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NORTH WESTERN WATERS ADVISORY COUNCIL
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GAP
Connecting Science Stakeholders and Policy

CHANNEL SCALLOP MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

GAP 2 PROJECT AND NORTH WESTERN WATERS ADVISORY COUNCIL (NWWAC)

REPORT

Executive Summary

On 15 And 16 April, 2014 a two-day workshop on the future management of the scallop fishery in the Channel was held in Brixham, England. The workshop was funded by GAP2 (an international EC funded research project) and logistical support was provided by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – UK, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and the North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC).

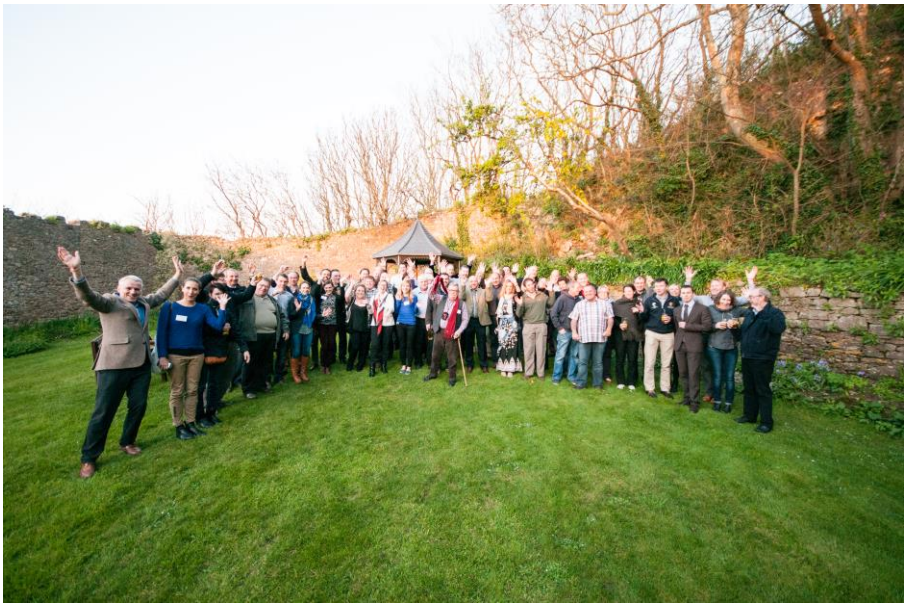
Photo Credit: GAP2

The workshop had 3 high level aims:

1. To examine scallop management in the channel, including challenges to success and opportunities to improve current management.

2. To bring together a wide range of participants from all coastal Member States concerned about Channel scallop management (predominantly France, UK – England, Scotland, Wales, Isle of Man, Ireland, Netherlands and Belgium) to discuss future management options through a participatory process.

3. To provide an inclusive and participative forum to engage industry in the design and management of their fishery and identify potential opportunities to strengthen the existing management framework, improve the scientific knowledge base, and develop long-term goals to deliver a profitable, sustainable fishery compliant with both MSFD and CFP policy objectives.



The workshop was attended by a diverse group of more than 60 participants across industry (including fishermen and their representatives, quota managers, supply chain), government, academia, and environmental organisations. Discussions were lively and participants all exchanged ideas on what the future could be for a prosperous and sustainable channel scallop fishery.

Photo Credit: GAP2

The workshop had several desired outcomes, including:

- Increased trust between different stakeholders
- Shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities for scallop fishermen
- Greater awareness of different perspectives on scallop management in the channel
- A number of ideas for improvements to develop further
- Proposed date and venue for a follow up event in France

The workshop achieved these overarching aims and outcomes and the following outputs were documented by the GAP team[*]:

- **Improved data is vital** to the long-term, sustainable future for the fishery. Currently stock and capacity data is poor, which would act as a barrier to developing a coherent regional management plan in the future.
- **Fishers would welcome the opportunity to support scientific studies** directed towards a full scallop stock assessment. Greater resources should be directed towards this kind of participatory scientific research.
- A **description of the different scallop fleets** operating in the Channel should be undertaken.
- Particular attention should be paid to ICES area VIId, including the **harmonisation of technical measures**. This will require further discussion to reach consensus.

[*] ***Please note that the content of the report includes opinions and views from all participants during the course of the two-day event, and are not attached to any particular organisation or the GAP2 project.***

- All **measures must be driven, bottom-up, by industry**. Whilst this is already broadly the case in France, in the UK greater emphasis should be placed on fishers' potential contribution to management planning and decisions.
- The establishment of a **dedicated working group**, with a specific focus on the Channel scallop fishery, would be beneficial to moving forward with agreed suggestions – potentially facilitated through the NWWAC's current Channel working group.

