



# Solent Scallop Call for Information

## **Summary of Responses**

January 2021

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**Title:** Solent scallop fishery call for information

**Authors:** P Cooper

**About this document:** This document has been developed to summarise the consultation undertaken by Southern IFCA between the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October and the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020 to better understand the developing scallop (*Pecten Maximus*) fishery in the Solent. The local fishing industry, having approached the Authority requesting support in ensuring it remains sustainable, have been asked their opinions on their experiences in the fishery and what could be done to ensure its sustainability in the future. The consultation was targeted towards those who have engaged in the fishery, although those who have expressed an interest have also been consulted. The call for information was also advertised on the Southern IFCA website and on social media. Responses provided beyond those initially targeted have also been accepted into the process. The responses received by the Authority have been summarised in this document. In determining the most suitable next steps, Members of the Authority will have access to the full package of responses received, together with any accompanying evidence.

**Further Copies:**

This document is available in electronic format from the Southern IFCA website at

[www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)

Alternatively, a hard copy can be obtained from the Southern IFCA Office:

Southern IFCA,  
Unit 3 Holes Bay Park,  
Sterte Avenue West,  
Poole,  
Dorset,  
BH15 2AA

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

There has been a small-scale fishery for King Scallop (*Pecten maximus* – hereafter in this document referred to as scallop) lasting for short periods and targeted by a handful of vessels has present in the Solent in previous years. This has typically been focused from Osbourne Bay on the north-east of the Isle of Wight as round as far as No-Man's Land Fort/Seaview further east. Previous fisheries have also existed on south-east side of the island, focused predominantly in the Sandown Bay area, however due to MPA restrictions this fishery is no longer possible.

More recently this fishery has expanded, being targeted by more vessels, lasting for longer periods and increasing the geographic extent of harvesting. Over the most recent winter this fishery was observed to last approximately 4 months or more and was targeted up to 6 vessels at any one time from a larger pool of local boats. The fishery provided an alternative focus for vessels who may have typically fished for native oysters or clams over the winter period but have found themselves unable to do so as a result of temporary closures or poor water quality impacting the classifications in some areas.

As a result of this members of the fishing industry from a number of ports in the Solent have raised concerns with officers, requesting assistance and management to ensure that this fishery remains sustainable. Initial discussions suggested that some members of the fishing industry were particularly interested in formalising a fishing season which has typically been focused around the winter months, and would ensure a period of recovery over the summer months. Other effort limiting measures have been suggested as well. A call for information will not only increase the Authority's understanding of the fishery historically and currently, but would also effectively gauge opinion from all relevant members of the local fishing industry on the future of the fishery.

## 1.2 Current Management

Within the Southern IFCA District there exists a complex range of management measures relevant to the Scallop fishery within the Solent region and beyond (e.g. Southern IFCA district, nationally).

These include Southern IFCA byelaws such as the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016, the Solent Dredge Fishing Byelaw and the Scallop Fishing byelaw. As well as national measures such as the Scallop Fishing (England) Order 2012, and a specific minimum conservation reference size applied to ICES area VIId. A summary of these management measures has been included in Table 1 overleaf but other measures may apply.

