

# **Recreational Angling Sector Group Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 - Minutes**

## **Attendees:**

Chris Holloway (Acting Chair)  
Dick Stubbs  
Wayne Comben  
Phil Higgins  
Charlie Annear

Patrick Cooper (Southern IFCA)  
Robert Clark (Southern IFCA)  
Brian Bleese (Dorset Wildlife Trust)  
David Mitchell (Angling Trust)

## **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Alan Deeming and Arthur Savage.

## **Minutes of previous meeting**

The methodology for how minutes were to be agreed and disseminated was discussed. The group agreed that the minutes, or 'notes' could not be verbatim and were to be a reasonable representation of what was covered in the meeting. It was decided that minutes were to be circulated following the meeting, if major points were missing this could be flagged up and resent around if required shortly after circulation. They would be then be finally agreed and signed at the next meeting, a copy would be retained by the IFCA.

## **Membership**

Membership of the group was discussed and it was recognised that since the last meeting 4 new members had been added to the group (including those who sent apologies). The chair discussed that there were still areas particularly the Wyvern Angling Trust region that still needed representation, although invites had been extended to AT members from that area.

Mr Stubbs stated that the Langstone Harbour charter skippers were also not represented. Mr Higgins said that as a representative of the Professional Boatmans Association he could provide a voice for charter skippers and feedback to the PBA minutes etc.

Members agreed that the group should remain open to further members and that further suggestions/nominations should be made to the chair, copying the IFCA representatives.

Mr Bleese stated that an ongoing issue would be reaching charter anglers. It was discussed that tackle shops is the best method for reaching this sector, and that

perhaps a representative should be included on the group as fisheries management of the angling sector had a direct impact on their livelihood. The group agreed with this.

## **Matters Arising**

### **Slipper limpet**

The issue of slipper limpet was considered to see if there was any update regarding the slipper limpet for bait issue. Mr Clark gave an update including information regarding the Wildlife and Countryside Act and how this could not be enforced by Southern IFCA. It was discussed that although nothing further had been undertaken, due to slipper limpet being established in the South Coast and the aims of the recent communications, it was considered that enforcement would take a common sense approach. The group also discussed whether an angling exemption from the Wildlife and Countryside Act would be appropriate.

## **Presentation from Brian Bleese from the Dorset Wildlife Trust on the concept of a sustainable angling festival/competition**

Mr Bleese explained the role and remit of the Dorset Wildlife trust and how it felt that angling was a positive way for individuals to experience nature. Using the example of the Holes Bay nature park it was explained that angling was one of the activities the trust would like to see in the park as it promotes contact with nature and that anglers had an important part to play in promoting conservation of the marine environment.

Mr Bleese then discussed the concept of a sustainable angling festival. With Chesil beach being a popular spot for anglers and with the Wildlife Trusts facilities based in the area there was an opportunity to host a shore based catch and release angling competition, which could raise the profile of sea anglers and marine conservation. The group felt that this was a positive idea and agreed that actually many local clubs and anglers/charter skippers were very conservation focused already, with a number of competitions being photographic and following a similar template.

The chair of the group felt that perhaps a good forum to discuss this would be at the Angling Trust and invited Mr Bleese to the next Wessex Angling club meeting.

## **Bass Measures Update**

Mr Clark gave an update on the recent bass management measures since the last meeting, which was pre the announcement of the commercial changes. The group heard that since the last meeting the commission had introduced monthly catch measures, Mr Clark explained that the measures had automatically become law and that they were to be enforced by the MMO but supported by the IFCA. It was also stressed that were the IFCA officers regularly pass on information to the

MMO regarding fishing activity.

*ACTION RC to circulate Bass Limits.*

Details are found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-fishing-restrictions-issued-for-bass-dicentrarchus-labrax>

Mr Clark went on to discuss bass nursery areas and the recent consultation sent to the IFCA on a review of the existing legislation. The IFCA has until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August to respond. The issue was discussed by the group, and issues were raised from the members that the anglers were already restricted by the bass nursery areas, the three bass limit and that it had an impact on charter boats. The importance of the bass nursery areas was discussed and their contribution to the channel bass stocks. The ability to enforce the legislation and any changes was also discussed as was the effectiveness of any alterations.

The group decided that Mr Clark should consider the comments from the group in the consultation and that the response from the group to proposed review of fishing should be:

Preferentially that: there should be no extension to the Bass Nursery Areas for the angling sector.

Failing that - if nursery areas are extended anglers should be allowed to fish to the three bass limit.

*Action RC to mention groups thoughts when drafting IFCA response.*

Whilst on the topic of Bass Nursery Areas Mr Stubbs raised concerns about night fishing in Langstone Harbour and that the bass nursery area legislation was reportedly unenforceable. IFCA officers stated that the legislation was enforceable, and although in some cases challenges existed, officers were engaged in compliance patrols in nursery areas during evenings and weekends as well as in the week. Mr Clark also reaffirmed that any information received from anglers fed in to the compliance risk register.

*Action PC to invite Ian Jones to the next meeting to give an overview of the Southern IFCA's compliance work.*

## **Southern IFCA Survey Work**

Mr Cooper gave an update on a number of surveys discussed at the previous meeting. The South Wight bream survey was conducted in May and gathered good data. This is in the process of being worked up and a report would be available upon completion. The recent Poole fish surveys were discussed and Mr Cooper stated that it was beneficial having local anglers involved and that it would be good to have local anglers along again in the future.

### **Any Other Business**

Mr Stubbs raised the issue of a loss of mackerel stocks in recent years. The group discussed this and agreed that it had been a poor couple of years. Mr Clark stated that the mackerel stock as a whole was not reduced, but that it was interesting that none had come in shore and that people were observing a change in stock trends.

Mr Holloway enquired about the restriction of undulates and whether the ban would stay in place. Mr Clark stated that they had come off total prohibition and put on a TAC, but that this was currently at 0 whilst it was being considered. The group discussed how it had become an important angling resource and members felt that it would be a shame to see this change.

Mr Annear then raised that it would be good to discuss in detail inshore netting at the next meeting.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed to be the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2015.