

MARINE RESOURCES PANEL MEETING

111th Meeting

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

24th October 2023

Present:	William Peggie – Director Natural Environment (Chairman) Don Thompson (DT) - representing Jersey Fishermen’s Association Steve Viney (SV) - representing Jersey Fishermen’s Association Chris Le Masurier (CLM) – representing the Aquaculture Industry Ian Syvret (IS) – representing Jersey Inshore Fishermen Association Gareth Jeffreys (GJ) – representing Société Jersiaise Natalie Porritt (NT) – representing Jersey Merchants Stanley Richard-dit-Leschery (SR) – representing Ports of Jersey Chris Isaacs – representing Recreational Fishermen’s Association
In Attendance:	Paul Chambers (PC) – Head of Marine Resources Francis Binney (FB) – Marine Manager, Marine Resources Alex Plaster (AP) – Marine Science and Research Officer, Marine Resources Kerrie-Anne Egge (KAE) Assistant Marine and fisheries Officer (minutes) John Vautier (JV) – Sector Lead – Rural and Marine Economy Alastair Christie (AC) – Senior Scientific Officer (Invasive Species) Isabelle Duggan (ID) – Scientific Officer (Invasive Species)
Apologies:	Jonathan Renouf – Minister for the Environment Steve Mullins (SM) – representing Recreational Fishermen’s Association

		Action
1.	Approval of Minutes from the previous meeting and Matters Arising	
	<p>The minutes from the previous meeting on 24th July were approved.</p> <p>Review of actions from previous minutes:</p> <p>Action 1:</p> <p>Marine Resources provided an update from environmental health on the Shellfish testing issue. Jersey waters have class B status as we now have third country status following the UK’s departure from the EU, and will continue to hold that status until we are able to prove otherwise. The main issue is that we cannot devolve testing i.e. IFREMER can’t do it on our behalf. Testing needs to be undertaken by the producers themselves using a certified lab or the competent authority.</p> <p>The JFA asked what kind of sampling program the French are subject to, as they also fish in our waters? PC confirmed that they are subject to a random sampling program but we cannot be part of this due to our status and would be subject to a separate certification process.</p>	

CLM asked whether the government could come up with a separate testing program per species. PC confirmed it all sits with environmental health and has costs associated that would need to be worked through e.g. Praire testing alone would be upwards of £50K per year so would need to look at each one in turn to assess viability

Action 2:

FB Data on whelks will be made available

Action 3:

The JFA find it upsetting that the Minister uses the terms “overfishing” and “destructive forms of fishing” in relation to MSP as not sure if he is referring to the Jersey or French fleet. Are we using data coming in from France to determine fishing effort, and is stock management really happening? Stability is not being felt within the Jersey fleet and we need confidence that measures have been considered and make sense. PC feels that the importance with overfishing is in how you define it as it is an emotive word, and there is a clear distinction between overfishing and stock collapse. This can be seen with the whelks.

The JFA said that the lobster working group was developed in 2019 and to date it has been difficult to get measures through. PC confirmed there are a number of barriers to legislative changes. Any agreed upon measures require changes in law for which we need to schedule in law drafting time. These are dealt with in a priority order and are largely based upon how much law drafting time you have anticipated at the beginning of any given year, plus there is also the additional issue of having to give 45 days’ notice to the EU for any changes. Technical measures, such as a change to MLS do make a difference but if you don’t control fishing effort then it will all catch up. PC agrees we need more of a holistic approach.

The JFA called for a review of the TCA as fisheries management needs to be rapid and it wasn’t easy to affect any change under the GBA either. Now we have autonomy, we notice the system isn’t working. If we aren’t getting simple measures through quickly then we aren’t moving forward. If we had a Minister who was really determined, it would make a difference.

JIFA asked if we have the the authority to now make changes to effort and advise the French authorities of those changes. PC confirmed we can affect changes under the TCA, the French cannot disagree but could use a arbitration process through the European Commission. We need to make sure data is sound and coherent, and use long data sets that will demonstrate clear trends.

2	<p>Presentation by Biosecurity Carpenter sea Squirt <i>Didemnum vexillum</i>, an update on marine invasives in Jersey.</p> <p>CI Oyster tables towards the lower shore may be more susceptible as the sea squirt can survive within inside the oyster bag as only uncovered for a few hours. Could also survive on mussel poles so also a need monitor those. This has affected Scotland in their</p>
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lower shore mussel beds. Our excessive intertidal range is a deterrent and if it doesn't attach strongly to a substrate it won't survive. Would prefer sheltered coves.

CLM if the species does become problematic, how do we go about erradicating them – is there a product that can be used?

AC said that bleach had been used before but had been relatively unsuccessful. Eradication is not really an option as the species will only return.

ID the species seems to behave differently at different places in the world. In Canada it has migrated out from the marinas to the scallop beds but that is not to say that will happen here. In the UK it seems to be staying in the marinas, except in Scotland where it has been found within an estuary.

CLM do PoJ have any control measures in place?

SR we don't sign up to the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) as all commercial vessels arrive from UK and EU and therefore are in the BWMC. PoJ need steer from government whether they want the convention extended to Jersey. If it was extended all vessels would need to go through the process, with all systems installed and the ballast process taking place in the loading port. All cruise ships operate a ballast system and some of the condor fleet have the appropriate systems installed. We are only signed up to Annex 1 and 2 of MARPOL. Any discharges into the water have to comply with international law and so we have means to enforce any issues.

WP we should continue to monitor this

3 Presentation by Marine Resources.

Marine Spatial Plan.

Marine Resources stated that these are all only recommendations and a political process will need to be followed in order to implement any of the proposals.

