

NWIFCA Annual Meeting

13th June 2014: 10:30 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
14**

SCIENCE REPORT **22ND FEBRUARY 2013 – 23RD MAY 2014**

GENERAL

The beginning of the last quarter involved the acquisition and equipping of a new lock-up in Carnforth, to be managed by the Senior Scientist but shared with the Carnforth Enforcement Team. As well as providing much-needed larger secure storage for science and enforcement equipment and improved access, it will also free up office space in the Carnforth office building, as there is facility there for processing and storing samples and even a small room for occasional meetings if required.

The Science Team are continuing their climb up the mountain of work for the Defra Review of Fisheries Management in European Marine Sites, which will impact on all fisheries activities within EMS in the District. Members and Officers are asked to have this in the fore-front of their minds as activities which would not previously have required assessment, even minor activities, all now need to go through the process of Habitats Regulations Assessment.

SURVEY AND FISHERIES WORK

Wirral Cockle Beds

On the first available spring tides in March Science Officers and IFCOs conducted a survey on the Leasowe cockle bed on the North Wirral coast. Two teams covered the previously fished bed, using jumbos and 0.5m² quadrats. Generally the bed was devoid of cockle stock, which was not unexpected as no high volume settlement had been observed since the fishery ended in 2011. The mean number of adults found was 6 per m², with a mean of 1 size cockle per m² and a mean of 5 undersize cockles per m². Of the 46 sites sampled cockles were found at only 17 of them. IFCOs continue to watch for settlement, in which case a further survey will be conducted.

Ribble, Morecambe Bay and Solway Cockle Beds

Currently all cockle beds in the District are closed due to low stock densities. IFCOs report to the Science Team on their observations of the beds when carrying out sample runs. Stock surveys of 2014 spat settlement will be targeted if they report any substantial recruitment.

Morecambe Bay Mussel Beds

Duddon Mussels

Back in the winter IFCOs had observed and were receiving reports from industry of an area of mussels within the Duddon Estuary. Interestingly this mussel bed did not suffer the ravages of the winter storms like other beds in Morecambe Bay, and IFCO Dixon had been working to get the shellfish classification process started to ensure fishing could proceed once the stock reached size. Access to the bed is via the Sandscale Haws Nature Reserve owned by the National Trust, and Officers began early liaison with NT staff to ensure full consideration had been given to any conservation issues (namely the protected Natterjack Toad population). In early March Science Officers and IFCOs surveyed the mussel bed. It consisted of 3 main islands located in the middle of



Fig. 2. The plague of starfish feasting on 2013 year class mussel on the southern edge of the skear at South America / Falklands (Morecambe Bay) – helicopter inspection – 1st April 2014.

A subsequent report from the industry following a hovercraft inspection at the end of April has indicated that the exposed skear had in the intervening weeks sanded over. If this remains the case, then it is unlikely that a fishery will occur this year. The Science Team have scheduled in a survey for the next suitable tide (mid-June) at which time it will be possible to form a more conclusive indication of the situation this year. Should a fishery be likely, an HRA will be carried out and Officers from all departments will meet to formulate a plan for managing the fishery, which will include the use of track record if it becomes necessary to limit the number of vessels prosecuting it, as agreed by the TSB. Following legal advice from the MMO, transshipment of seed mussel from vessels fishing the stock to transport boats will not be authorised.

Heysham Flat

Science Officers carried out a foot inspection of Heysham Flat skear at the end of February to provide a visual assessment of how the storms had affected the fishery grounds and *Sabellaria alveolata*. In general the seed mussel and deep mussel mud seen on the skear in the autumn had been washed away to reveal the cobbles and pebbles underneath. At the lower end of the skear (before Dallam Dyke) the substantial *Sabellaria alveolata* colonies remained but were eroded. This was also true for the honeycomb worm mounds that had grown around the channel to the south of the skear, and provides further evidence of the effects of natural processes on this reef building worm species.

Dallam Dyke has continued to become sanded in, and it is now possible to cross by foot. However, it is still fast moving and the window of time available to cross and return is limited to very close (i.e. 30 minutes) around low water. Across this channel the next two skears, previously covered with a substantial depth of sand, have been uncovered.

Considerable bird activity was observed, although it was not clear what they were feeding on (remaining mussel or other organisms such as worms). Science Officers also tested out the Dutch Wand methodology used by other IFCAs for surveying mussels and assessing biomass.

