



Action Points/Decisions from NIFF pre-meeting, 22nd February 2018

Matters arising/updates

1.) RIFF Renewal Process

Renewal process working group met October 2017 and changes have been made but they have not been circulated as yet. The TOR has been amended to take account of the changes made at the last NIFF meeting. The NIFF chair emphasised the need to be in a position to enact the RIFF renewal process as soon as possible after the Inshore Strategy is completed. **Action Point:** NIFF secretary to circulate the revised RIFF renewal document to the working group, to be followed by a meeting to finalise the document for circulation to the RIFFs for review/comment.

2.) Illegal declawing of brown crab

NIFF chair updated the meeting on the present position of this issue. KFO/IFPO are in agreement to proceed as outlined in action point from previous NIFF meeting. NIFF has already a joint position paper on the issue with the KFO/IFPO. The issue of declawing in an approved premise was raised by the West RIFF. They were concerned that fishermen would be expected to travel extensive distances to get to the approved premises. Many of the catches are small, especially bycatch and go directly to retail/catering. They asked if there was an alternative to an approved premises that could this be worked into a proposal. It was noted that clarification is required that the proposal would not impact on existing tolerances in EU regulations. **Action Point:** An open sub group of NIFF is formed to develop the position paper into a draft proposal. Sub group to take the views of all the RIFFs into account. Sub group to work with the SFPA bi laterally for the purpose of aiding the subgroup in interpreting existing legislation and discussing appropriate alternative terminology to the term "SFPA approved premises" again taking feedback from RIFFs to date into account. SFPA extended an invitation to meet with sub group on the issue. Potential implications of draft proposal on the hospitality sector to be provisionally outlined also. Above to be done once work on Inshore Strategy is completed. IFPO and KFO to be invited to work with sub group and meet with SFPA. Once developed, draft proposal to be circulated to RIFFs for comment within a short time frame. NIFF Chair to suggest to IFPO/KFO to submit draft proposal to SFLG for consideration by other POs. Once consensus is reached NIFF to consider a request to the Minister to introduce legislation as per proposal.

3.) SE RIFF Proposal on Pilot Pot Limit in SE Area

A member of the SE RIFF confirmed that they had not heard back from the IMG regarding this proposal. **Action Point:** BIM and MI to work with SE RIFF on developing this proposal as a pilot scheme.

4.) V-notching review

As the v-notching extension comes to an end in December 2018 there is a need to come up with plan before that occurs. BIM is looking at the operational side of the scheme and hopes to have some details shortly to present to NIFF. It was decided by the NIFF to set up a working group to review the present technical conservation measures for lobster (maximum landing size and v-notching). The TOR of the working group to include all TCMs for lobster. It was noted that if the inshore sector wants to replace any of the present TCM's that any new conservation measures must be just as conservative. Any new changes would need to be made well before January 2019

when the extension expires and therefore there is a significant time limit for the working group to come up with proposals. Realistically would need the Working Group's advice by October 2018 at the latest in order to draft up any legislation if required. MI noted that there are biological differences between regional stocks and it is important for the WG to look at the stocks on a regional basis. It was also decided that if a RIFF has a member with expertise on lobster that that member could sit on the WG instead of a NIFF member. **Action Point:** The working group to be formed as soon as possible after the completion of the Inshore Strategy.

5.) Bi-valve working group

The WG draft management rules were examined, as per document submitted via the secretariat. The WG were looking at the overarching management issues some were national and would require legislation and others would require management on a local level, via "voluntary agreement". It was agreed legislating for local variations was not feasible and should they be desired by Industry would have to be done on a voluntary basis. SFPA confirmed they cannot enforce "voluntary agreements" and as it stood, in the absence legislation regarding fisheries management their primary role was the enforcement of food safety legislation. The meeting went through the document with a view to amending it and identifying the components that could form an overarching regulation.

The following amendments were suggested to the draft management rules and components for regulation identified as such:

1. Rules to apply to new and existing fisheries from west of Carnsore Point to Malin Head. The scope of any new legislation relevant to this issue would be confined to that area.
2. There was no agreement on "Dredge Blade width not exceeding 1.0 metre. There was no agreement from the SERIFF on this proposed management rule. As such this aspect may not be included in legislation and may be left to local voluntary agreement if desired by industry.
3. One dredge per vessel – all agreed, to be considered for incorporation into legislation.
4. Can only fish in 1 classified production area per week. To be considered for incorporation into legislation.
5. Fishing hours – Following some debate around fishing time/steaming time and the difficulties regarding access to tidal harbours it was agreed to limit time at sea to a maximum of 16 hours in any given 24 hour period. To be considered for incorporation into legislation. All vessels already have to be fitted with VMS so time at sea could be monitored.
6. A TAC in agreement with MI/DAFM to be the closing point for the fishery each year. The SFPA note that the landing data is very slow to come in to show that the TAC has been reached. Additionally as less than 10m vessels do not have to report landings to the SFPA they have to have to rely on gathers documents. Both these issues make it difficult for the SFPA to monitor a TAC. Industry agreement that the TAC needs to feature in legislation.
7. A suggested TAC per vessel per week *Ensis siliqua* 600kg. Industry agreement that TAC be managed as such, per legislation.

8. A suggested TAC per vessel per week *Ensis arcuatus* 1200kg. Industry agreement that TAC be managed as such, per legislation.
9. Local agreement also has to be taken into consideration. Some discussion took place around this. It was felt there was confusion between local management and local agreement. The following was clarified.

Local management: Local management meaning measures agreed by industry regarding a particular “local” fishery, based on a voluntary agreement by industry but not enforceable by the SFPA as not covered by legislation.

Local agreement: Local agreement was where existing Industry operators local to the fishery (but not necessarily involved in it) agreed to the development of a new fishery on the grounds that they had no justifiable objections. Local agreement may need to be achieved by Industry engagement on all sides and the implementation of mutually agreed local management as described above. Any agreements would be voluntary and could not be legislated for.

If an instance existed that a RIFF agreed that there was no local agreement based on justifiable objections from Industry then a RIFF could recommend to the Bi-Valve WG and the NIFF that an area be removed from the priority list of areas to be considered for classification. The NIFF Chair expressed the view that as the RIFFs had been asked by IMG to compile this priority list then the removal of an area should result in the State Agencies diverting resources to other areas. Ideally RIFFs would give this issue careful consideration before requesting an area be put on the list. The SFPA said they could not commit to the concept of not proceeding with the classification of an area at the request of a RIFF as the expression of interest may have come from another source. The NIFF Chair said such a decision if pertinent to a wild capture fishery would be very disappointing from his perspective as it had the potential to undermine the Inshore Fisheries Forums Process. The rationale for his view was that the concept of the priority list was something that had been agreed by the IMG and the Inshore Fisheries Forums and that expressions of interest would have to come through the Inshore Fisheries Forums to be considered in the first place.

Action Point: The changes/decisions above to go to the IMG for review and advice. IMG to give feedback to NIFF and WG if appropriate, prior to NIFF considering a request to the Minister to introduce legislation.

6.) Adverse weather effects/damage

This issue of adverse weather effects/damage was raised by the NW RIFF. **Action Point:** It was suggested that any industry groups could explore the establishment, with BIM of Mutual funds under the EMFF.

7.) Proposal to limit multi rigging in the Irish Sea

Action Point: It was previously outlined by DAFM that as this proposal goes outside the 6nm limit that consultation would be required with other EU countries. The NIFF Chair made the assessment that Brexit would make that difficult at the present time and that item 16 below may provide a viable alternative to the aspects of this proposal that lay inside the geographical scope of the 6nm limit. It was therefore decided to shelve this proposal at the present time.

8.) Trawling inside 6nm limit

The issue of interactions between inshore and offshore vessels, and the operation of offshore vessels, in inshore waters and the negative impact that has on inshore commercial fishing operators and other marine users has been raised for a considerable time at both RIFF and NIFF meetings. Two reports came out last October on this issue with a month long consultation process which the NIFF made a submission to. The NIFF understands proposals are being drawn up for the attention of the Minister following the submission of provisional observations from the NIFF and the Producer Organisations. **Action Point:** The NIFF position is that “Vessels over 18m be restricted from trawling within 6nm”. They do not want to stop vessels between 12-18m trawling. It was also agreed that this should apply to all types of fishing from vessels over 18m. The NIFF also decided that each RIFF should give an example to the Minister to demonstrate how this restriction would provide opportunities for the inshore sector.

9.) AOB – kW effort for crab in BSA

The NIFF representative on the QMAC recently attended the Quota Planning meeting where the issue of kW effort for crab in the BSA was discussed and the importance of swaps. The importance of the swap is essential for >10m crabbers in enable them to continue fishing for the year however the cost of the swap for effort in the BSA is considered too high by some members of the QMAC. The lateness of receipt of log sheets from some fishermen has caused Ireland to look for kW days in the BSA retrospectively and this also needs to be addressed. This mainly affects the West, South East and South West RIFFs. DAFM have asked the NIFF to discuss crab effort and look at the possibility of a management plan. Maybe look at how they can reduce kW days. The NIFF representative on the QMAC asked the SFPA if a kW day is accounted for as a full day if the fisherman has only fished for a number of hours. The SFPA have asked the NIFF to email this query to them. **Action point:** NIFF representative on the QMAC to email SFPA to find out if a kW day is recorded by hours or days (in other words an explanation on the use of days and how they are managed). SFPA to make information on historical uptake of KW days available to the SE, SW and W RIFFs via the NIFF secretary. When the NIFF receives the facts from the SFPA they will decide how to proceed.

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