



**43<sup>rd</sup> Consultative Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021**  
**By Zoom video call**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Tim Glover (Chair), Mandy Wolfe (Secretary), Charles Clover, Jonny Hughes, Sam Fanshawe (BLUE)  
Chris Loder (MP West Dorset)  
Emma Sheehan, Tom Stamp, Adam Rees, (Plymouth University)  
Tom Scott (Newcastle University)  
Aubrey Banfield (West Bay fisherman)  
John Worswick (West Bay fisherman)  
Jim Newton (Beer fisherman)  
Matt Kujawski (Axmouth fisherman)  
Matt Toms (West Bay fisherman)  
Gavin Ziemann (Axmouth fisherman)  
Martin Sutcliffe (Dorset Coast Forum)  
Peter Tinsley (Dorset Wildlife Trust)  
Mike Spiller (Angling Trust)  
Jerry Percy (NUTFA)  
Ian Jones, Simon Pengelly (Southern IFCA)  
Sarah Clark (Devon & Severn IFCA)

**Apologies for absence**

Cllr Mark Roberts (Dorset Council)  
Cllr Marianne Rixson (East Devon Council)  
James Radcliffe (Bridport & Lyme Regis Harbour Master)  
Maxine Chavner (Natural England)  
Gerry Irwin (MMO)  
Jim Portus (South West Fish Producers Organisation)  
John Wallington (Axmouth Fisherman)

**Action Points from Meeting:**

- Peter Tinsley to send Lat Long locations of where vessels have anchored to Emma Sheehan.
- Ian Jones to forward information about the Interreg biodegradable fishing gear survey to Mandy to circulate to the group.
- Fishermen to share the challenges they are having with Brexit rules or applying for compensation funds with their local MPs.

- Matt Toms to email Chris with a question for Chris to put as a PQ.
- Committee members to feed in any thoughts on policy to Sam, Mandy or Jonny
- Fishermen to send any photos, videos or stories to either Mandy or Row.

## 1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

## 2. Updates

### SIFCA update from Ian Jones

*Covid* – SIFCA have been supporting fishermen during Covid where they can, signposting to the £23 million disruption support grants and providing intelligence to Defra during lockdown. Operational activities continue albeit more limited, with no vessel boardings unless totally necessary. Taking every precaution to keep everyone safe with full PPE and team bubbles.

*EU exit and licencing* – Licencing measure came in a couple of weeks ago between 6-12 nm for ICES areas 4c and 7e through 7g. Access remains at the same level as 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019. SIFCA has been patrolling the 6-12nm zone, particularly off Lyme Bay, under a cost recovery agreement with the MMO. There have been few issues.

*Fisheries Act* – The Joint Fisheries Statement and Fisheries Management Plans will affect IFCA responsibilities. High-level groups are currently working through the guidance before this is passed to the IFCA's. Likely to have a significant impact on IFCA resources in relation to the Fisheries Management Plans. APPG on Fisheries is running a seminar on 25<sup>th</sup> February covering the Fisheries Act 2020 and the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, implications for UK fishermen and current and future policy changes. Seminar will be introduced by Secretary of State George Eustice and high-level representatives from Defra and devolved administrations. You can [register for the event here](#).

*Two new SIFCA Committee members* have joined – Nick Fisher and Lyle Stantiford.

*South Coast Dorset MCZ consultation* **closes on 25<sup>th</sup> March**. Boundary is slightly inside the SIFCA boundary and so will be important to look at for those fishing in the area.

*Anchoring issues in MPAs off Dorset and Devon*. SIFCA is very concerned about the impact and has been liaising with MMO, MCA and Coastguard. Ian together with Mat Mander Chief Officer, D&SIFCA, wrote to and subsequently met with MMO to stress the importance of the reefs and protected areas and the likelihood of high impact. They are liaising with MCA, NE and MMO to get the vessels off the MPAs. This is an ongoing issue that needs legal advice on potential byelaws. Ian and Mat wrote a joint letter to MMO recommending that they should not only continue with educating the vessel owners, but also to pursue a legal approach alongside management measures.

Peter Tinsley reported that DWT have liaised with MMO and written directly to the owners of the vessels involved. DWT had received funding from NE to carry out some side scan sonar survey work in Weymouth Bay and Poole Bay to assess the physical impact of anchoring. Data has just been received and shows clear damage.

Emma asked if it was possible to share the locations of the anchoring as these may overlap some of the long-term monitoring sites. Peter reported that they used Vessel finder to map the locations of the vessels.

