

Action points from NIFF meeting 12th May 2021

1. Approval of meeting notes from NIFF meeting 14.04.2021.

Meeting notes from the NIFF meeting 14.04.2021 were approved. **Action Point:** NIFF secretary to circulate approved meeting notes to RIFF secretaries to forward onto their RIFF members.

2. Review of action points from NIFF meeting 14.04.2021

NIFF secretary on behalf of NIFF chair reviewed the action points from the previous NIFF meeting. As the majority of the issues in the action points were up for discussion under the Matters arising section of the agenda the review of those action points was completed as they arose on the agenda. The following action points remained for updates:

- a. **Query from the last meeting on an extension to validation of Certificates** – NIFF Vice Chair informed the NIFF that Marine Notice 14 of 2020 updated on the 21.04.2021 has extended the validity of safe passes he thinks until November. **Action point:** NIFF Secretary to check MN 14 updated on the 21.04.2021 and confirm date of extension to the NIFF.
- b. **Update on National Seafood Survey:** BIM noted that due to staff changes and staff who deal with the NSS also be heavily involved with the Seafood Taskforce there has not been an opportunity to meet and discuss the results of the NSS. Therefore, BIM is not in a position today to present the results. **Action point:** BIM to provide a summary or presentation to the NIFF on the results of the NSS as soon as possible.

3. Draft RIFF policy for engaging with the ORE sector.

The RIFF policy for engaging with the ORE sector was circulated to the RIFFs for their consideration following the NIFF meeting of the 14.04.2021. All RIFFs are happy with the draft policy. The SE RIFF asked for a small addition to the text as highlighted in bold “In recognition of the established statutory process, the RIFF should always recommend that inshore fishers **and other appropriate entities that depend on inshore fisheries**, who are concerned and may be affected, get access to all relevant information and make a submission.” **Action point:** All NIFF members agreed with the change to the text. NIFF secretary to revised draft and send to the RIFFs as the final approved version.

4. IMG comments on SW RIFF proposal on v-notching and lobster maximum size.

The IMG comments were circulated to the RIFFs for consideration following the NIFF meeting of the 14.04.2021. Three RIFFs included the SW continued to be supportive of the proposal, one RIFF was supportive of the IMG comments and does not support the SW RIFF proposal, and one noted concerns and gave recommendation of what should be contained in the next two year review recommended by the IMG. One RIFF did not come back with their position. MI explained that the proposal as is would be impossible to implement, due to the logistics and costs involved. The NIFF was reminded that any proposal of this type must provide an equal or better conservation measure than exists at present before it would be considered by the Minister. The IMG wish to leave the existing legislation on the current maximum size measure in place for the time being and review the measure in two years’ time. **Action point:** Proposal on v-notching and lobster maximum size to go back to the SW RIFF to see if they wish to revise it and resubmit to the NIFF.

5. Supporting responsible fishing and handling of brown crab Version 1.3

This revised proposal was circulated to the RIFFs following the NIFF meeting on 14th April for consideration/comment. It was also circulated to NIFA for comment. Three RIFFs are in support of

the revised proposal, one RIFF is still considering the proposal, one RIFF is awaiting clarification on the amount of crab claws that you can or cannot land before they clarify their position and one RIFF is concerned about the sustainability and decline of crab stocks and do not see the revised proposal as making a significant contribution. They are proposing an alternative.

Concerns were expressed that if small vessels have to bring in all their crab before clawing, they would not be able to carry it. It was also noted that there is still confusion about the amount of crab claws that can be landed from potters and netters. Is it 1% or 30 kg? It was clarified that for potters it is 1% of the total overall catch up to 30 kgs. For netters it is 30kg maximum. For example, if you had 100kg of crabs as a potter you could only land 1kg of crab claws. As there appears to still be some confusion the IMG will clarify the limits of what can and can't be landed in writing.

Action point: IMG to put together a one page document providing absolute clarity on what the proposal is. This document to be distributed to the RIFFs before they finalise their views on the revised proposal. NIFF also waiting for receipt of NIFA comments. Once all RIFF positions are clarified and NIFA comments are received the NIFF position on the revised proposal will be forwarded to the IMG/DAFM.

6. Revised draft protocols for opening a new fishery for bivalve molluscs.

All RIFFs were supportive of the revised draft protocol but want to wait until the Bivalve working group meets and considers the revised protocol before giving their final views. **Action point:** Bivalve working group to reconvene and have a pre-meeting to consider the revised protocol. This to be followed by a meeting between the BWG, MI, DAFM and SFPA to finalise the revised protocol.

7. Update on QMAC meeting 04.05.2021 on NW RIFF Mackerel Jigging proposal

NIFF representative on QMAC explained that the meeting held on the 4th May was specially convened just to discuss the NW RIFF proposal and that it would be on the agenda for the next QMAC meeting scheduled for the 19th May 2021. He explained that all the POs wanted a more regulated fishery and didn't want to see the overshoot that occurred in 2020 where the allocation to the hook and line fishery was exceeded by 184 tonnes or nearly 30% however as NIFF member pointed out that this only equates to 0.13% of the national quota. The POs want the hook and line fishery to use logbooks and quota balancing and don't want to see an increase in the daily landing limits. NW RIFF member explained that fishers in the hook and line mackerel fishery in the NW would be happy to use logbooks as suggested as would the SFPA. The NIFF representative on the QMAC said that after the meeting he felt confident that there was some sympathy towards the inshore sector and that something would be achieved. The QMAC team confirmed that they will take all notes of meeting back to the Minister and it is up to the Minister to make any decision on quota allocation to the hook and line mackerel fishery. NIFF emphasised that it must be remembered that this is a national quota and they no individual owns it. NIFF members complained about the huge disadvantage the inshore sector has at the QMAC meetings as they are one group against the four large POs. **Action point:** See what results from the next scheduled QMAC meeting on the 19th May. Depending on the result of that meeting a decision to be made by the NIFF on whether to bring the proposal directly to the Minister.

