

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting
16th June 2017: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
14**

**SUMMARY REPORT - TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW
COMMITTEE – 16TH May 2017**

1. The minutes of 7st February TSB were approved. There were no matters arising.

Leven and Pilling Cockle Fisheries Report (Agenda Item 5)

2. The cockle fisheries at Leven and Pilling are now closed after being open for 175 days. Leven saw the majority of the fishing activity. Pilling received very little interest due to: the bird flu outbreak at a nearby farm, smaller cockles returning lower value stock and MLS enforcement on the first day.

Science Report (Agenda Item 6)

3. The report included:
 - a) An update on Marine Protected Areas in the NWIFCA District.
 - b) Bait Collection Habitats Regulations Assessments - A deadline of December 2018 has been set for management of damaging bait collection activities. Only baitworm digging and pumping, and crab tiling are to be included.
 - c) Recreational Sea Angling Strategy - The draft Strategy has been circulated to clubs and individuals within the community for feedback.
 - d) CEFAS Bass Tagging Project - Officers have been working closely with Cefas to facilitate work tagging within the district. The project aims to better understand the biology of European Sea Bass. There has been a lot of interest and support from both commercial and recreational fishers.
 - e) MMO Liaison Meeting Newcastle - A letter of concern was sent on behalf of the NWIFCA to the MMO Licensing Team over the lack of early consultation with the fishing industry. MMO responded with an invitation to meet in Newcastle. Other teams at the MMO also took the opportunity to meet with science officers during the visit.
 - f) Moorside Power Station - The project is currently on hold; the company that makes the reactors is in receivership and Toshiba have pulled out. NuGen is confident the project will go ahead once other investors have been secured and is a major investor within West Cumbria.
 - g) Heysham Power Station Visit and Fish Sampling - Officers were able to visit with Natural England. EDF are keen for the monitoring of fish bins to continue. Science officers are working with NE to progress this.
 - h) Small Fish Surveys - The EA have not sampled the Mersey since 2009, and NWIFCA SFS could help fill gaps in their data. Three out of the nine EA sites were chosen due to their higher diversity. Surveys will begin on suitable tides.

Cockle and Mussel Fisheries (Agenda Item 7)

4. The report provided an update on the status of cockle and mussel fisheries within the district. Mussel has settled at Foulney, Foulney Ditch and the area from Low Bottom to the oyster frames. There is potential for a cockle fishery at Leasowe later in the year depending on

survival of the stock. Further stocks of cockles have been reported at Hoylake and have yet to be surveyed.

5. Requests from industry were made at BMWG to carry out a scientific study to assess damage to honeycomb worm reef from quad bikes and harvesting within the Heysham Flat exclusion zone. Science Officers, Natural England and the Wildlife Trust looked into the request; however due to the wide ranging influences and variability affecting the skear it would not be possible to collect meaningful data.

Bird Food Model Report (Agenda Item 8)

6. The issue of using a model to assess bird food requirements has been an ongoing for many years. NWIFCA Scientists have a lack of confidence in using the current models. Officers have been working with partners to progress spreadsheets with agreed thresholds that must be available for birds at all times. Further work on and justification of the figures continues. The Senior Scientist gave a demonstration of the spreadsheets to members.

The following recommendation was agreed:

- I. Approve the on-going work of Officers to progress the use of stock condition spreadsheets and an overall agreed tonnage for fisheries management

Byelaw Review - Byelaw 3 Permit to Fish for Cockles and Mussels (Agenda Item 9)

7. The report laid out the time-frame and the broad measures for a byelaw 3 review which was agreed. The next stage will be a consultation with industry.

The review is needed to develop the management of cockle and mussel fisheries using the experience gained since the introduction of byelaw 3 in 2012. The core provisions of the byelaw will be retained. However, some areas of concern were highlighted such as: flexibility in permit conditions, minimum sizes, closed seasons for cockles, exemption for personal consumption, use of boats (paragraphs 28-29), permit scheme (paragraphs 14-20), regulation of first sale, a permit scheme for traders, and support worker permits.

A.O.B. (Agenda Item 10)

8. No further business.

Clerk
25th May 2017