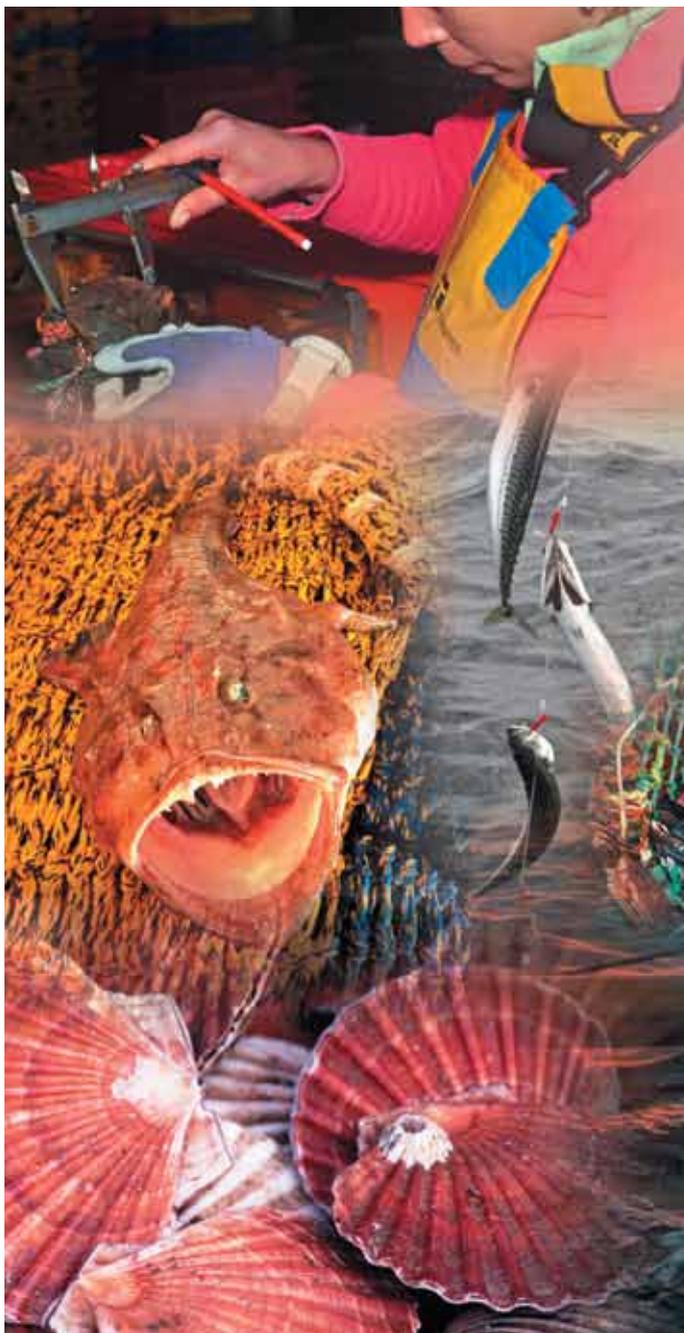


# SCOTTISH REGIONAL INSHORE FISHERIES GROUPS newsletter

spring 2017



The Scottish Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFGs) are non-statutory bodies that aim to improve the management of Scotland's inshore fisheries out to six nautical miles, and to give commercial inshore fishermen a strong voice in wider marine management developments.

The key objective is to deliver sustainable use of the natural resource recognising national and international obligations, and safeguarding fish stocks while optimising the economic return for inshore fisheries and dependent communities.

- **News from the five Regional IFG areas**
- **New Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Data System (SIFIDS) Project**
- **Regional Marine Planning News from the Clyde**
- **Static Gear Fishing Effort Surveys**
- **Funding and Training Opportunity Updates**
- **Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference 2017**
- **Proposed Daily Catch Limits for Hobby Fishermen**

This newsletter can be downloaded from the IFG website:  
[www.ifgs.org.uk](http://www.ifgs.org.uk)



**Industry led  
Working with all sectors  
Local management initiatives**

**Delivering an integrated approach to sustainable inshore fisheries management for Scotland**

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# Regional News

## North & East Coast

Contact: Iain Maddox - Chair  
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### Representation

There has never been a more important time for inshore fishermen to participate in representation in order to influence the outcome of proposed new laws, fisheries management and to resolve problems. Inshore fishermen can contribute to local forums and direct consultations as well as join and actively participate in a Fishermen's Association (who send representatives to the RIFG Management Committee meetings held each quarter). Representation should be as much a part of an inshore fisherman's business as any other aspect of the job and there is no point complaining about a decision Marine Scotland or Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing makes, if you do not respond to consultations or tell your Association representatives your views.

The North & East Coast Regional IFG (NECRIFG) has a new Management Committee consisting of representatives drawn from Fishermen's Associations throughout the region. This group is responsible for developing and implementing a Fisheries Management Plan for the region as well as being a forum for discussing regional inshore fishing issues and making recommendations to Marine Scotland. The Management Committee will also have a role in shaping the new legislation which will replace the current 1967 and 1984 Acts. Independent fishermen may contact the RIFG Chairman for more information on joining an existing fishermen's association or other options for representation.

### Management Committee Work

The new N&EC Management Committee has met twice and has been working through a wide range of matters. The regional Management Committee has already made formal recommendations to Marine Scotland as well as continuing to work on formulating proposals for a range of issues such as unlicensed fishing, spatial and gear conflict plus stock and habitat conservation. The regional



Gardenstown Harbour © Iain Maddox

Management Committee has also contributed to national consultations on MLS for crabs and lobsters as well as proposals for static gear marking.

A recent recommendation made reflected inshore fishermen's concerns about the various economic and environmental effects of the increasing population of grey seals in certain areas, as well as the potential impacts on other protected species. The N&EC Management Committee recently made a unanimous recommendation that the Scottish Government set up a Seal Commission to bring in appropriate population management measures.

