

Action Points/Decisions from Internal meeting of NIFF, 13th December 2016

Matters Arising/Updates

1) Irish Brown Crab FIP

Some of the RIFFs need further discussion on this issue as there is still a level of confusion. Two NIFF members went to the last Crab FIP meeting in Donegal on the 8th December, 2016 and gave a briefing on the meeting. The main item on the agenda was trying to get the Crab FIP up and running, in addition to a discussion on the clawing of crab and selling of white crab meat. It has come to the attention of some of the NIFF members that the SFPA consultative committee have come up with proposals in regard to clawing of crabs. It was also noted that different areas of the country have different issues in regard to Brown crab for example the North is concerned with clawing, landing of “white faced crab” and minimum landing size, the SW feels that the FIP in their area will go ahead and that they could do a suite of actions in support of it. It was noted that there is an opportunity through FIPs for fishermen to make the buyers pay a higher price for their product. The question was also asked, “How will a buyer distinguish between Origin Green labelled crab from those not labelled Origin Green”. All feel that the concept is good but there is a lot of detail that needs further examination. **Action Point:** RIFFs need to further discuss the FIPs in their respective areas and NIFF Chair to send NIFF secretary the new FIP website address.

2) Responsible Sourced Standard

Catherine Barrett, BIM gave a short presentation on Raw Material Certification in the Inshore Sector. She outlined the various types of certification and examples of inshore fisheries that have been certified. She also discussed BIM’s approach to certification through BIM’s responsibly sourced seafood standard and FIPs. Please see presentation attached in Appendix 1.

3) Technical Conservation Measures

Action Point: RIFFs to further discuss what Technical Conservation Measures they would like to see in the BIM workplan 2017. SW RIFF have requested that BIM include a comparative trail between T90 mesh and 110mm Square Mesh Panel for the avoidance of small whiting in their 2017 work plan. SW RIFF to put proposal together to send to the Marine Technical section of BIM and cc to NIFF secretary.

4) Social protection

The NIFF need to examine the changes announced in the recent budget regarding FISH Assist and the Welfare Bill so they can prepare a budget submission for July 2017. The NIFF chair suggested the setting up of a sub-group on this topic, correspond by e-mail and come back and report to NIFF by March approximately. The sub-group would need to start with the definition of a self-employed person and could check with the IFA, FISH ASSIST, Class P definitions. The NIFF does not have a policy position on social protection and feel that they really need some professional help to form one. A member suggested the office of social inclusion might be able to help www.socialinclusion.ie. It was also felt that it would be extremely difficult to progress this issue further without being able to procure external professional expertise and that if a Sub Group was formed they would face the same difficulty that the NIFF is currently facing. The Chair felt it was pointless putting the issue on future agendas until external professional expertise could be obtained, or the NIFF got further direction from the RIFFs.

Action Point: NIFF to ask the RIFFs to discuss the following question “Do you think the current social welfare system is fit for purpose?”

5) **Proposal to Introduce a MLS for Velvet crab**

The public consultation on proposal to introduce a MLS for Velvet crab ended on the 9th December, 2016. The DAFM presented some preliminary results. **Action Point:** DAFM to send preliminary results by e-mail to NIFF secretary to forward to NIFF members. DAFM to further analyse the response and report back to the NIFF in due course.

6) **Bi-valve Working Group**

At the last NIFF meeting on the 25.10.2016 the Bi-Valve working group requested a secretary from BIM for their meetings. **Action Point:** Declan Nee, BIM has volunteered to act as secretary to this group. The issue of expenses was raised for attendance at these meetings **Action Point:** No one has looked for expenses to date to attend these meetings so no expenses will be provided at the present time. The Bi-valve working group will only be working on classification of areas as in the original proposal circulated. A new proposal would need to be put forward to bring in management of newly classified areas into the sub-groups brief. The next meeting could be arranged around a Networking event. The classification of areas should take no more than 6 months.

7) **Public Consultation on replacement Capacity**

Action Point: Those RIFFs (SE, NE, SW and North RIFFs) who have discussed this public consultation have decided that the status quo should remain. If consensus can be achieved before the closing date of the Consultation Process the NIFF will make a Submission.

8) **Proposal to amend Lobster Max Size**

This proposal was discussed at some of the RIFF meetings prior to this NIFF meeting and the following decisions were reached:

SW RIFF proposed it

West RIFF agrees with the proposal from the SW and NW RIFFs that:

- (i) The 127mm Maximum size no longer apply to males from January 2017:
- (ii) The minimum landing size of 87mm remains as is;
- (iii) Extend v notching funding for females over the 127mm Max landing size for a further year.

North RIFF – v-notching to continue for both male and female lobsters

NE & SE RIFF haven't formed a position as yet.

The IMG have noted that there are varying views on how v-notching should be run. The NIFF chair emphasised that we needed a quick fix for 2017 before the existing provision for <127mm lobsters expires but that we also need to have a look at lobster in the broader sense. The DAFM have confirmed that it has been decided to extend the existing provision for <127mm lobsters for 2017 and to do a value review on how the v-notching scheme is delivered, its structure and how to review it. Some groups partaking in the v-notching programme are very good some are not. It is proposed that a steering group will be set up to do this review with a NIFF member involved as well as a sub-group of IMG members. The priority is to complete the review in the first 6 months of 2017, mainly examining the v-notching scheme and large female/males lobsters. BIM stated that we now have 2 years of data for <127mm lobsters and that there has been a significant spend on v-notching and posed the question “Is this the best use of the funding?” BIM does not have the resources to undertake a review at the present time and

would have to hire a consultant to do it. A study of the <127mm lobsters will support or not the continuation of the funding for v-notching lobster <127mm. It was noted that there is less than 2% v-notched lobsters over 127mm. However in some RIFF areas for example, the North and the South West they have a lot of <127 mm lobsters where as in other areas there are no lobsters over 127mm. We need to have a discussion on this. With the extension of the existing provisions for < 127mm lobster the crisis has been averted for the present time. **Action point:** NIFF members to put a name forward to the NIFF secretary for a member to sit on this sub-group.

9) **Proposal regarding gear restrictions for Vessels targeting Nephrops inside the 6 mile limit in the Irish Sea.**

There is a broad level of support for this proposal from the RIFFs however more work needs to be done. **Action point:** NE RIFF to bring back a revised proposal to the next NIFF meeting for consideration.