inshore fisheries management issues within Scotland.

Regional Marine Planning

The rIFGs and their Chairs are seen as the main route through which fisheries management issues can be recognised within the wider regional marine planning process arising from the Scottish National Marine Plan. There are eleven statutory, Scottish Marine Regions (SMRs). Each SMR is expected to develop a Marine Planning Partnership (MPP) although only two pilot MPPs have been established so far, for the Clyde and Shetland. Increasing demand for shared use of marine areas is already highlighting the importance of fisheries data and engagement with all the other key stakeholders within Scottish coastal waters. To develop robust regional marine plans, MPPs will rely on a consistent source of information regarding the scale and importance of fisheries, fish stocks and the environmental, as well as the social and economic conditions that sustain them. Through the rIFG network and specific provisions noted within

their Fisheries Management Plans, each of the SMR Marine Planning Partnerships will be advised on fisheries matters by the respective rIFG Chair. Some rIFGs will cover up to four SMR areas.

Achieving a smooth transition

The current system of Inshore Fisheries Groups will continue until April 2016. The West Coast rIFG Chair will be Alastair McNeill who currently chairs the South West IFG, and for the North and East Coast rIFG Iain Maddox from Dunbar will be taking on the role. There will be no changes in personnel in the Outer Hebrides or Orkney. In addition up to three Outreach Officers will be appointed to provide support for initiatives that the rIFG network wishes to take forward, together with administrative support to record regional meetings and assist the Chairs. New Fisheries Management Plans will be developed during 2016 in order that the local importance of fisheries is recognised, particularly where Marine Planning Partnerships are being established.

How does this impact on local fishermen?

The rIFG structure presents a new opportunity for inshore fishermen to make their views known and to work towards influencing local management processes to ensure sustainable fisheries within Scottish inshore waters. There is a desire to see strong coastal communities continuing to prosecute inshore fisheries and deliver high quality Scottish seafood products. To enable this, it is important that fishermen across all sectors who rely on access to fishing grounds engage in the development of sustainable Fisheries Management Plans by inputting views and concerns. There is a place for all inshore fishermen and those in the seafood supply chain to play their part in ensuring the wider marine resource is managed sustainably for the benefit of all.

Next Steps

Please seek out your rIFG and its Chair so you can support the work of implementing management plans for both local and regional sustainable fisheries. Please also register your contact details to make sure you receive information and invitations to take part, particularly fishermen who are not part of an established association. Further information on the rIFG process is on the Scottish Government Marine Scotland Website: www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/rifgs

Retiring IFG Chairs

The retiring IFG chairs are John Davidson from East Coast, John Cox from Moray Firth & North Coast and Duncan MacInnes who was acting chair for the North West. Members will wish to record their thanks for the very significant contribution they have made to supporting the IFG networks and to progressing actions

that will give fishermen and the industry a stronger voice.

Rig/Tanker Anchoring and Fisheries Liaison- New Guidance Proposed

Large anchor holes in the seabed from rigs and large tankers can present a real hazard to small fishing trawlers, as gear can become trapped, potentially causing a vessel to capsize. Following successful liaison with rig operators and the new anchoring area agreed at Burghead off the Moray Coast, the MF&NC IFG is looking at the wider problem of tanker anchoring over fishing grounds and marine protected areas in the inner Moray Firth. The MF&NC IFG will be formally consulting on this issue with other stakeholders as soon as possible. The East Coast IFG is also in discussions with local fishermen, Fisheries Liaison Officers, the Crown Estate and others regarding similar issues in the Firth of Forth, outside the Forth Ports boundary. The ECIFG hopes to identify an area for inclusion on Admiralty charts where large vessels should not anchor, to avoid damage to fishing grounds. Other IFGs have not reported similar problems with anchor damage.



example of 12 tonne rig anchor - image courtesy of InterOcean

The IFGs were recently invited to give a presentation to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's UK Safety of Navigation Committee (MCA UKSON) to alert their members to ongoing anchoring issues and safety concerns. The IFG Secretariat submitted a paper highlighting the importance of merchant and fishing vessels' coexistence, the problems in achieving communication between marine users, as well as growing demands for shared use of space making it more difficult to identify alternative anchorage areas away from key fishing grounds.

The outcome of the UKSON meeting is that the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is drawing up plans for a working group, and will liaise with the MCA, Marine Scotland, the Fishing Industry Steering Group and other interests such as the rIFGs, to develop non statutory best practice guidance on anchoring issues and enforcement.

Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference 2015 - Report

The third Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference was held on Friday 9 October 2015 at Eden Court in Inverness. A report of proceedings can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesConference>.



Richard Lochhead and Stewart Crichton at SIFC Orkney IFG stand

The Conference opened with an evening reception on Thursday 8th October (sponsored by Highlands and Islands Enterprise), followed by the main conference on Friday 9 October 2015. Both events at Eden Court were free to attend. Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment, launched the conference. Delegates attended workshops and sessions on a variety of subjects and visited stands hosted by a range of organisations including MASTS, fishing federations, Seafish, Marine Scotland, and others. Delegates made good use of the time for networking and informal drop-in discussions. There were opportunities to share experiences and knowledge in an informal setting on a wide range of issues, including long-standing fisheries management challenges and actions, and proposals to improve the evidence base on which fisheries management decisions are made. The next conference is expected to be early in 2017.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) - Update

A Simple Guide to MPA Fisheries Management Measures

Marine Scotland recently issued a simple, non-statutory guide to show the fisheries management measures in Marine Protected Areas: - <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00493862.pdf>. This initially provides details of the measures that are effective from 08 February 2016 in inshore waters. The guide will be updated as further measures are implemented, such as the Small Isles MPA measures currently under consideration.

Special Areas of Conservation Designation

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated for a range of habitats and species defined in the EU Habitats Directive. There are currently 47 SACs for species and habitats such as bottlenose dolphin, coral reefs and seals. On 18 June 2015 the Scottish Government received advice for four draft SACs for harbour porpoise from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). Following a review of the advice by Marine Scotland Science, Scottish Ministers wrote to SNH and JNCC, on 15 December 2015 to advise them not to proceed to consultation with these proposals.

The Scottish Government remains committed to having harbour porpoise SACs in Scottish Waters, where they are fully justified and supported by the evidence. A new selection process led by Marine Scotland is now underway. Further information on this new process will be provided in early 2016. There will be opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the new process. **Please send an email to Marine_Conservation@gov.scot with "harbour porpoise" in the subject line if you are interested in participating.**



Project Results and Next Steps - Evidence Gathering in Support of Sustainable Scottish Inshore Fisheries

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) 'Evidence Gathering In Support of Sustainable Scottish Inshore Fisheries' research projects focused on the future of the inshore fishing industry and took place over 12 months, concluding in Autumn 2015. Each of the seven projects has reported to Marine Scotland and the results are now being presented to Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs), Fishing Associations, Coastal forums and fishing communities around Scotland.

The support of the members of each IFG and the Northern Isles fisheries management groups has been pivotal to the success of the projects. The overall topics for the projects were identified at the outset, and the groups facilitated communication and engagement throughout Scotland's inshore fishing communities. The overarching aim of the projects was to help to develop the evidence base needed to better define the activities of the inshore fleet – evidence needed to underpin the management of Scotland's inshore fisheries and support the future sustainability of the industry. Without adequate data, fishing activities of <12m vessels can often be overlooked in marine planning or prioritising and as a result may find themselves displaced or disrupted by other interests.

The projects had four broad themes, to:-

- better define the location of inshore fishing activities
- assess the practical application of self-reporting technology and techniques;
- review market opportunities and constraints for the shellfish sector; and
- establish a platform for data provision for IFGs.