Management Committee representatives can make formal proposals which will help resolve issues, develop the industry, protect coastal communities and such like. Having established some common ground on various topics at previous meetings, it is anticipated that more formal proposals will be submitted for discussion at future RIFG meetings. Formal recommendations will be made to Marine Scotland where agreement is reached by the Management Committee. By following the correct decision-making process, results will be achieved.

### Working Groups

Successful outcomes are also being achieved through local level participation in topic or geographic based Local Working Groups (WG). A recent example is the Inner Moray Firth WG who agreed to reintroduce and update the voluntary agreement regarding Nephrops fishing:

"As agreed at Burghead 12th August 2016, twin rig Nephrops trawlers of the relevant horse power, may fish inside the areas indicated but they must use the cod end of 6mm single twine with no less than 100mm mesh and a lifting bag no less than 200mm"

With thanks to the SFF who created the original chart, it was updated and widely distributed. A link to this chart is provided in the News section of the N&EC website at [http://ifgs.org.uk/rifg\\_nec/rifg\\_nec\\_news/](http://ifgs.org.uk/rifg_nec/rifg_nec_news/).

A South Forth WG has been set up and plans to merge with the north side to form a work group for the Firth of Forth fishery. Other areas are considering if they want a work group for their local fishery and the expectation is that as fishermen realise they can influence what happens in their fishery, they will be more interested in taking some responsibility for its management.

### Fisheries Management Plan

The N&EC Fisheries Management Plan will help deliver the Scottish Inshore Fisheries Strategy to achieve more sustainable, profitable and well managed inshore fisheries throughout the region. This will be a living document with a range of short-term actions as well as longer-term objectives, taking into account the plans completed in 2012 by the previous area IFGs.

The Management Committee has been discussing the N&EC Fisheries Management Plan and had input from various experts and other reference sources. As well as taking a regional view, representatives are in discussion with their members about their local needs and wants and all this will be captured in a

draft document being prepared for the next RIFG meeting, due March 2017 Fisheries Management Plans will also be a key consideration as regional marine planning develops. All inshore fishermen are encouraged to make their views known to their Association representatives. Independent fishermen may contact the RIFG Chairman

### Information Sources

Representation requires knowing what is going on and reacting accordingly. The RIFG Chairman sends out emails to Association representatives with any new information that becomes available. The expectation is that this will be communicated to members for their information and feedback. Independent fishermen can request to be included in this email list.

Additionally, check the N&EC RIFG website regularly for meeting minutes, news and information about consultations and other matters: [http://ifgs.org.uk/rifg\\_nec/](http://ifgs.org.uk/rifg_nec/) or add this link to your Google Alerts and get advised of updates.

Marine Scotland's website is an excellent reference source for information, facts and figures:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries>

You can register to receive free updates by email or SMS when new information is posted:

<http://register.scotland.gov.uk/Subscribe/Step1>



Burghead Harbour © Iain Maddox

# West Coast

**Alastair McNeill - Chair**

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The West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (WCRIFG) was established in April 2016 as an amalgamation of the former South West and North West Inshore Fisheries Groups. The West Coast RIFG covers inshore waters for up to six nautical miles offshore from Cape Wrath in the north to the national border with England in the Solway Firth.

The WCRIFG Management Committee is currently developing a Fisheries Management Plan that is due for completion in early 2017. Informed by subcommittees, the Plan will detail key objectives that the WCRIFG will be pursuing over the next year or so. There are four subcommittees covering the WCRIFG's geographic area, namely West Highlands & Skye, Mull & Argyll, Clyde and Solway. Each encourages participation at the local level, thereby ensuring a bottom-up process to decision making. Subcommittees report to the Management Committee to ensure consistency and transparency in decision making. Short term Work Groups consisting of IFG members (and other parties if appropriate) may be formed when issues arise that need more detailed input or scrutiny to report findings back to the Management Committee. Work groups formed by subcommittees have explored a variety of issues within their respective areas.

The voluntary closure of Loch Sunart's scallop fishery in October 2016 was implemented by a Management Committee work group to protect the features of the Marine Protected Area. Designated to protect a resident population of common skate, the voluntary closure was sought because of significant concerns regarding potential damage that could ensue from the large numbers of displaced fishing vessels from Isle of Man waters. The voluntary closure was successfully rolled over on a monthly cycle until the end of 2016. A further work group will meet in early 2017 to explore concerns relating to management of west coast scallops that will also include the future position regarding Loch Sunart.

The West Highlands & Skye subcommittee proposed arrangements for local community management of the fishery in the Inner Sound and the Management Committee has reported the proposals to Marine Scotland. Mull and Argyll identified an area west of Mull which it believed will benefit from local management arrangements and a report on proposals will be made to the Management Committee in early 2017.

Tiree based subcommittee members met with representatives from Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Scotland to discuss management proposals for the Coll & Tiree pSAC. Fishermen were concerned about potential losses of safe winter fishing grounds resulting from conservation proposals and sought to work with agencies to ensure that environmental and fisheries management proceed in tandem. A number of environmental designations are either in place or will be introduced in west coast waters.

WCRIFG members understand the need for these designations and indeed value conservation measures given the positive benefits these can have on fish stocks. Members wish to work with SNH and others to ensure that management processes implemented to conserve flora and fauna or other environment features also take cognisance of the need to sustain historical fisheries. Whilst environment conservation is important so too is the need to ensure that local west coast fisheries as well as the fragile communities and associated industries fishing supports are also protected and sustained.

