

**NWIFCA Technical, Science and Byelaw
Sub-Committee**

10th February 2015: 10:00am

**REPORT
NUMBER
9**

SHELLFISH WORKING GROUP

Purpose: to provide Members with Terms of Reference (TOR) for the proposed Shellfish Working Group (SWG)

Recommendations

1. That Members approve the TOR drafted by Officers for the SWG
2. That Members approve Officers proceeding to facilitate the establishment of the SWG

Background

1. At the Special TSB meeting of 13th October 2014 Members approved the establishment of a multi-sectoral group to have input into the management of the mussel fisheries in Morecambe Bay.
2. Officers have investigated similar fora from old NW&NWSFC records, as well as discussing this method of management with other IFCA's for the wisdom of their experience.
3. A multi-sectoral approach would be appropriate for both cockle and mussel fisheries throughout the District. The area of immediate management need and therefore initial main focus are the Morecambe Bay mussel fisheries.

Terms of Reference

1. Officers have drafted Terms of Reference for the Shellfish Working Group and provide them to the TSB as a basis for discussion and agreement.

Shellfish Working Group Terms of Reference – January 2015

Vision Objective and Status of the Group

Vision:

To foster good relations between the various sectors with an interest in the shellfish in the NWIFCA District, and to encourage co-existence and agreed sustainable management regimes between all sectors.

Objectives:

- 1) To ensure shellfish resources are managed sustainably;
- 2) To balance the social and economic benefits of fisheries activity against the duty to protect the marine environment from such activities;
- 3) To balance the interests of all stakeholders with an interest in those fisheries;
- 4) To agree a defined criteria for access to and exploitation of those resources by all sectors;
- 5) To support the decision making of the NWIFCA TSB sub-committee, by providing information and recommendations on the management of mussel and cockle fisheries in the NWIFCA District.

Status of the group:

Non-statutory, voluntary. Make recommendations to NWIFCA via TSB. Not decision making or regulatory. NWIFCA will take account of outputs of this group.

The Shellfish Working Group (SWG) exists to foster good relations between the various sectors with an interest in the shellfish (initially mussels in Morecambe Bay but including cockles and other species as the need arises) in the NWIFCA District, and to encourage co-existence between all sectors.

The SWG meetings will provide a forum for NWIFCA, Byelaw 3 permit holders, seed mussel industry, nature conservation and other stakeholders to discuss issues relating to the shellfish, and to discuss, agree and plan on an annual basis how the resources should be best managed, in accordance with the IFCA duties of managing resources sustainably, and the NWIFCA's adopted Sustainability Principles.

It will provide a mechanism for all sectors to input into the management of these resources, provide a means for better understanding of each sectors interests and concerns, and provide a mechanism for informing where data gaps exist and research requirements lie.

It will provide a mechanism for agreement of defined criteria for access to and exploitation of those resources by all sectors.

The group is facilitated by NWIFCA, which also provides the secretariat. As yet there is no budget for this group which must be run from current NWIFCA resources. The group should urgently seek any funding and sponsorship required.

The SWG will be initially chaired by a NWIFCA Officer (CEO or deputy) and supported by NWIFCA Science Officers.

The SWG should seek an independent chair with knowledge and expertise in bivalve mollusc fisheries and the marine environment.

Meetings will be held four times a year initially in Carnforth but this may be varied by the group according to its work programme. Agenda items and papers (where necessary) must be circulated by email in advance of the meetings to allow verification. Discussions and recommendations from meetings will be noted (ie. no formal minutes will be taken) and meetings will be recorded whenever possible.

Membership of SWG

Membership of the group consists of representatives from the following sectors and organisations. The number of representatives from each sector is set and is indicated in brackets:

- Byelaw 3 permit holders (2)
- Seed mussel dredge fishery (2)
- Natural England (1)
- Shellfish buyers (1)
- Aquaculture (1)
- NGO representation – eg. RSPB, WLT, Arnside and Silverdale AONB (3)
- Science expertise – eg. Bangor Uni, Liverpool Uni, Lancaster Uni, University of Cumbria (2)

Nominations for new members are welcome, and the group is committed to ensuring that membership is representative of the issues being explored by SWG. Industry representatives must represent all viewpoints in their sector and not act in self-interest.

Representatives must have a commitment to a consensus approach to decision making. Outcomes and recommendations from the SWG will be taken to the TSB.

SWG members make a commitment to attendance of and participation in the group and the representatives of each sector will be expected to participate in all meetings and be actively involved in work undertaken by the group. The continuity of individuals attending meetings is integral to the momentum and success of the group's work.

Mandy Knott
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28th January 2015