Final reports for the projects are now accessible at <http://www.masts.ac.uk/research/sustainable-scottish-inshore-fisheries/> or contact your local **IFG or Project Facilitators Ali McKnight or Kyla Orr on Freephone 0800 043 3474** for paper summaries. A presentation of the outcomes is also being offered to any interested group or association up to the end of March, so get in touch with the Facilitators if this is something you would like to see happen in your area.



Ullapool Harbour. "The projects covered a range of fishing communities from Stornoway to Eyemouth. Ullapool harbour pictured during an evening AIS fitting."

Project 1: "Establishing the location of inshore fishing activities"; offered fully-fitted VesperMarine XB-8000 Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) to inshore vessels (<12m) around the Scottish coast, free of charge. These units are primarily an anti-collision safety device designed to transmit location, course, speed and vessel identity via VHF radio signal which can be detected by other AIS equipped vessels as well as land based receivers. The main objectives were:

- to explore the ability of AIS, which is largely reliant upon line of sight radio signals, to report effectively (particularly close to cliffs or high ground); and
- to establish whether fishermen would be willing to use AIS.

In total, 274 vessels were equipped with devices and their AIS signals recorded over several months. The enthusiasm for the project was illustrated by the fact that considerably more skippers expressed an interest in having an AIS unit fitted to their vessels than the project could supply. The XB-8000 AIS units were selected because they are Wi-Fi enabled with software that allows the skippers to see their vessel track and those of other vessels within reception range. The project also helped fishermen to access free software (OpenCPN) that can record and store tracks for presentation or future use. After becoming familiar with using the AIS units, skippers were asked about their likes and dislikes of working with AIS and how they viewed future use to support local fisheries management.

The results (59% return rate) have been illuminating with the vast majority of those responding seeing at least some overall benefit and all but a few skippers

considering or choosing to continue using AIS. One of the main advantages of adopting AIS as a way of gathering information on the location of fishing activities is that the data is openly available at relatively little cost. However, there were negative views regarding 'publicly available' information being seen by other commercial fishermen (noted by 34% of respondents) while the risk that the data might be used against fishermen was expressed by 30% of respondents. Poor or no coverage by AIS in some areas was also a concern (16% of respondents).

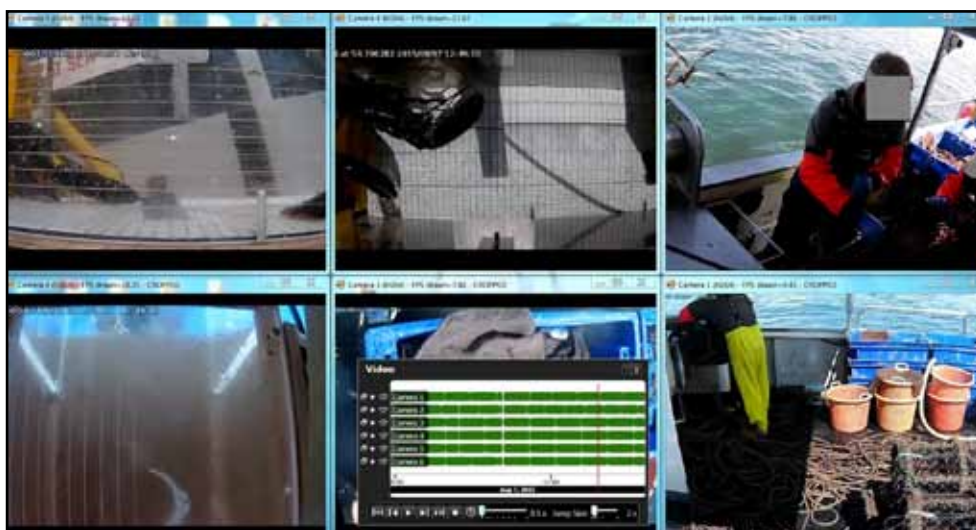
In addition to collecting AIS data to assess its ability to identify where inshore fishing is taking place, the potential areas covered by AIS were predicted using a sophisticated radio frequency propagation and reception model. By combining the outputs from the model with the AIS data it has been possible to identify potential AIS reception/reporting blackspots and to start thinking about how reception in these areas might be improved? Overall, the fitting of the AIS units, subsequent data collection and the survey of skippers' views has provided important new insights into the practicalities of using AIS in a fisheries management context and the willingness of the industry to adopt this technology. More detailed analysis of the AIS data collected is planned and this will help to inform both Marine Scotland and the industry's thinking on next steps in 2016.



"The unit is mounted in the wheelhouse, with an external GPS and aerial. WiFi transmits the AIS signal from the XB-8000 to an on-board computer, tablet or smartphone to show tracks"

Project 2: “Monitoring fishery catch to assist scientific stock assessments” and; **Project 3: “Identifying catch composition using electronic technology”** ran simultaneously on a number of under 12m volunteer vessels on the west coast to test the use of self-reporting via log-sheets and the cost-effectiveness of electronic monitoring (EM) including cameras, callipers, sensors and scanners. A total of 11 vessel crews from the Outer Hebrides to the Solway were given training on how stock assessments are undertaken and took part in trialling catch data collection methods with a key focus on data deficient stocks (Lobster, Brown and Velvet Crab). Participating vessels undertook 703 fishing trips during the project to provide comparable self-reporting data sheets and ‘electronic’ datasets (locational data, catch data, catch measurements and biological data).

Approximately 12% of captured data and video footage were analysed to compare recording methods for precision and cost revealing a high level of accuracy of manual catch recording (although discard data tended to be less precise), and effective electronic techniques for measuring catch per unit effort (CPUE), biological data of catch (sex, length) and basic discard data.



On-board camera recorded catch and discards while other electronic equipment measured carapace length and fishing effort

Despite some challenges in sampling discards, the trials have proven that EM systems are not only capable of providing useful data for stock-assessments and validating self-sampling but can also be used successfully without impeding fishing activities on smaller vessels. The process clearly demonstrated the competencies of fishermen in providing input to stock assessments and the value of such input in achieving robust and credible results. One of the recommendations arising from this project is the establishment of a working-group comprising fishermen, scientists and fisheries managers to further

develop realistic, standardised self-sampling protocols and expand the use of electronic monitoring systems in fisheries management.

Two projects focused on marketing and worked closely together to develop case studies in several areas within the Outer Hebrides, North West and Moray Firth and North Coast IFGs.

Project 5 “Improving market intelligence and co-ordination within inshore fisheries” studied market related constraints and opportunities of local marketplaces, by assessing existing supply, value and infrastructure, and by meeting with producers and industry representatives to assess supply chain challenges and potential solutions. Evaluation included existing product dependency, diversification risk and current success stories while highlighting potential product opportunities and infrastructure investment openings; market demand and how we develop a better understanding of this for inshore products; information exchange between supply and markets and the development of innovative trade cooperation models; and education on seafood preparation. Case study work was focused on peripheral areas on the West and some areas within the Moray Firth, taking in existing initiatives such as the Moray Firth Partnership’s “Seafood – See Here!” project.

Project 6, “Integrating stock management considerations with market opportunities” aimed to identify if regional, voluntary, increases in the landing size for certain species (Velvet Crabs and Nephrops) are economically and practically feasible to match market demand. This was done by determining the size distribution of animals and current markets, while assessing the potential economic and

stock sustainability effects of increases in the minimum landing size of species through modelling and direct communication with producers and buyers.