**Action: Peter to send Lat Long locations of where vessels have anchored to Emma Sheehan.**

Simon Pengelly reported that cruise vessels, maintenance vessels and cargo vessels are all anchoring off the coast, so several ship owners are involved. A further knock-on impact of the anchoring is on existing users in the area with reports that static gear fishermen have incurred gear losses and severe disruption.

Sarah Clark reported that up to 9 cruise ships have been anchored in Torbay since March 2019. All are anchored outside the MCZ and Torbay part of the SAC, but there was one incident where a vessel anchored in Start Point, Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC off Hope Cove. They tried to contact the vessel but were only able to make contact through Facebook to get them to move. This area hasn't had any mobile gear for at least 30 years so any damage is a great concern.

Peter Tinsley noted that the MPA boundaries are not on the charts that the vessels are using. Ian reported that MMO and Torbay Harbour Master are addressing this to get the MPA boundaries on the hydrographic charts as priority action.

*During the meeting Ian reported that he had just received an email from the MCA confirming that the cruise ships are making preparations to lift anchor and leave the area of Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC.*

*INTERREG project survey* - Ian noted a request for input to a fisherman's survey from Innovative Fishing Gear for the oceans about biodegradable fishing gear. [Fishermen Survey – INdIGO \(indigo-interregproject.eu\)](https://fishermen-survey-indigo-interregproject.eu)

**Action: Ian to forward information about the survey to Mandy to circulate to the group.**

#### **SIFCA update from Simon Pengelly**

*Management of pot fisheries* – consultation closed on 15<sup>th</sup> January and over 110 responses were received. Simon thanked Mandy for facilitating a meeting with Lyme Bay fishermen from the group to input to the consultation which was hugely beneficial. BLUE and Committee responses had been received. A summary of responses has been published and a Working Group will look at a set of potential measures.

Three main threads raised through the consultation:

- Regulation of recreational pot fisheries – SIFCA will look at ways to harmonise regulation with D&SIFCA.
- Whelk fisheries – ideas proposed included pot limits, closed season, increased MLS – SIFCA will look at relative merit of these measures and how they might be introduced in a stepped approach to allow fishers to adapt over time.
- Cuttlefish fisheries and trap fisheries within inshore area - several responses on this issue.

Management recommendations will be developed over the Summer for the Authority to consider.

SIFCA is looking at ways to harmonise measures with IFCA's to the West and East, they may not necessarily be identical but looking at ways to bring them closer together.

*Netting review* – management recommendations were presented by a Working Group to the Technical Advisory Committee two weeks ago. Still some areas to be ironed out. Review has two parts – existing regulations and management of net fisheries in harbours and estuaries and second part is a review of coastal netting (<1nm of shore). Main areas of contention around designated sites in Christchurch Harbour and Southampton Water where there's a linkage with SACS with Atlantic salmon as a feature.

#### **Devon and Severn IFCA update - Sarah Clark**

Sarah sits on both the Shellfish Industry Advisory Group and Crab Management Group and reported on recent developments.

*Crab Management Group* - met recently where there was discussion about the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement and the introduction of a tonnage limitation on crab vessels. The limit will affect UK boats that fish in EU waters and EU boats that fish in UK waters – with the limits set on a reference period of 2012-2016. Once vessels in the North Sea reach the tonnage limit there may be movement into UK waters.

Discussion about latent capacity and increase in effort of over 15m vessels. Discussion of Fisheries Management Plans and how the Project UK Fishery Improvement Plan for south west lobster and Western Channel and Celtic Sea crab could fit into a Fisheries Management Plan. Concern about potting impacts on designated features particularly in Eastern area where there are concerns about potting on limestone reefs. Sarah agreed to share their Habitat Regulation and MCZ Assessments with the Group that shows the assessments impacts on potting.

*Crab Management Science Group* is looking at modelling, stock assessments and identifying knowledge gaps.

*Review of diver permit conditions - Byelaw Permitting Sub-Committee* meeting is on 25<sup>th</sup> February - [Papers are online under 'Authority papers'](#). Main points from consultation responses were spawning period for scallops and density and landings of scallops from divers and mobile vessels into ports and into West Bay. Looked at lower impact of divers compared to mobile vessels and how to increase opportunities for low-impact diver fisheries. Recommendations are being made to the Sub-Committee to undertake a formal consultation to amend Category 1 Commercial Diver Permit to allow access to remove scallops from defined areas within designated areas between July – September. Allowing the fishery to fish in those areas will allow scallop divers to get a prime return on their catch without impacting on mobile scallop fisheries who are not allowed in those MPAs anyway.

