

FMAC
Minutes – 17 August 2023 (2nd Meeting 2023)
10.30 til 15.30
Conference Room 1, Victoria Quay

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jane welcomed members and highlighted previous requests to have an in-person meeting to help improve the flow of conversation and to have the opportunity to network. Jane confirmed that the meeting would give an update on FMAC subgroups and key strategic fisheries policies as well as more broad ranging discussions on other marine areas.

Roundtable introduction of members. See Attendance list.

Jane gave the opportunity for members to raise AOB to be added to the agenda. See AOB section.

2. High level strategic update

Jane gave a high-level strategic update including:

- Suite of fisheries publications on Monday (14th August) including consultation outcome reports for Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and the Future Catching Policy (FCP), and launch of consultation on the introduction of vessel tracking and monitoring for the under 12m fleet which will run until 7 November.
- Consultation on sand eels launched which will run from 21 July to 13 October
- Appreciate a large number of consultations for both UK and Scotland currently active. We try and stagger them but not always possible.
- Conscious that we need improve our explanation of how different policies fit together to manage our fisheries and how they deliver our commitments within the UK Fisheries Act and other legislation.
- Flagged the limits on Government resources and the need to prioritise.
- Our intention is to produce an update on our Fisheries Management Strategy delivery plan later this year.

The subsequent discussion with FMAC then included the following themes and points:

- An appreciation for the resource constraints being felt by SG.
- Request to try and stagger consultations and to coordinate with other UK administrations so they don't all come out at once.
- Suggestion that the high-level objectives of FMAC should include discussion of Good Environmental Status (GES), pressures on the marine environment and seabed disturbance.
- Questions over where FMAC sits within the new structure of the Marine Directorate.
- Discussion around how the main FMAC group interacts with the sub-groups and how the links will work.

Action: Jane – Share organogram of Marine Directorate and fisheries functions with FMAC

Action: Jane and Nick to touch base on Terms of Reference and role of subgroups

3. Subgroup updates and next steps:

A series of papers had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The following sections make reference to these papers.

3.1 Future Catching Policy (FCP) and Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM)

FCP update

Ashleigh talked through FCP paper highlighting:

- Consultation analysis and outcome reports published on Monday (14th August).
- Current focus is on considering technical and spatial measures first, and then discarding rules and the landing obligation.
- Currently pulling together data into a baseline document.
- Have arranged a meeting to begin discussion in relation to mitigating gear conflict between gill net, long line and mobile gear on 30 August.

The subsequent discussion with FMAC then included the following themes and points:

- It will be important to confirm prioritisation of both technical and spatial measures.
- If members want to join the FCP subgroup they should speak with Ashleigh to discuss. SG keen to have fishers and others with expertise involved in the group.
- The relationship between FMAC and the subgroup was explained – subgroup will develop actions and ideas then bring to FMAC. FMAC can also suggest actions for the subgroup.
- Discussion around whether incentivising low impact fisheries should be a key objective of the FCP, with a further point that not every policy can be everything to everyone; important to see how different policies link together
- Concerns raised on economic impacts of any implemented changes - need to consider environmental and socio-economic outcomes when looking at options and solutions.
- Question raised on what the requirements are to be an 'expert'. Currently the definition is those who have the technical knowledge and experience in regards to such things as fishing gear, net configuration, bycatch of sensitive marine species. The definition will be considered further to agree a benchmark for what constitutes an 'expert'.
- Plan to consolidate data into an evidence base

Action: Ashleigh and FMAC - Develop benchmark definition for expert, FMAC to send ideas

REM Update

Jane talked through REM highlighting:

- Currently not part of FCP subgroup discussions.
- Consultation report published on 14th August shows progress so far.
- SSI aiming to be laid by end of the year for mandatory introduction for scallop dredge and pelagic vessels.
- 24-month lead time for pelagic REM regulations to take effect.

The subsequent discussion with FMAC then included the following themes and points:

- Other Coastal States know the outline and SG has shared the consultation reports with them. International colleagues in regular conversation with them. Overall received positively.
- SG has the power to introduce REM outside of 12 miles.
- Questions on wider introduction for other fishing vessels. Need to develop alongside the FCP, undertake options appraisal and cost/benefit analysis.
- Confirmed REM required no matter where the Scottish vessels are fishing if they meet the pelagic / scallop criteria.
- Customers want transparency so REM can be a good initiative.
- Questions on what the requirements are when a 3rd country vessel moves between Scottish and UK waters.

Action – Jane – to confirm with DEFRA the arrangements for regulations for REM in 3rd country vessels going from Scottish to UK waters

3.2 Inshore

Jim talked through the paper on Inshore highlighting:

- The modifications to the TOR.
- Key priorities and issues raised at the last subgroup meeting.
- Under 12m vessel tracking and monitoring consultation now published and is live until 7 November.
- Clear links to the FCP consultation outcome.