The case study area focused on the Skye and SW Ross Trawl and Creel fishery for Nephrops with preliminary assessments also made for the South Uist and Barra velvet crab fishery. Evidence suggests that the industry is largely already managing or proposing velvet crab MMLs while studied Nephrops fishery is being fished at a level of maximum sustainable yield and that no real case exists for an increase in

minimum marketable landing size (MMLS) for the creel fishery above the current 34mm carapace length (CL) (as determined by the live prawn market); however modest changes could potentially enhance the size profile for market or stock health benefits. It was also clear that a raised MMLS for the trawl sector would incur costs and complexities that currently outweigh the benefits unless substantial longer term advantages can be demonstrated.

The study highlighted the different interests of the creel and trawl sectors in both optimal stock management and product / marketing strategy and indicates that a greater degree of physical separation between the two may be beneficial.

Finally, two projects focused on data requirements for inshore fisheries management, both resulting in web-based information management and visualisation platforms designed to be used by IFGs. Project 4



Can a diversified catch created by cooperative action increase local sales?

“Pilot study to define the footprint and activities by identifying target fisheries, habitats and associated fish stocks” trialled the development of a set of interactive, online maps depicting geographical, biological, oceanographic, and fisheries data for two pilot areas

(Moray Firth and Clyde). The idea behind the project was to stimulate creative thinking about how a modern, internet-based system might be used to support inshore fisheries management in the future.

The project initially reviewed what types of data IFGs might require for effective local fisheries management



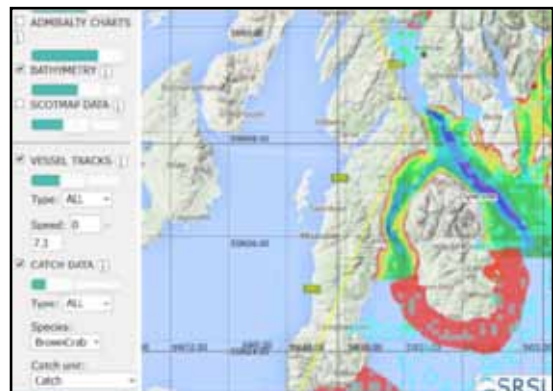
Studies assessed the feasibility of introducing a MMLS for Nephrops across creel and trawl fleets

and then produced a visual ‘Inshore Fisheries Data Explorer’ which allows overlaying and filtering of mapped data delivered across the internet.

Consideration was given to confidentiality and anonymity of data by allowing different levels of access to different users. Potential users were then

asked to trial the system and score the available layers and features in relation to how useful they would be for inshore fisheries management. The system was also designed with a view to transferring some functionality to the existing online National Marine Planning interactive tool (NMPi).

The second data provision project “Establishing a dedicated information resource base for Scottish inshore fisheries” (Project 7) developed a searchable ‘library’ database of information on Scottish inshore fisheries in direct response to the current and future needs identified in the IFG management plans. This has provided a framework for easy access to currently available reports, research and statistics



searchable by subject, author, date or geographical area. A two-year license from the service provider has been established to enable users to access the information hub across an extended trial period. A key part of the work was to identify with IFGs, the current information deficiencies that exist. Initial feedback from IFGs has been positive with ease of access and usefulness of the resource being noted. Regular updates can easily be carried out centrally or by IFGs as required and further development may be appropriate as the operational remit of the Inshore Fisheries Groups evolves. **Contact the project facilitators on FREEPHONE 0800 043 3474** or email alimcknight@agroecosystems.co.uk or kylaorr@gmail.com for further information.



Area News

East Coast

Rig Anchoring in the Firth of Forth

The Forth Ports Authority recently designated three additional rig anchorage areas in the Forth, which has caused concern to local fishermen about further loss of access to fishing grounds (see also the separate rig/tanker anchoring update in this issue). As part of continuing work to address local issues, discussions are taking place through the East Coast IFG with the Crown Estate and others, to generate support for the fishermen's case and require early liaison with fishermen to avoid unnecessary loss of key nephrops fishing grounds, as well as to identify the potential safety hazards for small vessels.

New East Coast Alliance - By Iain Maddox

The Inshore Fishermen's Alliance was set up in 2015, representing inshore fishermen from six harbours: Cockenzie, Port Seton, Dunbar, Cove, St Abbs & Eyemouth. Here, one of the founders, Iain Maddox, gives more information about the Alliance and why it was set up, with some views on encouraging future participation in the new North and East Coast regional IFG and regional marine planning.

1) Why was the Inshore Fishermen's Alliance set up, and how did you decide which harbour areas should be invited to take part?

The Dunbar Fishermen's Alliance (DFA) was formed in 2011 to campaign against Dunbar Harbour Trust's plan to replace the fishing fleet with support facilities for the renewables industry and we met with 'everyone' including the First Minister who got us a commitment we'd stay whatever happened. In the process, we became aware of the National Marine Plan and signed up for email updates from Marine Scotland and I started going to the Inshore Fisheries Group meetings too. I produced a written report from the IFG meetings and circulated it to members who were on email. This stimulated discussion over the radio and fishermen from other local harbours kept asking "How come to you boys ken what's going on and we get telt nane?"

The DFA encouraged our colleagues to send representatives from their harbours but as sole traders they could not afford the time off work and the retired men were concerned they'd need computer skills. Consequently, we did a deal whereby each harbour would have a nominated contact, so I would attend the meetings (and monitor the email alerts) and I would report to the local contact who, in turn, would get feedback from their colleagues to give to me to feedback to the next IFG.

Accordingly, we formed the Inshore **Fishermen's Alliance** in February 2015 to:

1. To bring together under-represented inshore fishermen's associations plus non-constituted inshore fishermen groups and individuals to ensure their needs are articulated and addressed.
2. To promote sustainable fishing for the common interests of members as well as protect and enhance the environment.

2) How does the alliance differ from other fisheries associations? Are all fishermen at all of the harbours eligible to take part, or is there a more restricted sectoral focus?

We do have a Constitution which restricts membership to inshore fishermen defined as "the inshore fishing fleet which is operator-owned, under-16.5 metre licensed fishing vessels typically fishing within the zero to twelve nautical miles inshore zone". Our membership includes associations and individuals. I coordinate communication but we don't have formal meetings as such. Usually, I and some Dunbar colleagues make arrangements for an open meeting at a harbour and we chat over coffee.

3) Looking forward to the new regional IFG setup which will encourage or enable the formation of area or topic sub-groups, do you think that your Alliance model might work as a "sub-group"?

For the south side of the Forth, yes. If the big plan is to define the Forth as a local fishery then we'll need to encourage the north side to form an alliance or we all team up together as preferred. We'd be looking for some guidance and leadership from the new rIFG chairman.

4) *Any other thoughts or ideas?*

Yes, I'd encourage all inshore fishermen to sign up for Marine Scotland and Seafish emails and newsletters so they know what is going on with the National Marine Plan in particular. Chat on the radio and send feedback to Marine Scotland as they are keen to get it so they can have a balanced view of what real fishermen really care about. Don't worry about spelling and grammar; just tell them what you think. Also tell the IFG chairman so matters of concern can make the agenda and not be inadvertently overlooked whilst important decisions are being made. The NMP is a positive step forward but it will mean changes - **be involved and help shape the future.**

Moray Firth and North Coast

Ship to Ship Crude Oil Transfer Proposals in Moray Firth

The Cromarty Firth Port Authority recently applied for consent to carry out ship to ship (STS) crude oil transfers in the Moray Firth, just inside the port boundaries adjacent to the entrance to the Cromarty Firth and immediately adjacent to key fishing grounds. This raised major concerns by local communities and environmental organisations, given the large number of European protected areas and species in close proximity that might be affected, either in the event of an oil spill, or due to possible contamination or introduction of non-native invasive species from proposed ballast water discharge into the firth. The area proposed off the Cromarty Sutors is within the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation and is one of the "hotspots" for bottlenose dolphins feeding in the area. The whole inner Moray Firth area is economically reliant on nature tourism.