### **Chris Loder MP for West Dorset**

Chris is keen to understand some of the issues the area is facing in relation to fisheries and the issues with exports. He had joined a call with Defra and participated in further calls with Belgian government who are equally concerned about issues being raised and believe that many of the issues are due to interventions by the French government. Charles welcomed Chris and asked if there was any intelligence about how long it will take to resolve the issues with shellfish exports. Chris thinks that politics in France including a French election later in the year and Covid lockdown in France have affected domestic markets. Problem may resolve itself once the French domestic markets pick up again. Reliance on Dover as a predominant route for exports is one of the issues.

Chris advised that MPs need to understand more about the impacts on fishermen not just the exporters, so they can call Ministers to account and challenge Defra on their assessment of the cause of the problems. Chris said that he and the MP for Totnes would welcome any input and feedback from fishermen and both would be happy to join a further call.

Jerry Percy noted that the £23m fund effectively doesn't provide support for catch sector, and even the exporters. A lot of fishermen were being told not to catch by the wholesalers because they weren't sure if they'd be able to transport it across the border. A review of the criteria for the fund would be very helpful. Chris noted that a similar issue was faced by dairy farmers in the early months of the Covid outbreak. MPs need to understand more about the problems fishermen are facing in applying to the fund. They can then challenge Ministers and Defra.

**Action: Fishermen to share the challenges they are having with Brexit rules or applying for compensation funds with their local MPs.**

Ian Jones noted that there had been a national government intelligence requirement to feed back to Defra any information about Brexit and Covid impacts. Hundreds of reports are being submitted through MMO to Defra about the issues. Chris noted that the normal lobbying approach needed to change due to the current government majority. A lot of organisations that have lobbying inroads are more effective if they engage with and are backed up by MPs. Anthony Mangnall, MP for Totnes also wants to take action. Several concerns raised around Defra's approach and lack of action, and the lack of government appetite to deal with the situation. Chris reiterated that MPs need direct input from fisheries representatives and can have an impact if they act in chorus collectively, to put pressure on Defra and Government to take action. Chris

will be in Bridport this week and offered to have a conversation or visit to discuss the issues and provided his email for any representations. [Chris.loder.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Chris.loder.mp@parliament.uk)

Jonny Hughes asked about whether discussions on depuration and exportation of shellfish were being held with the European Commission. Chris clarified that the discussions he had had were not at European level, but the frustration shown by the Belgian Transport Minister reflects growing frustration amongst other Member States. There are a number of negotiating positions and levers that the UK government could and should be exploring to resolve the issue with the French government.

Matt Toms asked whether European vessels are being boarded by MMO to check catches in the same way as British vessels. Is there anything in the public domain to allay concerns that European vessel catches are not being policed in the same way. Chris offered to place a Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State. This would effectively be a FOI request that has to be answered within a number of days. Possible question along the lines of: 'How many UK fishing vessels have been boarded by the MMO and how many EU fishing vessels have been boarded since the 1<sup>st</sup> January compared to previous year.'

**Action: Matt to email Chris with a question for Chris to put as a PQ.**

Sarah Clark confirmed that she will make contact with Anthony Mangnall MP to share feedback from fishermen in their district and reported that D&SIFCA had brought a successful prosecution against a French boat that had come within the 6 nm limit south of Salcombe.

#### **NUTFA update from Jerry Percy**

Jerry is party to some of the catch ups on EU negotiations, but things are moving very slowly. Sarah Ready is manning a NUTFA help line to help <10m access funding from local authorities, MMO etc.

#### **Research**

*Potting study* - Adam Rees reported that the results from the potting study had been published in a peer-reviewed journal on Monday. It has received a lot of attention with lots of interest in the results and how the work was carried out e.g. from East coast who are currently looking at potting on limestone reefs. Mandy has circulated the paper and Adam invited anyone to get in touch with any questions.

*Long-term monitoring* - Emma Sheehan reported that an agreement has been finalised with BLUE to continue the long-term monitoring surveys for 2021 and 2022 as part of a consortium with NE and Defra. A paper will also be published this year on the combined impact of the long-term monitoring, potting research and Reserve Seafood. Tim acknowledged the importance of the long-term data set as being unique in the UK.

*New INTERREG tagging project* – Emma announced a new project being funded by INTERREG to inform ecosystem-based fisheries management. This builds on the previous tagging and tracking work and expands this to a much larger area covering Scilly, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Sussex and across to Northern France and Belgium. A separate meeting will be organised to discuss the project with the fishermen once it is launched.

