**Summary December 15th Meeting Irish Nephrops 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 Nephrops stock status by functional unit was provided by Macdara O Cuaig of the Marine Institute. The update highlighted a positive or reasonably stable trends regarding MSY levels of fishing in FU15 Western Irish Sea, FU16 Porcupine and FU20-21 Labadie, Jones and Cockburn Banks. A negative trend was highlighted in FU17 Aran Ground and FU22 The Smalls.

Macdara highlighted the need, particularly in FU 16, for improved industry data provision to the Marine Institute sampling-at-sea program. 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.

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.

In the discussion that followed fishing industry representatives highlighted the necessity for the FIP to input to improved management of Nephrops in tandem with the industry-science partnership initiative. In particular the need for the FIP to input on potentially increasing effort in FU16, Porcupine Bank, was highlighted. There was a discussion focussed on FU 16, which has the highest economic value, on how a management approach, tailored to the specifics of both the stock and the fishery in that functional unit could be developed both through the FIP and the industry-science partnership.

It was agreed that a sub-group to tackle FIP workplan actions under Principle 1 and 2 would be formed. This working group would deal with 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 in early January. A meeting has already been scheduled between members of this group and the Marine Institute Nephrops scientists in the week of January 24th 2022.

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 Nephrops it is estimated that over 75% of the Irish fleet catching Nephrops are now FIP members.

There was a detailed discussion of the possibility of applying for MSC certification for Porcupine Nephrops. A document summarising the issues including sustainability aspects, costs and timelines was circulated in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that a further sub-group would be formed to progress this and to decide on how best to proceed.