Following a question on the subject, **PC** confirmed that blue carbon isn't heavily weighted as it is recognised that more work is needed in this area, but was taken into account. Kelp however are areas of high value to the potting industry and not widely accessed by mobile gear boats so an area around these kelp habitats is recognised for protection against mobile gear.

The JFA conveyed that the fishing industry feels bombarded by everything at the moment, going big on MPAs and then the announcement of a gigabyte of windfarm. This does not create the stability that is needed and feels that political idealism is being followed to the detriment of the fleet.

Marine Resources confirmed that the windfarm does not sit within Marine Resources remit but advised the objective of the MSP was to offer guidance to everything in the marine environment and all the different uses, to develop a network of MPA's and to deliver on the Island Plan.

	<p>JFA said that in the UK the term “Marine Spatial Plan” isn’t used, and has now been changed to Marine Spatial Priority in the recognition that things change over time. They also feel that the timeline for the MSP is too intense and does not need to be delivered by next year as have until 2030 (under 30 by 30). CLM also felt that the timings towards the end of the year are insensitive to the aquaculture industry.</p> <p>PC offered a specific meeting to the JFA next week where the MSP document could be reviewed in more detail ahead of the public consultation.</p> <p>WP the recommendations will need to be debated as normal. Any regulatory changes need to go through due process, which takes time especially if changing primary legislation.</p> <p>Some concerns were raised around how quickly the decision on the Ecrehous was put and only with a Ministerial Decision. Marine Resources confirmed that the amendment to the netting, trawling regulations, went to states assembly to be voted on. It couldn’t be done under licence condition as we did not licence the French at this time.</p> <p>JIFA wondered whether the government could potentially stop all dredging on the North Coast by licence condition but Marine Resources confirmed there are a different set of circumstances when it is within the 3-mile.</p> <p>A meeting with the French Authorities was planned for next month and the UK and EU need to be in attendance. The JFA questioned whether they would be invited to the meeting but PC was unsure and pointed out that meetings are not organised regionally anymore.</p>	MR/JFA
4	<p>Capture Fisheries Atlantic Bluefin Tuna update</p> <p>AP – ICCAT have recognised what we are doing and we are working on extension of ICCAT membership to Jersey (by demonstrating that we meet all of the criteria in our own right). Of special importance is the small size of the ABT being tagged in Jersey waters. Fish here are almost half the size of those in the Channel and these fish aren’t visiting the Mediterranean each year (only Bay of Biscay as they are not using the med spawning grounds).</p> <p>There will hopefully be 2 peer-reviewed papers released soon. One of the main points to note was that ABT can act differently for up to a month after being tagged with two thoughts perhaps the behaviour being a flight response or the result of pain and we are thinking about what can be done to stop or reduce the post-tagging behaviour. All of the work being done may open the door to future discussions on a catch and release fishery.</p> <p>DT it is exciting to hear about and be kept up to date with these important pieces of research and good news that what we are doing is being recognised.</p> <p>CI raised concerns about animal welfare and stress levels of the fish, wondering if there was a possibility of tagging the fish whilst in the water</p>	

	<p>AP stated that the fish are being tagged worldwide within this recognised way and it is unlikely we could tag in a similar way to sharks in the water because different species and a different set of circumstances. By bringing the fish onto the deck you are able to closely monitor the fish, assess welfare, and irrigate the gills at the correct flow rate. MR are using best practices for fish welfare.</p> <p>CI accepts this but it is good to challenge methodology and states that it isn't always the right way just because things have always been done that way.</p> <p>NP can the tags be reused AP You have to dismantle and rebuild the unit. You can get £1000 for each returned used device though.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Other Matters Fishing gear recycling scheme update.</p> <p>AP – MR received a small amount of funding earlier this year to run a pilot scheme to tackle the issue of end of life fishing gear (pots and rope). The scheme is running as a partnership between GoJ (Marine Resources, La Collette recycling centre, La Moye Prison Service), the Jersey Fisherman's Association and Ports of Jersey. We all know this is an issue and only need to look around our outlying harbours, La Collette and Victoria Pier to see that there is an issue to deal with. One of the main issues that presented itself was the issue of labour but we now luckily have the Prison service working on dismantling the pots and separating the gear into component parts and returning it to the recycling centre. We also now have a small facility set up near the JFA portacabin where anyone from the commercial fleet can drop pots and rope using a padlock with keycode</p> <p>DT appreciates and recognises that there is often confrontation, but that this is good scheme and reminds us that there is also scope for collaboration. We should explore the value of some of the components in more detail as lead is obtaining about £8-9 per kilo</p> <p>Other business (Windfarm)</p> <p>DT – Has been attending the Marine Resources Panel since the 1970's when Norman Le Brocq himself was in attendance. When we debate as equals. It's insulting that the Minister is allowing privatisation of the seabed through the windfarm proposals without first coming to MR panel and bringing the discussion to the table. It is a huge mistake to privatise the seabed through a corporate body. Whilst on my boat in France I wasn't able to travel through an area and was told to go around the wind farm. So a message to the Minister would be to think about the consequences of these announcements. As a matter of dignity and respect the Minister should bring this to panel. When we feel something needs to change, we need to bring it to panel in order to discuss it.</p> <p>CLM concerned that 30 by 30 will be agreed and then later on in time another section will be allotted to windfarms. Needs to be consideration for livelihoods.</p>	

	<p>WP it is all a balance and there is a need to take energy security into consideration. Our job is to provide any evidence required, and create better policies and legislation</p> <p>There being no other business the meeting concluded at 4.50pm.</p>	
	<p>Next Meeting date 22nd January 2024</p>	