<b>Table 1 – Management Measures relevant to the Solent Scallop Fishery</b>			
<b>Management Measure</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Further info</b>
Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016	Southern IFCA District	Defines areas prohibited to the use of Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (including scallop dredges) for the purpose of habitat protection. Relevant to the current fishery are Areas 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 (defined in the schedule) protecting seagrass and reef features on the north side of the Isle of Wight. Other areas in the Solent may become more relevant if the fishery continues to extend.	<a href="https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#BotTowedFishGear">https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#BotTowedFishGear</a>
Solent Dredge Fishing Byelaw (measures included to be absorbed into Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021	Southampton Water, Langstone Harbour and Portsmouth Harbour.	Provides a curfew (07:00 – 17:00 – to be amended to 06:00 – 18:00 when incorporated into SDPB) and closed season (1 <sup>st</sup> March to 31 <sup>st</sup> of October 2021) for the use of dredges within Southampton Water, Langstone Harbour and Portsmouth Harbour. This does not currently overlap with the extent of the fishery, but may become relevant if the fishery expands.	<a href="https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#solentdredgefishing2016">https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#solentdredgefishing2016</a>
Scallop Fishing Byelaw 2019 (to be implemented 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021 replacing the existing Scallop Fishing Byelaw)	Southern IFCA District	Limits the number of dredges towed by a vessel (maximum 12). Requires fitting of a spring loaded tooth bar and limits the width of the mouth of a dredge (85cm). Limits the number of tow bars a vessel can tow to two. Limits the length of any tow bar used. Applies a curfew to the Solent 18:00 – 06:00.	(previous byelaw can be found here: <a href="https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#Scallop-Fishing">https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#Scallop-Fishing</a> )
Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw 2019	Southern IFCA District – specifically Solent as defined in the byelaw.	Brings measures from the Solent Dredge Fishing Byelaw into a permit scheme allowing appropriate and adaptable management of the Solent dredge fisheries. Covers entire Solent including the Scallop fishery area.	
Scallop Fishing Order 2012	British Fishery Limits (as described in the order)	Brings in national measures for managing scallop fishing including dredge specifications (<85cm frame width; functioning spring loaded tooth bar; no attachments to rear, top or inside of dredge; no diving plate; <150kg dredge weight; Specifications on size and number of teeth; number of rows of belly rings;) Minimum size for area VIId (which includes Solent) of 110mm.	<a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/12/made">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/12/made</a>
Southern IFCA Minimum Conservation Byelaw (Awaiting sign off)	Southern IFCA District	Sets out minimum size for various species, including the size for Scallops fished East of the 002°W line as being 110mm. Otherwise currently applied through the Technical Conservation measures detailed in EC - 2019/1241.	

*Note – Other legislation (both national and local) will apply within these areas – the above aims to provide a summary of relevant measures – this is not to be used as a definitive list. Other measures may be implemented for example by the MMO through licence conditions.*

### 1.3 IFCA Duties

The nationally agreed vision of the IFCAs is that they will:

*“lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries within their Districts by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry”*

Under Section 153 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, Southern IFCA must manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district. In doing so, the Authority must:

- a) *seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way,*
- b) *seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or to promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation,*
- c) *take any other steps which in the authority’s opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development, and*
- d) *seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.*

Under Section 155 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the Authority has the power to make byelaws for the district. IFCA byelaw guidance outlines the management options and the scope of IFCA byelaws.

## 2. Solent Scallop ‘Call for information’

### 2.1 Call for Information

Following numerous requests from industry to consider management in the Solent, officers considered that the best way to further understanding of the fishery as well as scope the interest of the industry was to progress with a ‘Call for Information’. A ‘Call for Information’ is an evidence gathering exercise which is undertaken with stakeholders and the community. This period of engagement seeks to address any evidence gaps and gather any information relating to the fisheries in question. The information received during this process can then be used, in combination with any other evidence gathered, to inform the Authority of whether there is a need to undertake a full review of the fishery. The Solent scallop fisheries ‘Call for Information’ commenced in November 2020 and lasted until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020.

### 2.2 Scope of Solent ‘Call for Information

The Solent Scallop Call for Information aimed to gather more detail on the fishery, as well as provide give officers and members a better understanding on the opinion of industry on how they would like the fishery to develop. Letters were sent to those fishers who had participated in the fishery recently or who had expressed an interest to officers in the management of the fishery. Copies of the letter were also circulated by social media and made available on the Southern IFCA website, the call for information was not limited to those current participants in the fishery.

A full copy of the letter has been annexed to this document but the questions asked of the fishing industry were:

**1. Do you currently participate in the Solent scallop fishery?**

If yes, please provide detail on your role (fisher, merchant etc.), how long you have fished for/or purchased scallops in/from the Solent, which months you fish for scallops in the Solent, how many days a year do you fish for scallops in the Solent.

