

Recreational Angling Sector Group Meeting Minutes – 18/04/2024 – 19:00

Virtual Meeting – MS Teams

Attendees – Chris Holloway, Mike Bennet, Sam Cummings, Trevor Gibbs, Mike Spiller, Mal Thomas, IFCO Fred Harris, SIFCO Emily Condie

Apologies – Alan Green, Alan Deeming

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (18th November 2023)

Amendment to minutes – Change from Recreational Angling Sector Working Group to Recreational Angling Sector Group

2. Introductions

3. Southern IFCA Updates/Ongoing items

Pot Fishing and Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2023 – SIFCO Condie

There has been no update since the last meeting, both are with the MMO for QA.

Bream and Shore Gathering Workstreams – SIFCO Condie

SIFCA have begun work on both our Bream and Shore Gathering workstreams which both have a government set deadline for 2024. SIFCA have been gathering information on the impact of an initial draft of proposed measures in both fisheries and thank those members of the RASG group that have helped with this exercise. There will be more information on both in the public domain in the next couple of weeks through the May Technical Advisory Committee meeting (9th May).

FMPs – Update from PO Wright, delivered by SIFCO Condie

The Tranche 4 FMPs and associated delivery partners have been announced which are Black Seabream (MMO), Wrasses complex (MMO), Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal (MMO) and Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic (Defra).

These FMPs have an expected delivery date of 2025.

The Wrasses complex FMP will include: Ballan, Corkwing, Rockcook and Goldsinny.

The Celtic Sea and Western Channel demersal will include: Monkfish, Cod, Haddock, Plaice, Thornback Ray, Sole, Blue Ling, Deep Water Sharks*, Saithe, Round Nose Grenadier, Red Seabream, Skates and Rays*, Megrim, Four Spotted Megrim, Pollack, Nephrops and Whiting. *species in scope to still be confirmed.

The Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic will include Pilchards, Anchovy, Herring, Horse Mackerel and Greater Silver Smelt.

The Black Seabream, Wrasses Complex and Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal are in the initial scoping stage, while the Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic has entered initial engagement stage. Southern IFCA can pass along contact information to those interested.

Chris Holloway asked how the SIFCA Bream Review, the Bream FMP and the Angling for Sustainability project were all going to tie together.

SIFCO Condie responded: all three are separate and running on their own timescales. SIFCA have a deadline of 2024 to complete the Bream Management Review and must move forward with the information that is available now. That does not mean that in the future there will not be scope to include new or updated information as is the same with byelaw reviews of any management in the district. The FMP being run by the MMO, will have its own approach to incorporating information and ongoing projects, but is also due to be completed after the SIFCA deadline. The FMP may not align with SIFCA management however this is the same across all fisheries in the district and whether or not this is the case will not be known until the FMP is published.

Bass Nursery Areas – IFCO Harris

The bass nursery areas come into effect from the 30th of April until 1st November. If members see any fishing of concern, please direct information to Southern IFCA.

4. Additional Requested Items

Recreational Tuna Fishery – IFCO Harris

The government intend to open a recreational catch and release permit for charter vessels to target Tuna, which is expected to be in place for summer 2024. This is following the success of the CHART tagging programme and support received for a permitting scheme during a formal consultation held from July to September 2023. The relevant legislation will be laid in parliament in May 2024 and is expected to come in to effect in June this year.

Each UK fisheries administration will then decide if and when to introduce the fishery into their waters. DEFRA intends to open the fishery in English Waters in 2024.

The criteria to be eligible for a permit are displayed on the MMO website and all applications will be evaluated once the permit application has closed. If more applications are received than permits, the MMO will have a prioritising process linked to participation with the CHART scheme.

Pollack Management

Chris Holloway enquired on changes to Pollack management.

Mike Spiller responded: there is currently no limit on recreational at the moment, but it is expected this will change at some point. There has also just been compensation agreed for commercials who can prove they fished in the last year. This is thought to be up to 30%.

IFCO Harris also responded: He does not think there will be anything in the immediate future that will affect the recreational sector.

Flounder FMP

Chris Holloway enquired as to whether a Flounder FMP is being written due to the decreasing population.

SIFCO Condie responded: It isn't yet listed in any FMP however some are still scoping their species lists.

IFCO Harris responded: Concerns on flounder populations are fed back to management.

5. Any Other Business

IFCA and Recreational Sector Relationships

Chris Holloway initiated conversation on relationships between other recreational fishers and their relevant IFCA's. He had seen social media content insinuating difficult relationships and enquired if this was something others had found. He spoke positively of the relationship between SIFCA and recreational fishers. He believes SIFCA is the only IFCA to have a group solely for recreational fishers that allows for direct conversation with fisheries officers.

Mike Spiller confirmed he had a positive relationship with D&SIFCA and the recreational community surrounding Salcombe had high levels of engagement with the recent net fishing proposals in the area. He believes D&SIFCA have a recreational fisher sitting on their byelaw making committee.

SIFCO Condie informed RASG members that SIFCA also have a recreational general member on the Authority. Any stakeholder is able to apply to become a general member through the MMO who have a rolling recruitment campaign. It is understood that successful applicants will be held on a merit list until a position on the relevant committee becomes available. However further information on the application process is available on the government website.

Net Fishing in Christchurch Harbour

A member raised concerns on a vessel fishing in proximity to the entrance of Christchurch Harbour. IFCO Harris informed the group of the SIFCA Net Fishing Byelaw and that he would contact the member offline to discuss.

Meeting time

Chris Holloway asked the group if a 7pm timing was still appropriate.

The group confirmed.