*Tagging project* - Tom Stamp reported that receivers have been placed around the mussel farm in Lyme and estuaries last summer. Fieldwork has been affected by Covid restrictions, but they have tagged some crab, lobster and bass and have started picking up some of the tagged fish near Exmouth, Teignmouth and Plymouth. An update will be given when data is available.

#### **Recreational angling update from Mike Spiller**

Very quiet with current lockdown. Charter fleet are tied up and not allowed to go out. Shore angling is allowed but within local area (10 miles or 30 mins). New bass measurements are in place and tag and release starts next month with limit of two until end of November.

### **Funding update from Martin Sutcliffe**

£23 million fund not effective for catch sector and wholesalers so of limited application for Lyme. Wholesalers are being advised by shipping merchants not to send fish to the border, and if you haven't sent anything to the border then you can't claim for loss of income even though you've clearly lost income as a result of the border issues.

Martin has a meeting with Chris Loder at the end of week to discuss EU export issues with bi-valve shellfish. Boris Johnson and Michael Gove announced £100m for the fishing industry but it is not clear if the £23m is counted within that or additional. Martin is raising this with MMO but grants team currently fire-fighting. Advised fishermen to sign up for Business updates from Dorset Council - and Devon Council probably have something similar – for updates about any business grants and funding sources.

Jerry asked for Sarah Ready from NUTFA to be involved in any discussions around funding as she has significant expertise. Mandy has a meeting with Sarah tomorrow.

Emma asked whether the case is being made that the South West has Grade A shellfish waters to allow exports from our waters under current rules. Number of challenges to this discussed including that reclassification of waters is expensive and there may not be the evidence required. Trade has been built on depuration once it reaches Europe and setting up new depuration infrastructure would take time. The law restricting imports to the EU from third countries unless they have Grade A water was a law signed by the UK and as we are now a third country the rules apply to the UK.

Simon noted that the South Coast Fishermans Council have a small fund for training for new or young entrants into the fishing industry and approved a grant for a fisher last week.

### **AST App update from Mandy**

Mandy reported that 31 vessels now have monitoring apps. Between January and February, 13 vessels have transmitted over 11 fishing days. The Man & Van transported 61 boxes with all vessels transmitting which is excellent.

### **Reserve Seafood update from Mandy**

Mandy noted that the poor weather during the first part of 2021, along with the effect of Brexit and export issues has had a significant impact on market prices. Vessels across the four ports continue to sell locally and use the Man & Van service to land to both Brixham and Plymouth markets, as well as Pesky Fish.

### **Management Plan**

Sam Fanshawe has recently joined BLUE as UK Marine Projects Manager and will be working on development of the 5-year management plan with the Committee, as well as an annual plan that brings together all aspects of Lyme Bay Reserve management including conservation measures, Reserve Seafood, research, communications and funding. Sam aims to circulate a draft of the annual plan in March for discussion at the Future Management Sub-Committee and then presentation to the full Committee meeting in May.

## **4. Support for our Reserve Fishermen**

Tim asked if there were any further ways that BLUE could support fishermen. Requests for decent weather and cheap beer noted 😊. Tim emphasised that BLUE is keen to help as much as possible during such a challenging time and asked for any suggestions or thoughts to be shared with Mandy.

## **5. Tom Scott's Presentation on AST App and future data policies**

Tom has completed an Environmental Consultancy Masters degree with Newcastle University. As part of this he undertook a study of the AST App data. Tom presented the results from his research to the group.

John Worswick and Matt Toms noted a concern for the potential for areas that haven't been fished for a few years or areas with currently low fishing effort might be identified for closure as they would be considered a protection measure that would have a low impact on activity. It was noted that fishing activity in an area changes over time for various reasons but doesn't necessarily mean that it is an area that will never be fished.

Tom noted that the application of the data would not be for identifying additional closed areas but might be used to consider extending boundaries of existing sites, but that any boundary revisions would involve consultation with fishermen who could share that historic context.

Tim emphasised that the data is owned by the Lyme Reserve Committee and not owned by the regulators. The Committee would make any decisions about how the data was used.

Simon agreed and noted that discussions around the application of the data have focused on enabling management measures within MPAs and there haven't been any discussions about using it to extend boundaries of MPAs. Management of activities within MPAs is focused on the protection of designated features. The iVMS data could help decision making and fisheries managers to demonstrate what levels of fishing activity are sustainable and compatible with MPAs. There is a discussion to be had about access to the data by fisheries managers, and the data demonstrates how fishermen are working within the conservation objectives of the MPA.

Simon welcomed the research and invited Tom to discuss his research at the SIFCA Management Sub-Committee.

