

By: Chief Fishery Officer

To: Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
– 16 September 2020

Subject: **SUMARiS update and management recommendations**

Classification Unrestricted

Summary:

This paper updates Members of the changes that have occurred with the SUMARiS project due to the Covid 19 pandemic and submits the SUMARiS management measures and recommendations for comment.

Recommendations:

As the proposed management measure would be made at a national or international level the Authority is asked to **COMMENT** on the SUMARiS management paper and its recommendations

Project update

Like most projects the SUMARiS project has been significantly impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic, with the project grinding to a halt in mid-March. The project was supposed to be wrapped up and finished by June 2020 but a project extension was sorted and granted, and the project is now due to finish at the end of October 2020. Thankfully a lot of the project work and research has already been completed, however management meetings and the final wrap-up event have had to be significantly scaled back and are now taking place online.

Although the pandemic has had an impact on the project, a lot of the meetings have now moved online and the workstreams and relationships that have been built up through the project have continued to function even though we can't meet in person.

SUMARiS management paper and recommendations

Throughout the project KEIFCA have led on the management component of the project, holding a conference in May 2019 and developing a range of management option papers. After lots of discussion and several re-writes a management paper has been agreed between the SUMARiS consortium (Appendix 1). As a group we are now looking to engage widely with fishermen and organisations, with the aim to bring a series of recommendations to the final council of minister’s meetings in November and December 2020.

Thornback rays are by far the predominant species landed in the KEIFCA district making up 70-95% of landings, with species such as Blonde rays having peaks in landings during the spring in the southern part of the district. As our current byelaw in effect creates a minimum size length of 59cm for Thornback rays (using the CEFAS conversion) the proposed management would bring everyone to our standard and create a much fairer playing field for all fishermen of all countries targeting skates and rays in the southern North Sea and the East of the English channel.

| | Current KEIFCA byelaw | | SUMARiS proposal | |
|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | wingtip to wingtip | CEFAS conversion - snout to tail | Snout to tail | Category |
| Thornback ray | 40cm | 59cm | 59cm | Healthy stock |
| Spotted Ray | 40cm | 60cm | 63cm | Vulnerable/ Recovering stocks category |
| Blonde Ray | 40cm | 57cm | 63cm | |
| Cuckoo Ray | 40cm | 70cm | 63cm | |
| Small-eyed Ray | 40cm | 57cm | 63cm | |

Recommendation

As the proposed management measure would be made at a national or international level the Authority is asked to **COMMENT** on the SUMARiS management paper and its recommendations