

FishingFocus

The Defra and MMO marine fisheries newsletter

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Fisheries management

Fishermen will have more control over how they operate and better opportunities to profit under plans to overhaul the way fishing quotas are managed in England. Defra is seeking views on proposals for fisheries management reform in England, which are designed to secure a more profitable, sustainable and unified fishing industry in the long term.

Announcing the consultation, Fisheries Minister Richard Benyon said: "We need a simple, straightforward system that gives fishermen more say, and gives the communities that have such strong links to their fishing fleets the opportunity to invest and be involved in the way their local fleet is managed. I want to see a fishing industry that's much more integrated, without arbitrary divisions mandated by Government. The industry needs to be freed to fish so that all fishermen, and the ports that rely on them, have the opportunity to thrive."

The proposals in the consultation have been developed with industry



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representatives. They also draw on research from the Sustainable Access to Inshore Fisheries (SAIF) project and recommendations of the SAIF Advisory Group. The SAIF project was set up to find long-term solutions to the difficulties facing the English under 10 metre fleet.

We're hoping that everyone with an interest in fisheries will respond to the consultation.

Following its conclusion at the end of June, we'll be considering the responses and developing the final proposals and a full Impact Assessment on the costs and benefits. We're aiming to start the process of reform at the beginning of 2012.

📌 You can find out more about the measures in the consultation and how to respond to it on page 8.



I've been back working on fisheries since January, 12 years after my last December Fisheries Council. Some colleagues have asked none too subtly why I'd want to return. I don't need to spell out to readers the challenges and frustrations. But what attracted me back was the potential to make a difference, and do my bit to restore stocks to levels where quotas can be increased dramatically, so we make far better use of the productive capacity of the seas within a healthy marine environment.

This is a huge prize and we're far from certain to secure it. But there's a real appetite in Defra and among many in the industry to make innovative changes – some of which feature in this issue. I've also found greater openness to change in other countries and the European Commission than I remember 12 years ago. So I really hope we can work together over the coming months and years to make that difference.

John Robbs
Director, Marine Programme
and Natural Environment

News in Brief

Special Areas of Conservation – JNCC consultation

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) plans to start a three month consultation (pending Government approval) from June to August this year, on three offshore draft Special Areas of Conservation (dSACs) off the coast of England: Wight-Barfleur reef in the English Channel, and Pisces Reef and Croker Carbonate Slabs in the Irish Sea.

📌 You can see information on the sites at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4537>

You can contact OffshoreSACs@jncc.gov.uk for further information on the sites or to ask to be included on the list of consultees.

Special Area of Conservation – Natural England consultation

Natural England is planning to consult on a draft Special Area of Conservation site at Studland to Portland in parallel with the JNCC consultation. Natural England has already written to stakeholders most likely to have an interest.

📌 You can find out more at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/sacconsultation/default.aspx

If you'd like further information or to ask to be added to the list of consultees, please contact: swmarine@naturalengland.org.uk

Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation

Following public consultation on Dogger Bank in 2010, JNCC hopes to submit the site as a Special Area of Conservation to the European Commission in June 2011. There will be a report of the consultation on JNCC's website when the announcement is made.

📌 For more information, see: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1435>

New guidance for reporting fishing activities

The Marine Management Organisation has produced guidance for the industry to help them report fishing activities (logbooks, landing declarations and transhipment declarations) using their electronic software systems.

📌 You can find this at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/documents/elss_industry_guidance.pdf

Catch-based management research project

Defra is planning to fund a research project to explore how catch-based management could allow our fisheries to become more successful. The project will run this year, and will work closely with fishermen and other stakeholders in selected fisheries to get a good understanding of each fishery and options for better management.