In May Science Officers carried out a survey of the *Sabellaria alveolata* reef with the Wildlife Trust. The whole skear was covered in dense seed mussel last year. The Authority authorised hand-gathering of this seed as far west as a demarcation line drawn up to protect the main honeycomb worm reef area. Although not fished, this area has been substantially levelled off by the impact of last year's mussel settlement, subsequent build-up of mussel mud and then the winter storms and the worm reef is not in a healthy state. However, as has been shown over many years there is a constant battle going on between the two species and there is now healthy *Sabellaria* around all edges of the skear and it is spreading very much into northern areas which used to be old mussel shell on sand.

The May honeycomb worm survey provided Officers with an up-to-date view of mussel spat settlement on the skear. Once again there has been significant recruitment which may develop into a seed fishery. The situation will be monitored with a full survey scheduled in July to provide data for an HRA and to inform this year's management.

Other Shellfish Beds in the District

Fleetwood Beds

A report on these beds has been received from IFCO Brown following his inspection in April. The skears are showing a very minor and early mussel spat settlement, though nothing of any significance yet. Marine Beach and North Wharf are pretty much devoid of cockles. The area at King Scar is changing considerably with a recent mound extending considerably to the South East and a secondary stone mound accumulating at the western end of the feature.

The first batch of limestone has arrived on the beach for the Rossall sea defence work and it will be interesting to see if the Rossall Scar mussels are affected in any way this year.

Hilbre Island – Dee Estuary

On 2nd April Science Officers and the local IFCO responded to interest from the industry in the mussels at Hilbre Island by carrying out a close inspection of the mussel bed on the northwest of the islands. Hilbre Island had been an MCZ put forward for designation in the first Tranche in 2013, but removed from the list as it was agreed that with a 'recover' aim there was enough protection for listed conservation features (blue mussel bed on rocky reef, and peat and clay exposures) under existing conservation designations. The islands are situated within the Dee Estuary SAC and SPA, and Ramsar site, the Dee Estuary SSSI and Hilbre Island Local Nature Reserve. Officers intended to take a close look at the macro-community (ie. visible by eye) associated with the mussel bed and consider implications of a hand-gathering fishery on this site.

Officers were surprised that there had been any industry interest in these mussels. The mussel bed comprised of a narrow strip, estimated from mapping as 60m wide at its widest point, below the vegetated cliffs leading down to a shallow channel which bordered the sandbanks of the estuary. The overall area was estimated as 0.5 km² and lies entirely within the Local Nature Reserve boundaries (Fig. 3).