Ship to Ship or Ship to Shore transfers have been carried out at Nigg inside the Cromarty Firth for some years, but ship to ship transfers in the open sea from vessels anchored within a couple of miles from shore would present significant additional hazards and difficulties in controlling vessels as well as trying to contain any spill.

As well as the obvious environmental concerns, local fishermen were concerned about the possible impacts of the proposed increase in tanker and shipping activities in the area, even if no actual oil spill or ballast water contamination took place. Local Fishermen already have problems due to the numbers of large tankers anchoring over fishing grounds (and regularly moving anchorage point). The resulting anchor holes can cause long-term safety and operational problems for fishing vessels, lasting for several years. So the threat of more supertankers and other smaller tankers anchoring in the Moray Firth while waiting for operations to start, as well as the loss of access to fishing grounds during operations would be a major economic concern. Following the 1993 Braer oil disaster, an Exclusion Zone for nephrops and mussels remained in place for seven years, although other fisheries and shellfish exclusion orders were lifted within a year or two.

The number of vessels and value of fish landings from the inner Moray Firth area has been increasing in the last few years. The Value of Landings from just the two Fisheries Districts (adjacent to the Cromarty Firth Port Authority area and proposed STS Locations) increased by 47% since 2013 to over £1m in 2015. The number of vessels operating from Burghead Harbour on the Moray coast has risen (in summer) from an average 12 to 14 boats in 2011 to a steady 18 to 20 for most of the 2015 season. Boats operational in the winter also rose from 8 to 10 in the same period, so a potential oil spill could present a major economic blow to the industry as well as knock-on economic impacts on shore based industries and the local area.

An application by Orkney Island Council Harbour Authority for Ship to Ship transfers in Scapa Flow was consented by the MCA in 2015, and although enhanced management measures for dealing with ballast water and oil containment were applied, local fishing associations still have concerns about the potential for irrevocable damage if invasive non-native species were introduced. A 2006 proposal for Ship to Ship transfers in the Firth of Forth was abandoned due to the strength of local concerns.

The MF&NC IFG held a meeting with local fishermen on 20 January 2016 and obtained further information by email and telephone to include in its letter of objection and representations. The STS Consultation on the application closed on 08 February, and we now await deliberation by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency which is the body responsible for dealing with this application under the Merchant Shipping (Ship-to-Ship Transfers) Regulations 2010. This is a "reserved matter" so the decision will not rest with the Scottish Government.

Moray Firth - Static Gear Fishermen's Recording Scheme for Commercially Important Marine Species Abundance. Fishing Industry Science Alliance (FISA) and Inshore Fisheries Group funded project

This two year project, which started in 2015, aims to devise and establish a self-sampling and reporting scheme to allow static gear fishermen to reliably record and report the constituents of their routine catch including juvenile stages of commercial fish and shellfish without impacting significantly on working time.

The main focus in the first year was to develop and trial self-sampling and data-recording schemes suitable for the creel fishery in the Moray Firth. Options for data collection, methods used, recording formats, type of data recorded and the frequency of sampling and level of sub-sampling were evaluated.

Biologists from the Ness and Beaully Fisheries Trust (NBFT) were the science partners and produced daily and weekly recording sheets for participating vessels to record their landings and discards along with reasons for discard. These sheets also included by-catch, environmental data (temperature, depth, substrate, tides and weather conditions). In addition, location data, number and type of creel, soak time and bait were also recorded.

A range of interesting statistics and possible links between catch and by-catch abundance are starting to emerge, although it's obviously not possible to be accurate based on one year's data. More information about the project findings will be made available online once the first year-end report is finalised.

	Cod	Ling	Coalfish	B.Wrass	G.Wrass	Pollack	Pouting	Conger	LS.Dogfish	Sole	Topknot	Sea Scorpion	Whiting
Total	209	29	76	199	1	4	1	4	4	2	2	12	4
CPUE	0.0487	0.0068	0.0177	0.0464	0.0002	0.0009	0.0002	0.0009	0.0009	0.0005	0.0005	0.0028	0.0009
Per trip	3.542	0.492	1.288	3.373	0.017	0.068	0.017	0.068	0.068	0.034	0.034	0.203	0.068
Per week	9.09	1.26	3.30	8.65	0.04	0.17	0.04	0.17	0.17	0.09	0.09	0.52	0.17
Per month	41.8	5.8	15.2	39.8	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	2.4	0.8
% of total catch	1.162	0.161	0.422	1.106	0.006	0.022	0.006	0.022	0.022	0.011	0.011	0.067	0.022

Table 1 – Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) of By-catch species from creels sampled (June to November 2015)

For more information about the project, contact Sandy Patience: sandy.kincurdiefishing@btinternet.com

North West

NW IFG Chair

Richard Greene retired as IFG chair in March 2015 but is still Councillor for Highland Council's Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh ward and is active in supporting local fisheries interests. Members at his last IFG meeting thanked him for his significant input to the North West IFG and wished him well for the future. Duncan MacInnes, who was vice chair, then took on the role as acting chair, and has put in a huge amount of time and effort, travelling from the Outer Hebrides area where he supports the OH IFG, including attending sub group meetings in Kyle in relation to the BUTEC proposals.

BUTEC Range Extension Proposals – MoD

Following many months of press and social media speculation and a House of Commons Debate on 23 June 2015, the formal consultation on new Byelaws for the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (BUTEC) range and planned extension of the range / restricted fisheries areas was launched on 30 September by the Ministry of Defence (Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Byelaws Review Team). The proposals would increase the area closed to all fishing between the Isle of Raasay and the Applecross peninsula from 25 km² to 54km². This increase would more than double the area in which fishing, by any method, is prohibited at all times, and reduce the fishable area in the creel-only zone by around 11%. As mapped by Marine Scotland, the nephrops creel fishing is by far the most important fishery in the wider local area. The vessels that would be affected are generally small and locally based, with limited range and few options to relocate to fish elsewhere.

As requested by local fishermen, the North West IFG set up a special "BUTEC" subgroup to respond to this threat and to help prepare a formal response to the consultation. Highlands and Islands Enterprise secured funding for a professional economic impact assessment that helped substantiate the NW IFG response. This was completed by a local economist, Steve Westbrook, and submitted to MoD on 14 December 2015. Given the size of the ICES reporting squares, it was very difficult to drill down to local area level to ascertain the lost income / potential displacement effects of the proposals. Individual vessels gave consent for data to be gathered confidentially and consolidated to provide an approximation of the value of landings that might be affected.

Information was obtained directly from the fishermen who depend at least to an extent on stocks in the area that would be closed to fishing and figures and from the Input Output tables for Scotland. This showed that, inclusive of indirect and induced impacts, an estimated £917,500 of nephrops plus £30,000 of other species were landed from this zone between December 2014 and November 2015, which support 24 full time equivalent jobs (FTEs) in the local area, 26 FTEs in Highland, and 28 FTEs in Scotland. These impacts exclude value added after the first point of sale.

The MoD's detailed response to the representations was issued 05 February 2016. As well as carrying out a further economic impact assessment, the MoD invited the IFG and local fishermen to take part in local working group meetings in early February and March 2016, and offered one to one meetings with those affected. The MoD decision is expected in May 2016.