📌 You'll be able to find out more about the project by emailing: marinescience@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Sharks, skates and rays

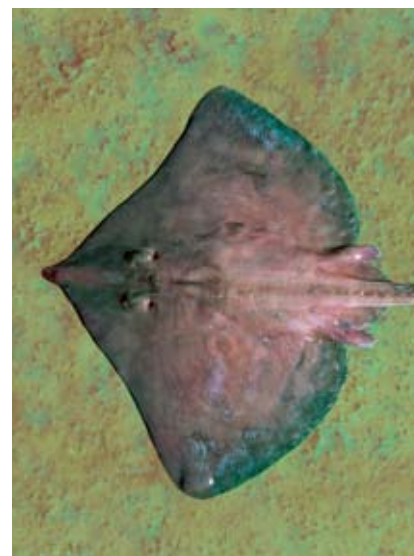
Sharks, skates and rays are rapidly depleted by overfishing and are slow to recover because of their low reproductive rates.

Earlier this year we published a Shark, skate and ray conservation plan which sets out policies and how we will work with stakeholders to manage stocks sustainably, so that depleted stocks recover and those faring better are fished sustainably.

We've banned the removal of shark fins at sea by UK registered fishing vessels, so sharks have to be landed intact. This will help to enforce catches, provide more data on sharks caught, and help their conservation. We're pressing the European Commission to ensure all sharks caught in

European waters are landed with their fins attached and we'll be looking to the Commission's Shark Action Plan to provide mechanisms to ensure long-term conservation.

We're also funding Cefas scientists, who are working in partnership with the fishing industry, to increase our understanding of the movements, key habitats and survivability after being caught and released of endangered species (such as porbeagle, common skate, undulate ray and spurdog). We want to use this research to develop bespoke measures to protect and manage these stocks, and make sure that their accidental capture is avoided wherever possible.



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Common skate

i The plan is at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/protect/species/sharks/

MCZs update

The four regional projects published their first proposals for Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) sites in late February. Since then the Marine Protected Areas Science Advisory Panel has given feedback to the projects on the proposals for a network of MCZs.

Richard Benyon, Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, visited the Finding Sanctuary regional MCZ project last month: "I really enjoyed my discussion with Finding Sanctuary stakeholders and was very impressed by the tremendous effort being put into the project by stakeholders from all sectors working together to find solutions".

The Minister listened to stakeholders' views and concerns about the site selection

process. He reassured them that where any sites proved particularly difficult or needed further investigation, then Defra would look at ways in which this could be done, while allowing non-controversial sites to be signed off by Ministers.

The Minister visited the Irish Sea Conservation Zones project last summer – and plans to meet people involved in the Balanced Seas and Net Gain regional projects. There's a lot to do before the regional projects send their advice on MCZ sites to Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). The Minister has written to the four regional projects thanking them for their work so far and encouraging everyone to

continue discussions as the projects finalise their recommendations during the summer.

Once we've received Natural England and JNCC's advice, Defra will consider this along with the site recommendations and impact assessment and hold a formal consultation on the proposals for MCZ designations next year.

i You can see the feedback from the Science Advisory Panel and find links to regional project websites at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/protect/mcz/ and if you have any questions about the MCZ site selection process, email: MCZs@defra.gsi.gov.uk

2011 catch quota trials

Voluntary English trials of the catch quota system – a different way of managing fisheries to reduce discards while safeguarding stocks – have begun for cod in the North Sea for the second year running. Twelve vessels based in Scarborough Grimsby, Whitby, Hull and Lowestoft are taking part – double the number of 2010.

We've also just launched a new catch quota trial in the south west, with three beam trawlers targeting Channel sole taking part. These vessels will use the gear developed in Project 50% which has been shown to reduce discards of all fish in that fishery. Under both trials vessels receive additional cod or sole quota (depending on which trial they are taking part in) at a level which is less than the normal discards level for that fishery.

CFP reform

The Commission has announced that the fisheries reform package – including proposals to reform the CFP, the Common Market Organisation and the European Fisheries Fund – is likely to be published in draft in July.

We're still pressing strongly for genuine, radical reform of the CFP – nothing less is likely to secure our objectives for our fisheries: sustainable stocks in a thriving marine environment as the foundation to a sustainable industry.

The difficulty is of course in the detail of how you fix this broken policy to realise the shared objective. A reformed CFP must provide the incentives and regulatory framework to enable

Fishermen have to land all of the cod or sole they catch, regardless of its size and value and it's all counted against their quota. Once a vessel has reached its quota allocation for North Sea cod or Channel (area VIIe) sole it must cease all fishing operations which can catch these species in these areas.

