

NWIFCA Technical, Science and Byelaw Committee

1st February 2022: 10:00 a.m.

Agenda Item
7

SCIENCE REPORT FOR INFORMATION 1ST NOVEMBER – 28TH FEBRUARY 22

Purpose: To provide an update on the work of the Science Team in the quarter.

Recommendation: Report for information, Receive the report

This quarter, the main priorities of the science team have been to carry out the work resolved at the TSB meeting on the 2nd of November, the continuation of ongoing research work and the introduction of the new Senior Scientist.

Key achievements since the previous TSB:

- 1) Leasowe cockle survey completed with results analysed and disseminated
- 2) Byelaw 4 – Potting byelaw submitted to the MMO for final review
- 3) Newbiggin and Pilling HRA reviewed and submitted to NE
- 4) Completion and sign off of Duddon mussel fishery HRA
- 5) Whelk track records collated and prepared for review
- 6) Ten consultation requests and two dispensation requests responded to
- 7) 1st draft of whelk fisheries management plan completed
- 8) Biosecurity plan for INNS draft completed and submitted to NE

ONGOING WORK STREAMS UPDATES:

1. NWIFCA RESEARCH PROJECTS

a) Razor Clam Collaborative Research

The survey has been scheduled again for October but cancelled due to bad weather. A new dispensation and amended HRA has been completed and submitted in the hope survey work will be carried out in 2022. Science team met with Bangor University to discuss progress to date and plans going forward. The main project lead is leaving post and a new researcher has been assigned to the role. Further updates on the progress of this will be provided once a survey schedule has been determined.

b) Whelk Fisheries in the North West

All samples obtained from industry have been processed and analysis of the data has started. Unfortunately due to staffing and other priorities the analysis has not been completed for this meeting as hoped. Once the analysis has been completed a report will be provided to members at a future meeting.

c) Development of Future Research Schemes – in discussion

2. MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN THE NWIFCA DISTRICT:

- a) Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs)

No further updates

3. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

- a) Future Inshore Strategic Hand Gathering Implementation Group (FISHGIG)

The management of 'hand gathering fisheries' come within the scope of the IFCA's section 153 duties within the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA 2009). Hand gathering activity for marine resources within English intertidal areas is extensive, occurring in all IFCA Districts and throughout the year, on significant scales and often of considerable value. The purpose of the FISHGIG is for IFCA's to collaborate and share information to improve their management of hand gathering fisheries by; working together to share resources, identifying common management objectives and sharing best practice. The final draft of the package of information has been completed and has been distributed internally to all IFCA's for comment. It is going to Chief Officers Group and Natural England and once available for external distribution it will be provided to members.

- b) Fisheries Management Plans

The purpose of the fisheries management plans is to define the fisheries, assess and account for their possible socio-economic and environmental effects and give a framework for their sustainable management. Currently the first draft of the whelk fisheries management plan has been developed and will utilise the data collected during the research project to inform on sustainable management.

4. MMO MARINE LICENCE AND OTHER CONSULTATIONS FOR THE QUARTER

- a) Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4

There have been six proposed new offshore wind projects in the latest round of offshore wind leasing. Three of these areas are within the Irish Sea. All of the proposed areas are outside of the district. Crown Estate are currently undertaking a Plan-Level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to assess potential impacts to European Marine Sites prior to awarding seabed rights. Further information can be found on the Crown Estate website with links to the process and maps of the proposed areas: <https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/en-gb/media-and-insights/news/2021-offshore-wind-leasing-round-4-signals-major-vote-of-confidence-in-the-uk-s-green-economy/>. It is expected that the HRA will have been completed spring 2022

- b) Mersey Tidal Power Project

The sixth online environmental workshop for the Mersey Estuary Tidal Barrage project ran earlier this month and was attended by NWIFCA. The workshop was again attended by representatives from wide ranging environmental agencies both statutory and non-statutory with knowledge and expertise in the area of potential influence from the proposed barrage.

The potential location of the proposed barrage was presented, with discussions over the potential impact of each option. The workshop discussed changes in sediment and channel

movements in the Mersey, the constraints of the project, and the key concerns of environmental agencies. Currently, the project is still in the initial scoping stage. In terms of fish/ fisheries, they are looking at carrying out multi-year duration surveys. A survey schedule will be made available in 2022.

Consultations this quarter:

- Mostyn Energy Park Extension Scoping
- Lancashire County Council Bridle Footbridge Replacement
- Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme - Phases 1 and 2
- Penrhyn Bay Coastal Defence
- West Coast Main Life Extension: Gantry Replacements
- Llanddulas to Kinmel Bay Coastal Defence Improvements Project

Dispensations this quarter:

- Hull Marine Laboratory
- Springfields Fuels Ltd - Catherine Retberg

5. WORKING GROUPS AND MEETINGS

a) Technical Advisory Group

NWIFCA continue to attend the technical advisory group (TAG) meetings which offer the opportunity for all 10 IFCA member authorities to discuss similar work schemes and share knowledge. This quarter, TAG was held on the 18th of November and members discussed updates on HPMAs and fisheries management plans which are national projects each IFCA is involved in. Work on *Sabellaria spp.* side scan surveys and sharing both survey equipment and staff training was also discussed.

NWIFCA
19th January 2022