A more detailed roundup of the event can be found here: http://gap2.eu/gap2voices/channel-scallop-fishery-collaborating-for-a-sustainable-future/

The workshop was run by a team of facilitators that guided participants through a range of exercises and discussion groups throughout the two day event. Presentations covered a range of topics on science, monitoring and data collection, management, markets and industry perspectives. A full list of presentations can be accessed here: http://gap2.eu/gap2general/gap2-scallops-workshop-the-presentations-les-presentations/

The facilitated exercises included unstructured sessions such as the 'getting to know you' exercise to more structured breakout groups, including a SWOT (*Strenghts, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*) exercise which helped participants identify key areas and issues they would like to see addressed in the next 2 – 3 years (see Annex A for the detailed SWOT).

The priority areas were then grouped in themes and participants were divided in smaller breakout groups to discuss each theme in greater detail. These themes are set out in section 1 of the report and include science, the regulatory framework, integration of industry knowledge and cooperation, market aspects, governance, management and communications. Section 2 provides overarching participant outputs and section 3 sets out next steps.

Section 1: Key emerging themes and discussion

Theme 1. Science

1.1. All participants agreed that robust science is essential to underpin well informed and evidence-based management decisions. The need to ensure the Channel scallop stocks are sustainably managed was therefore a prevalent discussion point during the workshop.

1.2. The importance of adequate funding was highlighted as critical in ensuring robust science to support the health of the stock. The wider issue of funding for research and scientific assessments on non-TAC species, particularly for shellfish, was also raised.

1.3. More resources must be devoted to scientific research programmes under both EU (HORIZON 2020, LIFE, LOT1) and national (EMFF) programmes. It was noted that in France the industry contributes and provides financial support to scientific assessments which is viewed as a positive and proactive approach from which lessons could be derived.

1.4. The newly created ICES Working Group on scallops was also welcomed. It was thought that this group should contribute to the improvement of stock assessments as well as assist in identifying data and science needs in the Channel. This approach would help fill current gaps in data but would also help provide a supportive scientific framework for assessing the health of Channel scallops.

1.5. The importance of using fishing vessels as potential research platforms was acknowledged by the group. This innovative approach to data collection could provide several types of real time data relevant for scientific analysis (e.g. VMS, e-logbook, sensors for measuring water temperature and salinity, seabed mapping, etc.).

1.6. Other considerations on science were discussed, such as how to take forward any spatial management through a pragmatic and rational approach as well as how to ensure water quality and deal with fito-sanitary issues to maximise the health of the stock. It was felt that these issues need priority action in the short term.

Theme 2. Regulatory framework

2.1. Although EU rules are quite general and the VIIde scallop fishery is mainly affected by provisions in relation to technical measures (MLS and ring size on EC Reg. 850/1998) and fishing effort (western waters regime), they are both in the process of revision and need to be aligned with current CFP objectives and the EU legal framework (e.g. MSY and the landing obligation).

2.2. There is a huge disparity between UK and French national measures in relation to scallops. This creates confusion, particularly for the Eastern Channel (VIId). A certain harmonization of provisions for vessels fishing in the same area was discussed as a means to increase mutual trust and confidence in the system and create a level playing field that will help to build a culture of compliance.

2.3. It was generally agreed that while EU institutions should be responsible for setting overarching principles and objectives, management measures should be taken at a regional or sea basin level.

Theme 3. Integration of industry knowledge and cooperation

3.1. In order to gain wider industry cooperation and knowledge sharing across the Channel, there needs to be greater understanding of relative fishing activities, on both sides of the Channel. To get a better picture of activity on the fishery it is essential to gather accurate data that can be used to help devise appropriate management solutions. More transparent data on the number of vessels, tonnage, allocation of days at sea (percentage of kw/day), amount of dredges used at sea, etc., will help establish greater knowledge of fleet composition and how industry might share knowledge and cooperate (both amongst each other as well as with scientists and policy makers) within and across different fleet segments.

3.2. Fleet profiles vary depending on the Member States. In France there are about 600 vessels (mostly family businesses and small boats below 15 metres) and in UK about 200 (most over 15 metres and run by companies). Approaches to cooperation and knowledge sharing will therefore vary depending on the fleet structure and culture of the fleet.

3.3. Participants were keen to discuss access to the fishery and felt that this is a topic that would need further discussion. There was recognition that access would need to be considered at an appropriate scale (regional vs. national vs. local) and should be considered within the context of potential displacement issues as a result of fishermen moving out of quota species due to the landing obligation.