A Solway work group looked at potential options that could see a study conducted in relation to cockles' hand gathering in the Solway Firth where the cockle fishery is currently closed to commercial activity. Marine Scotland has been clear that any Cockle fisheries project will be the responsibility of the industry and proposals should be submitted via WCRIFG. Another Solway work group completed the annual review of the Solway voluntary Code of Conduct aimed at managing gear conflict. After updating with current details, the Code was rolled over at the start of the scallop season last November. The Code of Conduct has been in place for eight years and is based on the principle of 'phone first'; it has largely ensured that gear conflict is effectively managed and during the 2015/16 season no breaches were recorded. The current 2016/17 season is the first time the Code has been in place since Luce Bay and Sands SAC was designated thereby limiting areas where mobile fishing gears can be deployed.

Findings of lobster v-notching and creel escape panel projects completed in the Solway will be reported in early 2017. Early feedback in relation to creel escape panels has suggested that people participating in the project found these particularly useful as a way of reducing time and effort.

If you wish to engage with WCRIFG Management Committee or one of the local subcommittees, please contact the Chair, Alastair McNeill  
email: [alastair.mcruaraidh.mcneill@gmail.com](mailto:alastair.mcruaraidh.mcneill@gmail.com).



Creel escape panel © Alastair McNeill

# Outer Hebrides

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The Outer Hebrides Regional IFG (OHRIFG) continues to implement the management measures identified within its management plan.

## Cockle Meat Yield Project

The OHRIFG contracted an Uist based contractor to undertake monthly cockle meat yield samples from 6 beaches in Uist, over a 12 month period. The beaches had been previously surveyed to ascertain stock levels and the IFG had concluded that some limited harvesting could be undertaken if meat yields levels were at a level which would suit market requirements.

A short summary of the findings from each beach was as follows:

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>North Ford</b>           | Cockles on North Ford are reasonably plentiful in the tidal fords but are generally of a smaller size than other beaches. Averaging over 60 pieces per kilo, highlights that a minimum landing size would require careful picking.  |
| <b>South Ford</b>           | South Ford cockles are definitely the largest gathered throughout the project and also provided the highest yields. This is the only beach which is regularly fished for cockles with a view to selling.  |
| <b>Grenitote Traigh Ear</b> | Cockles on Traigh Ear are very plentiful but small. Most cockles here are left unpicked for sampling purposes as it is likely that they would not meet the minimum landing size. For consistency with sampling I have picked in the same areas on each beach but recognise that certain areas of the beach may provide habitats for larger cockles. |
| <b>Vallay</b>               | Vallay cockles have proved to be of good size with a steady supply of cockles over 40mm. The yield has not fluctuated as much as the other beaches however yields did not exceed 12% throughout the year.   |
| <b>Baleshare</b>            | Baleshare was found to one of the higher yields with a good supply of 40mm cockles. There was more variance in terms of yield than at Vallay but otherwise similar in results.  |
| <b>Traigh Leathann</b>      | Traigh Leathann produced average results each time with a steady increase in yield  |

| % Yield Annual Summary |      |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                        | Jan  | Feb   | Mar  | Apr  | May  | June | July | Aug  | Sep  | Oct  | Nov  | Dec  |
| <b>North Ford</b>      | 8.5  | 9.0   | 9.8  | 11.0 | 11.8 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 11.0 | 9.3  | 8.9  | 8.7  | 8.2  |
| <b>South Ford</b>      | 11.9 | 12.7  | 13.0 | 13.8 | 14.8 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 15.5 | 13.1 | 11.7 | 12.0 | 12.2 |
| <b>Grenitote</b>       | 9.1  | 10.25 | 10.5 | 11.0 | 12.3 | 13.0 | 12.5 | 11.5 | 8.5  | 8.9  | 8.6  | 8.0  |
| <b>Vallay</b>          | 10.6 | 11.0  | 11.4 | 11.2 | 11.6 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 11.2 | 9.3  | 8.2  |
| <b>Baleshare</b>       | 8.9  | 13.0  | 12.6 | 12.8 | 13.2 | 12.0 | 11.0 | 10.0 | 8.5  | 8.4  | 8.2  | 8.0  |
| <b>Traigh Leathann</b> | 9.1  | 11.0  | 11.3 | 12.1 | 12.5 | 13.0 | 12.0 | 11.0 | 8.0  | 8.0  | 8.7  | 8.4  |

The OHRIFG will be convening a public meeting with the local community to discuss the meat yield findings and to consider future management options for developing a sustainable fishery.

## Vessel Monitoring Systems

The OHRIFG has been in discussions with Marine Scotland Compliance in identifying vessel monitoring systems that would identify when vessels were actually engaged in fishing. Marine Scotland Compliance officials visited Denmark to look at the Anchor Lab systems that has been used there successfully in managing a dredged mussel fishery. (<http://www.anchorlab.dk>)

Following their visit to Denmark, Marine Scotland purchased a system that was fitted onto the winch of the 'Wanderer', a Lewis based scallop dredger. The system monitored all the fishing activity undertaken by the vessel over a 3 week period, covering scallops grounds off, Lewis, Harris, Skye and the West Coast of Mainland Scotland. Results from the trials concluded that the Anchor Lab system can be used to accurately identify the Lat/Long position and the times that the vessel was actually engaged in dredging during that 3 week period.

The system was then fitted to the hauler of the 'Azalea', a static gear vessel, based in Uist which fished to the West of the Hebrides. Results from the trials aboard that vessel clearly identified the periods when and where the vessel was hauling static gear during the whole period.

Following the trials officials from Marine Scotland Compliance are confident that the Anchor Lab system can be used successfully to zone areas where features are to be avoided. The OHRIFG are hopeful that the results of those trials can be used for the future management of reducing the areas that require to be closed to commercial fishing activities within future and existing marine designations, within inshore waters of Scotland.

