

FIP and MI Collaboration Meeting 8th December 2023

Meeting with the Marine Institute Fisheries Liaison Team Lead to discuss latest updates, progress and plans for 2024.

- Numbers indicate an increase in vessels participating in sampling at sea program
- Message of participating in Sampling at Sea is a core component in FIP meetings. Discussed as a priority as recent Strategy Steering Group meeting.
- When estimating stock size to feed into ICES advice, Biomass (B) is calculated as Burrows X Mean Weight. Burrow data comes from UWTV survey, and Mean Weight comes directly from samples obtained from vessels and surveys. Comprehensive array of species weights is crucial for data accuracy, if weight data is off, Biomass calculation is off.
- Lack of data=precautionary approach which is always more restrictive and not necessarily reflective of the fishery.
- On the back of the scientific data collection fishery conducted during the 3-month closure period on the Porcupine (June-August), MI targeting prawn vessels for samples. MI noted samples from deeper waters are needed to increase data provisions for the Nephrops fishery.
- Data from the scientific data collection fishery at FU16 to be worked up in Q1 2024, will provide once available.
- Further data is required outside of the 3-month closed scientific fishery. Data collected over 3 months in isolation is not robust unless data for the whole year is collected to develop reliable data sets.
- MI noted spread of samples from Sampling at Sea program gathered across Ireland with samples collected this week from vessels landing in Castletownbere and vessels coming from the Porcupine Bank.
- Stressed importance of “data from the deck” with self-sampling and observer data mutually re-enforcing each other.
 - Increase from 4 data trips to 40 using sampling at sea
- Dap gap- Lack of data from commercial vessels means lack of data on uptake of innovative gear/ selective gear. Skippers may not be getting credit for change in gear usage or uptake of selective gears.
- Discussion on current state of Whitefish stocks and mixed fisheries considerations in data collection and catch composition.
- Ideas between the MI and FIP for progressing Sampling at Sea program in 2024 and beyond:
 - Work on educating new skippers on the importance of Sampling at Sea initiatives
 - Develop vocational course on sea-going/ sampling/ observer skills

Actions from meeting:

- MF to send query regarding Whiting recovery plan to MI to connect with relevant Whitefish expert
- Send Whiting workplan to MI fisheries liaison
- Keep in touch with MI re Tuna fishery 2024 for observer coverage