



Agenda item B8

By: Chief IFCO
To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – 21 November 2023
Subject: **Fisheries Management Plans Update**
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report provides members with an update on the national Fisheries Management Plan workstream. Six FMPs have passed through the public consultation phase and are now being redrafted before being sent to the Minister and five new Fisheries Management Plans are in the process of development. Officers will update the Authority on the AIFCA FMP review project. Tim Smith from the AIFCA will provide a verbal update on the progress of the Cockle FMP.

Recommendations:

This report is for **DISCUSSING** and **COMMENT**.

Background

The Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework to manage our fisheries as an independent coastal state outside of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are a requirement of the Act, the UK Joint Fisheries Statement, and a commitment in the England Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations) have been tasked to develop and then publish forty-three FMPs and DEFRA started this process with a first tranche of six 'frontrunner' FMPs, which have just passed through a 12-week public consultation phase.

Bass FMP	King scallop FMP	Southern North Sea & Eastern Channel mixed flatfish FMP
Whelk FMP	Crab and lobster FMP	Channel demersal non-quota stocks (NQS) FMP

The six 'frontrunner' FMPs are due to be published late 2023 or early 2024.

AIFCA FMP review project

Working with the Association of IFCA's KEIFCA officers ran a specific project to help facilitate and support the FMP consultation process, to engage IFCA members at a national level, share best practice and provide a platform for regionally focused IFCA's to collaborate and inform national plans. The project focused on two FMPs, the Crab and Lobster FMP and the Whelk FMP, that between them constitute a significant proportion of the inshore fishing economy and have had a history of regional management measures.

A key component of the project was to develop a bespoke website that could providing a one stop shop for all the relevant FMP documents, and important information pertaining to the stocks. Using the feedback and evidence gathered from all the IFCA members around the coast, in the form of filmed interviews and questionnaire replies, a workshop, run by the Association and KEIFCA officers reviewed IFCA Members evidence, drew together a national reply, and prioritised key actions. The workshop held in Poole (RNLI training centre) over the 26 and 27 September, was well attended by over 40 people from around the coast and proved immensely useful to DEFRA in reviewing the plans, highlighting regional similarities and differences and forming a clear idea of the critical tasks. This national reply will be emailed to you separately for information.

KEIFCA officers are in discussions with DEFRA regrading updating and repurposing the website, once the plans are published, so that it can act as a repository and portal charting the implementation of the FMPs.

The next FMPs in development

Defra is currently preparing the next five FMPs for English waters, which will be published by the end of 2024. A range of different delivery partners are leading on the preparation of these plans. DEFRA is building on the lessons learnt from the first set of FMPs to inform their development and the plans being developed do not go into the same level of detail as the front-runner plans. The aim is to have draft versions of the plans submitted by March 2024. KEIFCA officers are already working with the specific FMP project teams and are playing an active role in supplying information and providing input into the Cackle FMP. As plans develop drafts will be brought to the Authority.

Cockles

The cockle FMP will cover English waters only. The draft FMP is being prepared by the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA), working with the relevant Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) and a wide range of other organisations and stakeholders with an interest in the fishery (as part of the meeting the Cockle FMP lead (Tim Smith) will make a short presentation and answer Authority members questions)

Southern North Sea and Channel skates and rays

The Southern North Sea and Channel skates and rays FMP covers the English waters within ICES divisions 4b, 4c, 7d and 7e. The plan will include the following species:

blonde ray	cuckoo ray	spotted ray	undulate ray
thornback ray	small-eyed ray	starry ray	

The draft FMP is being prepared by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). See appendix 1 for the draft recommendation document

Southern North Sea demersal non-quota species (NQS)

The Southern North Sea demersal NQS FMP covers the English waters within ICES divisions 4b and 4c. It will include important demersal (bottom living) species without agreed catch limits (quota), such as:

cuttlefish	John dory	lesser spotted dogfish
grey gurnards	octopus	surmullet
red gurnards	squid	tub gurnards

The draft FMP is being prepared by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

North Sea and Channel sprat

The North Sea and Channel sprat FMP is a joint plan between Defra and the Scottish Government. It will cover UK waters of the North Sea and Channel. The draft FMP is being prepared by Cefas.

Queen scallop

The queen scallop FMP will cover English waters only. Defra's non-quota species fisheries policy team are leading the work on this FMP.

Implementation of the FMPs

Although the plans are due to be finalised in December, IFCA's are working closely with DEFRA to start the process of mapping out how FMPs are going to be implemented. With such a large number of plans, each with numerous actions and management measures there will inevitably be the need to prioritise delivery and resources. DEFRA has made it clear that implementation needs to happen at speed, but that the processes that underpins implementation needs to be set up to work over the long-term (the next 10-20 years). IFCA's will continue to work with DEFRA and other partners to create this new framework.

Recommendations:

This report is for **DISCUSSING** and **COMMENT**.