

Action Points/Decisions from NIFF meeting via Teams on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020

1. Demonstration of application to identify fishing events and quantify fishing effort

The Marine Institute presented an application to identify fishing events and quantify fishing effort which was developed as part of the iVMS pilot study to classify fishing activity. The potential of this application to estimate fishing effort in nearly real time and how it could be further developed was discussed. **Action point:** Marine Institute to provide presentation given at the last NIFF meeting of the 03.03.2020 on the pilot project and add the presentation given today on the application to circulate to the NIFF and the RIFFs. Marine Institute has also offered to give a presentation on the pilot study and the application to the RIFFs at their meetings.

2. Overview of available data sources on the inshore sector

BIM gave a presentation on the Data Collection Framework focussing on the social-economic data that BIM collect for this purpose. What the DCF is, the type of data collected, how it is collected and the sources of data for both the >10m vessels and <10m vessels were outlined. BIM went onto explain that all data collected is aggregated and confidential. BIM compared the data available through the DCF on the SSCF fleet where there are many gaps in data with the offshore fleet where there is substantial available data. **Action Point:** BIM to make presentation available to NIFF secretary to circulate to the NIFF. A workshop to be held during the next meeting of the Inshore Strategy Implementation Group to review DCF, examine gaps in data and how response rates to the DCF can be increased for under 10m vessels.

3. Prioritisation of issues that NIFF wish to raise with the Minister

As the NIFF have requested a meeting with the New Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine it was deemed vital to prioritise the issues they wish to bring to the Minister attention. It was decided that each issue would have a lead NIFF member with a number of supporting members to draw up a discussion documents on each issue.

After considerable discussion the issues that NIFF wish to bring to the Minister's attention were prioritised as follows:

- a.) Winter income supports for the sector
- b.) Maximising the potential use by the inshore sector of inside 6nm
- c.) Protecting mental health and resilience
- d.) Development of new fisheries

**Action point:** Each sub-group to discuss and formulate a discussion document on their chosen issue. Each discussion document to be circulated to all NIFF members for comment and to draw up an agenda in preparation for a potential meeting with the Minister.

4. SE RIFF proposal for the establishment of a subgroup to advise on the protection of the inshore fisheries sector with regard to offshore marine developments such as offshore energy (windfarms etc). SE RIFF member explained why this proposal came about. The SE RIFF felt under siege and unable to work on other issues of concern due to the increasing number of windfarm applications they were now trying to deal with. She also highlighted to the NIFF that the applications for windfarms would be proceeding nationwide at a great

pace. At the present time communication between the developers and the stakeholders is on ad-hoc basis. This proposal is looking for a structure within the development process between industry and the stakeholders. The merits and the potential issues in setting up this subgroup were discussed. **Action point:** Before the formation of any sub-group NIFF to write to the new Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien T.D. to introduce the forums and explain the situation that inshore fishers as a stakeholders group find themselves in regarding consultations with energy companies in particular wind farms. It was also suggested that a working relationship is developed with NIFA on this matter. The NIFF to write to the wind energy umbrella group in Ireland IWEA (who represent wind energy companies in Ireland) requesting a meeting with them to explain to them who we are, what we want etc.

5. [SW RIFF proposal on V-notching and lobster maximum landing size](#)

SW RIFF member gave overview of the proposal on v-notching and lobster maximum size. It is proposed that S.I. No. 591 of 2014 Lobster (Conservation of Stocks) Regulations be reviewed in terms of enforceability and rescinded to be replaced with a proposal that continues to support the V notching scheme but that is designed to maximise the spawning potential. This to be achieved by increasing the overall v-notching effort and making it a condition of the scheme that where over 127mm lobster are caught that they are eligible for V notching along with a proportion of lobster under 127 mm also done by the vessel. It is suggested as an example the split be 50:50 by weight although this might vary according to area and according to gear. The proposal was discussed by the NIFF members and will go to the RIFFs for review and comment. **Action point:** Proposal to be circulated to the RIFFs for consideration and comment.

6. [Update on NW Herring](#)

An update was given on the NW herring alternative proposal that went to the QMAC in August. The NRIF have tried to come to a consensus with the other stakeholders and have contacted them to see if a meeting can be set up. At the present time the NIFF/NRIF proposal along with the other stakeholder's proposal will be going to the Minister for consideration.

7. [Update on Celtic Sea Herring](#)

Proposal has been developed by the CSHMAC and has gone to the DAFM for consideration by the Minister.

8. [Grant aid for IT training and electronic hardware for fishers](#)

The West RIFF brought this short proposal forward to the NIFF and all agree that the inshore sector has a weak knowledge of computer literacy. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted this further as most services are now online, i.e. meetings and grant-aid funding. The West RIFF is requesting that a pilot program be rolled out to the six RIFFs where a third party provides IT training and electronics hardware (laptop). If successful, fishers could potentially avail of grant-aid for training and hardware. **Action point:** BIM lead on Inshore Strategy Implementation and NIFF secretary to put a document together on what is required by the RIFFs in regard to computer literacy and liaise with the relevant people in BIM to seek advice and financial support.

#### 9. US Tariff free agreement – Import of American Lobster

This issue was raised by the WRIFFF who are worried about an influx of American lobsters being sold in Ireland due to the US tariff free agreement. It was pointed out that American lobsters have been coming in via Canada where there is already a free trade agreement with the EU for the past 4 years and that Irish lobsters are a different product with a different market. The issue of biosecurity was raised by the SWRIFF as an even greater concern as live escapees have been recorded in European waters and the need to avoid accidental release into Irish coastal waters. **Action point:** Legislation on holding and release of the American lobster *Homarus americanus* needs to be explored and importers need to be made more aware that these lobsters cannot be released or discarded into the marine environment.

#### 10. Updating Fishing Profile

The NRIFF raised the issue of serious gaps in data in regard to the profile of inshore sector and how can we improve it and be ready for MSP. Some data had been collected to profile the sector in the NW back in 2013/2014 which is still being used in the Marine Atlas. The MI is looking to do some similar work with the brown crab fleet in the NW to complement data that has been collected on the fishery in Donegal. **Action point:** Inshore Strategy Implementation group to further discuss how we can increase the collection of this data on a national level to get as much done as we can in the shortest period of time. It was highlighted that there is a great need to get it addressed now. See also Action Point 2

#### 11. Update on the revised protocol for opening a new fishery for bivalve molluscs

DAFM has been working on the revised protocol and it has sent it to the MI for review. The MI noted that there have not been any substantial changes to it. Those areas where boundaries have changed would need to go through an appropriate assessment. The first area to be examined when the revised protocol is completed would be the Waterford Estuary fishery which is closed at the moment. **Action point:** When revised protocol is completed NIFF secretary to circulate to the NIFF and RIFFs.

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