The IFG's key aim is to facilitate an accommodation with the MoD/QinetiQ that would enable continued fisheries activity at an economically and environmentally sustainable level, recognising the significant local employment and other benefits from the BUTEC range. The IFG's BUTEC subgroup met again on 31 March 2016 to consider ways to avoid future gear conflict if the extension to the BUTEC range and fisheries restriction areas goes ahead as proposed. Six local nominated representatives from the creel and nephrops sectors will meet, along with Marine Scotland, to look at mapping activity in the area and consider possible spatial and seasonal zoning options that would be fair to all the different users. Their recommendations will then be considered by the other sectors that use the area, and any agreed way forward will be referred to the new West Coast rIFG.

SOUTH WEST

During 2015 SWIFG has consolidated its role as a result of the proactive participation of its subgroups. Subgroups for the Clyde, Mull & Argyll, and Solway, respectively have debated local issues and proposed actions within their respective areas. SWIFG executive committee has responded to major national consultations and developments with the potential to impact upon or otherwise affect inshore fisheries. Consultations by the Scottish Government on MPA and SAC management proposals presented a key development during the year. Whilst subgroups debated the MPA and /or SAC subjects pertinent to their respective areas, detailed responses were made to Marine Scotland with the agreement of the SWIFG executive committee.

MPA management proposals, the Clyde 2020 Initiative, forthcoming Marine Planning, a proposed Regulating Order application and the impact of cable laying contracts are some of the issues that have featured in the Clyde subgroup area. Where appropriate, written responses reflecting SWIFG's position have been made to the Scottish Government or other pertinent parties on some of these topics. Otherwise, the subgroup has been represented on the steering group committees of the Clyde 2020 initiative.

During the summer, the Mull & Argyll subgroup opted to canvas members and other fishermen directly with regards to increasing the minimum landing sizes (MLS) of lobster and crab as a means of conserving stocks. Questionnaire returns were overwhelmingly in favour of supporting the proposed changes and the executive committee agreed to explore views on implementing the same MLS proposals in other parts of SWIFG's area. Marine Scotland has been advised of these proposals. A focus session overseen by a facilitator took place in Mull in January 2016 to enable local fishermen to explore further fisheries sustainability management opportunities.

Members of the Solway subgroup continue to participate in a number of projects including data collection, v-notching trials and creel escape panel investigations. Initial feedback on the use of creel panels has been very positive and while a detailed report on findings will be produced in 2016, early indications from people involved in the trials suggest that escape panels are useful for stock conservation as well as being labour saving devices. During late autumn, the Solway Code of conduct was reissued for a further year. Notwithstanding some problems during 2015, members agreed that the voluntary code remains the best way of seeking to prevent conflict and this was duly agreed by all relevant parties. Solway Firth Partnership (SFP) has previously facilitated agreements of the code since 2008, but during 2015 this was undertaken under the auspices of SWIFG with the support of SFP.

The review of IFGs undertaken during 2015 will see the formation of a Regional West Coast IFG (rIFG) in 2016. The new rIFG will include the current SWIFG together with the North West IFG waters including Skye and the Small Isles. Key to rIFGs is the emphasis on the input of local subgroups and as such is effectively an evolution of what is currently ongoing in SWIFG with its subgroups structure. The future success of the rIFG, particularly with processes such as marine planning which is expected to commence in the Clyde catchment in 2016, will be the establishment of aims, objectives and positions on various issues.

To this end, Management Plans for the Clyde and the Small Isles and Mull, both of which were published in 2011 on the completion of the pilot phase of IFGs, will form the backbone of an updated plan for the new West Coast IFG region. Whilst a number of objectives in the Clyde plan remain relevant, the



Mull Focus Group

Mull group believe that large parts of the Small Isles and Mull plan have been superseded by events. The Mull focus session presented an opportunity to start the revision of current plans. The Solway was not included in the pilot IFG process as were some Argyllshire waters and as such these do not feature in any plans; thus a review will be fully inclusive of all inshore waters in the West Coast IFG region.

The rIFG will provide a forum whereby commercial inshore fishermen have a voice and the opportunity to contribute to future sustainable management of their industry both locally and nationally. The importance on having agreed positions will be imperative as forthcoming statutory developments and further conservation management measures are announced.

For more details on how you may contribute to SWIFG or the forthcoming regional West Coast IFG please contact the Secretariat, Fiona Mills, by email at admin@sw-ifg.com or Ross Cumming at Marine Scotland: ross.cumming@gov.scot

OUTER HEBRIDES

Updating the inshore fishing prohibitions currently in effect in the Outer Hebrides has been a key element of the IFG's Management Plan. In December 2015, Marine Scotland issued a consultation on behalf of the IFG on management proposals it had developed. These proposals included:

- Changing the prohibition period for static gear fishing in the Bragar to Dell area
- Removing the prohibition on mobile gear in the South of Harris area
- Expanding the seasonal prohibition that restricts scallop dredging in the Lochmaddy to Stuley island to include all methods of fishing for scallops
- Extending southwards the prohibition on static gear in the Northern Barra , Benbecula, North Uist and Harris area
- Introducing a seasonal prohibition on static gear fishing for shellfish in the Loch Roag area

The consultation closed on 26 February 2016 and an outcome report will be issued in due course. The minimum landing size for lobsters landed into the Outer Hebrides will increase to 90mm from 29 May 2016. This follows on from a yearlong phased increase from 87mm to 88mm introduced in May 2015, along with separate increases for brown and velvet crab.

A project to ascertain meat yields in cockles at 6 beaches in North Uist and Benbecula is well underway with early results indicating higher yields in summer. The project is due to finish at the end of January 2016 and a report of the findings will be published in April. The project will assist the OH IFG in developing future management measures for the sustainable harvesting of cockles in North Uist and Benbecula.

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (CNES) discussed at the September 2015 series of meetings the need to establish a local Marine Planning Partnership for the Outer Hebrides. Keith Bray, Head of Development Services, CNES, has met with the Outer Hebrides IFG to discuss the proposed development of a Marine Planning Partnership and the role that the Outer Hebrides IFG could have in such a Partnership.

Further meetings will be held with representatives from Shetland Islands Council when they will provide an update on the progress in setting up a Marine Planning Partnership in Shetland.

ORKNEY

Work within the Orkney IFG by Orkney Sustainable Fisheries (OSF) continues to go from strength to strength. In the summer of 2015, two new summer assistants joined the full time staff to make it the most productive summer sampling to date. Over 70,000 crabs, 4,000 velvets and 2,000 lobsters were measured by staff from June to December 2015 as part of our market sampling programme, while some 30 trips were conducted as part of our on-board fisheries observer programme. This data is being used to establish stock assessments and biological reference points to continue sustainable exploitation of crustacean stocks in Orkney.

The summer of 2015 saw collaboration between OSF and Heriot Watt University Orkney with a number of Master's thesis projects covering a broad spectrum of additional fisheries research avenues. These included; Green crab population ecology, Orkney lobster genetics, the effectiveness of escape panels within the brown crab fishery and spatial planning and fisheries usage. OSF will be looking to build on this work and on further similar collaborative projects in summer 2016.

Our inshore crab tagging continued in 2015, with a steady return of recaptures by both the inshore and larger offshore creel vessels. One tagged female crab was seen to move 67 km between the inshore fishing grounds and the grounds used by the offshore fleet.

Ongoing research into juvenile lobster habitat preference looks to continue in summer 2016, building on the preliminary trial conducted in the winter/ spring 2015. The trial demonstrated that juvenile lobster habitat preferences change over short time scales and that juvenile lobster size directly influences its habitat choice. With this information OSF will look to create artificial boulder reefs based on these findings and look at deploying these structures in 2016.

The OSF project investigating sea bottom temperature and its effect on the inshore creel fishery saw the deployment of temperature loggers over a wide geographic area in Orkney. Preliminary results demonstrate clear seasonal changes, with researchers now looking into how these relate to changes in catches and fishing patterns within the region.