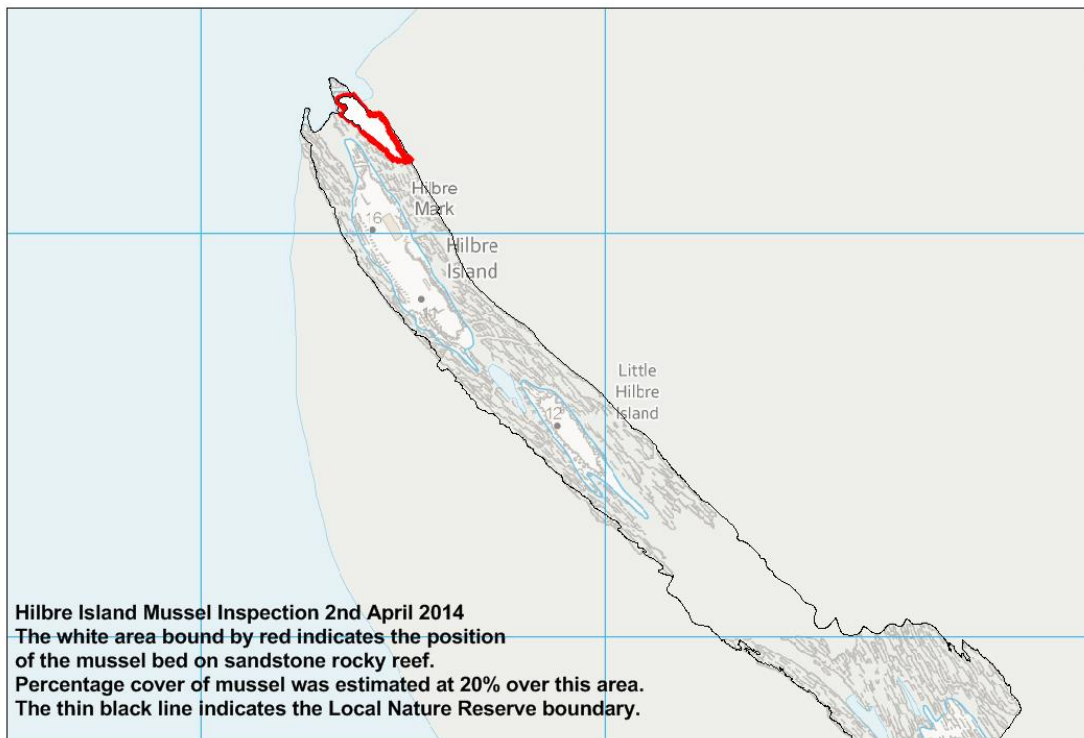


Fig. 3. Hilbre Island Mussel Inspection 2nd April 2014. The mussel bed lies entirely within the LNR boundary.

The mussels present were low density and patchy, mainly size but with undersize mixed in, and old and barnacled (Fig. 4). It was estimated there was around 50 tonnes of mussel of mixed sizes, with around 20% coverage across the bed. Small clumps of *Sabellaria alveolata* was also present around the bed (NB. the main areas of *Sabellaria alveolata* **reef** are to the north and west of the mussel bed and would not be impacted by a fishery).

The habitat was unusual for the NWIFCA district in that it comprised of sandstone and rock layers, with lots of small pools and crevices in the upper shore. Species present included: periwinkles, free-living polychaete worm eggs, *Flustra foliacea* (Hornwrack), *Ulva lactuca* (sea lettuce), whelk eggs, *Fucus* spp, anemones, sand mason worms, starfish and hydroids. Iron stone was found. A very small volume of mussel spat was seen in small pools on the upper shore. Oystercatchers and turnstone were seen. Volunteers at the Hilbre bird observatory had recorded chiff chaffs and willow warblers on the island. Seals were also seen hauled out on the sand bank to the western side of the island.



Fig. 4. Hilbre Island Mussel Inspection 2nd April 2014. One of the densest areas of mussel across the narrow bed, showing old barnacled mussel mixed with small amounts of undersize mussel.

Both Enforcement and Science Officers were of the opinion that should hand-gathering occur it would remove all the remaining mussel and would therefore not be of a sustainable nature. There would be enforcement issues over the minimum size, and if mussels were riddled out to remove undersize from the catch these would be lost during the next tide – unlike beds where a layer of mussel mud had built up beneath the size mussel allowing riddled out mussel to quickly dig back into the mud and thus be protected from wash out, these mussels would fall on to bare rock and have no such protection. Officers were also concerned of the impact on the bed and rocky habitat from trampling from quad bikes and fishers.

Efforts were subsequently made to ascertain what management measures were already in place for the protection of the mussel bed under existing legislation. Wirral Borough Council will be enforcing their Local Nature Reserve byelaws, which prohibit the ‘Taking, molesting or intentionally disturbing, injuring or killing any living creature’, ‘Intentionally removing any material from any area of the Reserve’ and also ‘Driving, riding, propelling or leaving any mechanically propelled vehicle (including hovercraft)’.

Cumbria Coast MCZ Inspection 1

IFCO Thinessen accompanied Science Officers as a familiarisation inspection was carried out of the northern extent of the Cumbria Coast MCZ, including St Bees Head. As Members will recall this was designated as an MCZ by the Minister in November 2013.

In line with the nine other IFCAs, the NWIFCA is considering all Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), both MCZs and EMS, in its prioritisation of work over the next three years. The general management approach to all Cumbria Coast MCZ features is to ‘maintain in favourable condition’, and therefore it has been given a national ‘low’ priority scale and will only be considered for requiring fisheries

management measures should any increase in activity or new activity cause concern about the features.

However, Officers would like to bring to the Authority's attention that there have been concerns about the impact of netting around St Bees Head on birds nesting on the cliffs, which dive into shallow water for their fish prey, particularly guillemots and razorbills. There have been reports over the years of numbers of birds becoming entangled in the nets and drowning. Cumbria SFC had considered introducing a byelaw prohibiting setting of nets within a defined area around the Head. Officers will investigate this further and bring the matter to the next TSB.

It was interesting to note that the *Sabellaria alveolata* from Seamill Lane to Nethertown was in a very poor state having been considerably damaged by winter storms – as had some of the sea defences along this coast. It was worn and covered in a layer of mud. Officers intend to monitor it as other duties allow to record its recovery or otherwise.