## Razor Fishery FISA Project

Electrofishing for razors is illegal, under EU regulations, although there is a derogation that permits fishing with beam trawl using pulse current in a specific area of the North Sea. Although electrofishing is illegal the Scottish Government has been considering whether electrofishing for razors can be conducted safely and sustainably. To investigate this issue in relation to razor clams, Marine Scotland Science undertook and published, in October 2014, a report: "*Electrofishing for Razor Clams: Effects on Survival and Recovery of Target and Non-target Species*".

The report concluded that electrofishing for razor clams does not have immediate or short-term lethal effects or prolonged behavioural effects on vertebrate or invertebrate species exposed to the electric field generated. The report also concluded that electrofishing is likely to be more environmentally benign than some other traditional methods, such as dredging and salting in the sub-tidal zone. It recommends that there be quantitative assessments of stock size as part of any development of a fishery that is sustainable in relation to the size of the resource.

The OHRIFG has identified limited commercial razor beds throughout the Western Isles, with some limited stock surveys using a water jet dredge system having been completed in 1999. They have identified that there is scope for the development of a small scale controlled licensed fishery. The OHRIFG is currently working with SAMS (Scottish Association for Marine Science) using a local vessel to establishing approved methodology that could be used to develop local stock surveys, so that stock management measures could be introduced if electro-fishing was an approved method of extraction. Early indications are that scientists from SAMS have had positive feedback on the trials for developing such methodology. If the final results of the FISA project are positive then the OHRIFG will prepare an EMFF application to undertake detailed stock surveys of all the commercial razor beds in the inshore waters of the Outer Hebrides.

## Inshore Fishing Prohibitions in the Outer Hebrides

Marine Scotland concluded a 3 month consultation process on amending a number of inshore prohibitions around the Outer Hebrides. The amendments had been submitted at the request of the OHRIFG following extensive consultation as part of their Management Plan. Following the consultation process Marine Scotland is to introduce all the amendments proposed by the OHRIFG as follows:

- **Amend the prohibition period for static gear fishing in the Bragar to Dell area, to coincide with same periods as the other area closures at the Flannans and from Scarp to Barra**
- **Removal of the prohibition on mobile gear in the Sound of Harris area**
- **Expanding the current seasonal prohibition on scallop dredging in the Lochmaddy to Stuley Island area to include all methods of fishing for scallops**
- **Extending southwards the current seasonal prohibition on the use of static gear in the Northern Barra to Scarp area to the West of the Hebrides**
- **Introduction of a seasonal prohibition on the use of static gear for shellfish in Loch Roag**

# Orkney

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Orkney Sustainable Fisheries (OSF) is nearing the conclusion of the 4 year Orkney Shellfish Research project (ends Dec 2016). Within the past 12 months we have continued to develop the project with increased coverage throughout the outer isles of the Orkney archipelago, and increasing fishermen participation within all aspects of the project.

Some of the most noticeable occurrences during this year have surrounded our crab tagging programme, with a steady stream of crab tag returns from fishermen along the north-west coast of Scotland on the back of our increased tagging activity in 2015. This included the return of individuals originally tagged south of the island of Hoy and subsequently recaptured off the north of Lewis and around the Island of Skye, having undertaken migrations greater than 150km. OSF will be looking to build on this data by increasing the coverage of its crab tagging programme - potentially involving the

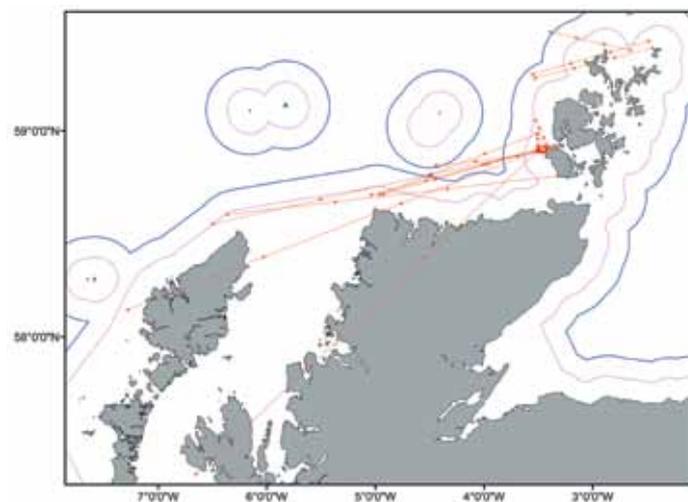


Figure 1. Documented tag returns of female brown crabs released within Orkney inshore waters and associated recaptures from 2015 - 2016.

other regional IFGs within a Scotland-wide project over the next couple of years.

We have continued to develop our relationship with the Stromness based International Centre for Island Technology, Heriot-Watt University and have collaborated on a number of student MSc

thesis projects relating to our inshore fisheries. These included investigating juvenile brown crab habitat preference and distribution around Orkney and determining a robust and effective method for scallop ageing. We continue to build relationships with ICIT, and shall be providing further student fisheries research projects in 2017.

OSF started a new Fishing Industry and Science Alliance (FISA) project in the summer of 2016 in partnership with; ICIT, Marine Scotland science and Orkney Fisherman Association. This project is investigating the discard mortality of brown crab within the inshore fishery by comparing the survivability of brown crabs with varying levels of damage associated with fishers discarding behaviour and their survivability within both a tank setting and at sea trials. The aims of this project are to provide a realistic understanding of the discard mortality levels within the Orkney creel caught crab fishery, with its result applicable to both Scottish and European crustacean fisheries in general.

Having concluded the 4 year research programme we are now embarking on the next stage of the development of our efforts to better understand and effectively manage our inshore fisheries. Mathew Coleman has been appointed senior fisheries research scientist on a 4 year contract with Elisabete Rodrigues appointed as his assistant. We're also delighted to welcome back Kate Ryzkowski after maternity leave. Kate will be leading the process of MSC certification of our crab and lobster fisheries and developing our outreach activities – with other regional IFG's and their fishermen, and with the wider local Orkney community.