OSF will be looking at holding a fishermen's conference in March 2016, providing an opportunity for fishermen to meet with OSF researchers and the results of current research projects to be presented. The conference will provide an opportunity for fishermen to help shape the direction of future research within the Orkney IFG. Additional information on all projects outlined can be found at the Orkney Sustainable Fisheries website:

www.orkneysustainablefisheries.co.uk



Focus on Shetland

By Carole Laignel

I am the Inshore Co-ordinator for Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO) and I report to a Board of Directors. The Board comprises 8 Directors half of whom are active fishermen. They all give their time voluntarily and meet at least 10 times a year. SSMO was set up in 1999 as a means of managing the shellfish fishery around Shetland, out to the 6 nautical mile limit, under the Shetland Islands Regulated Fishery (Scotland) Order.

There is also a SSMO Advisory Group which meets regularly and reports back to the Directors. Depending upon what matters are being discussed by the Group, experts are invited to attend meetings and give advice. Scientific advice is given throughout the year by the NAFC Marine Centre in Shetland. SSMO now have creel limits and creel tags in place. The creel limits are a maximum of 600 creels per vessel of which no more than 240 creels are to be used to fish for velvet crabs. Therefore, all creels over 240 in number should have a certain colour tag attached and escape gaps in place. We are also in the process of sourcing suitable escape panels.

A lot of time now seems to be taken up dealing with Marine Planning Applications which are mainly to do with aquaculture developments. Most of these do not cause any problems to the fishermen but we have objected to a few on behalf of our licencees. The importance of log sheet data and VMS data in demonstrating fishing activity in a multi-user inshore marine environment cannot be stressed enough in this process.

SSMO have commissioned a new website which should be up and running by April this year. Please check it out after that at: www.ssmo.com

In Shetland local management of other marine industries has also been possible via the Shetland Islands' Marine Spatial Plan. The SSMO as members of the local advisory group are helping to ensure that the Plan meets the groups joint vision that the marine and coastal environment is one that is clean, healthy, safe, productive and managed to meet the long-term needs of nature and local people. The SSMO and the Shetland Fishermen's Association have played an important role during the Plan's production; helping to guide policy development, helping to collect and check fishing data to identify and protect important fishing grounds, and also providing data on important marine habitats such as maerl and horse mussels. Maerl and horse mussels beds are important nursery grounds for several commercial species and the SSMO has taken active measures to ensure they are identified and protected around Shetland. They have made this data available to the Plan.



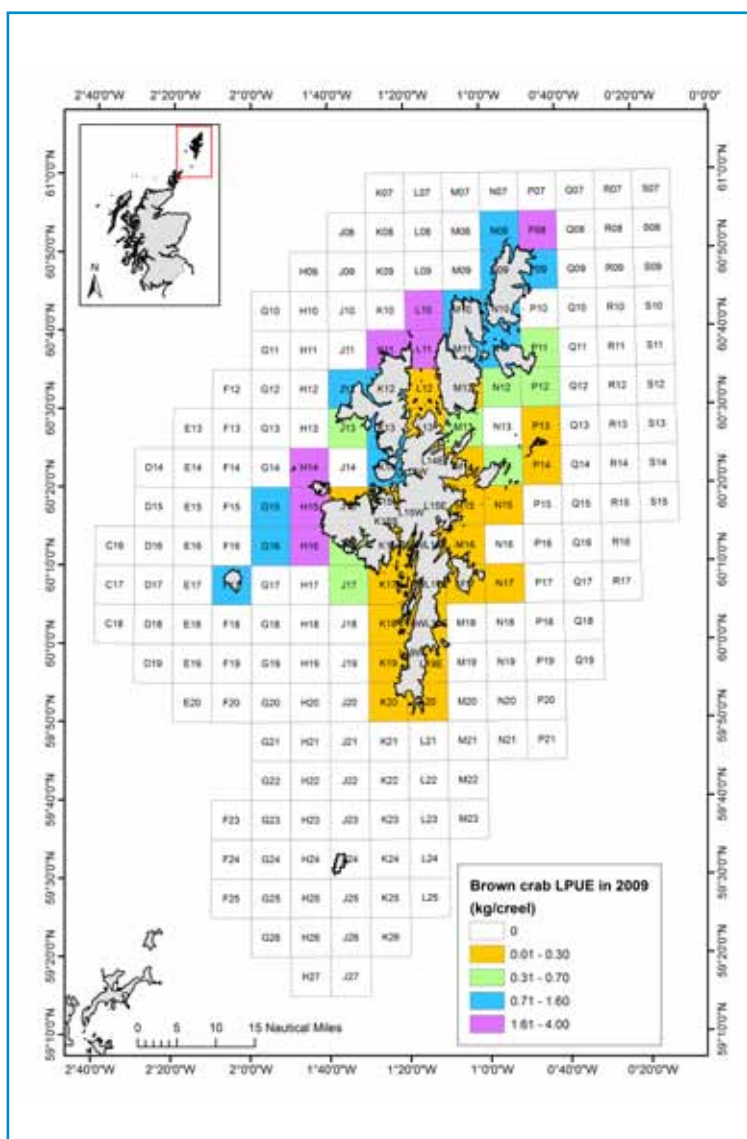
Putting fisheries on the map!

Inshore fisheries are carried out in an increasingly busy and competitive marine environment. There is a clear need for better fisheries data at a small enough scale to provide robust economic and scientific information so that fishing activities can be effectively represented, and so that the impacts of proposed developments on local fisheries can be accurately described and quantified.

Marine Scotland contracted the NAFC to deliver a project collecting landings and effort data at 5 nm square level in various areas of Scotland (instead of the current 30 nm reporting squares). This work was reliant on industry engaging with them and submitting 'paper' returns for the NAFC to enter into a database with aggregate reports compiled for IFGs. Despite repeated requests for industry input over the last three years, there has been limited uptake with some areas showing no support from individual vessels. It is recognised that fishermen in general have raised issues regarding paper reporting and some have commented that the use of technology as trialled under the EFF inshore project was more appropriate for this form of data gathering on activities including areas fished and effort deployed.

The data collection phase of the NAFC project has now been brought to a close with the available information forming the basis of a final report. The time and effort put in by participating vessels has been very valuable and is much appreciated. It has become clear that if all inshore vessels are to be able to engage with such data collection a system requiring minimal manual reporting would be an industry priority.

Marine Scotland plans to progress remote data collection for inshore vessels under a new EMFF project in an effort to avoid the additional 'paperwork' / manual recording that has been seen as a key stumbling block by industry. In the longer term this should provide the best route for collection and analysis of a range of data, without directly impacting on the working practices of individual fishing vessels. More information will be circulated in due course.



Seafood Special

Solway Seafood: Out of the Blue

Fishing boats in the harbour of coastal towns are a magnet for tourists and a favourite subject for picture postcards so it's odd that, at the same time, the industry is often portrayed so negatively in the media. Amongst other aims, the Out of the Blue project set out to address this by providing accurate and accessible information about Dumfries and Galloway's fishing industry. The intention was to 'keep it real': to avoid straying into a twee portrayal and to provide a true sense of an industry at work.

On the basis that a picture is worth a thousand words, one of the first steps was to commission documentary photographer, Colin Tennant, to capture images that would bring sea fisheries closer to a broad audience. Colin underwent Sea Survival training in order to go to sea aboard several local vessels recording people at work and illustrating the dramatic nature of the marine environment. These images have since been used in a host of ways including providing the basis for a Fishy Tales publication and a touring exhibition which is now 'on the road' and is booked into venues across the region throughout the coming year. Colourful and stylish photographs of local seafood have also been used to create a series of recipe cards: Fishy Dishes. With original recipes developed by a local chef, each card focuses on how to prepare and cook locally landed seafood along with the story of how and where each species is fished and landed along the coast.



