

Prawn FIP meeting 7th May 2024- Minutes

Agenda item 1: Update on UK prawn FIP- Covers **Action 3, task 3.5** of FIP workplan

- Irish prawn FIP coordinators welcomed representatives of the UK Prawn FIP to the meeting to provide an update on the state of play for the UK prawn FIP and the FIPs next steps.
 - UK FIP was due to end in April 2024.
 - A decision was made to join the In Transition program (ITM), an MSC initiative.
 - In the summer the fishery will initiate a voluntary social program as that is not covered in the ITM program.
 - The social program will cover implementation of a grievance mechanism for crew.

Agenda item 2: Functional Unit (FU) discussions- Covers **Action 1 task 1.4, Action 2, task 2.2** and **Action 3 task 3.5** of FIP workplan

Porcupine (FU 16) scientific fishery arrangements 2024

- 3 vessels per month for 4 months & will cover September this year.
- DAFM advert released 7th May
- Mean size of prawns in FU 16 decreasing
- Representative from the Marine Institute stressed the importance of year-round data collection to reinforce the 4-month scientific fishery.
- MI rep also stressed that the initiative familiarised vessels with the sampling at sea programme, which should help to get more vessels involved with data collection across other fisheries.
- FIP coordinators presented a summary of a 2023 FIP report on fishermen's attitudes towards protection of FU stocks which emphasised technical measures as the best approach.
- UK FIP representative described the development of the Irish Sea Demersal Fisheries Management Plan in UK waters which will include a range of Harvest Control Rules if a Functional Unit reaches a defined limit (Blim). However, no Blim is currently defined for FU15 (Irish Sea).

Action: Irish FIP to collaborate with UK prawn team on furthering discussions with ICES on reference points for FU15 (Irish Sea) as it pertains to actions under the FIP workplan.

Action: FIP to discuss with MSC potential for premium markets for certified product, such as the potential to get information on Swedish/Danish MSC certified Nephrops fishery markets.

Action: Coordinators to circulate the Functional Unit based sustainability report, completed as part of the FIP workplan, to FIP members.

Agenda item 3: Habitat workplan update Covers **Actions 4 task 4.1 and task 4.3** of FIP workplan

- FIP are incorporating more habitats work in the workplan due to an increased regulatory emphasis on effects of fishing on habitats.
- The FIP will explore options for expansion of habitat surveys to assess possible biodiversity reservoirs outside of fishing grounds where the current focus is.
- FIP have set a meeting with MI to discuss their habitat work and links to FIP workplan.
- It was suggested that National Parks and Wildlife Service have likely done some habitat surveys outside of fishing grounds.
- Regarding possible industry involvement in habitat surveys it was stressed that they would need to be designed in alignment with standard scientific procedures.
- It was agreed that the rationale, feasibility, and utility of industry surveys should be clearly understood before developing this option.

Action: FIP to follow up with NPWS on habitat surveys.

Action: FIP to explore rationale, feasibility, and utility of industry involvement in habitat surveys.

Agenda item 4: FIP priorities 2024- Covers **Action 1 task 1.3 and task 1.5 and Action2 task 2.3** of FIP workplan

- The MI rep updated the meeting on sampling at sea levels in 7a across all fisheries, with an emphasis on prawn fishing grounds.
- The MI rep stressed the importance of data from the deck in understanding interactions between fisheries.
- Absence of current data creates a risk that out-of-date selectivity information is used to assess stocks.
- It was agreed that a communication to FIP vessels, developed in conjunction with the MI, would be circulated through the vessel details database, the POs and Co-Ops to stimulate engagement in sampling-at-sea particularly in 7a.
- The necessity of protecting FU 15 (Irish Sea west) was stressed again with a fisher led approach to protecting FU15 and the Irish Sea as a whole, like what is happening in FU 16. This should be communicated to fishers through the FIP database.

Action: FIP to develop and circulate communications on sampling-at-sea and protection of the Irish Sea.

Agenda item 5: Social responsibility update

- An update on the social responsibility timeline and next steps were provided.
- Update that's the tender for a consultant to complete the Social Risk Assessment is being issued by BIM.
- It was agreed that the FIP database could be used to communicate FIP progress and social elements to vessels.

- The FIP will stay in touch with the UK prawn group on UK social assessment updates.

Action: FIP to keep momentum on frequency of future FIP meetings to maintain progress and ensure improvements are made in the fishery.