**2. What are your views on the current state of the Solent scallop fishery?**

For example, would you say the stock is currently healthy; consisting of mainly adult or juvenile scallops; is more or less plentiful than in recent years?

**3. How would you like to see the Solent scallop fishery managed?**

Please describe what these would be and why you believe they are necessary.

**4. Please provide any further information that you think would be helpful.**

Responses were received in writing where possible, in some cases officers were required to undertake verbal consultations, following COVID-19 protocols where phone calls were not possible.

### 2.3 Responses to the Call for Information

Overall a high level of responses, considering the specific focus of the consultation, were received. In total 21 individuals responded, all of which were registered owners or skippers of vessels which fished in the Solent. 11 were written communications, whilst a further 10 were recorded by officers following verbal consultations. Officer analysis indicates that this represents the majority of those vessels active in the fishery currently and historically.

The responses have all been logged by officers and are kept securely by Southern IFCA, this document will summarize both the verbal and written responses to provide the authority with the information provided by members of the industry as well as provide full transparency as to the work undertaken.

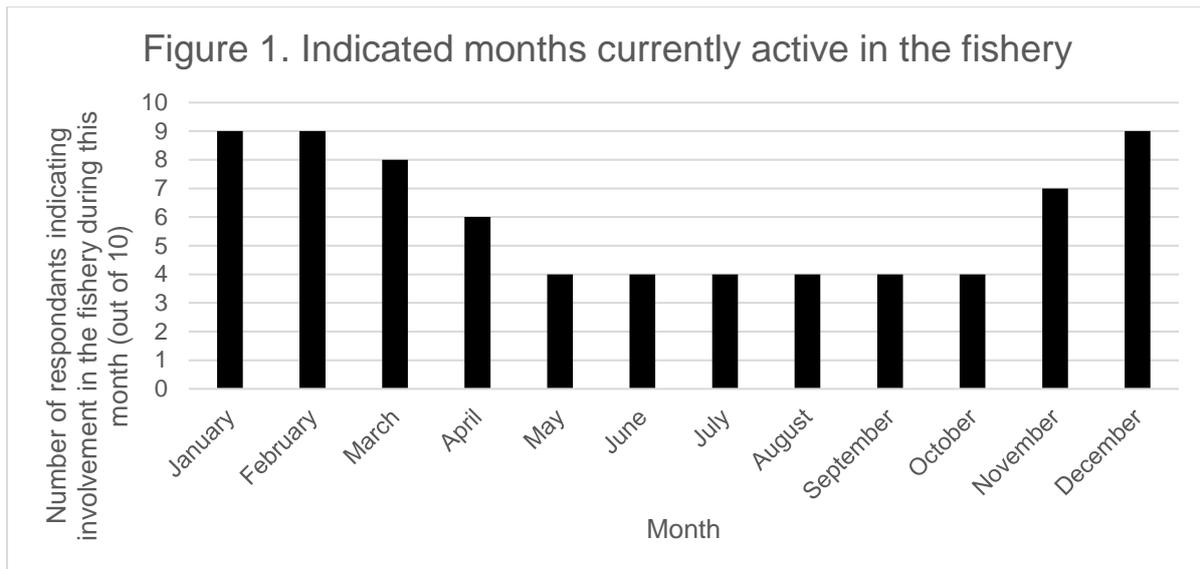
## 3. Summary of Responses

### 3.1 Current involvement

Responses to the Call for Information were received from 21 individuals, all of which were linked to fishing vessels in the Solent. 20 of the respondents still actively fish within the Solent whilst one was the owner of a vessel which has done previously. 15 individuals stated that they had fished within the Solent scallop fishery, whilst five stated that they had not participated in that fishery but fished in the Solent. Another did not provide details on current involvement.

For those that had participated, fishers were asked about the nature of their involvement in the fishery. Of those that responded the number of years involved in the fishery varied dramatically from 1-30 years. It is anticipated that this question may have been answered by some as a reflection on the length of time they have fished the Solent, not specifically the scallop fishery.