The Out of the Blue project involved a wide partnership including local fishermen, seafood processors, harbourmasters, chefs, the RNLI, the Fishermen's Mission, Environmental Art Festival Scotland and Seafood Scotland amongst others. Outreach activities included engaging local schoolchildren in sessions on fishing past and present, the practical considerations around a working harbour, maritime and coastal safety issues, preparing and cooking local seafood and, the best part, eating the results. Specialists in their field from up and down the country delivered events covering sustainable fisheries management, options for the future of the Solway cockle fishery and the use of technology in managing marine protected areas.

Funded by the European Fisheries Fund and Dumfries and Galloway Council, and co-ordinated by Solway Firth Partnership, the Out of the Blue project complements the aims of South West Inshore Fisheries Group and lays a foundation for future promotion of sea fisheries and the important part they play in local culture, heritage and economic development. The project also illustrates the opportunity for greater integration between the fishing industry and other interests including the arts, science and tourism sectors with benefits for all.



Top: Scallop Fishing at Night
Right: Netting on the Cree

Photo's Courtesy of : Colin Tennant

Seafood - See Here!

The first element of this FLAG funded project to increase awareness and demand for local seafood was successfully completed in August 2015 and plans are being drawn up for follow on work to build on the early developments. The first phase had to be completed quickly, as it was considered essential that information on seafood sources in the north area were available before the new East Scotland Seafood Trail was launched. Covering the area from Cape Wrath to St Cyrus and the north, Moray Firth and East Coast areas in between, the new website: www.SeafoodSeeHere.com provides information about sources of fresh seafood, including restaurants and hotels, fishmongers and markets, as well as seafood vans that are now a primary source of fresh seafood for many communities in the north. There are links to a calendar showing what seafood is in season. A wide range of events and activities have already been completed across the area and more training is planned in conjunction with local "hub" development.

Seafood-See Here! has exciting ideas for future developments, and is particularly looking at opportunities to work with the local fishing industry to develop more "net to plate" opportunities, link in with the network of Highland chefs and to work with local colleges including the new UHI Inverness Campus training facilities as well as further afield with Orkney College. Discussions are ongoing with a potential partner to develop a new recipe idea commercially. The project also provided information to the public and businesses on legal sources of seafood, supporting the ongoing compliance work by local Fisheries Officers, Environmental Health Officers and others who are trying to cut down on illegal fish and shellfish sales that can present a health hazard as well as undermining licensed fishermen. For more information about Seafood – See Here! contact **Kathryn Logan- Tel: 01463 725028**

The East of Scotland Seafood Project

This project aims to increase the accessibility and consumption of seafood on the east coast of Scotland. Initial activities included setting up a formal collaborative network, which included local IFG chair John Cox, and undertaking an asset mapping exercise leading to the creation of promotional material, a website and regional videos. The project website will help promote the area's reputation, events and historic links with seafood and provide easy access to information on local seafood, including through linking to local websites such as the "Seafood-See Here!", "Food from Fife" etc. This should in turn help increase consumption by visitors and the local communities. For more information about the project and its collaborative partners go to www.eastscotlandseafood.co.uk or contact Viv Collie on 07977 510 435.

Funding and Projects

Joint industry/science research projects funded under the 2015 Fishing Industry Science Alliance call

Following the 2015 call for proposals and selection process, the Fishing Industry Science Alliance (FISA) Steering Group has awarded over £130,000 of Marine Scotland funding for collaborative projects involving Scottish fishermen and scientists. Four new projects are receiving funding directed at improving knowledge on data limited stocks, analysing under-utilised fisheries data and reducing unwanted catches through improved gear technology. The projects cover the North Sea, Orkney, the east and the west coast.

Background

Marine Scotland allocates up to £150,000 per year to the Fishing Industry Science Alliance, administered by Marine Scotland Science. FISA aims to combine the expertise of fishermen and scientists to enhance knowledge and support effective management for sustainable fisheries. The FISA Steering Group evaluates applications and has representatives from a range of organisations including Marine Scotland, Aberdeen University, RSPB, Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Scottish White Fish Producers' Association Ltd and the Western Isles Fishermen's Association. Once a range of projects has been selected, the Fisheries Management and Conservation Group (FMAC) finalise the list within the financial limits and the set of agreed projects is published. As FISA is now in its fourth year, a number of projects from the previous years of funding are coming to an end. Once complete the final reports for these projects will be uploaded to the FISA webpages.

Details of the four new 2015 projects

- Aberdeen University and the Scottish White Fish Producers' Association Ltd have been awarded £46,688 for a study to refine a prototype fish distribution model. This will allow existing commercial and scientific data sources, which have previously been incompatible, to be used in combination. This is a necessary first-step towards creating highly-resolved spatio-temporal maps of near real-time fish distribution that are of relevance to the industry and managers.
- Heriot-Watt University and the Orkney Sustainable Fisheries have been awarded £13,500 to undertake a study on the discard survival and condition of Orkney brown crab from commercial creel vessels. The results of the study have the potential to feed into stock assessments and sustainable fisheries management frameworks developed by the Orkney Management Group.
- A further £35,000 has been allocated to the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) and the Outer Hebrides and North West Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs). This project will determine whether the use of video cameras, in conjunction with electrofishing equipment, could be used to assess the stock status of razor clams in Scottish waters. If such a method proves feasible and cost effective it would provide a practical tool for assessing inshore razor clam populations.
- Another £35,169 will contribute towards a larger scale project between Aberdeen University, Marine Scotland Science and pelagic fishermen to determine the size of mackerel prior to capture, and so avoid slippage. This project will build on work funded by Fisheries Innovation Scotland (FiS) and will field test and develop mackerel sizing algorithms using adapted broadband sonar. This will demonstrate the feasibility of estimating the size of fish in a school of mackerel during research vessel fishing operations and compare the estimates of fish size from the sonar with those from the catch.

Further Information

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/science/FISA>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/science>

European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF) / FLAG Funding Schemes - Fisheries Priorities 2014-2020

EMFF is the new fund for the EU's maritime and fisheries policy for 2014-2020. This is the successor to the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) which funded the seven pilot projects collectively titled 'Evidence Gathering In Support of Sustainable Scottish Inshore Fisheries'.

Support will be available through the EMFF programme in Scotland which delivers on sustainable economic growth in the sea fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and supports communities to deliver economic benefits during the transition phase of the Common Fisheries Policy reform programme. This programme is structured around 8 pillars of support which includes: 'Fishing gear & energy efficiency', 'Investments on-board fishing vessels', 'Investments to shore based facilities', 'Partnerships & advisory services', 'Support for Internal partners', 'Aquaculture, processing and marketing', 'Marine environment and inland fishing' and 'Community-Led Local Development'.

The Community-Led Local Development element of the fund will be delivered through Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs). The FLAGs are made up of local industry and community representatives and will be responsible for project selection in their respective areas. Fisheries Secretary Richard Lochhead recently approved a £6.5 million budget for FLAGs which can be used to support a wide range of projects including those that deliver on job creation and training opportunities, adding value, economic diversification and promotion of environmental measures.

