

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting
8th December 2017: 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA
ITEM NO.
9

SUMMARY REPORT - TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW
SUBCOMMITTEE – 31ST OCTOBER 2017

To Receive Minutes of the TSB Committee Meeting Held on 8th August (Agenda Item 3)

1. The minutes of 8th August TSB were approved.

Matters Arising (Agenda Item 4)

2.
 - a. The Senior Scientist asked Natural England whether any progress had been made regarding the light at Heysham Port.
 - b. An update was requested on the research into the approaches taken by other authorities to manage razor clam fisheries. The Senior Scientist stated that the findings will be presented in a report at a future TSB.
 - c. An update on the status of the side scan sonar was requested. The CEO stated that the manufacturer found no issues with the unit and that the issue is with the Solway Protector's power supply unit which will be resolved with the new vessel.
 - d. Members queried whether the suggestion to remove the regulation of buyers from Byelaw 3 had been agreed upon. A transcript of the discussion was requested.

It was agreed to circulate a transcript of the discussion that took place on 8th August about the regulation of buyers in Byelaw 3.

Science Report (Agenda Item 5)

3. The report included:
 - a. An update on Marine Protected Areas in the NWIFCA District:
 - b. NWIFCA New Vessel: Science officers have visited the vessel twice. The refit will support an outdoor wet lab as well as an indoor dry computer and tech work areas. The new facilities available on the vessel, such as the ability to carry quad bikes, will massively improve the capabilities of the scientific work carried out by NWIFCA.
 - c. Monitoring and Assessment Workshop: The Senior Scientist attended a workshop hosted by the Environment Agency. The aim of the workshop was to focus on the monitoring requirements of each organisation, assessing what monitoring work is on-going, what resources are available and what potential exists for resource sharing in the future.
 - d. Research Projects:
 - 1) Natural England underspend projects:
 - i) Drone surveys of crab tiles have gone ahead. The aim is to compare the time and accuracy compared to foot surveys.
 - ii) No update on the investigation into the use of nephrops creel pots as an alternative to trawling in West of Walney MCZ.
 - 2) Manchester University Lobster Genetics - Officers continue to facilitate the sending of samples from fishermen.
 - 3) Lancaster University Cockle Movements - Officers have been assisting two Masters Students with dissertation projects investigating cockle movements in Morecambe Bay.
 - 4) Bangor University Bird Food Model - Mr Feather has been sampling and surveying mussel beds, focussing on Foulney. He intends to continue through winter.

- e. North West Marine Plan: Officers attended three 'cause and effect working group' meetings with the MMO.
- f. Bass Measures: 2017 EU Bass measures are being enforced. Will be reviewed by the EU at December Council and further expected measures will be implemented in 2018.
- g. Recreational Angling Strategy: An update was provided on the recreational sea angling strategy with a progress report provided in Annex A of the report.

It was agreed to receive the report.

St Bees Netting Voluntary Code of Conduct (Agenda Item 6)

- 4. The Senior Scientist presented the amended voluntary code of conduct which allows for flexibility regarding the closure dates depending on bird behaviour each year.

Members approved the recommendations to approve the revised wording, approve the implementation in 2018 and approve the monitoring and reporting of compliance levels.

Monitoring and Control Plans (Agenda Item 7)

- 5. Defra has directed English fisheries regulators to write and implement Marine Protected Area Monitoring and Control Plans (M&C Plans). The plans require that management is monitored to ensure it is effective in protecting features of conservation and that non-compliance in management is detected and acted upon.

In an effort to avoid duplication the Senior Scientist has drafted a simplified M&C plan with site specific tables which reference the HRAs/MCZ assessments. The tables include parameters that will be monitored and trigger points for review of existing assessments with annual reviews built in.

The Senior Scientist presented the tables to the TSB.

Some members reported that they were unable to open the embedded excel document and requested that it be circulated separately.

Members approved the presented plan and the continuation of the work.

Cockle and Mussel Report (Agenda Item 8)

- 6. Cockles

Leasowe - A further stock survey was carried out on on October 18th. The dense area of cockle has spread out towards the north-east. The stock is growing very quickly and little undersize cockle was found. The remaining biomass of size is less than predicted at 1366 tonnes. Given the current decreased rate of exploitation a tabled report amended the recommendation to close the bed on 2nd December to the 17th February with close monitoring to change this again if necessary (ie. the level of stock is getting close to that agreed as remaining for the birds)

Penfold North - The stock is very slow growing and only around 10% is size. The environment is extremely muddy with little water which would make riddling impossible. A further survey is scheduled for 24th October.

Morecambe Bay - Pilling sands and Flookburgh/Leven Sands surveys and stock assessments were carried out on all three beds and a HRA for Morecambe Bay was completed. A report of tonning up on the bed at Flookburgh was received by the Senior Scientist who contacted those involved and informed them that the activity could render the fishery non-HRA compliant.

Mussels

Dee Estuary - A patch of dense mussel stock has been found within the Dee Estuary. A HRA has been completed and is with Natural England for sign off. A sewage spill temporarily closed the fishery but samples have returned to normal.

Heysham Flat - A seed mussel fishery was opened in August following the completion of a HRA with an exclusion zone in place to protect *Sabellaria alveolata*. Fishing began with a low level of activity and ceased once cockle fisheries opened.

Foulney and Low Bottom - Stock is mixed size and being monitored.

All other mussel beds have no commercial stocks at present and will be monitored for spat by IFCOs in spring.

Enforcement

Leasowe has seen the majority of industry activity with a shift to Flookburgh towards the end of September. Activity at Pilling has been limited. A high level of returns compliance has been recorded. Minimum landing size compliance has been excellent due to the size of the stock and the use of riddles when necessary. The following sanctions were issued in the reporting period: two FAPs, one verbal warning and four IFCO cautions.

Byelaw Review (Agenda Item 9)

7. The CEO provided an updated summary of the byelaw review report presented to the TSB in August 2016. The report highlighted the NWIFCA Byelaws that have been introduced, the Byelaws that are currently being reviewed and the order of Byelaws that are to be reviewed.

Members requested an update on the progress made with the Dredge Byelaw. The CEO stated that it is still with Defra.

Members approved the revised byelaw review as set out in the report.

The CEO is to contact Defra for an update on the Dredge Byelaw.

Byelaw Review - Byelaw 3 (Agenda Item 10)

8. The CEO presented a draft of the revised Byelaw 3.

The draft included the following issues for discussion:

- a. A reduction in the time window for renewal of Byelaw 3 permits.
- b. A five year cut off for Dee and Solway transitional permits.
- c. Revocation of support worker permits.
- d. The removal of boat safety provisions.
- e. The inclusion of a trading permit scheme.
- f. The permit application process and a mechanism to allow young people to join the waiting list

Mr B. Leigh raised concerns about the allowance of children of any age to be added to the waiting list.

Members raised concerns that the regulations of buyers had been included within the draft byelaw following the discussion at the TSB on 8th August 2017. A transcript of the discussion will be circulated to members.

It was agreed that Mr B. Leigh will present alternative wording to allow young people on the Byelaw 3 waiting list.

A.O.B. (Agenda Item 11)

9. A member of the Marine Biological Association has heard rumours that the carpet sea squirt has been found within the Bay. Science Officers understand this to be just a rumour.

Digital Communications Officer
28th November 2017