

MARINE RESOURCES PANEL MEETING

115th Meeting

Brief notes and action points from meeting held at Howard Davis Farm

3rd February 2025

Present:	<p>William Peggie (WP) – Director Natural Environment (Chairman)</p> <p>Steve Luce (SL) – Minister for the Environment</p> <p>Don Thompson (DT) – Jersey Fisherman’s Association (JFA)</p> <p>Chris Le Masurier (CLM) – representing the Aquaculture Industry</p> <p>Steve Mullins (SM) - representing Jersey Inshore Fishermen Association</p> <p>John Vautier (JV) – Marine Economy</p> <p>Natalie Porritt (NT) – representing Jersey Merchants</p> <p>Gabby Mason (GM) – representing JFA</p> <p>Chris Isaacs (CI) – representing Recreational Fishermen’s Association</p> <p>Gabby Mason (GM) – representing Jersey Fishermen’s Association</p> <p>Chris Casey (CC) – representing North coast fishers</p> <p>Ralph Mcaleer (RM) Senior Regulation Standards Officer</p>
In Attendance:	<p>Alex Plaster (AP) – Marine Science and Research Manager, Marine Resources</p> <p>Katie Bacquet (KB) – Marine Operations and Compliance Manager</p> <p>Francis Binney (FB) – Head of Marine Resources</p> <p>Kerrie-Anne Egge (KAE) – Marine Resources and Fisheries Officer</p>
Apologies:	<p>Mike Sheldon (MS) – representing Société Jersiaise</p> <p>Steve Viney (SV) - representing Jersey Fishermen’s Association</p> <p>Ian Syvret (IS) – representing Jersey Inshore Fishermen Association</p> <p>Stanley Dit Leschery – representing Ports of Jersey</p> <p>Sophie Platten (SP) Ports of Jersey</p>

		Action
1.	Approval of Minutes from the previous meeting and Matters Arising	
	<p>The minutes from the previous meeting on 4th December were approved.</p> <p>Actions from last meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Petit Port proposed exclusion zone – SM & AP agreed targeting anglers individually to discuss the subject is preferable to media release that would draw further attention to low use area. 2) MR to continue to raise with DEFRA inclusion of aquaculture in higher level fisheries discussions. SL confirmed that he is attending a meeting in Paris with Kirsten Morel (MSENV) & Ian Gorst (MER) in February to engage in communications. FB confirmed that there are also separate channels of communications going on with DEFRA teams (not fisheries related). The point is not fully answered yet but discussions continue. 	

CAPTURE FISHERIES

<p>2.</p>	<p>Recreational pot number limit</p> <p>Discussions about limiting pots for recreational fisheries have taken place previously within the lobster working group. Marine Resources have not imposed restrictions on pot numbers before for recreational fishers, only on species via bag limits so are trying to establish whether this is still something users would like to see (previous working group discussions were 2020). Suggestion is a 15 pot limit for recreational fishers and a 60 pot limit for commercial vessels who do not hold a shellfish entitlement on their commercial fishing licence.</p> <p>CI – the principle makes sense, sees challenges with enforcement and is wary about introducing a less enforceable management scheme than current bag limits.</p> <p>AP – if we have pot tags it allows for the removal of unmarked gear from the sea. This is widely used in the commercial sector and a management tool we currently use.</p> <p>FB – there is also a growing social concern over ghost fishing and the social ownership of this issue</p> <p>SM - would like to understand how to control ghost fishing by the commercial sector and the lending around of pots</p> <p>FB – I-VMS will help to unravel this and hasn't seen any requests for exemptions to work other gear.</p> <p>Biodegradable twine discussion</p> <p>DT – it wasn't popular within the JFA at the time to have the laced in panel but the door lock twine was accepted more widely. A shellfish cap on licences came in many years ago as vessels started moving from trawling to targeting shellfish. The cap was implemented then and fishers have had the option for many years to apply/purchase a shellfish licence. JFA never agreed to a 60 pot licence for the commercial sector. We must impose global limits. There has always been a call to manage the recreational sector. We have huge issues with the stocks. Better management measure would be to have a ban on parlour pots for non-professionals and recreational fishers work open gear only . No enforcement needed and this is a popular proposed solution amongst the JFA.</p> <p>CLM – supportive of pot tags for recreational fishers and find approximately 50 pots each year</p> <p>GM – there have been significant changes in our waters since the pot limits were last discussed – have there been any more studies to review that number again. Commercial fishers are struggling to get through the winter and applying for subsidies. Can the number be looked at again?</p> <p>CI – principle that commercials are restricting recreational fishing won't go down well</p> <p>Agreement that MR would contact the working groups to conduct further discussions</p> <p>NP – agrees the situation is very different now and something needs to be in place before summer and before people start investing in gear</p> <p>SM – important not to remove the stepping stones into the industry</p>	<p>MR to contact working groups and organisations to establish views ahead of April meeting</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>French Pollack size increase and closed season</p> <p>EU have implemented ICES E7 and E8 restrictions (based on their MSc) which includes</p> <p>1) Bag limit of 2 pollack per person</p>	

