

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting
15th September 2017: 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA
ITEM
10

SUMMARY REPORT - TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW
COMMITTEE – 8TH August 2017

Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

1. Ron Graham was re-elected as the Chairman and Trevor Jones was re-elected as the Vice Chairman. Trevor Jones chaired the meeting in the Chairman's absence.

Minutes of the Technical, Science and Byelaw Committee held on 16th May

2. The minutes of 16th May TSB were approved.

Matters Arising

3. The CEO reported progress of the dredge byelaw. A delay was caused by a change in Defra policy preventing AIS from being a requirement in IFCA Byelaws. Also the Regulatory Impact Assessment that had to be moved to a new government template.

Mark Johnston, acting on behalf of Natural England, and the CEO, acting on behalf of the TSB committee, are to write to the MMO regarding the delays in the implementation of the Dredge Byelaw.

A strong light shining over Morecambe Bay from Heysham Port was discussed. Mark Johnston, acting on behalf of Natural England, agreed to contact the port authority raising concerns about the impact of the light on wildlife.

Science Summary Report (Agenda Item 7)

4. The report included:
 - a) An update on Marine Protected Areas.
 - b) St. Bees Head SSSI - Netting and Bird Entanglement and Disturbance. Officers met with both commercial and unlicensed fishing stakeholders, at separate meetings, to discuss management options to prevent the entanglement of and disturbance to nesting birds on the cliffs. A proposal to implement a Voluntary Code of Conduct was brought forward to the TSB.
 - c) Bait Collection Habitats Regulations Assessments - A December 2018 deadline has been set for management of damaging bait collection from both recreational and commercial gathering. From sightings data to date no management is anticipated in this District.
 - d) C-Bass Tagging Project: Began in mid-June and is an example of successful joint working between, CEFAS, the NWIFCA, MMO and industry. So far 34 data storage tags have been deployed in bass over 50 cm length and 35 T-Bar tags were inserted into smaller bass around 30cm. Work will hopefully continue in early September.
 - e) Moorside Power Station development and associated North West Coast Connections projects are still on hold. IFCA involvement is reduced until financial security has been declared.

- f) West Cumbria Mine - A meeting with West Cumbria Mining, the MMO and fishermen in Whitehaven discussed variation of the Marine Licence for the exploratory borehole surveys. This involved an increase from 12 hours a day drilling to 24 hours. NWIFCA had expressed concerns over the cumulative impacts with other activities. CEFAS has recommended monitoring if 24 hour drilling takes place.
- g) Razor Clams - There are sub-tidal and intertidal beds in the District which Industry wishes to exploit. In order to explore future options Ms Aitken is approaching other regulators to see how they study the populations, assess subtidal stocks and how their fisheries are managed.
- h) Natural England requested project ideas for underspend money. NWIFCA suggested three fisheries focused projects as follows: Drone surveys of crab tiles in the Mersey Estuary and North Wirral Foreshore, Investigation with fishermen into use of Nephrops creel posts in the West of Walney MCZ, and the use of sidescan sonar to investigate the presence and distribution of subtidal mussel and scar ground in the Solway.

Graeme Fox at Manchester University is carrying out genetic research to assess the stock units of lobster fisheries around the UK and Ireland.

Two Masters Students at Lancaster University are working on dissertation projects with the intention of aiding understanding of cockle movements within Morecambe Bay.
- i) Website - Species Ecology - Science Officers have been working to populate information for individual species on the website.
- j) Monthly Shellfish Activity Returns Forms from permitted vessels that fish for crab and lobster are being digitised from 2006 to present.
- k) Oil Spill Response - Officers assisted the response to the oil spill from the Douglas Complex oil installation. Small oil deposits and tar balls washed up on the shore from Bispham to Cockerham Sands.

It was agreed to amend the wording of the Voluntary Code of Conduct for the next TSB to allow for flexibility in the closure dates.

Cockle and Mussel Fisheries Report (Agenda Item 8)

- 5. Mussels - Heysham flat seed mussel opened to byelaw 3 permit holders on 7th August. The northern line was adjusted to protect a Sabellaria reef. The mussel in the area proposed for a dredge fishery is not in a condition for a seed mussel fishery to go ahead.

Cockles - Leasowe, Pilling, Flookburgh and Leven Sands show potential for cockle fisheries subject to HRAs and surveys. Ribble - Penfold North has a large abundance of slow growing cockles in thick mud.

It was agreed that the Science team will seek email approval from members to open cockle fisheries.

Ravensglass (Muncaster Estate) Mussel Relaying (Agenda Item 9)

- 6. The report covered Kingfisher Sea Foods agreement with the Muncaster Estate to relay seed mussel on their land. The accuracy of the report was queried by Dr Andrews. It was agreed that it will be discussed outside of TSB and an amended report will be issued.

Small Fish Survey Programme Development (Agenda Item 10)

- 7. The report provided clarification following concerns raised at the June meeting. The current focus is on trialling methods, identifying what can be done, and discovering training and

experience needs. Once the preliminary experiments are completed a programme will be discussed at TSB.

Pink Salmon Alert (Agenda Item 11)

8. There has been an increase in Pink Salmon being caught in the North East of England. The Environment Agency is monitoring the situation and has requested anglers to report catches. There have been reports of Pink Salmon being caught off the West Irish Coast however; no Pink Salmon have been caught within the North West IFCA District to date.

Byelaw Review - Byelaw 3 (Agenda Item 12)

9. The review brought forward 11 recommendations to the committee which can be summarised in the table below. The chairman advised members to submit any further suggestions to the Head of Enforcement via email.

No.	Measure recommended to TSB	Outcome
1	The byelaw should contain the current mechanisms in Byelaw 3 for managing permit numbers. The permit should be renewed annually and 10 new permits should be issued from a waiting list per year. The transitional arrangements for the Dee and Cumbria should be time limited.	Agreed
2	The byelaw should contain a short renewal time period and the dates of validity and renewal deadline should be separated. Validity and renewal should not coincide with any closed season.	Agreed
3	The Byelaw should contain a single fixed annual fee of £500 payable on renewal of the permit	Agreed
4	The new byelaw does not contain provision for support worker permits.	Agreed
5	The new byelaw does not contain any apprentice scheme or preferential system based on age	Written submission of suggested measures
6	The question of the regulation of safety (and its certification) in permit schemes should be decided by the full authority	Agreed – suggested pursued by the new HoE
7	The current personal limits (5kg for both species) are maintained in the new byelaw. Officers investigate regulatory mechanisms to manage the personal limits outside of the flexible permit scheme	A more informed decision could be made following the Leasowe Fishery.
8	Further work on the byelaw should include the principle of the regulation of buyers subject to full legal advice on its application and consultation with other government bodies and industry	Regulation of this area will not be contained within the new Byelaw 3. Consideration to a separate byelaw regulating this area
9	The minimum sizes in the new byelaw should be set and defined as is currently in Byelaw 3. Officers should investigate a mechanism for seed mussel fisheries	Agreed
10	No set hand gathering methods should be included in the byelaw – all should be treated as flexible permit conditions. Recreational hand gathering methods should be restricted to the current methods in Byelaw 3	Agreed
11	Rigid riddle use should be treated as a flexible permit condition. No rigid riddle requirement should be contained in the recreational methods	Agreed

Clerk
1st September 2017