PROJECT WORK

EUROPEAN MARINE SITES – REVIEW OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

NWIFCA Byelaw 6: Protection of European Marine Site Features was finally signed by the Secretary of State and came into force on 15th May. Officers have been working to ensure that the application process for those fishermen eligible for a “Grandfather Rights” authorisation (to enter the Lune Deep closed area while fishing in the sandy sediment next to the rocky reef) runs smoothly and as quickly as possible.

Amber Assessments

Work has also continued on the “Amber” assessment process. A further screening exercise has been undertaken to assist in managing the project. Similar gear and feature interactions for each site have been grouped and assigned a level of assessment likely required:

- 0 – “light” Test of Likely Significant Effect (management is already in place)
- 1 – “light” Test of Likely Significant Effect (fishing activity does not occur in site /interact with feature)
- 2 – Test of Likely Significant Effect (there is limited impact on feature by fishing activity)
- 3 – Appropriate Assessment (there is known significant impact on feature by fishing activity)

These assigned levels of assessment are an initial overview and some are likely to change once more information on activity levels, feature extent and impacts of interactions is collected.

After completing this screening Officers have begun work on the “light” TLSE documents. These documents are a simplified version of TSLEs completed previously and document the evidence for the fishing activity not interacting with the named features.

Data Collection

Officers attended the March Enforcement Meeting in order to introduce the increased activity reporting required of IFCOs in order to inform this work. A pilot scheme for recording levels and position of activities is underway for bait collection. After feedback from the IFCOs this type of reporting will be rolled out for other fishing activities such as netting and potting.

MCZ DESIGNATION – TRANCHE ONE

Prioritisation of work for Tranche One (T1) MCZs was undertaken in conjunction with the EMS prioritisation project (detailed above). As both MCZs in the NWIFCA District (Cumbria Coast and Fylde MCZs) are low priority on a national level, these have also been assigned a low priority for NWIFCA work.

MCZ DESIGNATION – TRANCHE TWO

In mid-February Defra announced the 37 sites identified from the Regional MCZ Project recommendations as suitable candidates for the second tranche of MCZ (T2) (Fig. 5). These were chosen as sites which address 'big gaps' within the ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in the North-East Atlantic and which are likely to have sufficient supporting evidence to take them forward for full designation. In the north-west three sites have been put forward though only one is solely in the NWIFCA District. They are Allonby Bay, West of Walney, a co-location site with Walney and Ormonde windfarms which straddles the 6nm limit, and Mud Hole, which lies 11.3nm offshore and straddles the 12nm limit (Fig. 6). The MMO will be lead regulator for the latter two sites.