Theme 4. Market aspects

4.1. Shellfish are hugely important for France, UK and Ireland, with scallops, crabs and nephrops accounting for 72% of the total shellfish landings and 73% of the value in 2013. Scallops are the third most valuable fishery in UK (accounting for 33% of quantity and 24% of landings in 2013, where landings have more than doubled since 2006[1]) and the first in Normandy.

4.2. Participants therefore recognised the importance in developing internal markets and marketing techniques to improve scallop products. For example, the difference between markets in France and the UK were noted including whether fishermen sold them fresh, refrigerated or frozen, shelled, or in their shell. Coupled with this was a discussion about how to improve the handling/processing to derive a higher value for the product.

4.3. There was recognition that globalisation of markets can be problematic in terms of competition (i.e. the "lowest common denominator" effect) and differentiation in the market from other species of scallops can be difficult. There should be greater discussion about how to achieve market differentiation through better identification of the species as well as

[1] Statistics taken from the MMO UK Sea Fisheries Statistics 2013 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/358342/UK_Sea_Fisheries_Statistics_2013_online_version.pdf

techniques to improve the quality of scallops for the market. Traceability and sourcing were noted as playing an important role here too.

4.4. Some participants were interested in exploring market schemes to improve quality and value of the product, such as labelling and certification. Other participants were weary of labelling schemes, such as MSC and felt they impose high costs for low returns.

Theme 5. Management

Management plans

5.1. Most participants agreed that good management would deliver benefits to the future of the Channel scallop fishery. Effective planning and the use of appropriate tools need to be part of the design of any management plan. A robust plan must also take into consideration overarching EU requirements, such as compliance with marine conservation legislation such as achieving good environmental status by 2020 in line with MSFD requirements and OSPAR/Natura 2000 sites.

5.2. A plan needs to be set at the appropriate governing level and resource users must be part of the process and take the plan forward through a co-management approach. Goals should also be ambitious but achievable and broken down in short and long term objectives with specific measures to help implement the objectives. A well thought through plan will aid in greater clarity around access to the resource as well as incentivise responsibility for the fishery at an individual level, which will help in maintaining and enhancing the health of the stock.

5.3. Some participants noted that it would be useful to create a dedicated group to lead the process towards creating a management plan. This would include fishermen and industry representatives from France and the UK, as well as scientists, national administrations and NGOs. Such a group would be tasked with helping develop goals, objectives and principles by which to put the plan in motion. Targets would be set to ensure goals are reached.

5.4. When designing a management plan, participants were asked to consider key elements of good design. These included defining goals for the fishery, deciding who will be part of the management plan, assigning privileges to fish, developing supportive administrative systems, assessing performance and innovating to remain profitable and sustainable.

Capacity

5.5 The difference between management of the Channel between France and the UK was noted. For example, the French have a more regulated system with proposals and measures coming from the fishermen which are then sanctioned/endorsed by their authorities (bottom up approach). However, in the UK, regulation is characterised by a more top-down approach with little regulation. For example, the only limitation to enter the fishery is having a licence but this is was not considered a good form of limiting entrants given the current latent capacity issue.

5.6. There was discussion around the differences in allocation of kw-days among boats in the UK which would benefit from further dialogue to avoid conflict and misunderstanding between fishermen. This could be coupled with an evaluation of different fleet segments both in the UK and France to understand better the needs of the industry. Issues, such as latent capacity, might be considered in this evaluation.

5.7. There was recognition that there could be greater flexibility in the UK system to enable fishermen to fish to season and to market. A future discussion might be useful, particularly with UK fishermen, to understand how to improve flexibility and achieve greater certainty so that fishermen may better plan for their business.

5.8. However, in any system of allocation there must be clear and objective criteria to ensure that the system is designed to meet the goals of the fishery. This subject was an important topic, particularly for UK participants with most recognising that a further discussion on the subject would be useful.

<u>Technical measures</u>

5.9. There were various scenarios presented by speakers on measures to enhance the health of the stock while at the same time ensuring the fleet remains profitable. Options, such as spatial management with clearly defined zones (including zones that could assess stock interactions and zones where fishing activity occurs) could be identified and set out in an industry-led plan.

5.10. There was willingness among the group to sit down and discuss a number of technical measures with the view to achieving a set of common technical regulations that all users of the Channel scallop fishery could agree on. This discussion also raised the need to clarify measures that affect both the inshore and offshore.

Some elements for discussion here could be:

- The use of VMS should be considered to better understand fishing effort, geo-positioning and fishing grounds. VMS could also help inform monitoring and science needs. However, any use of VMS would need to carefully take account of data privacy concerns.

