



Action Points/Decisions from NIFF pre-meeting, 27th September 2017

Matters arising/updates

1) NWWAC Brown Crab Focus Group.

BIM representative gave an update on meeting of the NWWAC Brown crab focus group which was held on 14th September 2017. He noted the following:

- The lack of clear management objectives has meant that data collection has very variable and in the case of some stocks inadequate
- Need for harmonisation of data collected in the various jurisdictions so that management advice is comparable
- the need to involve the industry in data collection and to make this as easy as possible. There is too much paperwork at the moment, ideally user friendly electronic methods should be used.
- potential for economic analysis

NIFF membership of the NWWAC was discussed. At the present time NIFA could apply for membership as they are a legal entity. NIFF could request that NIFA becomes a member to represent the NIFF at the NWWAC. **Action Point:** BIM representative to further check with NWWAC secretariat to find out if it is possible for NIFF to become a member in their own right.

2) Progression of NIFF position on the de-clawing of brown crab

Following the joint policy statement from the NIFF, KFO and IFPO on the illegal declawing of crab the NIFF chair asked the members how they wished to progress the issue.

Action Point: Considering the appropriateness of the SFP CC as a forum to raise this and in order to progress the issue it was decided that the NIFF Chair will contact the KFO and IFPO to discuss making a request to the IMG to produce an Industry consultation document, which would be based on, inter alia, submissions from the 3 stakeholders. This would include the relevant positions of the 6 RIFFs as outlined in their meeting action points regarding the joint policy position document. If agreeable to the IFPO/KFO NIFF Chair to proceed with the request. NIFF Chair to revert to NIFF for further direction if this course of action was disagreeable to the IFPO/KFO. It would be at the discretion of the IMG who exactly in Industry to circulate this document to. Pending the results of this Industry Consultation a request could be made to the Minister to launch a public consultation on the issue.

3) Velvet crab proposal to introduce a MCRS

The full submissions to the Public consultation on the proposal to introduce a Velvet crab MCRS just went online before this meeting. Having reviewed these the NIFF felt that their position is as valid as ever. The NIFF still want to pursue this issue and are hoping that the Minister will make an announcement at their meeting with him in the afternoon.

4) Proposal from the SE RIFF on pot limit pilot project in the SE

This proposal from the SE RIFF was sent onto the IMG for input and comment. The IMG informed the meeting that they had not had a chance to fully discuss yet. The NIFF representative from the SE RIFF informed the meeting of the background to the proposal. It is important to note that the second NIFF member from the SE RIFF again stated that there is a strong objection to this proposal by the whelk industry as they feel that if implemented for lobster and crab fisheries in the South East that it would set a precedent for all pot fisheries. He explained that in its present

form it would make it virtually impossible for a single man operation to grow his business while at the same time favouring bigger boat operators. The NIFF chair expressed the view that the appropriate forum to express that view or raise objections was at the SE RIFF and not the NIFF, where the proposal had been adopted before submitting to NIFF. The NIFF chair expressed the view that it was up to the SE RIFF to consider this objection. If the SE RIFF considered there to be a clear mandate from the whelk industry in its entirety or a significant portion of the whelk industry, then the SE RIFF could amend or withdraw their proposal. Notwithstanding that the NIFF chair felt that the SE RIFF should give serious consideration to whether the issue of potentially settling precedent or not was sufficient grounds to withdraw or amend such a proposal. **Action point:** IMG to come back with their views on the proposal. The MI has already given their views. SE RIFF to organise a meeting with the fishermen once the IMG views are received.

5) Update on Inshore Strategy Development

BIM gave an update on the progress to date on the Inshore Strategy Development. Tender process is completed. Consultants RSM PACEC contracted to do the Strategy. First meeting between the consultants and the steering group held on the 20th September 2017. First phase is a desk review and sources of data were discussed. Steering group members are to compile the requested information and get it back to the consultants. Consultants to prepare a short document for the RIFFs to explain the strategy and what is required from them. Consultants to prepare a consultation document for review at next proposed meeting on the 9th October.

Action point: Once consultation document is prepared and reviewed by steering group BIM to organise a meeting the following day with the steering group, NIFF members and RIFF secretaries to discuss the consultation document. The proposed date is the 10th of October.