37 provisional candidate sites

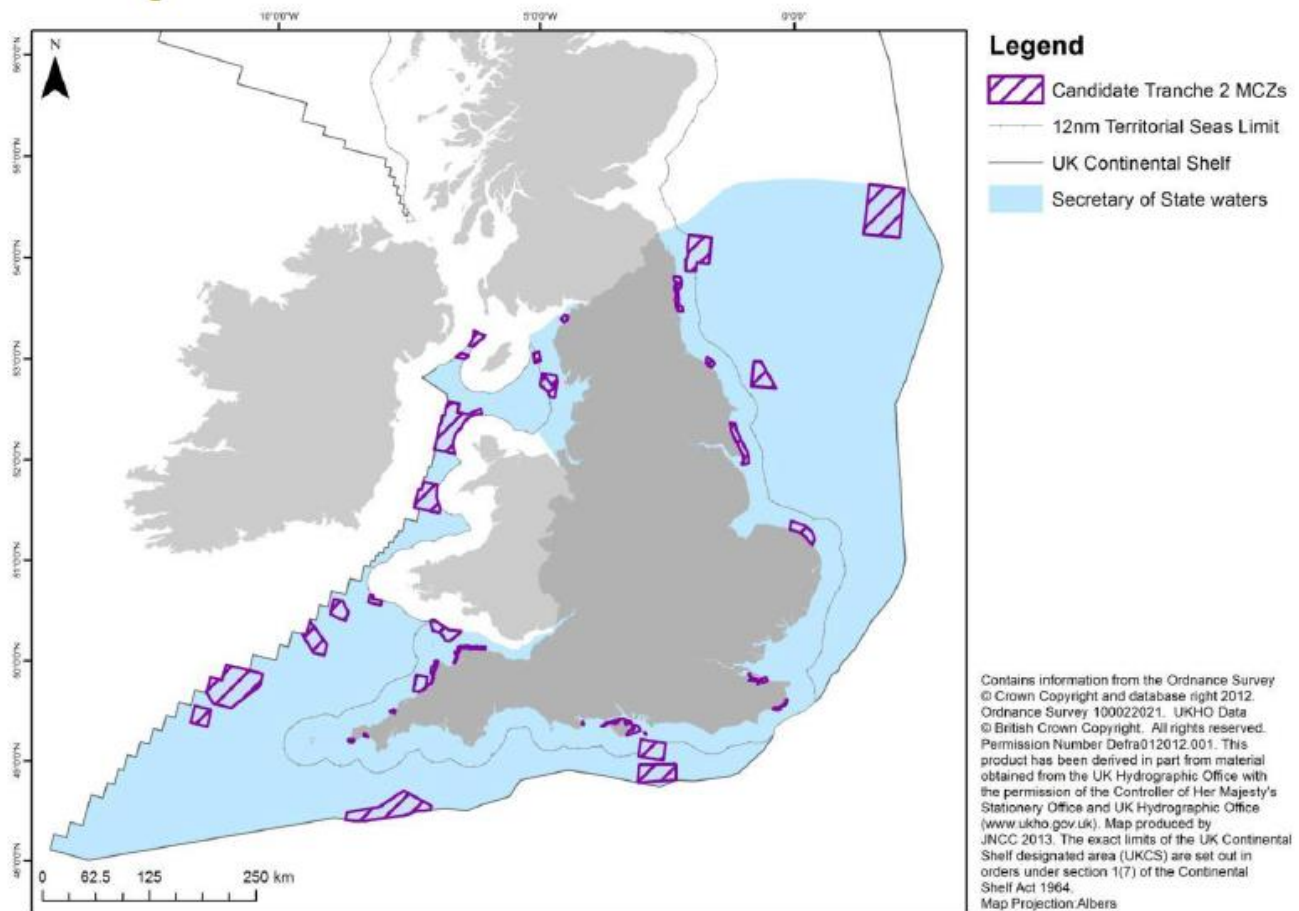


Fig. 5. The 37 sites put forward for Tranche two MCZs, subject to full consultation in early 2015. (Defra. 2014)

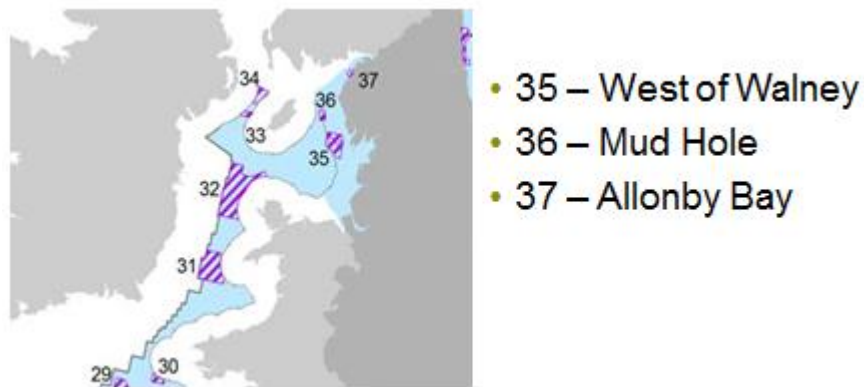


Fig. 6. The three Tranche Two MCZ sites proposed for the north-east Irish Sea (Defra. 2014)

Allonby Bay MCZ:

The following are the Broad Scale Habitats and Habitats of Conservation Importance within the Allonby Bay MCZ and all have '**Maintain**' as the general management approach, which suggests a low priority as for our T1 sites.

Broad Scale Habitats:

High energy intertidal rock
Intertidal biogenic reefs
Sub-tidal coarse sediment
Sub-tidal sand
Moderate energy infralittoral rock

Habitat of Conservation Importance:

Blue Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) beds
Peat and clay exposures
Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reefs
Sub-tidal sands and gravels

Activities, which at the current levels of intensity, are not negatively affected by the MCZ:

Commercial Fisheries
- Bottom Trawls
- Dredges
- Hooks and line
- Nets
- Pots and traps
- Other (e.g. bait digging)

Coastal defence and Recreation

Activities, which at the current levels of intensity, are likely to be affected by the MCZ:

Archaeological Heritage
Ports & harbours
- Disposal sites
- Port development

West of Walney MCZ :

The following are the Broad Scale Habitats and Habitats of Conservation Importance within the West of Walney MCZ and all have '**Recover**' as the general management approach:

Broad Scale Habitats: Sub-tidal Sand
Sub-tidal Mud

Habitat of Conservation Importance: Mud habitats in deep water
Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities

Activities, which at the current levels of intensity, are not negatively affected by the MCZ:

Commercial Fisheries
- Mid water Trawls
- Nets
- Pots and traps
Recreation
Existing cables
Shipping

Activities, which at the current levels of intensity, are likely to be affected by the MCZ:

Commercial Fisheries
- Bottom trawls
- Dredges
Non-UK Fishing
Archaeological Heritage
National Defence
Renewables
- Wind Farm

The current information held on fishing activity of the affected fisheries are:

Bottom trawling - At least 23 UK vessels fish the area targeting primarily nephrops using single and twin rig otter and pair trawls, March to October. UK seine netters have indicated they fish in the site.

Dredges - Fewer than 5 UK vessels are known to dredge the site, mainly for scallops throughout the year.

Non-UK Fishing - Historic fishing rights on parts of the proposed site, targeting nephrops and other species.

Mud Hole MCZ:

The following are the Broad Scale Habitats and Habitats of Conservation Importance within the Mud Hole MCZ and all have '**Recover**' as the general management approach:

Broad Scale Habitats: Sub-tidal Mud

Habitat of Conservation Importance: Mud habitats in deep water
Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities

Activities, which at the current levels of intensity, are not negatively affected by the MCZ:

Commercial Fisheries
- Mid water Trawls
Shipping
Recreation

Activities, which at the current levels of intensity, are likely to be affected by the MCZ:

Commercial Fisheries

- Bottom trawls

- Dredges

Non-UK Commercial Fishing

Archaeological Heritage

National Defence

Renewables

- Wind Farm

The current information held on fishing activity of the affected fisheries are:

Bottom trawling - At least 25 UK vessels fish the area targeting primarily nephrops using single and twin rig otter trawls and pair trawls, March to October.

Dredges - Small number of vessels target scallops between October and April.

Non-UK Commercial Fishing - Small number of vessels target scallops between October and April.

Defra is working with SNCBs (Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies) and Regulators to verify and update the evidence base before considering each candidate site further. SNCBs will provide updated advice to Defra on each of the candidate sites which will include an assessment of any newly available ecological evidence.

Ministers will select which sites to propose for designation from the list of candidate sites, taking account of the advice provided by SNCBs and updated information about costs and benefits of designation. Selection of sites will be consistent with the first tranche, with only sites that achieve an appropriate balance between the likely social and economic costs and ecological benefits proposed for designation. No decisions on which sites to include within the second tranche have yet been taken. The remaining Regional MCZ Project recommendations will be considered for inclusion within the third tranche of MCZs.

For the second and third tranche of MCZs Defra is planning to develop management options alongside site proposals. This will allow stakeholders a greater understanding of the implications of designating a site and what affect this may have on their activities. Defra and delivery partners will look to engage with stakeholders on a local and national level to verify the evidence base and inform management options for each candidate site. Niall Malone from Defra, along with representatives from the MMO, attended the NWIFCA Stakeholder Meeting in Whitehaven in May for this purpose. The Tranche Two MCZ public consultation to be held in early 2015 will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on the proposals and provide additional evidence for consideration.

Defra, the MMO and the NWIFCA are all looking to ensure the most up-to-date and reliable information on fishing activities is held. If Members know of any useful information that could assist this process please contact the Science Team.

MORECAMBE BAY HYBRID FISHERY ORDER

The Chief Officer presented a report to the last TSB meeting in May, asking the sub-committee to review the financing and benefits of the proposed Hybrid Fishery Order. Since the two meetings on the details of the proposed Order held in January and December, Officers have still to make the

agreed changes to the Management Plan. Time constraints mean that it has not been possible to respond to Defra's latest draft of the Order received in November 2013 and some further delay to the development of the Order is inevitable. The extensive MPA work required by Defra on European Marine Sites and MCZ in recent months has prevented progress with the Fishery Order. We expect that the Defra MPA work will continue unabated for the next 2-3 years at least.

The Chief Officer asked the TSB to consider two main matters. Firstly, the finances of the Order must be reconsidered to ensure the Order is financially viable. The Order will require a full time administrator to run the licence schemes, collect data, maintain records, report annually to Defra on the running of the Order, maintain the accounts of the Order and report to the Authority as required. The administrator post would have to be permanent and full time to ensure continuity and capacity in busy years. Additional work on the Order by other Officers, such as survey and data collection should also be covered by the fees levied under the Order. Routine work on Morecambe Bay which would be done by the Authority would not be charged to the Order. The minimum annual budget required to operate the Order in addition to the NWIFCA budget is estimated at approximately £60,000. This cost must be covered whether or not there is any fishing.