Sarah welcomed the study and noted that iVMS has been on mobile gear boats for a few years but it hasn't been used for assessing small-scale fishing activity. Very useful for identifying sites for development where there aren't conflict issues. Sarah would like to discuss further.

Emma noted that the long-term monitoring data shows that there are some commercial species that are not recovering but they are stabilising even in areas where fishing is increasing. They would like to proportionalise the landings data with the monitoring data, stock assessments and iVMS data.

**Action: Tom's iVMS report presentation to be circulated to the Committee. Post meeting note: Circulation of the report is pending agreement with the fishermen.**

Tim reported that he had approached BLUE's pro bono legal advisors to develop a Privacy Policy to protect data collected by the AST App. The policy sets out data protocols to protect the fishermen, the Committee and BLUE. The policy is almost finalised and will be circulated to the Committee before it is uploaded to the App where it will be the first thing on the screen.

## **6. Update on BLUE policy activities**

Jonny Hughes has recently joined BLUE as UK Senior Policy Manager and invited input and ideas from the Committee to inform BLUE's policy influence at national level. Current areas of work for BLUE policy of relevance to the Committee include: MMO consultations on management measures to restrict trawling within four MPAs including the South Dorset MCZ; EU-UK TACs and quota negotiations including non-quota

species; feeding into the development of the Fisheries Management Plans how these are to be structured and spreading best practice.

**Action: Committee members to feed in any thoughts on policy to Sam, Mandy or Jonny**  
[jonny@bluemarinefoundation.com](mailto:jonny@bluemarinefoundation.com)

## 7. Communications, events, media and PR

*Social Media* - Posts go out on the social media accounts a couple times a week. In 2021 the aim is to reach 3,000 Twitter followers and 2,000 Facebook followers. Current stats are: Twitter: 2,455 followers / Facebook: 1,832 followers.

A big shout out to Gavin Ziemann and Ben Browning for the Facebook page '*The Quayside. Home Of The Axmouth Fishermen*'. Both Gavin and Ben help tell the stories from the quayside and cast great insight into the unique fishing community in Axmouth. These stories are then shared on the Lyme Bay Reserve social media channels and website.

*Photos & Videos* - Mandy reminded fishermen to send any photos, videos or stories to either Mandy or Row, these are always really well received online and help publicise the Reserve.

**Action: Fishermen to send any photos, videos or stories to either Mandy or Row.**

*Communications Plan* – Members of the BLUE team together with Rowena will be creating a Communications Plan for 2021. This will include a review of communication projects since 2012 which have been spoken about and/or started but didn't achieve the funding to go any further, such as interpretation boards along the SW coast and on the chiller units, schools outreach programme, photographic exhibitions, visitor centre collaborations, Reserve Seafood website and leaflets, etc. The list is extensive but a lot of the ground work has already been done so it would be good to see if any of these can start up again pending funding. In addition to this Row will run an audit on the website's Google Analytics to see what areas can be improved and expanded upon.

*South Coast Challenge* ~~May 21–23~~ (Date changed to July 9-11<sup>th</sup> following announcement of lifting of Covid restrictions)- Lyme will be hosting the South Coast Challenge as part of the 210 mile / 3-day ride through three national parks, two areas of out-standing natural beauty and along the most iconic coastline in the UK, in support of Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE). The ride from Beaulieu, will stop off at three of BLUE's projects on the way: The Oyster Restoration Project, Lyme Bay and Plymouth Marine Park. More information at [www.london-monaco.cc/south-coast-challenge](http://www.london-monaco.cc/south-coast-challenge)

## 8. A.O.B.

Jim Portus had sent a note that Tim read out:

*Urge that the next step in research and evidence gathering should be a comparison between levels of indicator species within study areas resulting from different levels of mobile gear activity and static gear activity. If low levels of mobile gear activity are found to be no more damaging than moderate levels of static gear activities, then perhaps a "zoned" approach to managing all commercial activity in marine ecosystems could result in sustainable development that would benefit mankind and not cause harm to the marine environment?*

Sarah noted that the Lyme Bay Reserve is protected by a Statutory Order as well as a European Marine Site. D&SIFCA had considered doing a scallop dredge efficiency study in an area outside the SAC but inside the Statutory Instrument Order area and NE were firmly of the opinion that there was no way any trial for a mobile gear fishery could be carried out within the SAC or wider Statutory Order area.



Emma noted that the long-term research data showed what happens when mobile fishing is removed from an area showing the damage done by mobile fishing within the area.

Tim thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed: 21:20