

SW Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum

Via Microsoft Teams

31st of August 2020

13:00 hrs - 16:30 hrs

Action points

(All for Action, Confirmation or Clarification at NIFF)

1. Supports for Inshore sector to offset hardship caused by pandemic.

The low prices and short season suffered by the inshore sector is set to have a very negative effect over the coming months. The failure of Covid 19 Tie Up scheme as evidenced by the low take up of the scheme failed to adequately support the sector despite the best efforts of the RIFFs and NIFF to secure a workable scheme. New avenues need to be developed to ensure the inshore fishing infrastructure that is extant within the fleet survives these unprecedented times for the benefit of Ireland's coastal communities, food supply chain and export value to Irish exporters.

Action: Explore opening new fishing opportunities such as salmon, Sea bass, dogfish. Exploring novel species such as star fish.

Action: Request that grant aid for jigging machines recommence so that smaller vessels can diversify from pot fishing alone.

Action: Request that Covid 19 Tie up Scheme be extended as per original statement by Minister and that given the failure of the scheme as evidenced by the low up take that it be modified to reflect the actual and increased costs of operating vessels (e.g. Increasing insurance premia as underwriter exits market due to Brexit).

Action: Clarify why a tax clearance certificate was mandatory for the Covid 19 Tie up Scheme run by BIM when this is only required for amounts over €10,000 and nobody was going to reach that.

Action: Clarify why Sales Notes were not put in by buyers for transactions that fishers had receipts for as this caused great difficulty

Action: Given that the deadline for PUP application is the 17th of September fishers need to know all available mechanisms that they can avail of should poor prices (1.50 per kg for crab compared to €3 in 2019) continue or even deteriorate further as the season goes on. Can NIFF request a comprehensive briefing from social welfare on the social protection supports.

Action: Many businesses are able to avail of the Wage subsidy scheme however because of the unique nature of fishing (many of whom operate a crew share system) this horizontal support like many of the

others is no use to the majority of the fishing sector. Can DAFM consider working with the other departments to tailor something that might assist the industry in maintaining raw product supply and retaining skilled crew.

2. Draft proposal “Supporting responsible Brown Crab fishing” (pre read docs documents Proposal explanation and full draft of latest version 1.2 of proposal)

Action Point herefore the SW RIFF agreed to retain the current European Legislation but adopt that removal of claws may only happen in specified locations see below for full wording “European Union (EU) legislation (Regulation (EU) 2019/1241) restricts the quantity of claws from brown crab that can be landed by a sea-fishing boat operating in the waters around Ireland as follows:

For edible crabs caught in pots or creels, a maximum of 1 % by weight of the total catch of edible crab may consist of detached claws. For edible crabs caught with any other fishing gear, a maximum of 75 kg of detached crab claws may be landed.

- And that the removal of claws from brown crab at any point after landing may only be carried out in:
 - Food establishments approved for handling or processing fishery products in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 and
 - Retail establishments registered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004.”

3. Proposal re the maximum size of lobster and V notching from SW Cork Lobster co-op

The proposal was supported. **Action** Submit Proposal re the maximum size of lobster and V notching to NIFF.

4. Celtic Sea herring 2020 management arrangements.

In the absence of having full written detail of the current proposal for the meeting an outline was given of the proposal and the following points were made

Action Point

Given that only a scientific quota is available for the Celtic Sea Herring and in the interests of a stock recovery and sustainable exploitation of the resource we would like NIFF to make the following points to the Minister.

The under 18M fleet will find it economically viable to do a scientific sampling programme that comprehensively addresses both temporal and spatial elements of stock sampling in the fishery. The sentinel fishery has always relied very heavily on this fishery and had a long term view on its exploitation as few other herring fishing opportunities exist for this segment of the fleet. For this reason traditional

approaches to allocating the quota may not serve the stock recovery or socio economic dividend to its greatest effect.

5. Sprat fishery in Dunmore box

Given the issues around the Celtic sea Herring stock and the allocation of a 700t for scientific data purposes only, grave concerns were raised in relation to the anomaly that exists. In various management arrangements for the CSH in 2019 and prior there was a preclusion from targeting sprat/herring in the Dunmore Box for vessel booked into or fishing herring as per this policy

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/seafood/sea-fisheriespolicymanagementdivision/policyquotamanagement/celticseaherringmanagement/CSHManagementArrangements020819.pdf>. However this does not stop vessels from booking out of the fishery and targeting sprat as there is no preclusion under this policy;

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/seafood/sea-fisheriespolicymanagementdivision/policyquotamanagement/BookinginForm2020SpratFishery161219.docx>

Action It is not clear how the precautionary approach to stock recovery can apply if this misalignment of policy exists. Can the Department review this policy with a view to aligning them in the interests of conservation and stock recovery? The sprat fishery is unable to discriminate between species (sprat versus juvenile herring) and is permitted to operate in an area where stock recovery is essential. SW RIFF would like to see an alignment of policy so that the herring stock is afforded the full protection of the state to a recover and once again offer a valuable and viable economic opportunity for the sentinel fleet.

6. NW Herring proposal

Action SW Support the proposal.

7. SE Recreational potting proposal

Action The SE proposal is supported. It was noted that if we persist with the status quo it is permissive of illegal unregulated and unreported exploitation of the stock. In addition it is proposed that similar to other valuable species such as salmon that a permit may be issued on a seasonal basis (See IFI model) and that all permit holders putting to sea do in seaworthy craft with sufficient safety equipment.

8. SE RIFF Proposal for the establishment of a Subgroup of NIFF to advise on the protection of the inshore fisheries sector with regard to offshore marine developments such as offshore energy (windfarms etc.).

Action SW RIFF Supports part 5 for the establishment of a multidisciplinary structure headed up by the relevant Department as per the proposal.

“5. Seek to obtain the establishment of and participate within a recognised structure that has

oversight of the engagement process between such developers such as the wind farm industry, the relevant government departments and agencies (as mentioned in point 2. above) and ultimately those impacted on the ground (seafood sector – fisheries aquaculture and processing) and other relevant stakeholders.

9. Removal of 8% tariffs on US lobster

Action: Could the policy makers note that anything that can cause a potential negative trend cannot be taken lightly. What is of greater concern is the biological security as live escapees have been regularly recorded in European waters. Legislation re the holding and release of *Homarus americanus* needs to be explored.