The Fisheries Local Action Groups receiving funding are:

Eilean Siar	£ 528,000	Shetland Islands	£ 485,000
Orkney Islands	£ 482,000	Highland & Moray	£1,006,000
North East	£1,437,000	Forth	£1,052,000
Argyll & Ayrshire	£ 985,000	Dumfries and Galloway	£ 580,000

EMFF scheme opened to applications on Monday 18 January 2016 however FLAGs will launch over the coming months. Applications and claims will be made and submitted through the EMFF e-system. A link to the e-system and guidance will be provided shortly. For further information or to discuss a project idea please contact your FLAG area Development Officer. <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/grants-subsidies>

Training and Development

FITA - Introduction to Commercial Fishing Course- Lachie Paterson, FITA

The Fish Industry Training Association (Highlands & Islands) delivers a twice yearly, three week long Introduction to Commercial Fishing course at their training room at Dunstaffnage Marina, north of Oban. The December 2015 course was attended by 12 would-be fishermen/women from all airts and pairts! (Argyll & Bute, Ayrshire, Caithness, Glasgow & Ross-shire) The 10 men and 2 women ranged in age from school leaver to early 50s and all got on and successfully completed the 15 day course. FITA is delighted to receive funding through Seafish for this course which is open to anyone that would like to make fishing their career. The course encompasses all aspects of a successful and safe career aboard a fishing vessel - regardless of boat size or fishing method. The candidates receive practical training in knots, splicing, mending & creel making, along with classroom sessions and industry talks. During the final week of the course candidates complete their mandatory fishing safety certificates. For more information and future course dates, contact Lachie Paterson on **01583 431570** (office) or **07771 681428** (mobile). Email: lachie.paterson@btinternet.com Web: <http://www.fita.info/>



2015 course candidates undertaking practical work – creel making © Lachie Paterson

Trawl Gear and Selectivity Training

Mike Montgomerie, Seafish



Seafish have been running trawl gear training courses for fishermen for many years. Nowadays, since the closure of the Flume Tank in UK, the larger facility in Hirtshals Denmark is used. In January 2016 over twenty four fishermen, including some from the Moray Firth, attended courses at the flume tank. Another four courses are planned In February 2016: over 45 fishermen from all around the UK are booked up for three courses and 30 non-fishers will attend a two day general course on fishing gear and selectivity.

The main objective of the two day training in trawl gear and selectivity is to improve the fishermen's knowledge and skill level in relation to the type of gear that they use. Each course covers a general syllabus but the model gear demonstrated is similar to that used by the fishermen, so each course is customised as far as possible to suit the group attending.

To help fishermen address the landing obligation the course demonstrates a wide range of selective devices- as many as 40 different devices during the course. This is to give a better understanding of how the various selective devices work and demonstrate how some of these would be suitable for use in their particular fishery. We also demonstrate many innovative, selective devices that are used throughout UK and the rest of the world and hope that fishermen may be able to adapt and adopt some of these into their gear to help them fish more selectively.

During the course we endeavour to improve the fishermen's understanding of the gear that they use and its impact on the seabed and the general environment that they work in. With a better understanding of their gear they should be able to operate more efficiently with less environmental impact.

Seafish runs regular courses for fishermen and occasional courses for fishery managers and legislators etc. For more information, contact Mike Montgomerie (an ex Moray Firth Fisherman) on 01472 252327 or by email mike.montgomerie@seafish.co.uk



Seafish Gear Course © Mike Montgomerie

News in Brief

KIMO UK's Fishing for Litter Scotland project wins Nature Conservation Award

In December 2015, KIMO UK's Fishing for Litter Scotland project received the RSPB's prestigious Nature of Scotland Award for Marine Conservation, which recognises an "outstanding contribution to the conservation or sustainable management of Scotland's precious marine resources". The award recognises the hard work carried out over the last ten years by fishermen and harbour staff around the Scottish coastline to tackle and reduce marine litter. Read full news article here: <http://www.fishingforlitter.org.uk/blog/article/6/2015/12/18/scottish-fishermen-rewarded-for-helping-clean-our-seas>

Outcome Report on a consultation on measures for hobby/unlicensed fishermen in Scottish inshore waters
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/01/1467>

This report, issued in January 2016, reflects the deliberations of the Inshore Fisheries Management and Conservation (IFMAC) working group on possible measures to tackle unlicensed fishing activity in Scottish Waters and responses to the subsequent consultation. Marine Scotland supports the right for individuals to enjoy fishing as a hobby for personal consumption, and the use of creels is an integral part of that. However, it is not acceptable for unlicensed fishermen to use this as a smoke screen for commercial activity.

The report announced the intention to introduce catch limits for all unlicensed fishermen for key species and Marine Scotland will shortly undertake a brief consultation to establish exactly what those catch limits should be. Northern Ireland introduced legislation (The Unlicensed Fishing for Crabs and Lobster Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008) that limits the landing or retention on a boat of more than two lobsters or 5 crabs and this is an example of the kind of measure that Marine Scotland would like to see introduced in Scotland. New measures will bring clarity to what hobby/unlicensed fishermen are able to catch and to make enforcement more straight forward.

In addition, MS Compliance now has a recognised presence in all Scottish Inshore waters by regular tasking of Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs). Inshore patrols now ensure that sea-going officers are in closer contact with Scotland's inshore fishermen, monitoring catches at sea for minimum landing sizes and policing those vessels that fish unlicensed or indeed are operated by hobby fishermen. Other work continues with visits to Buyers under the legislation brought in in 2005 to ensure that Companies are registered as buyers and that they only buy from vessels that are registered and hold a valid UK Fishing vessel licence. For more information, contact Michael Cutts, Marine Scotland: Michael.cutts@gov.scot

Gear Conflict Consultation – outcome report published

The majority of fishermen from competing sectors co-operate well on a day to day basis but incidents of gear conflict have existed for decades. When gear conflict occurs it is very difficult for an enforcement body to prove that an offence has been committed.

The outcome report on the gear conflict consultation was published on 8 December 2015 and can be viewed on the Scottish Government at www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/12/4724. A letter from Marine Scotland to industry, with further information on the measures that have been announced to tackle gear conflict, can be viewed at http://ifgs.org.uk/files/6914/4965/8211/Gear_Conflict_-_081215.pdf. The aim of this suite of measures is to enhance reporting and recording to prevent incidents occurring in the first place and to improve deterrence against deliberate acts of gear vandalism and theft.

Latest Fisheries Consultations

Draft provisions for a Wild Fisheries (Scotland) Bill/Draft Wild Fisheries Strategy: a consultation
<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/wild-fisheries-reform-team/draft-wild-fisheries-strategy>

The Scottish Government has a manifesto commitment to support and protect Scotland's famous and valuable salmon and freshwater fisheries and to modernise the management framework. This consultation gives stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback on the approach currently being taken to develop the legislative provisions for a Wild Fisheries (Scotland) Bill. This closes 02 May 2016. For more information, contact the Marine Scotland Salmon and Recreational Fisheries Team on 0131 244 7061 or by email: wildfisheriesreform@gov.scot

Consultation on landing controls for the Scottish crab and lobster fisheries

A consultation on new management measures for Scotland's crab and lobster fisheries was launched 26 February 2016. The consultation is open for 12 weeks to Friday 20 May 2016 and seeks views on:

- increasing the minimum landing size for brown crab to 150 mm carapace width
- increasing the minimum landing size for velvet crab to 70 mm carapace width
- prohibiting the landing of berried (egg bearing) velvet crab
- increasing the minimum landing size for lobster to 90 mm carapace length
- decreasing the maximum landing size for female lobster to 145 mm carapace length
- introducing a maximum landing size for male lobster of 145 mm carapace length
- prohibiting the landing of 'crippled' lobsters (those missing one or both claws)
- introducing prohibitions on sale and carriage to match any landing prohibitions that are implemented on a uniform basis across the entire Scottish coast

The full consultation document and information on how to respond, no later than 20 May 2016, are at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/marine-scotland/crab-lobster-landing-controls/>



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