	<p>2) Moved minimum size from 30cm to 42cm</p> <p>3) Introduced a closed season</p> <p>4) Stopped any targeting for catch and release fisheries</p> <p>FB – recognises the challenges with the stock but, noted that Jersey did not receive the mandated 45 days notification and so are currently trying to establish what this means for Jersey fishers in French waters who may target pollack.</p> <p>Currently working with EU through DEFRA to bring some clarity to the wording as it is difficult to interpret what this means at the commercial and recreational level.</p> <p>WP – appreciate we had issues with notification on the bream closure, but important for us to be treated equally.</p> <p>AP - our quota for by catch has been reduced to 75kg (automatically through UK stock assessment)</p> <p>GM – we should align on stopping the catch and release due to the poor survivability of the fish</p> <p>SM/CI – have both seen large declines in the last 10 years</p> <p>SM – could be climate change and other factors</p> <p>AP – usually with climate change pressures, we see a shifting of abundance north of the species, but we haven’t seen this with Pollack and so more likely to be due to historical quota issues.</p> <p>WP – we are waiting a formal response from France</p>	<p>MR to continue to work to understand measures bought in by France</p>
4.	<p>Scallop testing</p> <p>GM & NP The need to test scallops for export was highlighted by the fishing sector. Fishers and merchants are concerned that without continued testing scallop exports to the continent could be refused.</p> <p>RM – Jersey is exempt from having to classify Scallops but in 2021-23 conducted 10/12 tests per year to achieve Grade A status.</p> <p>NP – if they could come from different areas it would be easier for fishers to bring Scallops for testing</p> <p>RM – CEFAS have defined the sampling points (one 10km squared area to the East of the Island) – highlighted as most likely area for disease</p> <p>CLM – should be added to discussions with France</p> <p>FB – French are keen to discuss this and trying to confirm agenda for meeting 20-21 Feb.</p> <p>SL – we do not need a dual testing regime so should continue discussions</p> <p>WP – renewed cost is around £10-15K per annum</p> <p>DT – instigated discussion with fishers on this in 2022 following collapse on GBA . France are proud of their testing regime and sentiment was there to extend the testing to Jersey. It all seems common sense at the fishers level but this was not a political discussion</p> <p>WP – need to establish a common approach and outline the budget requirements</p> <p>CLM – it is a political problem as sentiment at the lower levels is positive</p> <p>RM – Jersey is it’s own competent authority and we do have a potential option to share data and assign classification. Agreement would need to be reached by both Governments.</p>	

	<p>SL – might be easier for fishers to arrive with French classification than English classifications to make the process more streamlined</p> <p>FB – we will pick this up at discussions in Granville in February</p>	<p>MR to discuss at Granville meeting in Feb</p>
5.	<p>Granville SIVEP update</p> <p>FB – MR continues to keep issue alive in stakeholder meetings and will raise in Granville and Paris. We have support from Normandy and Brittany associations. It is also an issue that involves the GoJ veterinary teams and biosecurity. There is also the review of the TCA conversations and border controls in general will be an item for discussion</p> <p>WP – there will be pressure to reduce trade frictions and the UK are taking about deep compliance with EU regulations. We just need to establish how Jersey fit in with UK aspirations during these meetings. We must keep an eye on how these discussions go during 2025</p>	
6	<p>Increase in Octopus – Presentation</p> <p>NP - presentation on Common octopus/increasing abundance in our waters</p> <p>Beam trawl NW Guernsey full of Octopus after trawling for one hour. Jersey is nowhere near having an export market, difficult to process, pack and present product. Price between £2 - £6 per kilo. Congers once kept are now being thrown back in an effort to control octopus numbers. Mainly being caught to the North and West of the island. The issue needs research and long-term planning.</p> <p>GM – small market here locally and difficult to shift (also needs vacuum packing)</p> <p>DT – whilst we do need to keep things in proportion and has seen many comings and goings of stocks over tenure in JFA, there is a 1948 paper which illustrates the Octopuses ability to reach plague proportions. Octopus are very adept at finding their food and finding their way along gear</p> <p>GM – due to their life cycle and strategy, their ability to dominate and eat everything we need to give this issue some focus</p> <p>CI – only mitigation will come through understanding their behaviour. As we know they are a highly adaptable species with an amazing food conversion rate</p> <p>WP – do we need a working group?</p> <p>FB – KAE represents us at the ICES Working group for Cephalopod and we can put more focus into this now. In 1899 until 1950's there are reports on a population here but they died out during the big freeze in 1962/3. It is more of a recolonisation event than an invasive species.</p> <p>SL – are there any management/control measures</p> <p>DT – first point should be to see if there is support from MR to create a fishery</p> <p>NP – difficult market, a lot is lost through processing, can only really make money when it is caught as by catch to another main fishery</p> <p>SM – we need to think about the moral side of things, the public feel very connected to them but they are a predator species and they are damaging the ecosystem</p> <p>SL – this is not an issue we can ignore</p>	<p>MR to discuss in more detail</p>

