

Appendix 1. Action Points to be brought to the next NIFF meeting

1.1 Public Consultation process on a Review of Trawling Activity Inside 6 Nautical Mile Zone

The South East RIFF has decided to support;

An exclusion of all vessels using trawls over 15m length from inside 6 miles and baselines.

The SERIFF recommends where it specifies, that this be 15m LOA, and adds the following to be included; a restriction of 225KW (300HP) maximum engine power to be allowed inside of 6nm.

The SE RIFF supports the above proposal based on the rationale presented in the consultation main and supporting documents, where it cites the following;

- Economic – enhanced fishing opportunities
- Changes to environmental impact from trawling
- Re-establishing links between local fish resources, local fleets and local economies
- Conflicts between mobile and static fishing gears would ease or be erased.
- Improving availability of fish in inshore waters
- Protecting fish recruitment and stock components – nursery/spawning areas

All of the above are relevant from a South East geographical area perspective.

A number of fisheries both within the pelagic and whitefish sectors could bring enhanced economic benefit to inshore fishermen inside of 6nm if the above restriction is put in place. These fisheries include sprats, herring, prawns and general whitefish. A number of inshore boats already participate in such fisheries, but their viability would be improved with an additional potential for increased employment by developing the inshore capacity, with minimal losses to larger boats. Currently where a fishery can benefit a number of small boats over an extended period, this can be rapidly cut short by the fishing activity inshore by larger vessels. This proposal would generate greater overall economic return to the overall Irish but also local economy with additional marketing opportunities by way of greater seafood added value from day boats landing locally. The opportunity for local employment would be enhanced from this measure, alternative fishing opportunities would also ease pressure on key inshore fisheries such as crab and lobster. The image/perspective of small day boats landing fish would have a positive impact on environmental opinion. Funding opportunities exist to add value to fish caught by the inshore sector, but without the necessary protections such opportunities are minimised.

Gear conflicts such as between herring boats and potting boats within the south east RIFF area would be greatly minimised.

The South East RIFF also highlights the following fisheries not included in the consultation document that it feels need to be addressed;

- Dredging such as scallop. If the North East RIFF proposal for 4 dredges per side inside of 6nm is not adopted, then the SE RIFF recommends that dredging be included for scallop.
- Mussel dredging conflicts with pot fisheries in the south east area (mainly whelk but also crab and lobster). The SE RIFF is not proposing to exclude outside of 6nm mussel dredgers as it

- recognises that the mussel seed fishery is fished mainly by larger vessels, however the status quo cannot be allowed to continue. Proper arrangements to cater for accommodating pot fisheries to avoid gear losses need to be put in place on a statutory basis (rather than gentlemen's agreements etc.). The SE RIFF is open to be involved in seeking solutions that could include; communication protocols, seasonal zoning of areas etc.
- While the SE RIFF welcomes the proposed protection inside of 6nm, we wish to point out that to improve the availability of fish inshore, more needs to be done to enhance the overall sustainability of fish both inshore and offshore, by looking at technical conservation measures such as increased mesh sizes.

1.2 Invitation for Submissions - Island Fisheries (Heritage Licence) Bill 2017

As when previously discussed at the SE RIFF meeting of the 19th September 2017, the SE RIFF considers that it could not adequately give an opinion on the proposed Bill as there was not enough information supplied, and ask clarification on the following;

- Is it proposed to give free licenses to fishermen who do not currently hold a fishing license or what scope of qualifying criteria will there be other than being a resident of an island?
- Does the proposal give special protection by way of a permit to exclude non inhabitants of islands for fishing inside a specified distance (e.g.) 6NM of islands?
- What species and gear types are to be covered?
- How would a scheme fit in with existing management regimes, for example mixed stock fishery objectives with regard to salmon?
- If the heritage license is to cover quota species, where does the quota come from – from existing Irish national quota or from additional quota granted to Ireland by the EU?
- Is there scientific data to demonstrate the availability of fish to be pursued under the heritage licenses to ensure sustainability etc.
- Is there a study completed that details the need/justification, scope and manner in which such heritage licenses are to be introduced.

The SE RIFF however believes that fishing communities living in isolated areas should be supported, but that it would be wrong to do this by differentiating one group of communities from others nationally, where there are examples of non-island communities that were isolated from fishing opportunities and had lost important key fisheries that had sustained them through generations. Particular reference was made to areas such as the Waterford Estuary where calls have been made for heritage style fisheries, and where a study is about to be undertaken to document the importance and economic potential for demonstrating the heritage of fishing in the area.

1.3 Notification of change of the weekly quota with the Waterford Estuary Razor Clam Fishery

The South East RIFF confirms approval of an increase in the Weekly quota within the Waterford Estuary Razor Clam Fishery from 400kg per week to 500kg per week in order to enhance the viability of the boats fishing, while still protecting the sustainability of the resource. The SE RIFF gives notice of the change to be effective from Monday 30th April 2018 to the NIFF and other relevant bodies.

Appendix 2. Non NIFF Action Point to be brought to the attention of DAFM/IMG

It was agreed to forward the following Action Point from the last meeting of the SE RIFF held on the 26th April 2018 directly to DAFM policy and the IMG for clarification in advance of the next NIFF meeting;

Protocol for new bi-valve fisheries - Clarification required by IMG under the process to first identify new beds, publishing the revised protocol, and the need for workshops on its application.

The South East RIFF wish to point out a deficit in the application of the protocol for first identifying potential new shellfish beds before the classification process can begin.

Under the protocol the proposers (i.e. fishermen/entity looking to open a new bed) must supply adequate information on the bed to the appropriate RIFF, where this then gets forwarded to the BWG to be included if appropriate on a priority list, that then goes to the NIFF and IMG. To be included on the priority list the MI first need to validate the existence of the bed with consideration to its potential commercial viability. Before this happens, the fishermen are required to first demonstrate a level of preliminary evidence such as results of initial tows/catches including GPS co-ordinates that could give an indication of the extent/boundaries of the bed.

The South East RIFF ask that the NIFF have clarified at IMG the procedure to correctly allow proposers (fishermen) the ability to 'scout' any potential area (without the intention of making landings), as they have been made aware from SFPA locally that permission must first be granted before a boat can search any area. The following needs to be therefore clarified and included in the protocol;

- Who the application is to be made to
- What information is required
- Any conditions required

The South East RIFF also ask that the revised protocol for classification of new shellfish beds be published as soon as possible, and that all agencies involved in its application be briefed including regionally along with fishermen's representatives groups (such as the razor associations) and the RIFFs.

We recommended regional workshops, which could be facilitated through the RIFFs and the BWG.