8. Seafood Task Force update

NIFF chair updated the NIFF on the last Seafood Taskforce meeting on the 5th May 2021. The main item discussed was a tie -up scheme to be followed by a decommissioning scheme. NIFF chair noted that it has been difficult to put the inshore perspective forward at the taskforce meetings regarding the effects of the cuts due to the TCA. Although the proportions of quota the inshore sector received are smaller any cuts have a huge effect on the sector and the communities they support. Details of a proposed tie-up scheme should be available at the next Seafood Taskforce meeting scheduled for the 19th May 2021. **Action point:** NIFF chair to keep the NIFF and RIFFs updated on discussions at the Seafood Taskforce meetings

9. Other quota management issues

BSA Crab – QMAC members at their March meeting discussed if a swap for crab effort in the BSA should be pursued earlier this year in order not to have to pay increased prices later on in the year. At the following QMAC meeting of the 19th April NIFF representative undertook to arrange a meeting with the POs on swapping in of BSA crab KW days before the next QMAC meeting scheduled for the 19th of May. The declining crab stocks, management of the fishery and quota swapping for BSA Crab KW Days was discussed by the NIFF. **Action point:** NIFF secretary on behalf of NIFF representative has written to the POs to check their availability for a meeting before the next QMAC meeting scheduled for the 19th May 2021. Meeting due to take place towards the beginning of week starting 17th May. Date to be confirmed.

10. NIFA proposal supported by the SW RIFF on increasing the minimum mesh size for gill netters targeting Hake in the BSA to 120mm

This proposal was circulated to the RIFFs following the NIFF meeting on the 14.04.2021. All RIFFs support this proposal going forward however the question was asked “who do we bring the proposal to?” The DAFM noted that it was outside the scope of their inshore section and the IMG but that they had spoken to their colleagues who confirmed that a requirement for increased mesh sizes, such as that set out in the attached proposal would have to apply to all vessels operating in the specified area, not just Irish vessels. In order to have this adopted at an EU level, it would need to go through the regionalisation process – which would involve submitting the proposal to the North Western Waters Advisory Council. **Action point:** DAFM to send on relevant legislation and the reply from their colleagues to the NIFF secretary to forward onto the NIFF members and NIFA in order to make any changes to the proposal to progress it to the next stage.

11. Commission Decision to remove Ireland’s Control plan for weighing after landing.

The NIFF expressed their disappointment that the SFPA were unavailable to attend their meeting today. The NIFF confirmed that there is confusion amongst fishers as to what this revocation means on a practical basis. Questions for example include “Are fishers responsible for weighing on landing?”; “Do we have to have approved weighing scales on every pier?”; “Do all fishers know about these changes?” NIFF secretary read out the email from the SFPA sending their apologies and noting that the SFPA had met with members of the inshore fleet. NIFF chair confirmed that he attended the SFPA meeting with NIFA representatives. The SFPA also confirmed that they are drafting various guidance documents for the industry including an FAQ, Fishery information Notices of weighing, weighing systems, transport, traceability and food safety requirements. They are also drafting templates for weighing records and transport documents as per request from the inshore sector. The NIFF emphasised that the SFPA needs to get the information out to the fleet as soon as possible. **Action point:** NIFF chair to contact SFPA to follow up on the

documents promised at the meeting. The inshore sector requires this information as soon as possible.

12. Public consultation on Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network

NIFF secretary informed the NIFF that she had written to the DHLGH to request a presentation on the MPA document for the NIFF and the RIFFs. She is still awaiting a reply. BIM also confirmed that they are working through the document and will share their findings with the NIFF. The NIFF members commented that it was a very heavy document and they didn't know where to start reviewing it. BIM suggested that they should focus on the process and where the inshore sector is to fit within it rather than the technicalities of designation etc. There needs to be a logical, reasoned and coherent approach and the reasons and the aims of any designation must be articulated clearly. Evidence in support of designation must be provided and the management measures proposed must be proportionate and reviewed regularly to determine that they are effective. Most importantly the sector needs to articulate how it wishes to be communicated with and consulted during this process. The DAFM noted that a summary of the report would have been useful to make it more user friendly. The DAFM commented on the targets set and that there were various ways to reach these targets. It was also noted that there are already many competing users in coastal areas as is and many of these areas are already covered by other designations and rules. The MI advised the NIFF to evaluate the why and what. Do you agree or disagree as to why we are designating areas as MPAs? What in your view are the possible benefits and/or disadvantages of an MPA for fisheries? **Action point:** It was decided that both the RIFFs and the NIFF should make a submission to this consultation. NIFF secretary to follow up on request for presentation with DHLPH and BIM to send on any pointers and findings to the NIFF. Closing date for submissions is 30 July 2021.