The table below indicates the months in which vessels participated. 10 respondents provided information on the months they fished for Scallops in the Solent.



Fishers were also asked the number of days spent in the fishery. Seven responded to this question, two indicated that they spent 300 days in the fishery a year, one responded 144 and four others fell in a range of 0-60 days a year.

### 3.2 Views on the state of the fishery

Fishers were asked their views on the current state of the fishery. From all of those that responded to this question, 16 respondents indicated that their views on the fishery were positive, no respondent gave an outright negative answer, although a number expressed concern about the current harvesting level.

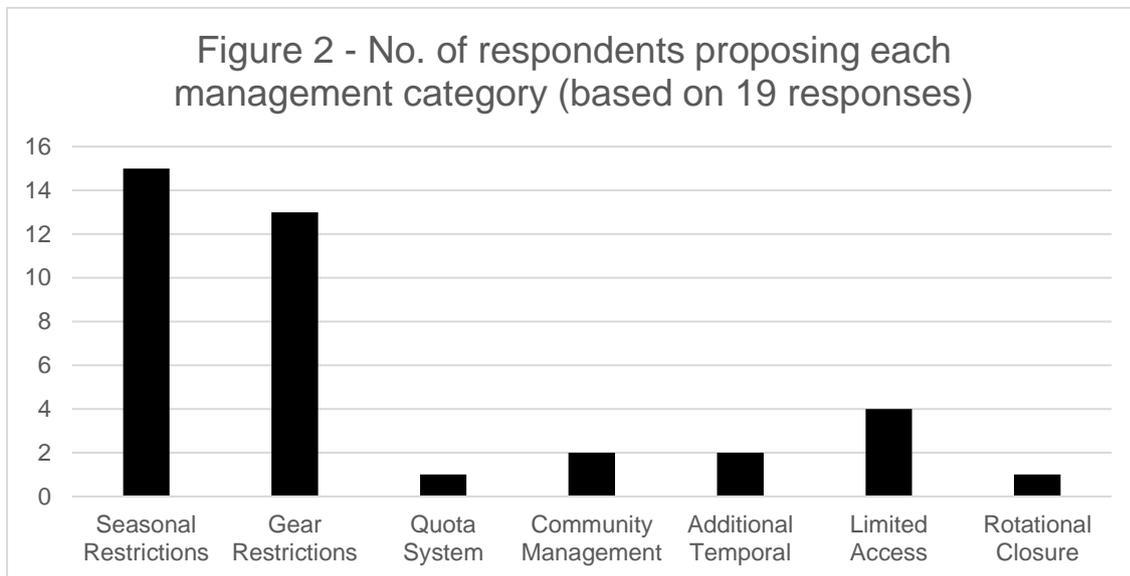
13 fishers provided an opinion on the ratio of juvenile to adult scallops on the ground all indicating some level of juvenile, with nine respondents indicating that there was more small than large on the ground and others indicating a full range of sizes of scallop. 13 fishers provided a response as to whether they felt there had been an increase in abundance of scallops or not. Eight indicated that they felt that scallop abundance was increasing, four indicated that it had remained the same whilst one individual indicated that abundance was declining.

Although not asked specifically a number of respondents provided information related to the geographical extent of the fishery. Six fishers indicated that the extent of the fishery had increased including spreading across the north shore of the isle of wight and the Solent forts to areas that a year ago were “showing no signs of life for scallops” as well as one fisher indicating that he had observed them “spreading and moving” through other fisheries and had “seen scallops in the harbours”, presumably referring to Portsmouth and Langstone. A number of fishers made reference to the scallop’s presence in relation to the depth of water, one fisher indicated that below 15 metres it was mainly juvenile scallop whilst at around 10m depth it was predominantly larger scallops. One fisher, typically participating in the trawl fishery, indicated that in the deeper water in the Solent scallops appear to be growing well.

