

It was suggested that other permit byelaws could adopt the flexible approach.

A suggestion to change the wording of Recommendation 1 to “NWIFCA adopts the use of flexible permit byelaws” was agreed.

Following a vote of 7 for and 0 against, the principle of introducing a flexible adaptive management approach was agreed.

Byelaw 11: Prohibition of Dredging was proposed to replace NWSFC Byelaw 12 following the introduction of emergency prohibition of dredging byelaw in February 2016.

A full draft of the proposed Byelaw 11 will be presented to the June meeting. It was suggested that a wider review of byelaws be taken forward in parallel. A strategic look at progress with byelaws to review progress was requested to agree priorities.

Cockle and Mussel Permit: Byelaw 3. Response on requested legal advice is still awaited. Changing Byelaw 3 to a flexible permit byelaw should be considered.

RESOLVED

1. NWIFCA adopts the use of flexible permit byelaws.
2. Members approve development of Byelaw 11: Prohibition on Dredging. CE to prepare a further draft for the June meeting.
3. The CE to prepare a draft of Byelaw 3 including the flexible permit and review procedure approach for TSB.

43 SCIENCE SUMMARY REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The Senior Scientist introduced a new member of the Science Team, Ms Belinda Vause.

The report covered:

- Review of Fishing Activities in European Marine Sites
- United Utilities Outfall – Anchorsholme, Fleetwood
- Sea-Bass Project Steering Group Meeting London – Bass Tagging and Small Fish Surveys Possibilities
- Wader Bird Trading
- North West Coast Connections – National Grid work on routing options for 400KV cables from Moorside Power Station. Borehole survey work using jack-up barges is being carried out for the proposed routing of the tunnel under Morecambe Bay for the high voltage cables. There is some opposition to the proposed route corridor from Moorside to link into Heysham. There is still poor liaison with fishermen by NWCC, NG and other developers along the North West coast. The Senior Scientist has raised the point about liaison with fishermen at the quarterly technical meetings and has facilitated meetings between NWCC and fishermen. It was suggested the IFCA should write to NWCC and Nugen to draw the poor liaison to their attention. The MMO representative agreed to raise this point with the MMO Licensing Department and will report back to the TSB Committee. NE works closely with NWCC and Nugen on consultations and advise on bird survey work.

Marine Planning – MMO Launch of the North West Inshore and Offshore Marine Plan Areas. A recent meeting in Blackpool to launch the North West marine plan areas was attended and a response to the scoping document will be sent. The deadline for comments is 13th May.

Bivalve Mollusc Working Group. A meeting postponed because of the opening of the Leven cockle fishery has been re-scheduled for 13th May.

Cockle and Mussel Fisheries in the NWIFCA District – Surveys. A summary of the cockle survey results was provided. Some beds may have future cockle fisheries. Surveys of those areas will be carried out during the summer.

A developing island off Fleetwood has attracted press interest and is being monitored by Wyre Council. There is concern that this structure could affect coastal processes in Morecambe Bay.

IFCA Sonar Camera Demonstration. A demonstration provided by Eastern IFCA was attended. The camera was purchased with Defra funding and is shared by all IFCAs. It is useful for underwater imaging of turbid environments and may be trialled on “Solway Protector” to survey subtidal mussel beds in the Solway Firth.

Cumbria Coast MCZ *Sabellaria alveolata*. Cumbria Wildlife Trust has undertaken five successful research projects over the last five years in collaboration with the IFCA. Further research will continue in 2016.

An update was requested on use of a drone for survey work. The potential to hire drone operators to carry out survey work is being investigated. Mr Jones reported that Menai Strait mussel growers will be using professional drone operators to survey shell size and meat content of mussels. He agreed to keep officers informed on this project.

It was RESOLVED to Receive the report

44 LEVEN COCKLE FISHERY: UPDATE (Agenda Item 7)

The Leven cockle fishery was opened for the month of April. It was the first cockle fishery in Morecambe Bay for a number of years and generated media interest. Regular monitoring of the area was carried out. Compliance with the requirement for weekly returns was poor and reminder letters had been issued. Returns so far indicate a total of 13,947 kg was removed from the bed. Sanctions included 3 verbal warnings, 4 advisory letters and 4 official warning letters.

The fishery had been well managed. Given the high level of potential interest in the whole issue of cockle fisheries management in Morecambe Bay and the input from local fishermen the enforcement and science teams were to be complimented on the work they had carried out on the fishery.

It was RESOLVED to receive the report.

Meeting ended at 1300 hours.