

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

11th December 2015: 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA
ITEM NO.
10

SUMMARY REPORT - TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW SUB-COMMITTEE – 6TH NOVEMBER 2015

In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman, Mr Jones, took the Chair.

The minutes of TSB Committee meeting held on 11th August 2015 were approved

Bivalve Mollusc Working Group (BMWG) (Agenda Item 5)

The group considered updates on Heysham Flat hand-gathered fishery and Ribble mussels, possibilities for other fisheries in 2015-16, constraints on removing mussels from the Bay, particularly in relation to bird feeding requirements, also research proposals on larval dispersal in the Irish Sea.

The TSB approved ongoing drafting of a Mussel Management Plan for Morecambe Bay and to extend the remit of the BWG to incorporate cockle management *should* increased stocks be recorded in the District in surveys in the spring.

The Science Summary Report (Agenda Item 6) included:

Introduction of new science officers

Cockle and Mussel Fisheries in the NWIFCA District,
Survey and Fisheries Work,

Assessment of Fishing Activities in European Marine Sites,
Routing options for cables from Moorside nuclear power station.
Moorside Power Station

Cumbria Wildlife Trust Marine Trainees Partnership

Work of the IFCA national Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Irish Sea Maritime Forum/Celtic Seas Partnership Marine Strategy Framework Directive Workshop
Halite – Gas Storage in Salt Caverns at Preesall near Fleetwood

Seal Deterrents in the Ribble Estuary: Local fishermen asked NWIFCA for advice on deterring seals that are ruining catches. MMO advice is that fishermen are legally required to try methods such as acoustic deterrent before considering the option of culling.

Heysham Flat Mussels Management (Agenda Item 7)

Heysham Flat has been fished in recent years as a seed mussel fishery. Prior to 2005 it was fished as a size mussel fishery and inspections over the last year have found large quantities of size mussel on the skear indicating that the bed is not an ephemeral seed bed at the moment.

The dredge industry requested authorisation to harvest seed from the bottom skears and offered to draft an HRA. Officers agree this would be acceptable under the Habitats Directive but it is the Authority's responsibility as the competent authority as to whether it accepts the findings of that information.

Use of Drone for Surveying (Agenda Item 8)

The practical uses of a drone to assess mussel fisheries was investigated. Members were shown video of a trial at Heysham Flat skear with an RSPB drone. No disturbance to birds was observed during the trial. Other applications of the use of a drone to assist NWIFCA work were discussed.

It was agreed to purchase a drone if finance is available.

Byelaw Review (Agenda Item 9)

Amendments by Defra to IFCA byelaws to meet the landing obligations are not yet complete.

Byelaw 2 (Vessel Size). No further progress to report.

Byelaw 3. Commercial Cockle and Mussel Permit. Officers are reviewing the byelaw and plan to have a draft ready for the December meeting.

Byelaw 8 (Foul Hooking). Amendments awaited from Defra.

Byelaw 9 (Fishing for Shrimp and Prawn). The byelaw has been left in abeyance pending further investigation.

Byelaw 10 (Measures for the Protection of Lobster). Clarification on the deeming clause is still awaited from Defra and MMO.

A.O.B. (Agenda Item 10)

Meeting with David Morris. The Chief Executive reported on a meeting with Mr David Morris earlier that morning. Discussion included cockle fishery and its impact and funding of IFCA's in the event of a possible cockle fishery. Mr Morris had also expressed interest in the National Grid routing options and proposed new nuclear power station at Heysham.

Clerk
25th November 2015