### 3.3 Views on future management

The call for information also asked for views on the future management of the fishery. Of the 21 respondents, 18 provided a view that they would like to see some form of management implemented on the fishery, two indicated that they did not feel the fishery needed management and should be left alone, although did provide some suggestion as to possible

management if it were to be implemented, whilst one did not specify either way but indicated that “the fishery needs to be studied properly first by the Authority in order to gain the best available evidence, before coming to a decision too rapidly”. The type of management respondents preferred varied and figure 2 highlights the forms of management each respondent (of the 17 who indicated a preference towards some form of management and two who would prefer no management but made suggestions) provided.

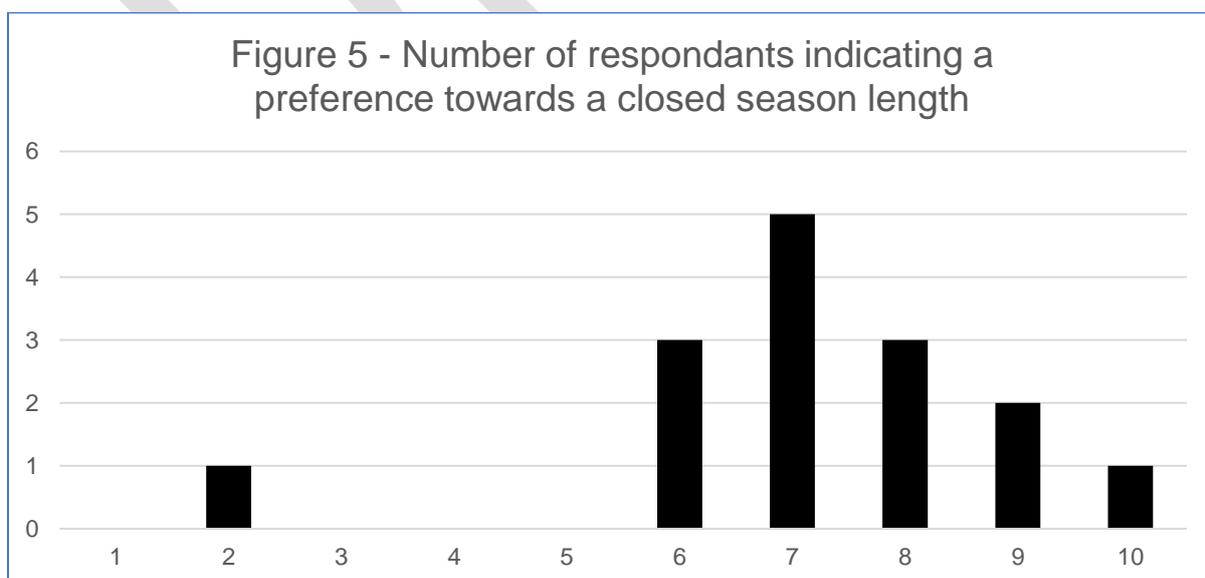
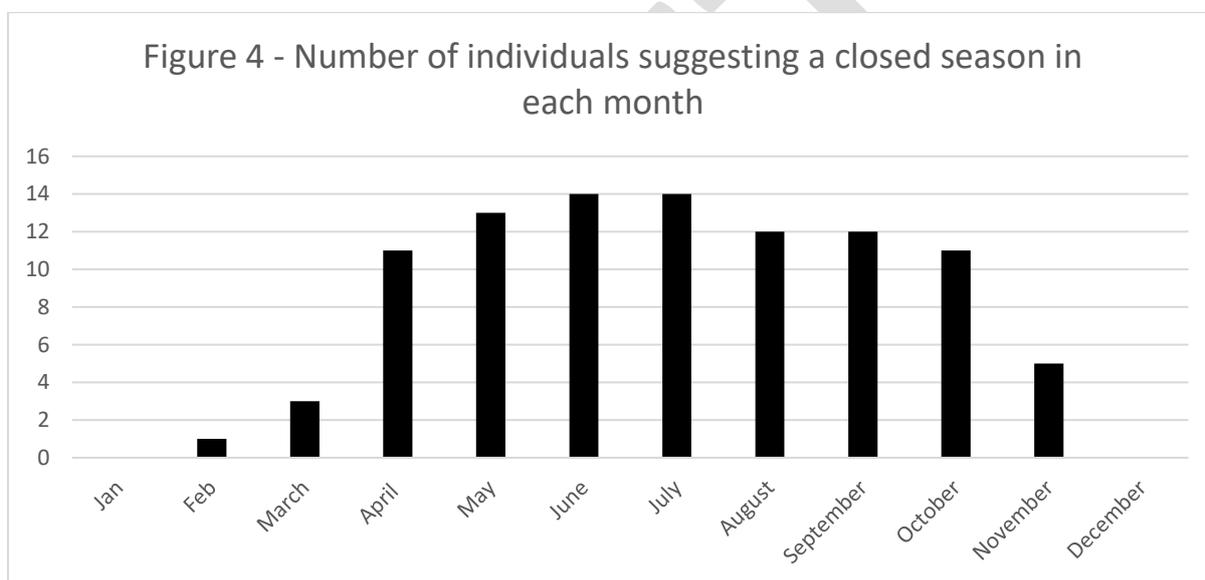
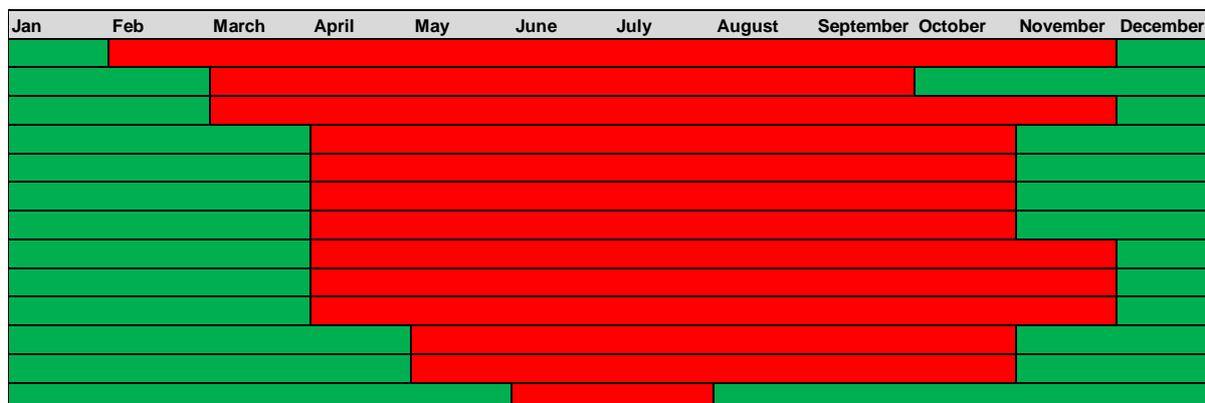