- Reducing fishing effort through limitation of the number of vessels in UK.

- Seasonal/rotational closures introduced through a co-management approach with buy in from the scallop industry. Working through options through a co-management process will create the right governance to support any desired change.

- Harmonisation of measures such as a limit on the number of dredges used on-board each dredge or ring size in trawls for offshore waters. Changes to measures should be proposed by industry but government should help implement.

- There should be greater transparency on information. For example, ring size, fishing activity, seasonal closures, etc. Technology gap here that needs to be filled to help streamline current system.

Theme 6. Governance

6.1. Examples must be drawn from experiences on both EU and international fisheries such as Shetland, Isle of Man, Wales or Maine (US) and analysis conducted to assess what key characteristics of these successful fisheries might be taken onboard when engaging in a management plan for the Channel scallop fishery.

6.2. The new CFP must be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat for collaboration between stakeholders and Member States to develop bottom-up proposals to improve fisheries management at fishery/sea basin level.

6.3. A regional approach was strongly supported. The Advisory Councils, are natural leaders for industry dialogue and interaction between fishermen and fishing industry representatives, policy makers, scientists, national administration, and other stakeholders (including eNGOs). The North Western Waters dedicated Channel Working Group (WG3) was a case in point and some participants felt this group was the best forum to take forward scallop management discussions. However, there was support for the idea of a separate, industry-led group to drive management change using the NWWAC Channel Working Group as a model of success that could be applied to the scallop fishery.

6.4. Scallop representatives must ensure that their fishery is considered a priority in terms of requiring dedicated attention. Fishermen, fishing representatives, regulators, and other interested groups must therefore work together to achieve a robust governance framework through a bottom up, co-managed approach. Only through working in close collaboration with industry will there be genuine buy-in to management proposals and the eventual realization of an economically prosperous and sustainable fishery.

6.5. There should also be robust systems in place for monitoring and control to reduce any illegal activity as well as build a more accurate picture of activity in the Channel.

Theme 7. Communications

7.1 There was an identified need to improve the consumer perception on scallop dredge fisheries by promoting those fisheries that are engaging in initiatives that support greater sustainability within the fleet. MSC certification may be one tool to demonstrate sustainable practices and to boost reputation and credibility of the industry. However, participants were cognizant that MSC it is quite expensive for small scale fisheries and is therefore not attainable or desirable for all segments of the fleet.

7.2 While communications at a local level was considered strong, there was concern from participants that communications at a national level is generally poor. Government needs to improve clarity around the rules for fishermen to establish more inclusive systems of knowledge sharing to support greater sustainability of the fishery and economic viability of the fleet. For example, Government might consider conducting a survey to ask fishermen how they wish to be engaged.

7.3 In terms of technological communications, participants recognised the opportunity to capitalise off improved technology to communicate their activities publically as well as to use these technologies to help demonstrate they are fishing sustainably.

7.4 Participants would like to see media on scallops to be more factual and representative of the industry rather than painting a very negative picture of scallop fishing. Media should also be evidence-based and underpinned by science where possible.

7.5. Finally, it is important that the media are part of the process towards greater sustainability of the stock to help the industry improve perception from critics and demonstrate industry's compliance with the rules.

Section 2: Overview of participant outputs and possible roadmap to success

Short term (next 1-2 years)

- Need better science and stock assessments to improve evidence base for decision making. Better science is cornerstone to achieve a sustainable fishery with appropriate management. This might include the commissioning of an scientific assessment to support the baseline for developing a regional management plan.

- Appropriate funding is targeted and used effectively to improve science, data, management and governance of the stock.

- UK Government could carry out a review on the characteristics of the scallop fleet in the Channel. This might be achieved by mapping out industry needs against the existing landscape in the Channel. Any such review could be coupled with an independent socio-economic analysis of the fishery to gain baseline information on economic and social conditions at a regional level.

- Governance needs to be put in place to support future management. For example, an industry-led working group could be established with a clear mission, objectives, roles and responsibilities and adequate funding to support set up and continuation.

Medium term (next 2-4 years)

- Review the management system across the scallop fishery to examine opportunities for a more strategic approach based on optimal environmental, economic and social objectives and outcomes.

- Resolution of effort issue with differentiation between full-time scallop fishermen and beam trawlers targeting other species. This might be considered as part of the capacity review.

- How to achieve greater flexibility with quarterly DAS allocations. Needs to be consideration of harmonisation of regulation and restrictions outside of the 12 nm – with potential for spatial closures.