More information relating to our projects and research objectives can be found on our website:

**[www.orkneysustainablefisheries.co.uk](http://www.orkneysustainablefisheries.co.uk)**



Measuring crabs © Dave Linkie

# Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation

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2016 was a busy year for Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO) with the Board of Directors and the Advisory Group meeting on a regular basis. We also had our fourth annual Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) audit and went through the reaccreditation process for MSC. Our new website has been a success with several fishermen using the online system in the member's area to submit their SSMO log-sheet data electronically.

SSMO continue to work closely with Marine Scotland Compliance and an updated Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by both parties. Under the terms of the agreement, Marine Compliance and SSMO will assist each other in enforcing management rules and access restrictions which are in place to regulate the shellfish fisheries within the area covered by the Regulating Order.

After the most recent stock assessment the SSMO Board made the decision to issue some new shellfish licences. There will be a maximum of three creel licences and one scallop licence issued. The creel licences will be species-specific as there is to be no increase in effort on velvet crabs at least until the velvet stock rebuilding process is complete.

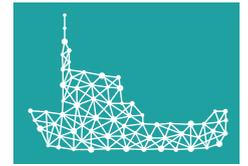
SSMO have commissioned a few specific projects this year which are being carried out by the North Atlantic Fisheries College (NAFC) Marine Centre in Scalloway. These include

1. Updating the Marine Spatial Plan using the VMS data provided by the scallop fishermen. It was discovered, through discussion with Marine Planning, that the recording of fishing activity needed updating. As this information is vital to any planning application decision it was deemed very important to update with first the scallop fishing data continuing with creel fishing data another year.
2. Collecting fishery and biological data on scallop grounds outside the six mile limit around Shetland. The purpose of this is to carry out some exploratory data collection to determine the stock levels out with the 6 mile limit as these populations could act as nursery grounds for inshore areas. This is not a full stock assessment but will feed back on the population structure and catch rates in comparison to grounds within the six mile limit and look into potential relationships between the different grounds.
3. A number of our creel fishermen are taking part in a lobster self-sampling project. This has come about after consultation with our members regarding the introduction of a maximum landing size for both male and female lobsters. The information coming back from some of our members was that the proportion of lobsters they were landing in the larger size ranges was greater than that which was indicated in the sampling data held by the NAFC Marine Centre. It was, therefore, considered necessary to augment the data set. The fishermen have been issued with calipers, waterproof paper etc. They then measure the carapace length of any landable sized lobsters, note if they are male or female and if there is the presence of any berries and send this information in to us.

More information on SSMO can be found at [www.ssmo.co.uk](http://www.ssmo.co.uk)

# Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Data System (SIFIDS) Project

£1.51m of research aimed at improving data collection for Scottish inshore fisheries



## SIFIDS

Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Data System



© Dave Linkie

Proposed and led by members of the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS) Directorate based within University of St Andrews this £1.51m project is seeking to develop an integrated system for the collection, collation, analysis and interrogation of data from the Scottish inshore fishing fleet. It is anticipated that one of the outcomes of the project will be a decision support tool able to utilise the data collected to inform fisheries management and marine planning decision making.

Funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund this 30 month project is divided into 12 distinct but strongly linked Work Packages being undertaken by a mixture of researchers from St Andrews and independent contractors appointed through competitive tender, including the Scottish Association for Marine Science, NAFC Marine Centre, and Seascope Fisheries Research Ltd. The project aims to build on aspects of the work carried out under the previous, EFF funded and Seafish led project 'Evidence Gathering in Support of Sustainable Scottish Fisheries' and will complement and be consistent with the delivery of Marine Scotland's inshore fisheries strategy.

While the project formally commenced on 1st December 2016 it was publically launched via a press release timed to coincide with a kick off

meeting for work package teams on the 13th of December. This release was followed by a more detailed article in the January 5th edition of Fishing News. The overall end date of the project will be the 31st May 2019.

The SIFIDS Project is intended to assist Marine Scotland in achieving their goal to "support the development of a more sustainable, profitable and well managed inshore fisheries sector by modernising the management of inshore fisheries" through addressing the three key elements highlighted in the 2015 Scottish Inshore Fisheries Strategy, which are:

- **enhancement of the evidence base on which management decisions are taken;**
- **promotion of stakeholder participation, and;**
- **the incorporation of inshore fisheries activities within spatial marine planning.**

As the SIFIDS Project Coordinator and MASTS Operations Director, Dr Mark James, explains "There are more than 1500 inshore fishing vessels operating in Scottish coastal waters. This fishery represents an important part of the rural economy and the cultural fabric of our coastal communities. The fact that there are so many small inshore vessels operating around our coast – often in remote areas means that it has been difficult to gather data that we need to understand how this sector operates in terms of fisheries management, economics and its relationship with other users of our coastal waters".

Specifically the project will seek to develop a highly integrated, cost efficient system with the scalability to be deployed fleet wide. It is intended that this system will, at a minimum, gather information on vessel movement, position, catch composition and gear shot/hailed. As well as the vessel based data collection hardware the system will also comprise a central data hub where the information streams collected will be collated, stored and analysed.

The industry, as individuals and through the RIFG

and Marine Scotland will be consulted throughout the project to ensure that both the hardware and any associated processes are consistent with what is needed, recognising both the practicalities and sensitivities involved in collecting fishing related data. The database will be designed using open source software thereby allowing it to be as 'future-proof' and cost efficient to upgrade and modify as possible.