Secondly, the Authority now has 2 years' experience of operating the comprehensive cockle and mussel permit under Byelaw 3 for the whole District, which brought in much tighter controls on hand-gathering including a reduction in the number of permit holders from the previous scheme under the old Byelaw 5. Enforcement capacity within the NWIFCA has also increased. The Foreshore Gatherers Safety course has been reviewed and is being redesigned, along with a new course for boat users in the fishery, both of which will be mandatory for new permit holders. This byelaw makes use of the enhanced IFCA powers provided by MACA and the advantages of a Regulating Order for the Morecambe Bay area alone over this byelaw are now less obvious.

There is a need to review Byelaw 3 to tighten some of the wording and add further provisions. Based on our experience and learning from implementing and enforcing this Byelaw, the Authority may consider an amended version to be the most suitable regulatory measure for managing the cockle and mussel fisheries on a District-wide basis, to include Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary, and therefore consequently to cancel our application for the Morecambe Bay Fishery Order. The pros and cons of an Order need to be re-examined following Defra legal advice.

A separate and new application would need to be submitted for a Several Order. If the decision is taken to continue with the Hybrid Fishery Order application there is a large amount of work still needed to be done. In view of the changing workload due to the EMS Review, the Senior Scientist recommends that a designated officer would need to be recruited forthwith to action this work, and have a lead-in period for training in order to manage the Order once in place.

Whatever is decided about the Regulating Order part of the Morecambe Bay Hybrid Order, the Several Order component will still be an essential measure to promote aquaculture in Morecambe Bay. Development of this element of the Order must be continued but the Order would become a Several Fishery Order rather than a Hybrid Fishery Order.

The TSB considered that to re-examine this issue was not an unreasonable request, but asked for further information to be gathered from Defra legal advisors and for further discussion to be held on the matter.

CUMBRIA WILDLIFE TRUST MARINE GRADUATES SCHEME

The Science Team has been working in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts Marine Graduates Programme for the past three years, training and supervising 4 graduates a year in cockle, mussel and *Sabellaria alveolata* surveying. Two excellent reports have been produced and are available on both agencies websites. The Trust has been successful in securing a further 3 years funding from

the National Lottery Heritage Fund for their Marine and Coastal Heritage Programme, which will provide nine 12-month placements for graduate trainees and four 12-month placements for west coast trainees over three years. The project will cover the Cumbrian and Lancashire coasts. Planning is underway for the Science Team to train the new intake and extend the partnership to hopefully include more projects providing data for some of the issues to be dealt with as shown in the NWIFCA Science Plan 2014-15.

RAZOR CLAM FISHERY DEVELOPMENT

Cefas Fisheries Science Partnership Project – testing an electro dredge in the NWIFCA district

After being unable to carry out any data collection before the original 31st March deadline for funding, the project window has been extended until the end of June 2014. NWIFCA derogations and the Habitats Regulations Assessment for this work have been amended as required.

Testing of the dredge equipment began in mid May and Officers hope to get out on the vessel once the gear is fully operational. After the survey work has been completed, a written report will be compiled by Dr Dave Palmer (the Cefas project lead).

PROJECT INSHORE – draft Stage 3 report

Matt Watson from the Marine Stewardship Council made a presentation to the national IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the responses from the IFCAs to the Project Inshore draft Stage Three (final stage) reports. These are produced for each individual IFCA focusing on the major fisheries in their Districts.

There were many common concerns raised by the IFCAs mainly in relation to raising public expectations while not explaining fully our resource limitations, technical errors and flawed data, lacking bespoke management recommendations and basically saying nothing new.

Matt reported that Natural England, Seafish and MSC had also commented on the draft Stage 3 reports and there is a lot of commonality in these responses. The Senior Scientist has asked to see these responses, although these have not been sent through as yet.

The next part of the process is that all of the IFCAs' comments will be tracked by PI team, and amendments will be made should the consultants (Acoura) be in agreement. If not they will justify why they do not agree. There was an assurance that they will come up with some bespoke measures and suggestions for potential remedial work to improve fishery's management for each IFCA; and the suggestion was made that stakeholders share the burden for sustainable fisheries, whether this be fishers, retailers and the supply chain sharing responsibility.

