

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting  
15<sup>th</sup> March 2018: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO.  
9**

**SUMMARY REPORT - TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW  
SUBCOMMITTEE – 6th February 2018**

**Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 1)**

1. A minutes silence was held in memory of Keith Willacy and those who died in the Morecambe Bay Tragedy this week in 2004.

**To Receive Minutes of the TSB Meeting Held on 31st October 2017 (Agenda Item 3)**

2. The minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 TSB were approved.

**Matters Arising (Agenda Item 4)**

3.
  - a. The bright light at Heysham Port was discussed. The impact of other bright lights was raised.
  - b. The side scan sonar is working and will be tried on the new vessel.
  - c. St. Bees Code of Practice will begin on 1st March. A press release was issued and the Senior Scientist was interviewed on BBC Radio Cumbria.
  - d. The Bass measures have been published.

**Vessel Completion and Delivery (Agenda Item 5)**

4. The report outlined the completion and delivery schedule for the new vessel as in the report to this meeting:

**Science Summary Report (Agenda Item 6)**

5. Contents are further updated in the report to this meeting

**Razor Clam Management Report (Agenda Item 7)**

6. The 52 page report by Science Officers provided an in-depth overview of the management of razor clam fisheries in the UK and Europe. Minor amendments were agreed to the executive summary and publication on the website with a call for interest in collaborative research. This has been completed.

**Cockle and Mussel Report (Agenda Item 8)**

**7. Cold Weather Closures for Intertidal Shellfish Fisheries**

Cold snaps during November and December followed by a period of unseasonably mild weather raised the question of when action should be taken to close fisheries to minimise the disturbance to feeding and roosting SPA birds. Officers discussed with NE colleagues and established that good practice would be to close prior to cold weather setting in. For 2017 a decision was made not to close any fisheries as the risk was deemed to be low.

**Cockle Stocks**

Leasowe - Fishing activity has reduced to minimal levels. The need to review a closure is no longer required.

Penfold North - Stock was surveyed on 8th November. The bed remains muddy but has hardened slightly. Accessibility is still an issue. The main size class present is 20-30 mm however the majority were 20-25mm. The bed will be surveyed again in early spring.

Flookburgh / Leven Sands and Pilling - Not surveyed during the reporting period.

### **Mussels**

Dee - Not surveyed during reporting period, to be resurveyed once conditions allow. Sampling for the presence of the INNS Chinese Mitten Crab will also continue.

Heysham Flat - An inspection was carried out on 5th January. Mainly undersized mussel remains on the lower reaches of the main skear and Knott End skear. There are areas of newly settled *Sabellaria alveolata* on the northern side of Knott End skear and the southern side of the main skear. On the northern side of the main skear there is a combination of newly settled worm with older structures and live structures. It is still unknown whether remaining mussel and the worms will be buried under this year's mussel settlement.

Members approved the report.

### **Cockle and Mussel Fisheries Enforcement Report (Agenda Item 9)**

8. Fishing has shifted from Leasowe to Flookburgh and is increasing at Pilling. Returns compliance has dropped, and sanctions applied as reported in HOE report.

Members approved the report.

### **Crab and Lobster Stocks Report (Agenda Item 10)**

9. Commercial crab and lobster returns data 2006-2016 from port landings within the NWIFCA District have been digitised and analysed.

Members approved the report.

### **Byelaw Review: Potting Byelaw (Agenda Item 11)**

10. Officers proposed a flexible permitting byelaw for potting to regulate all relevant species recreational and commercial sectors. This would revoke five existing byelaws. The Sussex IFCA's potting byelaw example was circulated. A draft byelaw will be considered by TSB.

Members approved the revised approach.

### **Byelaw Review - Byelaw 3 (Agenda Item 12)**

11. Two issues remain to be resolved.
  - a. The Cockle and Mussel trading permit proposal was discussed at TSB and a query raised in respect of IFCA powers. Legal advice from MMO is expected in March 2018.
  - b. Applications from minors to go on the waiting list. Two minimum ages were suggested. Fourteen coincides with the time children begin making career choices at school and twelve is the age at which parent and child must sign passport applications.

Members approved setting the minimum age to go on the waiting list as twelve.

### **A.O.B. (Agenda Item 13)**

12. Mark Johnston relayed concerns that had been raised about cockle pickers riding quad bikes in areas that they do not need to access. The Head of Enforcement commented that it may have been IFCA Officers accessing a sample point.

**Digital Communications Officer**  
**26<sup>th</sup> February 2018**