Subject to agreement, the system will incorporate security features and protocols to allow various groups to access the data gathered. This might range from access to aggregated (anonymised) regional/sectoral data for the RIFGs and fishermen's associations/organisations to skippers being able to access data collected by their own vessel. The main focus however will be the creation of a 'real-world' system, employing automation wherever possible, to collect quality assured data on inshore fishing activity across Scotland (particularly those areas where data is deficient) to provide a robust and objective evidence base for use by inshore stakeholders.

As well as developing mechanisms for collecting fisheries data the project also incorporates work

packages which will examine the role of social, cultural, physical and economic drivers on the decisions made by fishermen. It is intended that the outputs generated by these work packages will feed into the data hub and assist in providing context to the data collected on fishing activity.

As the project progresses, over a hundred inshore vessels will be approached to take part in the project by allowing observers on-board and to help test some of the equipment and processes being developed. Further information on these activities will be provided to the RIFGs later in the spring as the survey requirements for each of the Work Packages is agreed.

The SIFIDS Project is designed to deliver a step change in the way that inshore fisheries in Scotland could be managed in cooperation with the industry. The philosophy from the outset will be to maximise the utility of industry acquired data, whilst significantly reducing the long term costs of data collection and management.

For further information on the individual work packages and ongoing updates on progress visit the project webpage at

<http://www.masts.ac.uk/research/emff-sifids-project/>



*SIFIDS Project participants at launch meeting*

# Static gear fishermen's recording scheme for commercially important marine species abundance

Sandy Patience reports on progress of the FISA funded study

Brown crab, lobster and velvet crab are economically important within the Moray Firth and are prosecuted through an inshore static gear fishery. Using a self-sampling scheme, devised as part of this FISA project, catch and effort data for both target and by-catch species have been collected on board Argosy II, over the last two seasons. The data collected, combined with observer sampling, carried out two days each month and are providing new insights into the fishery and useful information on by-catch in the fished area and its seasonal changes.

The second year of data collection project began on grounds off Nairn on the 21st of June 2016. Initially, we encountered good volumes of brown crab and velvet crab with little lobster on the grounds. Coming into July, we saw a decrease in brown crab and a marked increase of lobster and velvet crab. Also noticeable this year was the amount of small cod, of varying sizes, in the creels. From around the 15th of July to the end of August lobster fishing was fairly steady, whilst on one day alone we returned 82 undersized lobster, 141 undersized brown crab, and v-notched six berried lobster.

By September, although lobster catches declined, the sizes improved. Whether this had anything to do with high water temperatures (16.3 C at the time) or was down to plenty of fresh mackerel for bait, enticing the larger variety out is, as always



Sandy Patience displaying September's larger lobsters © Ness & Beaully Fisheries Trust

with nature, conjecture. October followed a similar pattern to the previous month but, with an increase of brown crab and velvet crab. At the end of the October we began to take our gear ashore due to the uncertainty of the weather.

All the catch and bycatch data collected on board the Argosy 11 have been provided to The Ness & Beaully Fisheries Trust. The data is being worked up, along with the observer data collected by the Trust's biologists. The final report is due to be completed by the end of February 2017 and will be made available of the FISA website.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/science/FISA>



Spider crab - creel by-catch © NBFT



Sun star - creel by catch © NBFT



Dover Sole - creel by catch © NBFT

## Static Gear Fishing Effort Surveys

Marine Scotland has been conducting surveys on static gear fishing activity over the past year, with the aim of improving understanding of the level of creel fishing activity in Scotland's waters and to help inform future management proposals for the sector.

The skippers of over 200 vessels have been surveyed around the Scottish mainland – nearly 80 from the Ullapool and Oban areas on the west coast, and just over 120 from the North East, Fife and Borders areas on the east coast.

For each area visited, Marine Scotland sought to establish what the key issues were for the local

static gear sector, gather opinions on potential management approaches, and quantify and map the effort being deployed on fishing grounds. The key issues reported by fishermen were diverse, encompassing a range of national and local issues. However, the preliminary findings from the surveys indicate a common concern regarding the increasing level of fishing effort.

Views on potential management approaches, and how they could be implemented, were similarly wide-ranging, but an initial examination suggests that most of those surveyed were supportive of effort-based measures, but more uncertain around spatial measures (e.g. seasonal closures).

Detailed findings from the surveys and next steps will be discussed at the Inshore Fisheries Conference on 28th April, with a report on the findings published in the spring.

## Clyde Marine Planning Partnership - Status Update



The Clyde Marine Planning Partnership (CMPP) was formally established in February 2016 by a number of the members of the Core Group of the Firth of Clyde Forum including some of those who served as members of the Steering Group of the Clyde Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative. Membership has now expanded and includes a wide range of important stakeholders including the West Coast Regional IFG, the Clyde Fishermen's Association as well as representatives from aquaculture, environment and recreation, relevant local authorities and other statutory organisations such as Peel Ports.

Marine Scotland has proposed to nominate the CMPP as the delegate for taking forward regional marine planning in the Clyde and published a public notice to this effect. At time of writing a revised Direction is with public authorities and the CMPP for consideration. Once adopted by Ministers the Plan will be statutory in nature. The CMPP will be a statutory consultee in all relevant license applications and Plan related developments.

The role of the CMPP, when creating a regional marine plan, will include:

- **Assessing the condition of the region**
- **Summarising the significant pressures and consequences of human activity**
- **Setting relevant economic, social, marine ecosystem and climate change policies**
- **Keeping under review the characteristics of the region**

As part of the planning process CMPP has drafted the 'Assessment of the Condition of the Clyde Marine Region' identifying significant pressures and main issues to be dealt with in the marine plan. This will be published in 2017.