The Final draft will be produced and the IFCAs will be given time to comment, one of the major criticisms the NWIFCA has had of the process. There is a follow up time of 18 months and assurances were given that the PI team are committed to getting these final reports right and will take this time if it is needed. There is no expectation of IFCAs having any future engagement with the project once the final reports have been produced.

BIOSECURITY PLAN

Science Officer Sarah Temple has made further progress on producing the NWIFCA District-wide Biosecurity Plan, a copy of which will be tabled at the June meeting. It is almost in its final stages and it would be useful for Officers to receive feedback from Members on the content and format of the paper, and any omissions that can be corrected. A draft of the plan was discussed at the May TSB meeting and detailed written comments from Natural England have been incorporated.

AUTHORISATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

Rock armour maintenance work at Caldy golf club – MMO Licence consultation
Cammel Laird Alabama Way Marine Operations Facility - MMO Licence consultation
Eskmeals shell propellant testing - MMO Licence consultation
Walney wind farm pre-emptive licence for cable repairs - MMO Licence consultation
Roa Island jetty renewal - MMO Licence consultation
United Utilities – Anchorsholme and Harrowside. outfall renewals - MMO Licence consultation
Foxfield Viaduct – Duddon Estuary - MMO Licence consultation
Heysham Harbour Maintenance Disposal renewal - MMO Licence consultation
Port Meridien Pipeline – Walney Channel - MMO Licence consultation

A number of other MMO Licence applications were screened out as not requiring NWIFCA responses.

Cefas Clean Seas Environmental Monitoring Programme surveys – byelaw authorisation
Brown & May Ormonde wind farm monitoring surveys – byelaw authorisation

NERC Tracer release study for Water Framework Directive and Bathing waters – liaison re: timings of releases
Fylde Coastal Masterplan

MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES ATTENDED

Cefas Training – Standard Operating procedures for the Use of Drop-down Camera and Side-scan Sonar for Evidence Gathering for MPA Habitat Mapping

ATV Training – Sarah Temple
Mersey Port Health Authority Open Day
Vessel Sharing Meeting – EA and Natural England
SEADOGS meeting
HRA Training – Part II – York
Shellfish Liaison Meeting
Regulatory Impact Assessment Training – Defra- London
National IFCA TAG meeting - London
NW Cumbria FLAG AGM
Solway Firth Partnership quarterly meetings - Carlisle
National Grid – Coast Connections consultation
NWIFCA Byelaw review Meetings
Coast and Estuaries of North and Mid-Wales – Conference - Bangor
EUNIS Habitat Classification Training – 2 days – Poole RNLI Training Centre
Dee Cackle Order Meeting
Stakeholder Meetings – across District
Defra and Natural England meetings re EMS Review and MCZ work
EMS Fisheries in EMS teleconferences – national and TAG
Enforcement Meeting (Whitehaven & Carnforth)
North West Wildlife Trusts Irish Sea Marine Conference
NE Webinar – Marine Evidence Project Update
Dee Estuary Conservation Group
Solway Estuary Cackle Management - Kirkcudbright

COMMUNICATIONS – Officer Joe Moulton

The communications role has been busy during the last quarter. During April the second newsletter of the year was produced and distributed to members and stakeholders across the district and UK. A number of different public events have been attended by officers. Mersey Port Health authority awareness day was extremely valuable in presenting the role of the NWIFCA to other agencies across the North West. In April Cumbria Wildlife Trust held their second Marine Conference, IFCOs Leadbeater and Moulton attended with a display. IFCO Moulton chaired the students carers session for prospective marine graduates whilst Miss Leadbeater attended a seminar on Wind Farm development. A two day event in May run by the Ribble Friends of the Estuary group was also attended by communications and science staff.

Although not within this quarter of reporting, four community stakeholder meetings have taken place across the district in Whitehaven, Preston, Milnthorpe and Wallasey. Meetings have featured presentations and discussions surrounding EMS sites and MCZ's. The final meeting in Wallasey was the best attended, issued raised included problems with Byelaw 3 permits and inshore netting. The meeting in Whitehaven was also attended by representatives from DEFRA, MMO and Natural England as well as fishermen. The Milnthorpe meeting had discussions which centered around possible fishing in the West of Walney proposed MCZ and the introduction of younger people into the fishing industry. Although attendance has been low, discussions and contributions from attendees have been constructive. The meetings were organised well in advance of the proposed dates and were publicised in the media, NWIFCA website, social media and word of mouth and therefore the poor attendance is difficult to explain. Despite this the meetings have still been a useful engagement strategy.

Science Officers
27 May 2014