

## Eastbourne low impact workshop #2 (19th Feb 2020)

### Notes

#### Pre-workshop

- Mention of post seen on Facebook reporting that France will define any inshore boats as low impact.
- Concern over lack of offshore/010m at these workshops.
- Perception that there hasn't been great awareness of the workshops from fishers.
- Questions from fishers about the need for anglers to be in attendance.

The meeting began with a summary of the project objectives and work to date, alongside an explanation of the interaction between politics (the FWP) and policy making and the difficulty that can entail. Defra re-stated their commitment to developing policy through co-design with the fishing industry. This included an explanation of 3 key points:

1. That <10>m definition had not worked and this was an opportunity to revise how the industry is viewed and segments within it are distinguished by their impact, rather than length.
2. That a collaborative approach to policy development is both necessary and more effective to deal with complex areas such as fisheries
3. That there are a myriad of other issues, both historic and current which make any work with stakeholders difficult.

Questions were asked by participants about definitions and their significance, on whether terms such as 'inshore' could even be defined, and about how the project had engaged with people to maximise input and attendance. It was felt that attendance was lower than it could have been and that in future a larger group of fishermen should attend. Questions were asked about why anglers were attending the workshop and it was explained that anglers were specifically to be included in the Defra tender.

Further comments from the room included that there should be a focus on management, and that the socio-economic impacts of fishing need to be considered alongside any environmental impact, as the absolute lowest impact possible would also mean very little income and an inability to support any jobs.

A further question was asked about what type of environmental impact should be the focus of the questions and an example was given of creel fishing for nephrops in Scotland, where the cumulative impacts of static gear (creels) in terms of stock impacts were thought to be higher than that through mobile gear.

The question of what defined a fishery was also raised, as it is wider than just a specific gear and target species and reflects the total effort of humans to catch fish.

The wider impacts on the marine environment were cited, with the impacts of plastics on fisheries, and the negative impacts of pollution, alongside the natural impacts from storms which have (eg storms removing kelp off West Sussex in 1987) altered marine and coastal habitats more than any fishing effort could. The example of cadmium levels in UK crab (resulting in a Chinese import ban) was also cited as an issue of concern.

The entire process of consultation was addressed as problematic and not the appropriate engagement tool to reach and involve fishermen. The opinion was also voiced that many fear sharing information as they feel it will be used against them.

Defra re-stated that the purpose of this project is not to be used as a 'stick' to beat with, but to seek a better way of understanding and expressing what is going on and could result in less (rather than more) regulation, or quota incentives but that if the industry felt that 'do nothing' was a better option, that that should also be put forward.

It was made clear that no fisherman wants to cause damage. It is not in their interest. A consideration of different mindsets for those who enter opportunistically rather than being raised into it was mentioned.

The impact of inshore fishing is always weather dependent and many in the room had fished for less than a week since 2020 began.

Criticisms were made of the process leading up to (and including) the workshop and the opportunity to develop an approach that works needs to be made the most of.

It was said that a definition of sustainable fishing is the inshore fleet. Sometimes inshore fisheries which need to be able to diversify and adapt through the seasons are limited by top down management and this can cause negative impacts on both fishers and mortality (eg bass) which is of no benefit to anyone.

### **First session (open discussion); Key points:**

- Why aren't there representatives of the larger vessels present?
  - Responded that there is a greater composition of u10m vessels in this area, which will change with the workshop in Brixham.
- Any review of this topic should include social and economic criteria.
- It would be welcomed if Defra or equivalent would look into the environmental impact of other activities. For example:
  - Tip runoff;
  - Plastic pollution;
  - Cadmium levels in crabs; and
  - Aggregate dredging.
- The impact to the seabed from fishing is much lower than from storms.

- There is always a concern that the information they provide will later be used against them.
  - Another backed this up “are we giving you a stick to beat us with”.
    - Phil McBride: No, if we wanted a stick we would use a top down approach rather than co-design;
    - We are coming here so that you can have a say; and
    - If you do not value this type of process then let us know, this would be a major finding.
- It might be better to look at methods of how to reduce fishing impact.
- The process so far has felt contrived, as if there is an effort to funnel the conversation to produce predetermined outputs.
- Will we get a debrief of what was said in the other workshops?
  - Chris W and Phil McBride: Yes, at the final symposium if not before.