The subsequent discussion with FMAC then included the following themes and points:

- More details on linkages to marine planning process and spatial squeeze within the minutes of the subgroup meeting.
- Highlighted need to consider UK Fisheries Act objectives and Good Environmental Status.
- Highlighted that RIFGs are focussed on developing operating plans for their respective area. The FMAC subgroup is for considering national inshore fisheries matters.

Action – Jim – will consider producing a 'roadmap' for inshore fisheries to show how the different policies fit together

3.3 Scallop

Jim talked through paper on Scallop highlighting:

- Subgroup evolved from SSSWG.

- Key discussion points from the subgroup and future actions for the subgroup to consider.
- Highlighted that much of the Scottish fleet operate outside our waters.
- Aim for the next subgroup meeting to be in Autumn but sensible to fit in with UK SICG group.

The subsequent discussion with FMAC then included the following themes and points:

- Highlighted need to consider UK Fisheries Act objectives, pressures on the marine environment and to manage socio-economic alongside environmental.
- Ongoing discussions at UK level on broader use of licence, quota and technical measures to manage fleet.
- Shared frustrations over science data gaps and difficulties in filling them.
- Concerns raised over data collected by Marine Directorate but currently challenging due to resource constraints.

3.4 Climate Change

Jane talked through the meeting paper highlighting:

- Next meeting planned for early September.
- Importance of working together to develop the plans and develop a baseline.
- Workshop on Monday 4th September.

The subsequent discussion with FMAC then included the following themes and points:

- Barriers for smaller vessels due to lack of infrastructure, funding etc.
- Workshop currently for subgroup but can open if needed.
- Offer from Cathy to make links with the Blue Carbon forum.
- Metrics used to monitor GHG reduction in sector currently TBC, discussions ongoing in subgroup.
- Concerns that even if fishing fleet goes Net Zero that is only a small impact on climate change but could have significant impact on industry and food production.
- Seafish highlighted their seafood specific emission tool.
- Importance of consider impact of seafood that is exported.
- Highlighted interactions between multiple policies working together.

4. Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)

Kerrie talked through the paper on FMPs highlighting:

- Timeline of FMPs.
- Role of FMAC within the FMP process.
- FMPs will ideally come to consultation in one block rather than individually, aiming for early next year for December 2024 deadline.
- Aim to establish a subgroup to help with the production phase. Please contact Kerrie by 24th August (kerrie.campbell@gov.scot).

- Seafish have been involved in the development of frontrunners and will assist in the development of the North Sea and west coast Nephrops FMPs, and scope out future work on Non-Quota species FMPs .

The subsequent discussion with FMAC then included the following themes and points:

- Welcomed that they would come out to consultation as one block.
- Concerns raised over lack of ecosystem approach and NQS. Highlighted that NQS will be considered for FMPs but have to complete statutory requirement for the 21 first. NQS will be delivered over a longer timeframe.
- Encouraged to comment on consultations when released even if involved in the subgroup.
- Importance of early engagement highlighted to aid development and implementation of plans.

Action: FMAC – Contact Kerrie to join FMP subgroup

5. Lunch

6. General updates:

6.1 National Marine Plan

Rachel gave a presentation on NMP2 highlighting:

- NMP2 aims to guides users to policy and legislation already in place. Where new policy is needed it will identify that. Internal SG group set up to coordinate this.
- Asked FMAC how they would like to be engaged in the process.

Discussions around NMP2 included:

- Clarity could be provided in NMP2 on the anticipated future of different regions in relation to pressure on the marine environment.
- For some sectors, targeted advice will be provided.
- Can FMPs take account of NMP2 and be used as one of the mechanisms to implement NMP2?
- Confirmed NMP2 not expected to lead to any legislative changes.
- Highlighted importance of youth engagement from a range of areas and sectors.
- NMP2 will support regional management but won't replicate or take away from them.

Action: FMAC - feedback on preferred engagement approach for NMP2

6.2 MPAs

John gave a presentation on MPAs highlighting:

- More regular updates will be given through FMAC, inshore group and RIFGs going forwards.
- The new socio-economic assessment methodology for fisheries management measures, developed with stakeholders, was considering the social aspect in more detail.
- For mobile species MPA and SPAs for seabirds – coming to stakeholders soon.
- Benthic MPA/PMF – main stakeholder engagement done but still engage but in forums like this.
- Working to improve the consultation platform to allow commenting on just one site/region rather than whole report.

FMAC discussions around MPAs included:

- Aim to start rolling out inshore vessel tracking next year to ensure 2026 deadline met.
- Concerns raised over engagement – need to be clear and transparent on the evidence base.
- Confirmed that the consultation will include options for restrictions (zoned vs applying gear restrictions to the whole site)
- Highlighted that gear restriction links to displacement of effort and pressures on the wider marine environment.
- Important to ensure when deciding restrictions that the area and seasonality are considered.