6) V-notching review update

Technical report from MI should be completed by the end of the 1st week in October. BIM still do not have the 127mm+ lobster data in the database as yet so will not be completed until towards the end of the year. **Action point:** Pending the full review the NIFF chair asked the members if they wish to see the lobster v-notching scheme extended for another year to allow the RIFFs to consider the review when complete. The MI representative has agreed to bring the technical report to the RIFFs for discussion before Christmas. It was also agreed to ask the Minister for an extension at the meeting with him in the afternoon.

7) Management Proposal from Bi-valve working group

Action point: After some confusion as to TOR of this working group and what species were included and excluded in their management proposal the IMG have decided that BIM would sit down with the working group to clarify their TOR and assist them in drafting the management proposal in the appropriate format and with the requisite supporting information. The Chair of the NRIFF expressed in strong terms a preference for “local management”.

8) SFPA and illegal fishing/abuse of recreational potting

West RIFF brought this issue to NIFFs attention. The NIFF member from the West RIFF informed the meeting that they had not seen any SFPA personnel at sea on the west coast over the last year. They felt that persons fishing legally were being targeted and those fishing illegally were not. The SFPA explained that they did not have enough inshore patrols this year and they only have 2 RIBs available to do this work. Furthermore they did not agree that persons fishing legally were being targeted and advised the members to contact the SFPA confidential line is they witness

illegal fishing. They also confirmed that they plan to have more vessels available on the water in the coming year. **Action Point:** West RIFF have requested that the NIFF members check with their RIFFs to see if illegal fishing/abuse of recreational potting is widespread. The NIFF Chair suggested that the WRIFF consider asking the NIFF to raise the issue at the next SFP CC meeting. He requested that they use the existing procedure to do that and seek guidance from the secretariat if necessary regarding that procedure. The question was asked “Has anyone been prosecuted under the recreational potting legislation? The SFPA indicated that there have been some prosecutions.

9) Update on the re-engining scheme

BIM confirmed that the scheme will be launched by the end of the year or sooner if possible. The initial scheme will be available for the replacement of inboard engines on marine fishing vessels of up to 12m LOA at a grant aid rate of 30%. The inclusion of bivalve vessels is to be clarified. Replacement engines may not have more power (kW) than existing engines. The limiting factor in implementing this scheme has been a lack of administrative resources.

10) NE NIFF proposal to limit multi rigging in the Irish Sea

Following support from the RIFFs this proposal was sent to the IMG for consideration. NIFF identified that the proposal lacked specific information, which would be useful in terms of finalising the proposal. NIFF does not possess this information but the State agencies do. MI have done some analysis however it is difficult to quantify who exactly is multi-rigging. **Action point:** Information regarding vessels registered for freezing prawns at sea could be cross referenced with VMS data regarding activity within the specific area. BIM can then determine which vessels are actually quad rigging and which would be impacted by this proposal. Proposal to be circulated to NIFF following the addition of subsequent information

Main agenda items

1) Proposal from SE RIFF to increase the MLS for brown crab nationally

Based on feedback from the RIFFs, NIFF have adopted this proposal and the SFPA have no issues with it from an enforcement perspective. MI observed that the potential biological benefits of this proposal would be mitigated if crab under 140mm were declawed as opposed to landed whole for potential inspection. A MLS for crab claws could provide a solution to this issue. This would require a separate proposal. **Action Point:** NIFF to bring the proposal to the Minister attention at their meeting in the afternoon.

2) Proposal from NE RIFF to increase the minimum landing size of razors from 100mm to 125mm in the North Irish Sea

There is a significant level of support from the RIFFs for this proposal for *Ensis siliqua*. The West RIFF would like to make it a national project but this would have to come as a separate proposal. The forums have received a clear mandate from Industry on this. Both the MI and the DAFM support this proposal but see it as only a first step in a situation where a lot more needs to be done to conserve the species. Economic data particularly catch value by size range, would make a good addition to this proposal as it would demonstrate that this proposal would effectively raise the economic value of this fishery. It was noted that more pressure was on the stock in the North Irish Sea due to displacement of vessels that usually fish on the Rosslare bed which is being rested at the moment. It was

also noted that further scientific advice has been made available since this proposal has been drafted. **Action Point:** MI to provide a more comprehensive advice on the proposal to the DAFM. This proposal to be brought to the Minister's attention.

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