**Action: Chris W to provide his mobile number on email correspondence**

The point was also made that the title of the project led to expectations that the workshops would be focusing on defining low impact as an alternative to under 10/over 10 definition. If about lowering impact overall then misleading.

Conversation kept returning to definition, thresholds and suspicion that there was already a definition and that the aim was to identify good and bad to regulate. Also concerns about the implications of definitions of ‘inshore’ as well as ‘low impact’, particularly in relation to possible regulation. Idea that ‘consultations mean information will be used against you’.

**Discussion 1**

- Concern that participants won’t report their own fishery as being high impact.
- Questions raised over whether people should talk about their own individual experience, or about the fishery as a whole.
- Highlighted lack of discussion around social and economic sustainability.
- Use of word ‘fishery’ is too broad.
- Belief that there are larger environmental issues than the activity of u10m boats that Defra should be focusing on.
- Worry that the results of previous consultation processes have been used to disadvantage fishers in the past – “Used as a stick to beat us with”.
- Potentially important to differentiate between low impact and lowering impact (threshold?).
- Perception that the co-design process is actually leading towards a predetermined outcome, in which participants will be led towards so that the conclusion appears natural – suspicion that their views won’t really be considered.

Due to the amount of time listening to participants, the first session (which was meant to be an introduction to the concept of scales of impact) was removed from the workshop plan and a

focus instead on what the priorities for management are for the industry, opportunities to lower impacts and the incentives and barriers to doing so were agreed as a more productive next step. These issues were discussed in relation to the criteria / issues identified in workshop 1.

These were:

- Impact on stock / mortality of target species
- Impact on stock of non target species
- Ghost fishing / gear
- Impacts on endangered species / Bycatch of birds or cetaceans
- Pollution (plastic, bilge water, ..)
- Fuel / emissions,
- Food chain disruption / impact of discards
- Damage to ecosystem
- Damage to breeding grounds /spawning
- Damage to seabed
- animal welfare / handling

## **TABLES:**

### **Phil, Jack, Chris**

- TARGET STOCK / NON TARGET Technical measures e.g. changes from 80mm/100mm cod end resulted in mesh-mesh interaction which closes the mesh so the conservation measure is actually counterproductive as it decreases the mesh size
- GHOST FISHING larger vessels offshore towing gear (incl EU vessels) can result in ghost gear; nobody is trying to lose gear its expansive and time consuming; poor marking can be an issue; pot quality and recycling was raised as an issue; the quality range for whelk pots ranges with price £6-£25) and the cheaper option are considered 'throw away' by comparison; for mobile gear attempts at recovery are always made; the infrastructure is lacking to deal with net / pot recycling regionally; a fishing for litter scheme should be rolled out and funded nationally; currently these efforts are at fishermens own expense so there needs to be an incentive to increase it; problems with fishing gear for landfill and incineration were noted.
- BYCATCH eg relating to a bass allowance in mobile gears are unavoidable even if set at 0 they will still be caught; impact of pelagic factory trawlers on bycatch seen as more significant;
- POLLUTION - PLASTICS plastic litter at sea (from land) is widespread; SEWAGE discharge impacts witnessed 5km out to sea; bilge oil to be siphoned off and canned, soakers can be used
- EMISSIONS there is a trade of between fuel emissions and fuel use (eg between older and newer engines); hybrid engines not viable as too expensive and often not compatible; H-Cells can lead to better efficiency but wear the engine out faster so faster

replacement; shipping kites for fuel reduction have been trialled but hard to imagine for fisheries

- FOOD CHAIN IMPACTS impact of factory trawlers in the channel on food chain must be immense;
- ENDANGERED SPECIES undulate rays are caught in isolation as territorial; no dolphins or spurdog caught;
- ECOSYSTEM fly shooters in Channel (FR/NL) have major impacts on variety of stocks and fish methodically in squares and that ground is then totally depleted so they move on - extremely high impact and efficiency - its not possible that these are non-quota fisheries as the fishery is mixed sometimes up to 36 species in a day.
- SEABED storms have a bigger impact than fishing; seabed is still productive despite fishing and people dont change their grounds or methods; Kingmere MCZ is permitting aggregate extraction although trawling is not permitted - this was seen as ridiculous