- Begin the process towards developing a management plan and get sign off from the NWWAC and the European Commission, with review periods to ensure objectives are being met, and progress is being made.

Long term (5 years)

- Develop a system of positive rewards, results, responsibilities. This could be linked to securing stronger access rights within the Channel to create local ownership and buy-in to management.

- Greater security over tenure should be linked to filling science needs by bringing industry into a co-management process where fishermen are involved in the science and monitoring of the stock. This should also help incentivise gear innovations that reduce the impact on the seabed.

- Consider options around a spatially managed fishery in conjunction with current effort or even an alternative system. Harmonisation of management across the Channel can be achieved through an industry led co-managed process. IFCAs need to support the inshore aspects of regional management.

- Agreement and sign up to a long-term management plan that takes an ecosystem-based approach and is agreed through a co-management framework.

- Potential for MSC but not a prerequisite for achieving and demonstrating sustainability.

- More scallops in Channel with greater access to markets, greater security over resource and economic viability of fleet. Channel scallops should be model for success with positive media attention and potential for high investment.

Section 3: Next Steps

1. Present report to NWWAC and share with other organisations/events, as required.

2. Support development of reciprocal workshop in France and aid in possible fishermen's exchange to gain better understanding of scallop management in France.

3. Target funding to take forward research options for monitoring and data collection to develop evidence-base from which management decisions can be made.

4. Develop an action-oriented team to help support industry and government in taking forward options for future management of the Channel scallop fishery, perhaps through the April workshop organising team.

5. Develop co-management process with fishermen and fishermen's representatives to form an industry-led focus group to support discussions on future management options for Channel scallops. Use current Channel Working Group as model to learn from.

6. EDF host a follow up workshop on principles of co-management and the importance of good design when engaging in a fishery management plan.

7. Engage with other initiatives and groups, such as Fishing Into the Future, to develop and test ideas around science and data needs, including supporting science and data in any follow up workshop.

Annex A: SWOT Analysis of participant perceptions of Channel scallop fishery

Strengths	**Opportunities**

- Professional industry (2)
- Good market/quality product (8)
- healthy viable stock/resilient species (8)
- Year round fishery (1)
- Industry participation in science (2)
- Scale of vessels currently fits demand (1)
- Willingness to collaborate (1)
- Shared passion/commitment for a sustainable industry (1)
	- Industry involvement in science and data collection, including local/regional management and learn from best practice using spatial, rotational, dynamic seasonal management (8)
	- Improved monitoring/surveys/scientific knowledge of stock (6)
	- Improved collaboration/management (6 total):
	  ○ between industry members within UK and between the UK and France (2)
	  ○ between fishermen, science and policy makers (2)
	  ○ across supply chains and markets (2)
	- Work together to develop shared objective and agree management strategically to create good governance of stock across Channel (5)
	- Better access to markets, recognition of quality product, consideration for MSC (8)
	- Fishing innovations as substitution to traditional dredge (1)
	- Limit access (1)
	- Opportunism/cohesion amongst fishermen (2)
	- Opportunity to start scientific progression through French/English working group (2)
	- Stock enhancement programme (2)

Weaknesses	**Threats**

- Industry and government inability to work together/regional differences (3)
- Science (12 total):
  ○ Poor stock surveys, including between UK and French scientists (5)
  ○ Insufficient evidence to determine health of stock (5)
  ○ Variable recruitment (2)
- Insufficient financial resources (3)
- Not enough positive government action (2)
- lack of clarity on communal management of the resource which is complicated through inability to harmonise size and scale of gear and
	- Media/poor advertising (3)
	- Intransient NGOs/dogmatic approach of some NGOs on impact causing closures of beds (5)
	- Latent capacity within the sector that is not being addressed and potential for increased capacity (5)
	- Poor legislation/government inaction (2)
	- No barriers to entry/open access nature of stock (2)
	- Economic viability of the fleet (1)
	- Market competition from cheap imports/weak markets/dived scallops (4)
	- Insufficient evidence to determine health of stock/more research required (2)

vessels (2) - Poor technology (1) - No benign capture method/high impact dredge (2) - Different/weak approaches to management (2) - Too many entrants/open access/few alternatives (3) - Days at Sea is ambiguous (2) - Latent capacity provides instability (1) - Limited flexibility/effort is restrictive for fishing (2) - Poor infrastructure(1)	- Science with agenda attached (1) - Illegal fishing (1) - Environmental, toxins, ocean acidification (4) - Discard ban (2) - Inaction/do nothing (3) - Poor communication and difference of opinion on what management should look like (1)

*Number in bracket represents number of participants who presented a particular view.