	<p>KAE – next ICES WG meeting for Cephalopods is in June and is held annually. It would be good to gather understanding of what is going on across the region</p> <p>WP – should be taken seriously as a marine invasive in terms of its impact and similar to Asian hornet in terms of level of management. No conclusion today but a recognition of the issues that we need to work through.</p>	and open dialogue with IFRAMER
7	<p>I-VMS update</p> <p>KAE – I-VMS close to delivery and a phased roll out will take place beginning in February 2025. There have been delays due to various documentation requirements, the live testing phase and the requirement to integrate the system into the MMO platform. MMO/DEFRA are close to a position to sign off the integration and we should be issuing a notice to licence holders in due course.</p> <p>DT – raised issue of the unit draining the battery on his boat</p> <p>AP – confirmed that the unit should be wired through an isolator which would resolve the issue.</p> <p>DT – the installer said it needed to be wired the way it has been</p> <p>AP – we will speak to the installer and add a note on this into the notice to licence holders</p>	MR to speak to installer and update in notice to licence holders
8	<p>Steve Mullins standing down and leaving remarks</p> <p>Steve Mullins leaving speech (see appendix 1)</p>	
9	<p>Update to shellfish application</p> <p>AP – there has been an application to increase number of species harvested and to expand the concession from Bay Shellfish two panel meetings ago. There has been a decision not to support the expansion of the concession and the reason is mainly down to usage of the current site. If outputs improve in future we can review this again but it will not be expanding at this time.</p> <p>Mussels will be added to the licence.</p> <p>The applicant is being formally notified of this decision.</p> <p>GM – at what point can they be marketed as Jersey produce if they are importing adult size</p> <p>CLM – it will be unlikely that they can market them as Jersey produce.</p>	
OTHER MATTERS		
	<p>Special thank you to Don Tompson, Steve Mullins, Stanley Dit Leschery</p> <p>WP/SL – acknowledged and extended thanks to the above members for their significant contributions to Marine Resources Panel over the years and wished them well in their future endeavours</p>	
	Meeting ended: 16:30	
	<p>Next Meeting date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday 28th April, 2025 - Monday 21st July, 2025 - Monday 20th October, 2025 	

Appendix 1

STEVE MULLINS

MRP STAND DOWN

After many years representing recreational fishermen, mostly the angling community by either sitting on the panel or being in the background on an advisory capacity I am standing down.

For those of you who don't know me I'm a lifetime recreational fisherman, I was also a commercial fisherman for 20 years, till last year I was Chairman of Sinkers Sea Fishing club the largest club on the Island. The club has a membership of up to 100 members annually, a social media following of over 2500, we also run or help run all of the open angling festivals & competitions on the Island. This has allowed me to be in contact with most recreational fishing groups & individuals who care strongly about our marine & coastal ecosystem. My replacement Simon King is similar to me with a strong passion for angling & a love of the sea. He sits on the Sinkers committee so will have the same access I had to the many people involved in recreational fishing on the island. He is a member of the UK Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society where he participates in their surveys & studies, he was on the lifeboat crew for 8 years. Workwise he is head of Aztec Group financial services in the Island. He cares strongly about our coastal environment, the protection of endangered species & the rights of islanders to go recreational fishing. I hope you will welcome him on board.

Parting concerns for me is how much the recreational sector has given up to assist the commercial fishermen. We have lost traditional recreational fisheries of setting nets & trot lines on beaches, we are limited by bag limits on how many fish we can take, not directly to do with with protecting the commercial fishermen but there are even limits on how many worms we can dig!

All of the above has made little difference to the commercial fisherman's catches, lobster is still in decline, I struggle to believe that we are one of the few places in Europe that still keeps female lobsters with eggs. The Bass stocks in Jersey got so low that there were fears they were going to be totally wiped out, the recreational restrictions made no difference, it was only by having a total commercial ban that stocks started to build again.

There are still concerns with the Bass stocks. There are 1000's of pounds caught with gill nets in the winter when sales are low, this could leave it unviable for commercial line fishermen to make a wage when sales are high in the summer as too much of the catchable stock has already been caught. If Gill netting was stopped within a mile of our shoreline for the first 4 months of every year it would prove beneficial for all. It would allow Bass to group together without being caught to make for bigger & stronger breeding shoals(Jan, Feb, March), allow them to go through their full spawning cycle(March, April), it would reduce the amount of deaths to rare or unwanted species & marine diving birds, there would be more stock for line fishermen during summer months when demand is high. The MSP is about sharing our waters without having a detrimental effect on the marine ecosystem, using scientific evidence while trying to keep a balance. Sometimes it seems this balance tips too far the wrong way, as with the Bass which locally became an unviable fishery due to overfishing.

Overall I would like to thank all involved in the MRP, I would hate to see the state of our coastline, marine wildlife & fisheries without the caring people we have here who genuinely care.

Yours

Steve Mullins