## HOW CAN POLICY CONTRIBUTE TO IMPACTS ?

- Cuttlefish - impact of washing traps rather than letting eggs develop
- Discards eg bass; having to land species that would otherwise go back into the food chain (and are no going to landfill); 2 hour tow exemption due to survivability but some some species eg lemon sole this means you cant target them as a 2 hour tow is too little time as they can outswim the trawl
- Perception that industry are seen as being liars is also based on historic track records being faked
- Problems caused by giving quota market value and allowing it to be traded out of the country
- Any investments made are often met by quota cuts which decreases value of that investment
- Brexit is too slow and UK govt too weak - demand for 12nM limits to be exclusive to UK fleet
- DAS means intl swap used but doesn't remove effort, just swaps and keep fishing (eg NL - Scotland)
- Inshore fleet are low impact as weather dependent; cumulative impact in last 2 weeks is 0 (=no impact); low impact is set for the future as limits by license.
- Wind Farms, aggregates, EU vessels and pelagic factory trawlers / fly shooters are the main impact to address
- Ground (12nM limit) is seen as more important than quota

## Discussion 2

(\* = this area is believed to have been negatively impacted by policy measures)

- Impact on stock \*
  - Intention is there, but application doesn't work
  - Nets/size of holes in nets
- Impact on stock of non-target species \*

- Ghost fishing/gear \*
  - This is unavoidable/can't be helped
  - Poorly marked gear and low quality of gear means that it often breaks, however participants felt that they couldn't afford higher quality, yet expensive, gear
  - Some fishers will dump gear that's broken instead of bringing it to shore, potentially need to provide incentives to bring in old gear.
  - Lack of infrastructure to help fishers retrieve and dispose of gear – need for improved recycling and waste facilities.
- Impact on endangered species
  - Catching some species is unavoidable
  - Birds aren't caught by trawlers – confusion over how they could be caught?
  - Fishers aren't catching endangered species e.g. dolphins
- Pollution
  - Binbags are carried on board, fishers do their best to reduce ocean littering
  - Participants claimed that they don't see plastic in the sea often, other than plastic which has been left by pedestrians on beaches (e.g. dog refuse bags)
  - Fishers instructed to siphon oil out of water – this is difficult, but not impossible.
- Fuel/emissions
  - Older engines don't always have higher emissions.
  - Some engines might have low emissions but high fuel consumption.
  - No participants were aware of/had seen any hybrid (electric) boats. They didn't see this as a possibility due to high prices and incompatibility with their current boats.
  - Fishers want to be as efficient as possible for economic reasons, it's not in their interest to use high levels of fuel.
- Food chain disruption
  - Large impact on this from o10m vessels catching large quantities of species, however not much impact from u10m vessels.
- Damage to ecosystem
  - Industrial (o10m) fishing boats do great damage, not u10m boats.
  - Fly-shooting has a high impact, acknowledgement that this is a highly efficient method which u10m fishers cannot afford. High impact because it manages to remove large quantities of fish very quickly.
  - Focus on non-quota species, mixed fisheries.
- Damage to breeding/spawning grounds
  - Don't believe they've had any impact – fish keep coming back in same quantity.
  - Don't know where these grounds are.
- Damage to seabed
  - Fish are still there – how can they measure?
  - Storms do more damage to the seabed than fishers do.
  - Dredgers will do more damage than trawlers – nowhere to run aground.
- Animal welfare
  - No comments.

## Other

- Fishers are being forced to lie as they feel backed into a corner by government.
- Criticism of the foundation of original the quota system
- One fisher claimed to have had 40tn of cod quota in 1995, and now only has 2tn. Belief that quota has been reduced drastically and without having lied they would have none left.
- Government has forced fishers to either buy more quota (expensive) or sell their own on.
- Belief that days-at-sea/effort based regimes do not work.
- Impact of external agents are harder to manage (foreign vessels, aquaculture).
- Because u10m are restricted by their boat licences from buying bigger boats, they must be low impact compared to those who aren't restricted in doing this.
- Biggest change to make should be protecting the 6-12m area from large/EU vessels.
- Fishers are lying about recording their bycatch/simply not recording it at all.
- Ever-changing nature of the mixed fishery makes it hard to maintain standard behaviours.
- Want to be presented with policy examples/scenarios in these workshops. They feel they don't understand what Defra wants out of this, and the workshops are too abstract to come up with a new idea – they want to be given options to feed back on.

