

**North Western
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly Meeting: 6 December 2011**

CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

Purpose: to inform members of current priorities and policy issues

Recommendations

1. Note the matters raised.

Overview of the period

1. Since mid August the Ribble cockle fishery has taken up the majority of officer time. This fishery is the subject of a separate report. Other issues covered below are:
 - I. Marine Conservation Zones
 - II. The Inshore Fisheries review by Defra
 - III. The Review of the Common Fishery Policy
 - IV. Funding for the West Cumbria Fishing Industry

Marine Conservation Zones.

2. Defra are now reviewing the advice containing the lists of proposed MCZ sites from all the 4 regional projects including the ISCZ. The final lists and advice was published on 9 September. Sites which are found to have sufficient scientific evidence and justification for designation will be identified and all those sites will be subject to a public consultation.
3. On the 15 November 2011, Defra published a ministerial statement on MCZ. This is attached at Annex A to this report. In summary it puts back the timetable for consultation and designation of MCZ by 6 months
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2011/11/15/wms-marine-conservation-zones/>
4. The MCZ Science Advisory Panel published its response to the advice from the 4 regional projects on 15 November. This is available at the website below. The SAP has compared the evidence underpinning all the proposed sites and ranked them on a scale of 1-5. This ranking by the SAP resulted in the Minister saying that the SAP had reported that only 23 sites out of the 127 total had sufficient evidence to be designated.
5. However, the Marine Conservation Society has requested confirmation from the Minister and pressed for all the proposed sites to be designated. We must assume at this stage that all or many of the sites may still be recommended by Defra and subject to public consultation.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/protect/mpa/mcz/sap/>

Defra consultation: Reform of Domestic Fisheries Management Arrangements in England.

6. Defra consulted on proposals for reform of inshore fisheries management in England earlier in 2011. The NWIFCA contributed details of the fleet structure in NW England. A key elements of the proposals was to establish local rights to fishing. Possible models proposed included quota held by communities to safeguard small scale fleets in certain areas, allocation of clearer and more stable entitlements to fish across the English fleet using fixed quota mechanisms and safeguards to help retain fisheries access rights in more sustainable fisheries and prevent fishing rights becoming concentrated in the large scale fleet.
7. The full consultation is available from the Clerk or from the Defra website at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/manage/saif/>
8. Defra have now published a summary of responses which is available at the website below and proposals for the next steps in a letter from the Minister at Annex B to this report. In summary, a number of pilot studies will be set up round England to test the various proposals and ideas which have come out of the consultation.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/files/111102-fisheries-reform-summary-responses.pdf>

Common Fisheries policy review

9. The recent Defra consultation on the review of the CFP closed on 10 November. The AIFCA response to the CFP including contributions from the NWIFCA was circulated to members. There is no further information on future development of the CFP review at this stage. Any further comments and responses from members can be sent to the office and will be forwarded to Defra to assist them with their ongoing negotiations

Funding for the West Cumbria Fishing Industry

10. A further report on this £2.2M grant was published on the BBC website recently. A copy is included for information at Annex C

Chief Executive
North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
4 May 2011

Written Ministerial Statement on Marine Conservation Zones

Environment Minister Richard Benyon today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

As part of the Government's commitment to implementing in full the provisions of the Marine and Coastal Access Act, we are creating a network of national protected areas in British seas to ensure our underwater wildlife flourishes in years to come. We are clear that looking after the wildlife and habitat in our seas is just as important as looking after those on land.

The Government's first step to identifying new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in English waters was taken forward through four regional MCZ projects managed by the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, who are Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. The regional projects provided their recommendations for proposed sites for MCZs on 8 September. These have been reviewed by the independent Science Advisory Panel (SAP) and their advice to the SNCBs and Defra is being [published today on Defra's website](#).

The Marine and Coastal Access Act requires the establishment of a network of conservation sites in the UK marine area. In English waters the network will comprise European Marine Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, sites designated under the Ramsar Convention and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). The Act requires that the network must conserve or improve the UK marine environment and protect a range of representative features.

The regional MCZ projects have done excellent work in bringing stakeholders together and making site recommendations, but it is clear from the SAP's advice that there are a number of gaps and limitations in the scientific evidence base supporting the MCZ recommendations.

It is important that we get this right. It is vital that we have an adequate evidence base for every site if we are to create successful well-managed MCZs. An adequately robust evidence base will be essential when we come to implement management measures.

Defra will therefore be commissioning significant additional work to support MCZ designation including an in depth review of the evidence base for all the regional projects' site recommendations and committing additional resources to carrying out seabed and habitat monitoring.

Protecting our marine environment is essential and the Government remains fully committed to establishing MCZs to contribute to an ecologically coherent UK network. However, the need to strengthen the evidence base for the MCZ recommendations means this is going to take longer than the ambitious target first put forward. We are likely to be able to designate some MCZs fairly quickly where the supporting evidence is adequate. However, for others we anticipate that more investigation will be needed before they can progress towards designation.

Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee will provide the MCZ impact assessment and their formal advice in July 2012. This is six months later than previously planned and this revised timetable will enable them to address the recommendations from the Independent Review of the Evidence Process for Selecting Marine Special Areas of Conservation (published July 2011) and take account of any further evidence obtained from the work that Defra is now commissioning. We will give careful consideration to all the advice received before undertaking formal public consultation on MCZs by the end of 2012. This consultation will include all sites recommended by the Regional Projects with clarity on how and when work on them will be taken forward. It is envisaged that the first MCZ designations will take place in 2013.

Defra and delivery partners will work together ensuring that early management measures are put in place to provide effective levels of protection for designated sites and continuing to build the evidence base for future designations. Defra will also take the opportunity, working with

stakeholders and SNCBs, to look at other marine features which may benefit from spatial protection.

This phased approach to designation will also allow more scope to shape the English network taking account of sites being considered by the devolved administrations and neighbouring Member States.

Annex B

Sustainable Fisheries – Domestic Fisheries Management Reform Team

Area 2C Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London. SW1P 3JR

To: All respondents to the consultation on domestic fisheries management reform in England.

Date: 2 November 2011

Domestic Fisheries Management Reform in England

I am writing to let you know that we have today published a summary of responses to the consultation on reform of the fisheries management arrangements in England, along with details of our intended next steps. This document can be found on the Defra website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/04/05/fisheries-1104/> .

We have considered carefully all the views expressed during the consultation period. The clear, consistent message to slow down and test options before making any big changes has been reflected in the decision to take forward pilots next year to trial alternative management approaches for the under-10m fleet. We will also be working with NUTFA to explore their proposal for an inshore Producer Organisation.

Further details of the next steps, including the allocation of quota to the pilots, can be found in the summary at **Annex A** of this letter. We have also published a Question and Answer document which can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/manage/saif/>. Copies can also be obtained through your local Marine Management Organisation office.

We are now seeking expressions of interest from groups of fishermen that are interested in being involved in the pilot schemes. There needs to be a reasonable level of support from fishermen in the local area for the pilot to operate successfully. By expressing an interest, you are not committing yourself to participate at this stage. Further information on the potential quota allocations to pilot groups will follow once we have identified who is interested.

Expressions of interest should be sent in writing (including the names of the fishermen interested, and the RSS and PLN numbers and names of their vessels) to the address at the top of this letter, or by email to fisheriesreform@defra.gsi.gov.uk by **close Friday 18 November 2011**.

We would like to thank you for taking part in the consultation. Your views are important to us, and we hope you will continue to engage as we take forward this work.

Yours sincerely

Nathalie Simon
Domestic Fisheries Management Reform Team

Annex A

Summary of next steps for Domestic Fisheries Management Reform

We will:

- Look to establish voluntary pilot schemes to test alternative regional/local management approaches to managing quota;
- Work with NUTFA to explore their proposal for an inshore Producer Organisation;
- Recruit a number of Coastal Liaison Officers to support establishment and running of the pilots, which we will fund through the European Fisheries Fund;
- Allocate to pilots a share of the under-10m pool based on track record of participating vessels in pilots, supplemented by additional quota obtained through agreement with local POs, and where this is not possible, we will undertake a temporary “top-slice” of quota for relevant species for which the TAC increases next year;
- Undertake a permanent realignment of FQAs associated with consistently underutilised quota from 2012 to increase the under-10m pool, consulting with industry to finalise the methodology;
- Explore further with industry how to deal with increasing pressures on shellfish stocks;
- Re-consider the need for, and options to, change the management arrangements for non-sector vessels;
- Undertake further work to address the issues of latent/dormant capacity within the fleet;
- Develop an FQA register to increase the transparency of FQA holdings, in co-ordination with DAs.



Cumbrian fishing communities receive £2.2m funding boost

There are about 78 registered fishing vessels within Silloth, Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven. Fishing communities in Cumbria have received £2.2m of funding to help them boost business from local produce.

The North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group (Flag) wants to use the money to help the area build a more sustainable future.

The group, which runs along the coast from Silloth to Ravenglass, wants to establish a brand for Cumbrian seafood and sell its produce at food markets.

It also hopes to create four new businesses and 20 jobs.

Cumbria County Council's Tony Markley said: "This is great news for those Cumbrian coastal communities within the Flag area and we would encourage as many people and businesses as possible to take part in this initiative."

As well as developing new businesses, they want to support young people in completing fisheries industry apprenticeships and develop an educational programme to change perceptions of fishing.

The European Fisheries Fund and The Marine Management Organisation awarded £1.35m of the funding, with the rest of the money provided by members of Flag.

Last year more than 4,100 tonnes of fish were landed at ports within the area and about 78 fishing vessels are registered within Silloth, Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven.