



SW Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum

08.02.2021

Video Conferencing

9.00 hrs to 13.00 hrs

Meeting Notes and Action Points

1. Welcome -The Chair welcomed Dolf D'hondt the new environmental rep and made introductions of the SW RIFF.
2. Declarations of interests
One member declared his interest in crayfish as a fisher
3. Action Points of 31.08.2020 the action points were review -see updated list below.
4. NW RIFF proposal regarding line caught mackerel (Proposal circulated). The SW RIFF discussed this in some detail. It was noted that the increase in the daily limit was supported on the practical ground that were presented. It was also agreed that while the issues around quality and equipment were worthwhile the conditions and vessel size under which fisheries operated around the coast varied widely therefore the SW RIFF would avoid being specific about this. It was also agreed that an increase in the amount allocated to the hook and line fishery was to be welcomed as it presented a very small amount of the overall quota. It was also acknowledged that this was hard won. **Action point: SW RIFF support the proposed change to the allocation of the national Mackerel quota specifically that the allocation of 400t which is set aside for the hook and line <15M fishery be increased to 3000 t for the reasons outlined and that the landing limit of 750KG to be increased to 1500kg for the operational reasons outlined.**
5. Response to Crayfish PIN and modification to the programme (MI response Circulated)
MI and DAFM joined the meeting. MI described how they intend to proceed over the next two months with respect to tendering following the publication of the Prior Information Notice in Dec and following feedback received from the fishing industry.

Provide any further clarification, if needed, on our response to the observations we received from industry.

MI confirmed that there would be no changes to the fishery in 2021 but tendering would still be published to carry out the project work envisaged in 2021. The projected cost would be above a threshold which requires it to be published Official European journal. This adds a complexity to the process which is online. To overcome this a company called Bid Services will be engaged to provide guidance, training and support to fishers to enable them to submit a tender during the 6 week period.



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The following times lines are subject to change; The tender will go up the end of Feb and will remain up for 6 weeks. After which tenders will be evaluated according to specified criteria and will either pass or fail. Contracts to issue in May enabling the framework to be established. Again, timelines are subject to change. MI stated that there was a degree of support from an unspecified number of fishers for a voluntary arrangement around introducing measures outlined in the PIN in an unspecified project area in north Kerry, the boundaries of which have been not been agreed. Clarification sought as to whether this was the extant area where Crayfish tangle netting has been prohibited since 2006 by SI xx . MI Indicated that the Kerry box is just a small part of the project area but possibly Kerry head to Ballydavid although not all skippers were consulted.

DAFM outlined their position regarding consultation and the pressures to address the issues raised on a regular basis to the department by Environmental NGOs etc regarding by-catch of protected species. They have decided to rely on an evidenced based approach and commended the value of the MI data collection.

Action point:

Given that the reports and data analysis are not available for project work done in North Kerry can MI provide the scope of the survey methodology given that this is already written up for the project proposal / tenders and would inform SW RIFF of the approach taken?

Action point:

Having discussed the importance of clear communication what role does the MI does envisage the Northwest Kerry Shellfish Co-op, NIFA, SW RIFF W RIFF playing in dissemination of information?

If the pilot initiative is to be supported and successful, the MI will need to bring complete transparency and open consultation to the process giving defined roles for the groups in the region. Could MI clarify the specific role that they see the SW RIFF playing?

6. “Expanding Ireland’s Marine Protected Area Network”. Up coming launch of consultation and work plan around it. (Link sent) A discussion around the nature of MPAs and what form they will ultimately take was had. The point was made that various sites afford protection but in reality little actual protection -e.g. Sprat as a forage species within SPAs and SACs was highlighted, and the value of designating MPAs if the curretn designations cannot afford protection. It was acknowledged Ireland’s current Programme for Government (2020) includes a commitment to expand Ireland’s network of MPAs to 10% of its maritime



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area as soon as is practical and to meeting a higher target of MPAs constituting 30% of its maritime area by 2030, in line with the recently published EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Action point: disseminate the report in a more accessible format.

Action point: Extract the options for what form MPAs will take so we can progress the discussion with a common understanding at our next meeting.

White Pollock allocation at Quota management (Proposal circulated)

Current Quota allocation

November 2020 10 tonne

December 2020 10 tonne

January 2021 2 tonne

February 2021 4 tonne

The Issue:

Having a quota of 10 tonne for November and December makes no sense as the quota was not caught and the economic benefit was lost to the sector. February, March and April are the main months for small boats to catch white Pollock. The quota should be 10 tonne for each of these months.

Action point: Proposal to be brought to NIFF and if approved to Quota Management by the NIFF rep

To request for there be an allocation of 10 tonne white Pollock for boats under 55 feet for March 2021 and that the quota be allocated so that it optimises the economic benefit to the sector it has been allocated to, specifically the smaller vessels who target white pollock early in the year.

7. Update on <10M National Seafood Survey. The numbers returned increased from a low base. A more detailed breakdown will be available after the data call has been completed and it is hoped that this would inform further actions.