Importance placed on defining 'inshore' as well as 'low impact'. Next steps

- Fishermen would want to see policy options presented to them before they talk through impacts, need to have something to respond to; consultation doesn't work; don't want different fishing methods pitched against each other; need scenarios to understand what the effects could be; want a level playing field,
- Want feedback to group and an opportunity to input through another meeting or interviews.
- Suggest planning all future events on neap tides to encourage participation
- Further regional focus groups in Weymouth / Poole and the East coast were suggested as was a wider survey of the fishing community
- It was also suggested that the timing of this piece of work on low impact was not good - as there is so much uncertainty around Brexit, issues with the MMO, issues with Sussex IFCA and the trawling and netting byelaws and that possibly shifting the timing to later in the year or 2021 when its clear what is happening with the fishing industry, access, trade etc might be more productive.

## Rob, Alice

Regulations need to be fair across industries and sectors – need to look at the relative impact of fishing vs other industries/activities as well.

Consider displacement effects of conservation measures and what is being protected vs impacted.

Issue with creating a divide between low and high impact as will create goodies and baddies.

Generally, fishers want to move towards better practice but this should have some sort of financial reward. Needs to be some sort of benefit associated with improving environmental performance.

### **Target stocks**

Any consideration of impact must include the effect of fishing on target stocks, e.g. dive caught scallops highly selective and can have big impact on stock compared with dredge that may have only 5% efficiency (but other impacts).

### **Sea bed impact**

Consider overall impacts e.g. trawler with 10m wide track fishing same sandy area vs whelk pots spread over wide area. This also includes considerations of the cumulative effect of fishing.

### **Fuel use/plastics**

Opportunities to support better technologies, e.g. more efficient/lower impact trawl doors and biodegradable gear that could be opportunities for collaboration between fishers, scientists and manufacturers. Funded through research?

Unintended consequences: IFCA regulation to create maximum number of pots may have unintentionally created a new target... Other IFCA regulations also can have unintended environmental consequences, e.g. tagging of whelk pots with plastic tags that break off.

### **Cross-cutting**

Given the idea of a threshold in relation to 'low impact' the idea of *de-minimis* suggested – identify vessels that are not worth managing (cf. French 'artisanal'), e.g. 18 ft open boat with outboard that will only ever have limited impact because of capacity and little scope to generate large earnings. Maintain a limited pool of these. All other vessels should be regulated/incentivised to lower impact.

Fishers are involved in science and paying for it through levy and are keen to support the fishery long-term.

Providing additional quotas to u10s as an incentive unlikely to work. Issue with quota is also the timing and the ability to catch. 40% of 2019 quota not utilised. Need improved method for distributing quota in u10s.

One way to achieve benefits across the inshore fleet would be to decentralise the management of the u10 pool. Not in the form of the coastal PO (scepticism about this as a direction). Alternative might be to create a network of local quota management units and national association (similar to PO national association) that would report to MMO (enforcement) and



Defra (policy). This would be more locally embedded and allow fishers to be more flexible ensuring that they can adjust when they fish – catch better, earn better, fish better. Quota may be available at the right time, so can be safer, reduce emissions - benefits across several of the impact categories identified. POs should be retained for the over 10s. One-way valve should go so that quota can be more freely traded with POs.

IFCAs not popular. Accountability of the IFCAs is an issue. Fact that only one works and because of the individual highlights that there is a structural problem. Issues include too many councillors and not necessarily full representation of fishers. Decision making may not be by consensus and decisions lack accountability. Opportunity should be taken to review.

There is a need to overcome assumptions about fishing. View appears to exist that if making money then this is because having a negative impact.

**Harry, Lydia**

### **Second session (table discussion): key identified impacts and means to reduce these.**

#### **Target stock population:**

- Barbless hooks (angling)
- Respect spawning seasons;
  - This is hard to achieve because, for example, some slower vessels will not have the range to travel outside the required area closures during certain spawning seasons.
    - This could be overcome with subsidies for vessel and engine upgrades.
  - Might just displace pressure.
    - Would require a finer scale, improved and more reactive local management system.

#### **Bycatch of non-target species:**

- Often bycatch is only non-target because of prohibitions, and these do not always make sense in a local context (e.g., undulate rays) which are very common in certain areas, often accounting for over 50% of the fish caught.
  - A finer scale, improved and more reactive local management system should be able to allow species in this situation to be landed and thereby reduce the impact on non-target species.
    - Smaller management areas with more fishers on the board (especially those that are paid for their time, to ensure that they are there for the right reasons and not out of boredom or to push their own agenda).