6.3 International Negotiations

Kerrie and Lauren updated on International Negotiations including:

- Most advice out other than cod and pelagic.
- Stakeholder engagement ongoing.
- Rough dates given for negotiations but most still TBC.
- Format will follow last year (in person for key delegates support online by wider team).

Action: Kerrie/Lauren – update FMAC with dates when known

Action: FMAC – if want negotiation updates ensure replied to Catherine’s GDPR email. If didn’t receive but want to be updated contact Catherine Whitby.

6.4 Sandeels

Lauren highlighted that the sandeel consultation is out and will run from 21 July to 13 October. All members with an interest encouraged to reply.

Discussions around sand eel included:

- Request to advertise consultation to non-UK colleagues.
- The mechanisms of anticipated outcome are outlined in the consultation and would be through an SSI.

Action: FMAC – reply to sandeel consultation if of interest

7. AOB:

Request for future FMAC agenda item on delivery of work to support the UK Fish Act objectives and Good Environmental Status.

Action: Delivery of work to support the UK Fish Act objectives and Good Environmental Status to be added to next meeting's agenda

Confirmed that for Blue Fin Tuna, all must be landed just can't be sold. Only for human consumption questioned.

Action: Lauren – Follow up with David Anderson on selling blue fin tuna if only human consumption

Highlighted that the Good Food Guide (GFG) consultation is out, has been shared, deadline Aug 26th

Action: FMAC – reply to GFG consultation if of interest

Highlighted that social media should be used respectfully in relation to FMAC to ensure trust within the room.

7.1 Ease the Squeeze

Nick talked through Open Sea's 'Ease the Squeeze' report highlighting:

- Keen to play a role in the space as new member.
- Recognised the shortage of data.
- Talked through the three key recommendations from the report.
- Welcome feedback and discussion with group.

Discussions on the report included:

- Scottish Fishermen's Federation highlighted concerns with the report. Further dialog was encouraged to talk through the concerns.
- Highlighted that where co-management works best is when consider others viewpoints and have discussion around them. This requires trust.

7.2 Net measurements

Stuart updated on net measurements including:

- Infringement data showing buying nets just above required size and not allowing for shrinkage.
- Omega gauge requirement to measure nets, temporary measure coming to an end November.
- When found under required size (300mm), temporary measure of 90 days being returned to 30 days.
- Any concerns contact local officers who will come and measure.

Discussion on net measurements included:

- Request more communication when temporary measures coming to an end as fishers and suppliers have bought in bulk.

- Suggested a phasing out of temporary measures rather than a hard deadline
- Clarity asked over square mesh panels.

Action: SG officials to follow up with the fishing industry over square mesh panels issue.

Next meeting TBC, potentially early 2024

Action: FMAC to consider when next meeting and format (in person/virtual)

Closed 15:25

Attendee List

Alex Wiseman	Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association
Andrew Brown	Scottish Seafood Association
Anne Birnie	North East of Scotland Fishermen's organisation
Aoife Martin	Seafish
Bally Philp	SCFF
Calum Duncan	Marine Conservation Society
Cathy Tilbrook	Nature Scot
Daniel Lawson	Shetland Fishermen's Association
David Anderson	Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation
David Gilchrist	Anglo-Scottish Fishermen's Association
Elaine Whyte	Clyde Fishermen Association / CIFA
Elena Balestri	Science Policy Officer, Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Elsbeth Macdonald	SFF
George West	Fife Fish Producers Organisation
Hannah Fennell	Orkney Fisheries Association
Helen McLachlan	RSPB
James Anderson	Shetland Fishermen's Association
Kara Brydson	Fisheries Innovation and Sustainability
Kenneth Coull	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
Kevin McDonell	West of Scotland Fisheries PO and Orkney PO
Lewis Tattersall	Seafish
Mark Dougal	Peter & J Johnstone Ltd.
Mike Park	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
Nick Underdown	Open Seas
Paul Macdonald	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Robert Stevenson	Lunar QMG
Sheila Keith	Shetland Fishermen's Association

Scottish Government

Coby Needle	Marine Science
Jim Watson	Fisheries Domestic Management
Jane Macpherson	Fisheries Strategy
Kerrie Campbell	International Fisheries
Lauren Reid	International Fisheries
Catherine Whitby	International Fisheries
John Mouat	Marine Protected Areas
Elaine Tait	Marine Protected Species
Stuart Griffin	Marine Compliance
Ashleigh Meikle	Future Catching Policy and Marine Shared Space
Rachel Scrimageour	National Marine Plan

Malcolm Macleod Head of Access to Sea Fisheries