The catch quota system is designed to reduce discards and encourage fishermen to use their professional skill and knowledge to maximise the return for what they catch while not increasing fish mortality. To achieve this some in last year's trials used larger mesh cod-ends and others have moved areas to avoid catching juvenile fish which has to go for fish meal or be destroyed.

The trials are monitored by CCTV and one aim is to find out whether the catch quota system

us to make the most of our natural resources and tackle the terrible waste of discards. Fishermen should be given the freedom to plan better for the long term with clearer entitlements to fish – giving them more control, incentives and responsibility for managing fishing activity, and a clear stake in the long-term health of fish stocks.

To achieve this, we've been exploring, with the EU institutions and Member States, how to make real changes to the CFP's governance structure. It's complex, but the goal remains simplified, decentralised management, enabling those closest to fisheries to plan for the long term, allowing fishermen to take responsibility



Mixed catch with discards

is a suitable option to pursue as part of reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The system also offers the opportunity to reduce the burden of regulation on fishermen.

A total of 25 fishing vessels in Scotland are taking part in similar trials in 2011.

📌 You can read more about discards and Project 50% at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/cfp/discards/

for prosperous and sustainable fishing operations. We want regions to have more say in the rules they operate under and have more discretion in how to deliver the objectives of the CFP. The process will continue through the rest of 2011 and 2012, and we'll continue to work with a wide range of stakeholders and organisations (including the Commission, Member States, MEPs, representatives of the fishing industry, processors, retailers, environmental organisations and others) to build support for radical reform.

📌 You can find out more about CFP reform at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/cfp/

SHELLFISH

Brown crabs and lobsters

Brown crab and lobster fisheries are amongst the most valuable fisheries in England, with crab landings worth £13.7 million and lobster landings £12.9 million in 2009.

These fisheries are likely to become more important as quota stocks come under increasing pressure and more vessels move into this sector. Some fishermen and scientists are concerned that brown crabs in particular are already being over exploited, because of increased potting effort in recent years. We're currently considering actions to safeguard brown crab and lobster stocks by restricting the potential for future growth in catching capacity of the shellfish sector, through a rights based management system.

This system would involve vessels fishing these key shellfisheries

being allocated individual user-rights for a given amount of time. Rights could be allocated to groups of individuals or communities if the industry supports this approach. We're also considering safeguards to prevent the concentration of rights or loss of rights for small scale interests.

For a system to work effectively and for everyone to benefit, we want those most affected to be involved in designing it. The consultation on reforming English fisheries management (see pages 1 and 8) includes questions on the general principles of applying a rights based management system to brown crab and lobster fisheries. Although we expect consultation responses to generate issues and ideas, we've already started discussing these principles with industry and delivery partners. We're keen to start working with



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smaller industry groups (catching and shore-based sectors) soon to start designing how a system could be set up and run.

Although we're currently only considering a rights based management system for brown crabs and lobsters, such a system could be extended to other non-quota shellfish (e.g. whelks) and we'll keep this under review.

While stocks aren't in a bad state, fishermen really can have a say and we'd like to hear your views.

📌 To respond to the formal consultation see page 8 and to keep an eye on this policy area see: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/shellfish/

Shellfish Orders

The Government is committed to an economically viable, long-term future for the shellfish industry. We're working with shellfish stakeholders to ensure that we have the right framework in place to facilitate the sustainable development of this sector.

Following the changes to the way we're making Shellfish Orders, we'd like to encourage Inshore Fisheries Authorities (IFCAs) to apply for Several and Regulating (Shellfish) Orders or Regulating Orders, and individuals to apply for Several Orders to manage stocks sustainably.

Several and Regulating (Shellfish) Orders allow fishermen and

IFCAs to improve a fishery through good management. In 2009-10 these Orders were worth £9.3 million in England.

Regulating Orders allow grantees (usually an IFCA or other inshore fisheries management body e.g. the Environment Agency) and fishermen to restrict access to a fishery to prevent overfishing by setting Total Allowable Catches and specifying the fishing method and/or season. The Orders allow regulators and industry to work together locally to ensure the fisheries have a long-term, economically viable future.

Several Orders grant a right of the fishery to the applicant, providing legal protection for the species named in the Order.

Existing Orders have been granted for around 20-25 years, and give the grantee the ability to plan and manage their business over a long-term period, while requiring them to develop the fishery. A long time period allows an aquaculture business to develop and provide a sustainable seafood resource. With aquaculture production likely to increase in future, Several Orders could be increasingly important for developing shellfish farms, whilst Regulating/Hybrid Orders will be used to manage wild stocks.

📌 If you'd like to apply for a Shellfish Order, or if you have any questions, please email: shellfish@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Marine planning

The MMO is now preparing marine plans to inform and guide marine regulators and users from Flamborough Head down to Felixstowe, and has also published a guide on how to have your say on marine planning along this stretch of the coast.

The East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas are the first two areas in England to be selected for planning, and we are one of the first countries in the world to plan across all marine activities, for all our territorial waters.

The Statement of Public Participation outlines how and when the fishing industry and others can get involved with plan-making, including a timetable for the two-year process. The first stages of this process involve detailed evidence gathering to identify the key issues to be addressed in the marine plans. The MMO intends to launch a web portal soon. This will allow anyone interested in the plans to go online, see how plans are progressing and contribute to their development.

The MMO has also started a sustainability appraisal, gathering key information to help ensure marine plans are developed to meet the aims of sustainable development.

📄 You can read the East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas Statement of Public Participation at www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/you.htm



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News in Brief

The MMO has published its Corporate Plan 2011-15 at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/about/publications.htm

and a newsletter for the East Inshore and East Offshore areas at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/documents/newsletter02.pdf

Meet the team: the Marine Licensing Team

The new marine licensing system under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 has been in force since 6 April 2011.

A marine licence is required for many activities involving a deposit or removal of a substance or object below the mean high water springs mark or in any tidal river. This could be the construction of a port or wind farm, dredging of a channel or building a private jetty.

The MMO's Marine Licensing Team is responsible for most of the marine licensing in English inshore and offshore waters. The team is based at the MMO's headquarters in Newcastle, but works with marine officers around the coast of England.

Andy Beattie is the Head of Regulation and Licensing. He leads both the Marine Licensing Team and the Conservation and Enforcement Team who work closely together across the wide range of marine activities requiring licences in English waters.

Shaun Nicholson leads the Renewables Team, who work closely with the Infrastructure Planning Commission on large scale wind farm developments.

Brian Hawkins is Head of Marine Development, and his team covers a wide range of marine development projects, from small jetties through to major port expansions.

Neil Wellum is Head of Conservation and Enforcement, concentrating on regulating activities which impact on nature conservation. This includes considering new byelaws and issuing wildlife licences.



Andy Beattie, Head of Regulation and Licensing

EFF funding

Over £2.1 million has been approved for investment in the English fishing industry through the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) so far this year.

The money, from the EFF and the MMO, will provide new facilities for fishermen, improve fishing vessels and help a number of fish farming and processing companies to expand. It's hoped the funding will directly help to safeguard over 210 jobs and create at least 38 extra jobs.

Improvements to fishing boats based in Brixham, Dartmouth, Newlyn, Padstow and Maryport were also approved for funding during the first quarter of the year. Some of the items being purchased by their owners include new engines, generators, on-board ice makers, scalloping equipment, upgraded net hauling and other lifting equipment.

Fishermen in Selsey, West Sussex, should also soon benefit, after funding of £82,000 was awarded to Chichester District Council to build a new boat ramp on the

East Beach. In Whitby a new heavy duty landing davit is being installed after harbour master, Martin Willis, applied for a grant towards the equipment.

Martin said: "The new facility will be an asset for the town's fishing fleet, particularly the larger trawlers. It will be much safer and more cost effective than procedures which were put in place due to the old, broken equipment. We hope the new addition will also benefit other vessels using the harbour enhancing the port's reputation as a quality location to operate from."