A variety of measures were proposed, some fishers indicated that a combination of measures were the preference with 11 of those proposing both seasonal restrictions and gear restrictions. Details of the proposals found under each category are found in the following sections. Although two individuals included above suggested that management was not required, they did submit suggestions as to possible management/clarification that was required, these have been included in the above figure. Based on the 20 who provided views relating to management, one respondent indicated that although they would like to see management but that they did not know what measures would be appropriate.

### 3.3.1 Seasonal restrictions

The measure that most respondents called for were seasonal restrictions although the suggested time period for an open and closed season varied. Figure 3 highlights the various closed seasons (where specific months were given) proposed by each respondent, Figure 4 indicates the number of fishers indicating a closed season covering each individual month and Figure 5 indicates the preferred lengths of closed season based on the responses.

Figure 3 – Various proposed closed seasons provided where respondents gave specific months open (green)/closed (red)



The majority of those who indicated they would like to see a closed season implemented indicated some form of summer closure with 13 respondents indicating a closure over (at least some of) the summer months as being preferable. Reasons given for this included not targeting during the breeding season “allowing scallops to grow and spat”, catching when they are not full of roe and closing the fishery when there are other summer fisheries to target. The length of the proposed seasons varied, with some (three respondents) indicating a preference for a long 9-10 month closed season, one vessel indicating a preference for a two month closed season and ten vessels indicating a preference for a closed season lasting between six and eight months. A further respondent indicated a preference to a summer closure, but did not quantify a time period and six respondents did not indicate that they would like to see a closed season implemented, with three of these indicating that they specifically would not like to see a closed season implemented (and suggesting alternative measures in their place).

### 3.3.2 Gear Restrictions

Following the suggestion of a closed season, the next highest preference for management consideration was related to gear restrictions with 13 respondents indicating a preference towards this.

Two main focuses were included in this from respondents:

- **Dredge Number** – Of the respondents, 10 individuals suggested that dredge numbers should be limited on the vessel for the purpose of sustainability, mitigating environmental impact and limiting access from some of the larger nomadic scallopers. Of the 10, two suggested the limit should be three dredges, seven suggested limiting to two dredges and one suggested setting a limit on the maximum width of dredges (similar to the Southern IFCA ‘Fishing for Oysters’ byelaw’).
- **Dredge Specification** – Six vessels made comment on gear specification, four indicated that they felt only light weight or N-Viro type dredges should be used in the fishery to contribute to the sustainability and mitigate impact on the environment. Others suggested improvements could be made from the existing national measures which some felt were for “a large-scale offshore fishery”. Other requests included clarifications as to the dredges permitted in the Solent and how they fit in with the various pieces of legislation.

### 3.3.3 Limited Access

Several respondents indicated that they would like to see access to the fishery limited in some manner. Some suggesting limiting to Southern IFCA vessels, presumably referring to home port location or those vessels with a Southern IFCA ‘Vessels Used in Fishing For Sale’ permit, others just referred to a cap on number. A number of other respondents, whilst not referring specifically to a cap on numbers or limited access, suggested that further benefits from gear restrictions (e.g. lighter dredges, limited number of dredges) would be restricted access to the fishery from larger nomadic scalloping vessels.

### 3.3.4 Other Proposals

Other proposals provided by respondents included:

- **Community management** – Several respondents indicated that a level of community management involving, or being led by, the individuals involved in the fishery in determining the required management to ensure sustainability.
- **Quota System** – One respondent indicated that they would prefer to see a flexible quota system implemented whereby the fishery has a 12 monthly quota system, based

on the number of vessels fishing. Variations could be added to reduce the quota (but not extinguish) during the breeding season e.g. “2 bag scallop limit when spatting”.

- **Rotational Closures**- One fisher indicated that instead of closed seasons covering the whole fishery, the ground could be split into areas allowing access to different areas at different times e.g. “4 months closed each.
- **Additional Temporal Management** – Two fishers suggested a reduction in the hours fished as a potential management tool, one suggesting restricting between 08:00 and 16:00 and another suggesting reducing to a five-day week. Current regulations limit the season 07:00 to 19:00 and four fishers specifically indicated that they felt this was sufficient.

### 3.4 Further Comment

Fishers also provided further comments where requested. These included:

- The fishery providing an ideal replacement for the oyster fishery. Numerous fishers saw this as a replacement for the native oyster fishery stating that the decline of the oysters could be leaving an abundance of food for the scallops and the scallops not being subject to the same predators (tingle). One fisher did express concern that without management the scallops would experience a similar decline as the oysters.
- A number of fishers requested that a survey be undertaken to improve knowledge of the fishery and expressed an interest for industry to be involved.
- Some fishers indicated an interest in further management, but not beyond their requests as that could potentially limit their livelihood at a difficult time.
- Some fishers raised concern over the effect the COVID-19 pandemic has on enforcement, and the potential impact the removal of small could have on the future of the fishery.
- Some fishers expressed a concern over the number of starfish present, considering predation from this species as having a bigger impact on scallop stocks than fishing, and requesting investigation into the increase of this species.
- One fisher considered the closed areas currently in place, presumably referring to those set out in the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016, to provide sufficient sanctuary for scallops to breed.
- One fisher raised on going concerns over management of MPAs and the impact that was having on local fishing.
- One fisher indicated that they would like to see a seasonal closure of the fishery, but that it should be accompanied by staggering the clam season in the Solent to later in the year, this would avoid overlap with the Poole clam fishery and provide further harvesting opportunities for fishers.