Core to the CMPP's approach is public and stakeholder input. Work is underway on a Statement of Public Participation which will be published on the website and will outline key times and ways that people can get involved. Currently the WCRIFG feeds into the process of Plan making and policy design through both the CMPP members' meetings and the Clyde 2020 process. The WCRIFG Fisheries Management Plan, which is currently under development, will also be an important consideration for marine planning in the Clyde.

Members meet once a quarter to discuss the development of the Regional Marine Plan and a quorum of 8 members is required at every meeting. More information about the structure of the CMPP including the members and constitution can be found here <http://www.clydemarineplan.scot/about-us/about-the-clyde-marine-planning-partnership/>

Once the Direction is confirmed early in 2017 the CMPP will progress with the publication of the Statement of Public Participation and the Assessment. Following this will be a period of public and stakeholder engagement which will identify main issues to be dealt with by the Clyde Marine Plan. Further information: [www.clydemarineplan.scot](http://www.clydemarineplan.scot)

# Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Celtic Seas (SIMCelt)

SIMCelt ([www.simcelt.eu](http://www.simcelt.eu)) is a two-year project that aims to enhance cross-border cooperation between the UK, Ireland and France to achieve the successful planning of their adjacent marine areas in the Celtic Seas. Each country is at different stages of marine planning but recognises that the marine environment is a fluid border between different administrations. The project, therefore, is intended to develop ways to approach transboundary marine planning so that the inherent challenges of the process can be addressed.

Marine planning is a way of sustainably managing the increasing, and potentially conflicting, demands on our seas and their sensitive resources. It cuts across different policy areas, enabling public authorities and stakeholders to participate in a coordinated, integrated and cross-border approach that considers ecosystems as well as economies.

The SIMCelt initiative has several work streams that will be completed by the end of 2017. Partners include Marine Scotland, the Department for the Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, the Irish Marine Institute and the French Agencies for hydrography and Marine Protected Areas. Academic support is provided by the Universities of Cork and Liverpool.

Marine Scotland is leading on two Case Studies that look at cross-border marine planning within the Solway Firth and the Firth of Clyde. In the Solway, the northern part is subject to marine planning as it is carried out under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 but the southern part comes under the planning jurisdiction of the English Marine Management Organisation.

In addition, the Northern Irish Marine Plan area and the Isle of Man's waters also need to be taken into consideration. The Solway SIMCelt Case Study is, therefore, looking at all the issues that must be accommodated in order for marine planning proposals to benefit each other rather than cause problems across administrative borders.

In the Clyde, the process for developing a Regional Marine Plan to complement the requirements of the Scottish National Marine Plan is under way. Transboundary planning in this area will have to take into account the interests of many different stakeholders as well as eight Local Authorities,



Marine Spatial Planning Challenge "game"- blocks represent different sectoral interests © Sarah Brown



Multiple users, key habitats, sectoral interests - it's a real challenge! © Sarah Brown

a National Park and other public authorities. The Clyde SIMCelt Case Study has allowed an innovative game – the MSP Challenge, Clyde Version – to be developed in order to better understand the planning process. The game will be used around the Clyde during 2017 to engage with stakeholders and demonstrate the complexities of matching varied viewpoints and competing demands on resources.

# Funding Update

## European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Following the EU Referendum, the EMFF programme is presently continuing to operate as normal. The Scottish Government will provide updates as the situation becomes clearer. The fourth round of applications for EMFF closed on 31 January 2017.

## Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG)

Fisheries Local Action Groups administer grant funding as part of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund community led local development programme to support fishing, aquaculture and maritime industries around coastal communities.

The FLAG is made up of representatives from the fishing industry and coastal community interests from both the private and public sector and will consider applications for funding. To support the work of the FLAG a Development Officer is in place to help those wishing to apply to the fund.

Sarah Lamb, Highland & Moray FLAG Development Officer commented:

"It's really important that the industry and local communities are aware of the opportunities available to them through the FLAG. Those wishing to apply will have support they need to submit an application, this is particularly helpful for people who have never applied for funding before, and so I encourage anyone who has a project or business idea to get in touch."

The fund can be used to support a wide variety of projects that will deliver on adding value to fisheries products, creating job opportunities and stimulating economic growth in fishing, aquaculture and marine based industries, as well as promoting co-operation and innovation.

Mike Park, Scottish Whitefish Producers Association "The FLAG gives us a fantastic investment opportunity for our maritime industries, and it comes along at a vital time where we want to protect and grow business in Scotland. Grants are available to fishing and aquaculture sectors including harbours, ports, fishermen, wholesalers, processing and research, and maritime tourism projects. As funding is allocated on a first come first serve basis upon application approval, I would encourage businesses and groups to contact the Development Officer as soon as possible to discuss their project idea and for assistance through the application process"

For further guidance and to obtain a copy of the Expressions of Interest form please contact your regional FLAG development officer.

Sarah Lamb, Highland and Moray FLAG Development Officer :

Tel 01955 609560 or email [sarah.lamb@highland.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.lamb@highland.gov.uk).

# Training Opportunity

## The Business of Fishing: A journey into fisheries science and management

Date: June 2017



In 2017 fishing is about more than just catching. Fishing into the Future, a UK-based charity, is working with the Scottish White Fish Producers Association and the Scottish Fisheries Federation and others to deliver a training course for Scottish fishermen called "The Business of Fishing: A journey into fisheries science and management."

This course seeks to bring all who attend on a journey into the what, when and why of fisheries science. Fishing is a complex business and science is pivotal. It has been developed with the help of fishermen who understand your needs. It complements your current knowledge and provides practical opportunities to go 'under the bonnet' of fisheries management, science and the market place on which a successful fishing business depends on

The course will stretch your thinking. You will work with other like-minded professionals to learn and interrogate the processes involved. No in depth scientific knowledge is needed to enrol on the course just come with an open mind and a willing spirit. You will be able to share insights and build understanding away from the pressures of fishery regulation.

