

Agenda item B4

By: Chief IFC Officer
To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation
Authority – 15 September 2017
Subject: Research projects update
Classification Unrestricted

Summary:

To update the Authority as to the development and progress of potential research projects that were outlined in the KEIFCA 2016-17 annual plan.

Recommendations:

- Members are asked to approve the use of £5,000 from research reserves to fund and resource a genetic study regarding whelk stocks in the district.
- Members are asked to note the updates

Whelk research update

After quite a lot of time planning and pushing quite a lot of the whelk projects are starting to come together

- 1) Since the last authority meeting Dr Hollyman's whelk project has collected and analysed area specific, whelk age and size of maturity data from each of the 4 areas in our district. All the whelks were collected over the space of a few days by local fishermen and we would like to thank Lee Turner, Dave Cotterill, Ben Cooper and Chris Gale for their help. Dr Hollyman is just in the last stage of writing up the findings and a meeting with the local fishermen that collected the data is planned for later this month. The findings will be presented to the Authority at the next meeting.

- 2) After quite a lot of backwards and forwards it has finally been confirmed that a funding proposal submitted last year to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) for approximately £15,000 to study how whelk populations vary seasonally, has just received approval. As part of the project a local fisherman will collect whelks once a month for two years using scientific pots supplied by KEIFCA. The whelks collected will then be measured and dissected to determine their gender and size at maturity.
- 3) After discussions with the North Thames FLAG project and Essex University a new whelk research project started to develop that would help inform how related/ connected whelk stocks are within different areas of our district as well as further afield. Understanding this question is a vital component of developing our understanding and management of whelk stocks in our district. Using £5,000 from the research reserve it is proposed to apply for 75% match funding and use this money to fund and resource an Essex University MSC student to undertake a genetic study. The project proposal was initially presented to the FLAG in mid-July and was rejected but we have been encouraged to reapply for their next meeting in September with some alterations.
- 4) Continuing discussions have been had concerning the development of a whelk riddle and a whelk fisherman's association. It is hoped that once the North Thames FLAG project with Essex University has got funding, the riddle development work will be the next project to take forward.

Thornback Ray project update

On 17th July the funding for the SUMARiS (Thornback Ray) project was confirmed. This is very exciting opportunity for KEIFCA to get involved in large international project and put the issues and experience of Kent and Essex fishermen at the forefront of decision making. Both DEFRA and CEFAS have been updated and briefed as to the scope and intent of the project. With the back drop of Brexit the project will face some unique challenges, however, DEFRA saw the project as a positive way to engage fishermen in regional fisheries management and hoped that projects like this might help inform future relationships. The first planning meetings start in the autumn.

Recommendations:

- Members are asked to approve the use of £5,000 from research reserves to fund and resource a genetic study regarding whelk stocks in the district
- Members are asked to note the updates