#### **Ghost gear:**

- All pots and nets tagged and recorded at the beginning of the year, then ticked off at the end and penalties for all of those that have been lost;

- Create facilities at all ports for old gear disposal that is cost free or even incentivized; and
- Reapply the 200nm limit – this would stop foreign towed gear vessels towing over their gear.

#### **Bycatch other marine life:**

- Shoot gear in the evening and haul in the morning, to avoid birds;
- Codes of conduct and fast adaptive closures when high volumes of birds are about; and
- Larger vessels generally need to address this area.

#### **Plastic pollution:**

- More options for buying recycled plastic gear; and
- Need R&D into other options for dollies and as trawl protection (to stop them wearing out).

#### **Fuel use / GHG emissions:**

- Subsidies for more efficient engines and more efficient hull designs.

#### **Food chain impacts:**

- Cannot identify anything here.

#### **Spawning impacts (ground / seasons):**

- Consider closing spawning grounds; and
- Local management at a finer scale that can close areas quickly (adaptive).

#### **Seabed impacts:**

- Drift netting was banned and this meant more effort displaced into bottom impacting gears (got worse)
  - Needs a finer scale, improved and more reactive local management system.

#### **Animal welfare:**

- Limited time out of the water (recreational / charter); and
- Controls on how fish are handled.
  - Could require training.

#### **Other comments:**

- A finer scale, improved and more reactive local management system needs to be a two way information feedback system;
- Changed to non-carcinogenic silicone lures;

- They only get more quota when the species is not there to catch; and
- Need to take account of the weather and tides when organizing meetings.

### *Intro session*

Impact of nature- Storms Ciara and Dennis. Affected the mood in the room and is the biggest impact on their fishing activity.

Concern about giving information to consultation which will be used against industry. There should be a system of rewarding good behaviour.

### *Discussion*

#### **Target stock population:**

- Landing Obligation makes them land live fish which is killing their future by damaging the stocks.
- Their biggest impact is wastage. They could sell everything they catch but need to throw some of it back.
- They believe that the U10s are apportioned so little share of the target stock that they aren't making much of an impact.
- Big ships are disproportionate for the areas they're allowed to fish. Areas like the Channel should have a maximum size of vessel. **(Also applies to pollution).**

#### **Bycatch of non-target species:**

- Local management could more appropriately account for stocks in specific fisheries which are considered bycatch but should be allowed e.g. rays.
- Finding other uses for bycatch e.g. spider crabs as bait. They make a conscious effort to avoid spider crabs when they are prolific as they can damage gear. When fishing is unviable they will avoid it.
- Gear can be adjusted to avoid species they don't want e.g. different mesh sizes

#### **Pollution:**

- Low emission certificate on licensed O10m vessel. Charter boats don't require that.
- Southampton- boats get tugged in by lower emission vessels.
- UK is the most polluted area for diesel in Europe [no source or certainty behind this claim].
- Plastic pollution is rife from trawlers.
- Charter boats have changed to zinc heads instead of lead to reduce pollution. However, zinc breaks down faster than lead. Lures have also been changed to non-carcinogenic silicone.

#### **Non- marine bycatch:**

- Not a huge problem for the inshore fleet. Their gear is too small and this is more of a concern with super trawlers.
- Suggestion that they could shoot gear at night and haul in the morning to avoid seabird bycatch. However, this would limit their activity.
- There are Cornish bylaws for minimising the threat to seabirds. Other suggestions for a code of practice/ conduct which would be self-regulatory.

#### **Ghost gear:**

- MPAs help reduce gear conflict by removing the towed gear which in turn reduces the ghost gear and impact of gear pollution.
- Getting the EEZ back would help reduce conflict with French trawlers.

#### **Seabed impact:**

- They can't reduce their seabed impact anymore.
- They may increase their damage on the seabed by diversifying into drift fishing.

#### **Animal welfare:**

- Disproportionate pressure from outside. Idea that animal welfare is given the upper hand over industries involving animals.
- Factors that recreational anglers try to control: time out of water (catch and release), handling of the fish for photos.

#### **Food chain:**

- Anglers' waste from filleting goes directly back to the inshore crab stocks, contributing to the food chain.
- Pelagics are the main vessels affecting the food chain- they remove all of the bait/ food source for other fish. Big boats should be removed as their effort is disproportionate.
- It makes no sense for them to remove the bottom of the food chain if it leaves no pelagic bait.