You can apply for the course online at [www.fishingintothefuture.co.uk/training](http://www.fishingintothefuture.co.uk/training). All meals and accommodation are provided; travel support and other incentives are available for course participants.

For questions about the programme please call our team:

- **Jim Masters (Fishing into the Future)**  
on 01803 659219 or 07900244507
- **Mike Park (Scottish White Fish Producer's Association)**  
on 07710504773
- **Derek Cardno (Scottish Fishermen's Federation)**  
on 01224 646944 or 07545 429314



Steve Mackinson © SWFPA



Hauling Creels © Lachie Paterson



Lobster V-Notching  
© Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation



Fraserburgh Harbour © Seafish Images

Mending Nets © Adrian T Jones / Shutterstock

# News in Brief

## Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference 2017 - Save the Date!!

Your opportunity to have a say on how inshore fisheries are managed!

The fourth Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference will be held on Thursday 27th April and Friday 28th April 2017 at Eden Court in Inverness. The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity will address the conference on the Friday morning. Delegates will have the opportunity to attend workshops covering a diverse range of issues from Brexit to management of our crab and lobster stocks. More information will be available shortly and details of how to register will be available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesConference>



# Proposals for Setting Daily Catch Limits for Unlicensed/Hobby Fishermen

In the summer of 2016 Marine Scotland sought views on proposed catch limits for hobby/unlicensed fishermen in Scottish inshore waters. An outcome report following analysis of responses is now available on Marine Scotland's website and sets out the intention to introduce the proposed catch limits. The proposed measures will not affect licensed commercial fishermen. It was clear from responses to the consultation that there is wide support for the principle that fishermen who are not licensed to fish on a commercial basis should have reasonable restrictions in place to limit the number, per species, of certain shellfish, that they can take. We intend the proposals to come into force before Summer 2017.

The proposed catch limits for unlicensed/hobby fishermen are:

| Species            | Daily Catch Limit |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Lobster            | 1                 |
| Nephrops           | 10                |
| Crab (any species) | 5                 |
| Scallops           | 6                 |

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/unlicensed>

# Landing Controls for Crab and Lobster - new conservation measures announced

Scottish shellfish are to be given additional protection through new conservation measures announced by Fisheries Secretary Fergus Ewing on 20 January 2017. Following a consultation, the Scottish Government will introduce landing controls intended to improve the sustainability and management of Scotland's crab and lobster fisheries.

The minimum landing sizes for crab and lobster will be increased as follows:

- **brown crab from 130/140 mm to 150 mm (excluding Shetland)**
- **velvet crab from 65 mm to 70 mm**
- **lobster from 87 mm to 90 mm on the west coast (excluding Solway Firth).**

Additionally, the maximum landing size of female lobster will be decreased to 145 mm (excluding Orkney and Shetland), and the landing of berried (egg bearing) velvet crab will be prohibited. These measures are expected to come into force later in the year.

Commenting on the new measures, Mr Ewing said:

"Scottish crab and lobster are an important part of the rural economy, fished by almost 1,400 creel vessels around the coast. Landings were worth £26.8 million to the economy in 2015, helping to support many remote communities.

"These new measures are a forward step in achieving the vision set out in our Inshore Fisheries



Brown Crab © Seafood Scotland

Strategy and will contribute to developing a more sustainable, profitable and well-managed inshore fisheries sector in Scotland."

Nick Turnbull, Secretary of the Mull Fishermen's Association, said:

"We welcome the introduction of these new management measures. Mull fishermen are in agreement in wanting extra protection for our shellfish stocks, and we are confident these measures will help to promote their future health and sustainability."

The consultation outcome report is available to view at: [www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/01/1817](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/01/1817)

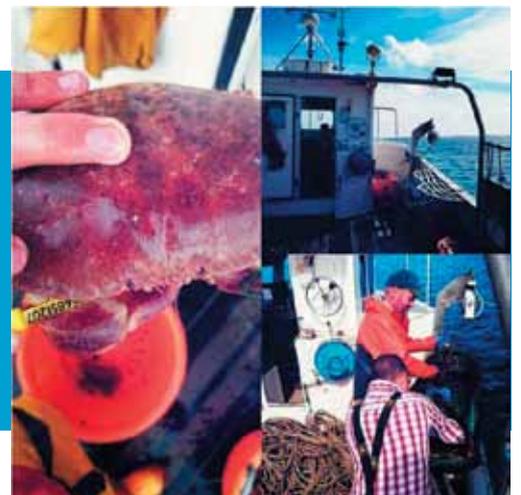
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**Link to latest Seafish Quay Issues newsletter:**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/Publications/Quay\\_Issues\\_Autumn\\_2016\\_Digital\\_Version\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/Publications/Quay_Issues_Autumn_2016_Digital_Version_FINAL.pdf)

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Al Jazeera, the Middle East news channel, recently filmed some of Orkney Sustainable Fisheries' work on crab tagging. This is part of their four year Orkney Shellfish Research project to learn more about catches and avoid overfishing (see regional news section). You can view the film at: <https://youtu.be/5rloZyMqCWk>





## RIFG Contact List

| RIFG | Name             | Position    | Email                                 | Telephone    |
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| WC   | Alastair McNeill | Chair       | alastair.mcruaraidh.mcneill@gmail.com | 07799 572501 |
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| SSMO | Ian Walterson    | Chair       | hnpengineers@btconnect.com            | 01595 692493 |
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## Scottish Regional Fisheries Groups newsletter spring 2017

Please send comments and ideas for the  
next RIFG newsletter to:

Inshore Fisheries Management and Coastal  
Communities Team, Marine Scotland.

**Email: [inshore@gov.scot](mailto:inshore@gov.scot)**