Other significant awards approved include £606,000 for Grimsby Fish Dock Enterprises towards the £1.2 million redevelopment of Grimsby Fish Market – the biggest grant approved so far in 2011. Around £115,000 was also committed to help Hartlepool processing company W Hodgson Ltd to expand its factory by 50 per cent and offer more locally caught shellfish. This should also benefit local fishermen, as general

manager Peter Hodgson explains: "My family's business has been part of Hartlepool's fishing industry for almost 100 years and we are proud to offer fresh locally caught fish to our North East customers. I'm looking forward to expanding our product range to meet their demand, which should also help the local fleet as we will be able to take more fish from them."

Catherine Murphy, MMO's programme manager for EFF in England, said: "Some of the projects we've approved this year are firsts for the UK. It's great to see a significant level of private investment in our fishing industry – this is really encouraging in the current economic climate." Projects of all sizes can qualify for EFF, so Catherine encourages anyone thinking about developing their business or investing in new facilities and equipment to contact the MMO to see if their idea is likely to be accepted for funding.

📌 You can find out more about applying for EFF grants at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/funding/eff_apply.htm



YOUR VIEWS

Fisheries management reform

We'd like to hear your views to help us to make decisions on how best to reform the fisheries management arrangements in England.

The main proposals in the consultation include:

- Establishing a network of community quota groups in England, focussed on safeguarding and maximising the benefits associated with small scale fishing fleets and fishing communities;
- Allocating clearer, more stable and more predictable entitlements to fish across the whole English fleet, using Fixed Quota Allocations (FQA);
- Supporting restructuring of the English fleet with some additional quota for under 10

metre vessels, using limited realignment of consistently under-used quota and a small redistribution of FQAs attached to English licences, at the start of 2012;

- Improving transparency of quota holdings by introducing an FQA register and, over time, a web-based trading portal.

We're also interested in views on proposals to introduce rights based management in England for some non-quota stocks, starting with brown crab and lobster (see page 5).

The deadline for responses to the consultation is Thursday 30th June 2011.

You can find the consultation, Impact Assessment and the full Government response to the

Sustainable Access to Inshore Fisheries Advisory Group's recommendations at: www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/04/05/fisheries-1104/

To let us know your views, you can write to the Sustainable Fisheries – Access to Fisheries Team, Defra, Area 2C Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London. SW1P 3JR or email fisheriesreform@defra.gsi.gov.uk or post your views at our online forum at www.communities.idea.gov.uk/login.do

We'll be holding meetings around the coast to talk about the proposals and you'll find out about the meetings soon through MMO's coastal offices and at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/manage/saif/

Scallops

Scallops are one of the UK's most valuable fisheries, with first sale landings worth £47 million in 2009. The amount of scallops caught by the UK fleet doubled between 1994 and 2009.

We're working on a new English Scallop Order to provide better safeguards for king scallop stocks; ensure there are scallops for the smaller local fleet to fish; improve the enforceability of existing scallop management measures; and put English waters on a similar basis to other UK waters for scallop dredging.

In February we published a consultation on proposals for a revised Order, which included the following measures:

- Restricting the number of dredges which can be used outside 6 nautical miles in English waters;
- Banning scallop dredging vessels with an engine power over 221kilowatts (kW) from fishing within the 12 nautical mile limit in English waters;
- Improving compliance with the English Channel minimum landing sizes;

- Clarifying the existing legislation on attachments to dredges.

We received a wide range of responses to the consultation which closed on 1 April. Responses were both written and through meetings with key organisations. We're now analysing these responses and will be announcing the next steps soon.

📖 You can read about the English Scallop Order at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/shellfish/scallops/

FishingFocus – Your views

Have you any questions you'd like us to answer in the next issue of Fishing Focus or comments on this issue? You can email us on fishingfocus@defra.gsi.gov.uk or write to Fishing Focus, Defra Marine Programme, Area 2D Nobel House, London SW1P 3JR. You can read previous issues of Fishing Focus at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/wwofishing-focus/

