

Recreational Angling Sector Working Group Meeting – 13/09/2022 – 19:00

Virtual Meeting – MS Teams

Attended: CH (Chair), TG, AG

Apologies: SP, MS, PH

Agenda

1. Introductions

Introductions were made for Members in attendance. New Member Allan Green was welcomed by the Chair.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (26th July 2022)

Agreed.

It was raised that the issue of MCRS in relation to species used for bait needed to remain on the agenda of the Southern IFCA MCRS review. SB confirmed that this would be raised with Authority Members through the review process. Also, in relation to MCRS was a request that the review consider the inclusion of all species on the fish sticker when a new version is made. SB confirmed she would pass this on for consideration.

Members stated that they wished to be provided updates on black bream management as and when they were available. SB confirmed she would keep the group informed of any developments with this workstream.

A Member raised that there had been an interesting article in Sea Angler magazine in relation to HPMA pilot sites in the north which other Members may wish to read.

3. Progress on actions from the previous meeting

There were two actions from the previous meeting:

ACTION: SB to send out Doodle Poll for future meeting dates in 2022 – **complete**

ACTION: SB to raise internally whether a duty officer number could be provided for the Southern IFCA District - **complete**

4. Southern IFCA Updates/Ongoing items

Net Fishing Byelaw: The Net Fishing Byelaw and associated documentation is currently in a Quality Assurance (QA) process with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The MMO provided initial comments following a first round of screening which did not identify any matters that would require significant changes to the byelaw or associated documentation. Southern IFCA has submitted a response to the comments raised by the MMO and are anticipating further rounds of QA prior to byelaw confirmation.

Pot Fishing Byelaw: The byelaw package is intended to be viewed by the Authority at their September meeting. Should the Authority approve the package, the byelaw and associated documents will be sent to the MMO to enter into the QA process.

It was queried whether the byelaw would require the marking of all pots. SB informed Members that the byelaw currently includes a requirement for the marking of all pots in the District. It was stated that the byelaw does still need to go through the MMO QA

process so it cannot be ruled out that there may be further amendments required but the intention is to require the marking of all pots.

Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Review: In 2013 and then updated in 2016, Southern IFCA introduced a Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw to protect sensitive habitats and species found in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) throughout the District. To achieve Southern IFCA's duties, a review of management is necessary following designation of additional MCZs and MCZ features in the District and to ensure habitats and species in other MPAs are protected according to the most up to date evidence.

The review commenced with an informal consultation on a number of proposed changes to the byelaw which ran from 17th June to 1st August 2022. The consultation considered amendments to the Southern IFCA Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016 based on updated evidence, newly designated sites and features, updated Conservation Advice provided by Natural England and evidence of sensitive habitats outside of MPAs. Responses were invited via email, post and via an online form. Throughout the consultation period, Southern IFCA officers contacted key stakeholders to inform them of the consultation and engaged with fishers whilst out on patrol.

Following the consultation, a Summary of Responses document was drafted which can be viewed on the Southern IFCA website on the 'Ongoing Reviews' page. The Authority are now considering the responses and whether any further amendments are required to proposed measures under the byelaw.

FISP Bid: Members were informed that a bid had been put into the Fishing Industry Science Partnerships Scheme by Plymouth University, working with partners in the fishing industry, for a project that aims to use telemetry to develop understanding of movement patterns, habitat use and stock characteristics of black bream in Dorset and elasmobranch species in the Solent. The Southern IFCA is engaged with this project through the potential provision of staff time. Indication of whether the bid has been successful is anticipated in November.

It was raised that there may be a risk in publicly identifying the movement patterns of black bream as this may allow for concentrations of fishing effort in areas where they are identified to occur. It was raised that this has been seen previously with eels and salmonids and the impact could outweigh any scientific benefit. It was also raised that if it is identified that there are low numbers of bream in certain areas, this could be because of fishing outside of the District not inside so any data would need to be considered carefully before explanations are given for any effects noted.

5. Additional Requested Items

It was queried what the recreational limit is for taking lobster. SB confirmed she would double check any regulations other than IFCA regulations and relay the information to the group. SB also updated Members that there is an intention to restrict the quantity of lobster landed by recreational fishers under the Recreational Potting Permit under the Pot Fishing Byelaw, however this byelaw is going through the MMO QA process and is not yet in force.

ACTION: SB to check on any national legislation relating to the ability to retain lobster recreationally.

6. Any Other Business

Clarity was sought on the bass nursery area regulations with regard to bass caught from the shore and from a vessel. There was concern that different information was being provided to anglers from different sources such as tackle shops and fishing clubs. SB confirmed that the bass nursery area regulations apply to fishing for bass, or fishing for any species of sea-fish using sand-eels as bait, by any fishing boat in the areas specified in the BNA regulation. It was stated that shore anglers were encouraged to abide by the spirit of the legislation but that the regulation to not target bass applies to fishing from a vessel.

It was queried whether BNA dates could be tied in with the dates for recreational fishing for bass under the national measures. SB stated that this would be beyond the scope of the IFCA as both were nationally introduced measures. It was stated that one of the frontrunner Fisheries Management Plans currently being developed is for bass so there will be a consideration nationally with regards to management of this species.

It was questioned whether information on bass regulations could be re-sent to local angling clubs. SB confirmed that this could be done and requested a list of clubs that would like to receive any information so this could be actioned.

Members were asked about a meeting date for November/December. It was agreed that Members would be approached nearer the time.