#### *Other points*

- Believe that the use of net gear in this fishery is as good as it gets for being low impact.
- Need for a better balance of fishers on IFCA committees. Committees are currently not representative as they require an investment of personal time and effort. Many believe that the only people willing to do that are using it for their own gain i.e. large boats and anglers. There should be a paid position- that's how to attract fishermen with the knowledge.
- IFCA's should serve as a two-way feedback, acting as a portal for information between industry and MMO/ Defra. Communication from IFCA's is key. Discussion on these boards/ committees need to be shared and made publically available.

- Lots of support for local management; this should be promoted by IFCA's who in turn need to be more reactive and quicker.
- There was a feeling that whatever is defined as low impact could be overridden by IFCA regulations which would be more restrictive.

**Julie, Kat** (participants on table including 1 x angling rep, 1 x commercial trawl fisher + his wife, 1 x local councillor involved in EU policy reform, incl. CFP)

There was agreement that anything could be high impact if there are too many vessels fishing a fishery, or if effort is too high. Conversely, anything could be low impact if managed well. There was reluctance to say one type of gear is lower impact than another, as there are many variables, and even what might be considered the most high impact gear (e.g. pulse trawling) could be low impact if only used selectively e.g. for 2 weeks just before Christmas when sole prices are high and they are thick. The point being that determining low impact on the basis of gear is not likely to be effective. It was suggested that an approach to ensure sustainable fishing should be based on Time-Effort-Method, determined by science. It was felt that fishers should be involved in the science that is used to determine management measures - they could work with scientists to design monitoring/recording equipment that could easily be used on vessels. Cameras on board and VMS could be used to monitor and record catch and fishing effort.

There was a suggestion that interaction and involvement in co-management and science participation should be mandatory, as is safety at sea training.

A focus on lower impact was preferred, rather than low impact. There could potentially be a points based system, where fishers get points for activities that are deemed to be lower impact, such as collecting litter. They could be rewarded for higher points - this would incentivise behaviours. This could be determined by a Code of Conduct for different fisheries.

### **Target stock population**

Monthly quota doesn't work. If you can't fish for 2 months, you lose that quota. Annual, or rolling quota, would be fairer.

### **By-catch of non-target species**

By-catch of endangered species is notifiable - this may put people off reporting as if they do the areas can get shut.

### **Ghost gear**

### **Plastic / pollution**

Dealing with plastic was considered something that could be achieved. Fishermen are willing to collect plastic waste but currently do not have anywhere to dispose of it. The barge that was provided in the Thames for fishers to dump plastic waste was very successful - fishers collected

plastic when they were fishing and easily discarded in the barge, which was then taken away. If all ports/harbours could have a facility for plastic waste, fishers are likely to be happy to collect plastic waste when at sea for free. In order for this to work, there should be no charge to the fishers. Fishers could get points for collecting plastic litter.

There is a line recycling scheme where gear is recycling and money goes back into the community. This is very successful. There is also the Global Ghost Initiative. Recycling used gear needs to be economical - may need a subsidy. Need government funding for industry to recycle gear.

The impact of plastic on fisheries themselves should also be considered.

### **Fuel use / GHG emissions**

Fuel use needs to be addressed urgently, given its contribution to climate change. It would be quite easy to change - all engines could be fitted with hydrogen generator cells - a grant is available for this. The inshore fleet is not fit for purpose - vessels are inefficient and need to be updated and modernised. A scrappage scheme could help with this.

### **Food chain impacts**

If spawning is looked after this will have a positive impact on food chain impacts.

### **Spawning impacts (grounds / season)**

It was felt that locals look after spawning grounds as it ensures healthy stocks going forwards. However, they can't control other vessels (from other UK ports or EU) coming in and fishing those areas. Suggested bringing regulations regarding who can fish in waters out to 200 NM, including banning trawling inside 12 NM.

### **Seabed impacts**

Most of the damage to the seabed is perceived to come from extreme weather rather than fishing activity. It will depend on sea bed type. Fishing does very little damage on fine ground, such as sand, as the ocean moves these seabeds anyway. Different on reefs. Need to be fishing in the right place with the right gear. Propaganda about this can be damaging to the industry. Damage to the seabed can be controlled by effort control.

### **Animal welfare**

Anglers can attend to this easier than commercial fishers, such as trawlers.

