**Summary December 15th Meeting Irish Haddock and Saithe FIP**

**Attendees**

Patrick Murphy, Irish South and West Fish Producer’s Organisation,

John Ward, Irish Fish Producers Organisation,

John Lynch, Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation,

John Nolan, Castletownbere Fishermes Co-op,

Paul Boyd, Clogherhead Fishermens Co-op,

John O Kane, Foyle Fishermens Co-op,

Michelle O Neill, Kingfisher Fresh

Ronan Sheehy,

Barry Faulkner Jr.,

Giles Bartlett, Whitby Seafood

Karen O’ Hanlon, Morgans Fish,

Pat Lynch, Dundalk Bay Seafoods,

Karen O Hanlon, Brian McCullagh, Morgans Fine Fish,

Donagh Good, Good Fish,

Teresa Horan, Fergal O Mahony, Joe Hannon, Kevin Clarke, Maurice Hickey, Green Isle Foods

Darren Collins, C-Fish

Marine Institute: Macdara O Cuig,

BIM: Daragh Browne, Dominic Rihan, Vincent Ryan, Matthew Mc Hugh, Catherine Barrett

Verifact: Frank Fleming , Mike Fitzpatrick

An update on the scientific status of Irish whitefish stocks was provided by Macdara O Cuaig of the Marine Institute.

**Haddock status**

**Celtic Sea ICES Area 7b-k**

* Spawning stock has increased in 2020
* Recruitment in 2018 second highest but followed by smaller year- classes.
* Fishing pressure has been reduced and is just below FMSY
* Discarding high ~ 30 % during 2018-2020.
* Advised catch lower owing to lower recruitment 2019/2020

**Rockall Haddock ICES Area 6.b**

* Spawning stock above MSY Btrigger since 2015 and currently near highest.
* Fishing pressure slightly above FMSY in 2020.
* Recruitment is sporadic –2017 and 2021 year-classes estimated above average.

**Irish Sea ICES Area 7a**

* Spawning stock above MSY Btrigger Bpa and Blim
* Fishing pressure is below FMSY .
* Recruitment in 2020 considered lowest in past 25yrs.
* 18% reduction in advice owing to lower incoming recruitment.

**Saithe**

**North Sea, Rockall & West of Scotland(Sub area 4 & 6 and Division3.a)**

* Spawning stock fluctuated without trend and has been above MSY Btrigger since 1996.
* Fishing pressure increased recently; above FMSY in 2020.
* Recruitment lower in recent years.
* Stock declining since 2017 as a result of poorer recruitment.
* In 2021, quota in 6 was 9.4% (6175 t) of TAC for the stock

For **West of Ireland and Celtic Sea Saithe (ICES Areas 7 to 10)** there is no update as the stock is not subject to a full scientific assessment, it is considered a bycatch stock and the advice will not be reviewed until 2022. However in the 2022 Stock Book the Marine Institute note that preliminary catch data show international catches average around 365 t over the past 3 years, which is well below the TAC.

One of the major points stressed by Macdara was the need for additional sampling data provision to the Marine Institute sampling-at-sea program due to the impact of covid restrictions on observer coverage and scientific surveys. It was agreed that the Co-ops and Producer Organisations would communicate to their members the need to participate in this data provision. This initiative will be supported by the FIP with information outlining the importance of improvement in this area.

**Action:** This initiative by the Co-ops and POs to increase data provision will be further supported by the organisation by the FIP of port workshops to increase awareness of this and other FIP workplan elements among skippers. As BIM are also organising regional workshops on selective gear in 2022 it was agreed that these 2 workshop initiatives would be merged and to organise these as soon as Covid restrictions are eased.

**FIP vessel membership update**

Mike Fitzpatrick of Verifact gave an update on the ongoing initiative to increase vessel membership of the FIP. Having worked with all of the main co-ops and sales agents for whitefish it is estimated that over 70 to 80% of the Irish fleet catching whitefish species are now FIP members.

**Rockall Haddock potential MSC application**

There was a detailed discussion of the possibility of applying for MSC certification for Rockall Haddock. A document summarising the issues including sustainability aspects, costs and timelines was circulated in advance of the meeting.

**Action:** It was agreed that a working group would be formed to make progress on this issue and to decide on how best to proceed. This working group structure, similar to that developed by the Brown Crab and Nephrops FIPs, will be established to tackle specific workplan issues for the Haddock and Saithe FIPs. The working group will also tackle Principle 1 and 2 issues such as improving industry data provision to the Marine Institute sampling-at-sea program and the uptake of more selective fishing gears across vessels that are FIP members. The make-up of this sub-group will be formalised early in 2022.

**Social risk assessment update**

Mike Fitzpatrick updated the meeting on recently introduced requirements for FIPs registered with Fishery Progress to submit an initial self-assessment for social risk criteria and dependent on that the conducting over the following 12 months of a detailed risk assessment and development of a social work plan.