

North Western IFCA

Technical, Science and Byelaw Sub-Committee: 21 June 2011

Strathmore Hotel, Marine Road East, Morecambe: 10.30 a.m.

MORECAMBE BAY SEED MUSSEL FISHERIES UPDATE

A. Purpose of Report

To inform members of developments in the seed mussel fisheries within Morecambe Bay since the last report to the full authority in May.

B. Recommendation

1. That members endorse the actions taken by officers in managing this resource.
2. That the report be received

1. South America and Falklands

- 1.1 After consultation with the industry and conservation interests, Officers authorised a dredge fishery for undersized mussels under byelaws 12 and 15 in the area shown at Annex A.
- 1.2 Authorisations begin on 20th June and will remain in force until 2nd September. They can be extended should the need arise.
- 1.3 At the time of writing, four authorisations have been issued.
- 1.4 Mussel settlement has been extremely good this year. A survey in May resulted in an estimate of biomass on the beds being between 20,000 and 30,000 tonnes. Officers and colleagues from Natural England will take part in a helicopter survey on Friday 17th June and a verbal report to the TSB can be given for a further update.
- 1.5 In agreement with Natural England, Officers have authorised the fishing in the area under delegated powers on the basis that the stocks there are ephemeral and are likely to be lost to the fishery due to natural events.

2. Heysham Flat

- 2.1 Fishery Officers and Science Officers have assessed mussel settlement on Heysham Flat in April, May and June. It is extremely patchy with some small areas with seed clumping already. The underlying substrate is very cobbly in areas where seed density is greatest, suggesting that harvesting may not prove attractive.
- 2.2 Officers will continue to monitor the situation and advise the Authority should a fishery develop.

3. Foulney

- 3.1 This area has not developed in such a manner as to meet the criteria for authorisation as a seed mussel fishery and therefore no action has been taken. Officers will continue to monitor the area in order to react swiftly should this situation change.

**Scientific Officer
June 2011**