### Initial comments

"Inshore" – no one knows what this is exactly. No understood definition and this relates to the definition of under10/ low impact fisheries too

Different challenges between anglers and commercial fishermen could cause tensions but overall, it impacts everyone and we need to understand these different challenges

Feedback on general co-management – important to define what you are asking of the exercise – what specifically are you trying to understand. Phrasing of the ask – lowering/reducing impact rather than the threshold of ‘low impact fisheries’ (automatically puts some in high impact and they worry about the repercussions of that)

Lack of trust in the process. Fear that anything that is said will be used against them “giving you a stick to beat us with” Feels like the “process is contrived”

### Opportunities / barriers for low impact fishing

Overall, the conversations led to the concept of having a ‘points based system’ where positive practices score you points towards lowering your impact / being defined as a ‘low impact fishing’ and then there could be incentives associated with that.

Good fisheries management is the key low impact fishing. Management makes the type of fishing high/low impact and so applies differently to different gear types.

Time + effort + method = good management (Venn diagram)

Social and economic factors cannot be separated out from environmental when considering ‘low impact’

Importance of safety at sea. They shouldn’t be criminalised if they accidentally enter and MPA in order to not endanger the crew. Life most important.

Quota management for the year rather than monthly or the ability to ‘roll over’ allowances or carry over a certain amount. This would make it easier for them to manage because when its periods of bad weather they have not used their quota then it is lost!

### PLASTIC POLLUTION AND GHOST GEAR

Fishers are already collecting plastic pollution out of the ocean and there should be an easy way for them to recycling this (a collection point at every port etc.)

Previously in the Thames the PLA had provided a barge to collect all the plastic but they stopped this after a couple of years (assuming due to lack of council funding).

The key thing is that it should be free and easy and not council specific, England wise. This also connects with lack of plastic recycling facilities in the country.

Handing in plastic pollution for recycling/ appropriately recycling gear/ reporting lost gear could get you points to lower your impact.

### FUEL / EMISSIONS – big problem, but easy to fix!

Big problem because water acidity rising will eventually affect the stocks

Feeling that the inshore

fleet is not sufficiently modernized or ‘fit for purpose’.

Need for electric/hydro powered boats or buying a 'hydrogen generation cell' to fit to motor.

The barrier for this is funding as fishers do not have the money to upgrade their boats. There could be a government scrappage and replacement scheme

#### DAMAGE TO BREEDING GROUNDS / SPAWNING – hard to tackle problem

Typically the local fishers know the times and locations of the spawning grounds and so avoid in order to allow the fish to breed. They know to fish appropriately for spawning seasons. Fishers coming from outside either don't know or deliberately go there!

Suggestion that if the 12nm zone was restricted to UK fishers this might prevent this problem

Fisheries sciences is lagging behind by at least 2 years. Fishermen see the changes sooner and this knowledge should be used.

Fishermen could be trained on basic fisheries science and then used as data collectors. Funded and also perhaps receive low impact points if they are collecting scientific data (not just catch recording but wider information).

Trust between fishermen and science industry is currently lacking 'they view us as stupid'. And how could we ensure robust data collection? VMS, if fishermen are doing the right thing they shouldn't mind

Anglers should only take certain sized species but how could this be policed?

#### IMPACTS ON ENDANGERED SPECIES / BYCATCH OF BIRDS OR CETACEANS/ ANIMAL WELFARE / HANDLING

Netsmen's defence (to be able to kill a seal) should be scrapped

Bycatch of endangered

species need to be reported to MMO but this causes fisheries to be shut down so

likely that things can go unreported

Considers that some Anglers could improve in their animal welfare standards as not all follow this code of practice. Seabirds more impacted by Anglers / long line than trawler fishers.

Led poisoning also linking to animal welfare.

Old school fishermen had high views of animal welfare but this "was lost in the introduction of the quota system"

#### DAMAGE TO SEABED

The weather can have worse impacts on sand/fine group sea bed than fishing/trawling. But accepts that fishing does impact the reefs.

Need to "end propaganda"

about damaging effects and let science lead. Science should be the key for



co-management to work as you can't argue with it

### NEXT STEPS

Wants to continue being included and kept up to date about the feedback from other workshops.  
Communication is key!

- Emilys link <https://cor.europa.eu/et/news/Pages/European-Parliament-votes-in-favour-of-the-request-from-EU-regions-to-outlaw-electric-pulse-fishing.aspx>