## 4. Next Steps

This summary of responses document will be shared by email with all individuals who responded to the pre-consultation. The document will also be posted on the Authority's website and will be shared by social-media.

In addition to the responses received during the 'Call for Information', the Authority will source the best available evidence in order to build a picture of the fishery under review. The information gathered may include quantitative information on current effort, the participants engaged within the District and gear types and methods. In addition, where available, up to date and historic stock assessments will be analysed in order to map the fishery over time. In depth literature reviews will also be conducted to ensure that the best available evidence is

sourced in order to support the fishery review. In addition, social and economic data will be derived from all relevant sources.

It is the intention for select Members of the Authority to attend a Working Group during the week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021, in order to review all of the best available evidence gathered during the 'Call for Information' and when addressing evidence gaps. Based on the best available evidence, the Working Group will then report to the Technical Advisory Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021, as to whether there is a need, based on the best available evidence, to pursue management in the Solent scallop fishery. The Technical Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the Authority on the 4<sup>th</sup> February as to whether there is a need to pursue management intervention in the Solent scallop fishery.

Based on the best available evidence and the wider legislative duties and responsibilities of the Authority, the **Authority will decide on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 whether management intervention is appropriate**. If intervention is deemed to be appropriate then the review will enter Stage 2 of the Byelaw Process. Delegation of powers to the TAC may be considered by the Authority at this point, in line with paragraph (36) of the Standing Orders.

DRAFT

## Annex I

### Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Unit 3 Holes Bay Park, Sterte Avenue West, Poole  
Dorset. BH15 2AA  
Tel.01202 721373  
Email [enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk)  
[www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)



5<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### **Solent Scallop Fishery – Call for Information**

Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) is seeking information on the Solent scallop fishery in order to support the sustainability of this fishery. In response to recent interest from the local fishing community we are aiming to better understand the fishery and consider whether additional management is necessary.

This 'Call for Information' is the first stage of the process and we would like to hear your views from the outset. As a guide, please could you consider a response to the following questions:

- 1. Do you currently participate in the Solent scallop fishery?**  
*If yes, please provide detail on your role (fisher, merchant etc.), how long you have fished for/ or purchased scallops in/from the Solent, which months you fish for scallops in the Solent, how many days a year do you fish for scallops in the Solent.*
- 2. What are your views on the current state of the Solent scallop fishery?**  
*For example, would you say the stock is currently healthy; consisting of mainly adult or juvenile scallops; is more or less plentiful than in recent years?*
- 3. How would you like to see the Solent scallop fishery managed?**  
*Please describe what these would be and why you believe they are necessary.*
- 4. Please provide any further information that you think would be helpful.**

This initial Call for Information will last for a period of 8 weeks, from the **5<sup>th</sup> November to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**. During this time, we encourage you to discuss your views and ideas with Southern IFCA officers and local fishing associations, who we will be contacting directly. If you would like to speak to an IFCA Officer regarding this Call for Information please contact the Southern IFCA office on 01202 721373 or email [enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk).

Following the 'Call for Information' we will summarise the responses received and place this on our website at [www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk). The responses received will help to clarify the next stages of the Solent scallop fishery review.

**Please submit your response in writing, either by email ([enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk)) or letter (address at top of letter), on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Jones'.

Ian Jones. Chief Officer

**Confidentiality Disclaimer:** Copies of responses will be made available to the public on request. If you do not want your response – including your name, contact details and any other personal information – to be available publicly, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the consultation. Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for this information under freedom of information legislation. Because of these laws, we cannot promise that we will always be able to keep these details confidential.