

Recreational Angling Sector Working Group Meeting – 25/08/2021 – 19:00

Southern IFCA Office – MS Teams Meeting - Minutes

Attendees:

Chris Holloway (CH)

Alan Deeming (AD)

Tim Ferrero (TF)

Patrick Cooper (PC)

Simon Pengelly (SP)

Ian Jones (IJ)

Apologies:

Charlie Annear, Kim Gibbs, Steve Porter, Phil Higgins, Sam Cummings.

Agenda

1. Minutes of the previous meetings

Subject to minor amendment the minutes of the meeting were accepted.

2. Introductions

No introductions were made but members discussed revisiting membership arrangements, checking with existing members whether they wished to continue, and looking to fill gaps in certain areas, particularly the Solent.

ACTION: IFCA officers to consider a social media push for membership for the group.

ACTION: PC to review terms of reference for membership.

3. MCRS:

- Byelaw Introduction

SP highlighted to members that the MCRS byelaw was confirmed on the 28th of July 2021. The byelaw had been published on the website, discussed face to face with stakeholders and updated stickers and information sheets had been distributed. Members were reminded that this formed an important step, and an ongoing review of sizes was taking place. Members were appraised of the engagement and enforcement regime surrounding this. CH stated that this was positive from an angling perspective. IJ provided feedback that some fishers were considering their mesh size as a result of this legislation.

- Review Update

SP provided a further update on the MCRS review, informing members that following a Call for information regarding the ongoing MCRS review, which Jamie Small provided had previously circulated to the group, a paper summarizing those responses had been submitted to the Technical Advisory Committee.

A total of 11 responses were received from a range of backgrounds covering those questions. A summary of these responses has been produced and has been submitted to TAC. This document is currently available as part of the committee papers, but on approval by the committee it will be published on our website and disseminated. Again, a recommendation to

the TAC is to form a working group which will consider all the evidence gathered as part of the review, and form a working group to consider the current minimum sizes. SP reminded members that ongoing projects, particularly with Plymouth university, were underway to consider improve the evidence base regarding age of maturity for species including mullet and whelks. AD highlighted a concern that 50% maturity would be used across the board for all species in an MCRS review. SP stated that the background policy for the review had yet to be formed by the membership, and factors determining relevant MCRS updates had yet to be defined. Other members agreed that a species based approach for MCRS updates may be more appropriate.

4. Netting Review Update

SP took provided an update on the nettings review, highlighting that a paper was being submitted to the TAC which drew together the evidence applied to various areas into a model, setting out evidence clearly. SP highlighted that officers and members had worked hard over the previous months considering this evidence.

CH also highlighted that the implementation of the 200m pier code of conduct had been seen as positive by the angling community. SP indicated that they were continuing to work with the industry on this and had not had any observed instances of non-compliance to date.

5. MCZ Bream Management

PC provided an update to the group following on from the previous meeting. PC highlighted that NE/DEFRA were able to secure funding to survey bream nests, something which was undertaken by the EA and CEFAS aboard Solent Guardian, gathering data in Southbourne Rough, Poole Rocks and the Purbeck Coast MCZs using side-scan sonar. This data is currently being worked up, and the group will be kept updated as any information is made available.

PC also updated the group around the additional data gathering with regards to fishers, and and through IFCA compliance patrols. This will support the IFCA in understanding the activity better when developing management and to inform impact assessments.

6. UK Sea Angling 2018 + 2019 Reports

PC provided an update to the group regarding recently published sea angling reports for 2018 and 2019, compiled by CEFAS, considering the participation and catches for sea anglers in 2018/2019. Members were aware of the project, as a large ongoing citizen science project. Over 2000 anglers from across the UK provided data for over 8500 fishing sessions. This was coupled with 12000 UK residents being polled to better understand the UK's Sea angling profile.

AD highlighted some possible concerns relating to the report and extrapolation of a small sample size, particularly around individual species reports where single records may be provided (and in some years not). Other members of the group considered it a useful tool, and highlighted positives regarding the indicated return rates demonstrating responsible angling.

7. HPMa update

IJ provided an update to the group on the current state of the HPMa review encouraging members to view the information held on the JNCC website where more information is found. IJ updated members that:

- The government had committed to identify and designate pilot HPMA's by the end of 2022.
- NE and JNCC will be considering the ecological criteria for these and have developed a set of principles around this.
- Socio Economic Criteria will also be considered as part of the identification process.

IJ promised to keep the group updated as this developed.

8. Angling Engagement

SP highlighted recent angling engagement at the Sea Angling Classic in Portsmouth, which provided a useful opportunity for highlighting the MCRS sizes as well as other IFCA relevant legislation. TF updated members on possible collaboration in the future, particularly linking sensitive habitats with navionics charts. CH reminded members to update the IFCA on other opportunities for involvement.

9. Any Other Business

CH updated the group on the lack of Mackerel this year as a concern, AD also highlighted this.

Reports:

- Minutes of the previous meeting
- HPMA Review - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-highly-protected-marine-areas-hpmas-review/government-response-to-the-highly-protected-marine-areas-hpmas-review>
- Sea Angling 2018 + 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sea-angling-in-the-uk-report-2018-and-2019>
- Technical Advisory Committee Agenda - <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/25364/sitedata/files/TAC-Agenda-Aug-21.pdf>