

**NWIFCA Technical, Science and Byelaw
Committee**

6th February 2018: 10:00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.**

7

RAZOR CLAM REPORT

- Purpose:**
- i. to provide an in-depth report to the Authority on the management of razor clam fisheries in the UK and Europe;
 - ii. to provide Members with a clear understanding of the constraints to managing sustainable sub-tidal razor clam fisheries;
 - iii. to provide a document to Members to aid discussion;
 - iv. to provide a document for publication on NWIFCA website in order to make clear the current position on razor fisheries to industry.

Recommendation: that Members approve the report.

1. The shallow seas around the NWIFCA coastline hold stocks of commercially valuable species of bivalves, including razor clams.
2. There is great interest from industry in being permitted to harvest these stocks, and there have been numerous requests to SFC and NWIFCA in recent years.
3. The Authority took a decision in 2012 that according to its duties under MACA 2009 unless it had confidence in its understanding of the stock, and issues around sustainability and impacts on the environment, that fishing for razor clams should not proceed.
4. Requests to fish are still being submitted and Intel has suggested there has been a risk of illegal fishing.
5. The NWIFCA Restrictions on the Use of a Dredge Byelaw 2017 provides District-wide protection against illegal dredge activity.
6. Members and Officers support moves to develop fisheries where possible providing IFCA duties to manage sea fisheries resources sustainably are met. It felt prudent to investigate the up-to-date situation regarding gear and how other regulators manage their stocks.
7. The purpose of this report (Annex A) was to provide an in-depth examination of fishing gear and fisheries management of razor clams in the UK and Europe, in order to progress possibilities of sustainable razor clam fisheries in NWIFCA District.
8. Information gained from the background research has not removed many of the existing constraints faced by the Authority in managing sustainable sub-tidal razor clam fisheries.
9. The report contains recommendations on what is required for progress to be made.

**Mandy Knott
Senior Scientist**