

FISHERIES COMMITTEE

OPEN MINUTES

**Fisheries Department
Thursday, 16th June 2016
9.00am**

These minutes are draft minutes until confirmed by resolution at the next meeting of this committee

Present:	The Honourable Phyl Rendell - Chairperson	PR
	The Honourable Ian Hansen	IH
	Director of Natural Resources – John Barton	DNR
	Acting Marine officer- Bernard Meehan	BM
	Dr Sasha Arkhipkin	SA
	Mrs Cheryl Roberts	CR
	Mr Drew Irvine	DI
	Mr Lewis Clifton	LC
	Mr Stuart Wallace	SW

Minute Taker: Miss Beverley Reid

Public: 2

1 Apologies for Absence ACTION

1.1 Mr Alex Reid, Mr Hamish Wylie & Capt. Chris Locke

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 FIFCA members declared an interest in the whole agenda.

3 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th February 2016

3.1 Matters arising from the Minutes held on the 16th February 2016 Item 7.1 –

Industry representatives indicated that the following text reflected their position on this item at the February meeting:

All views received by FIFCA were represented. Although one member thought that a final position should be agreed rather than it being done piecemeal and that allocation should not be done on a historical effort basis, the majority of members who responded supported the following views:.

- The principle that the illex fishery will move to the ITQ system broadly on the same principles as the rest of the

fishery.

- Consultation will allow individuals to comment on the fine details and their own perspectives.
- It was emphasised that Falkland Islanders should hold the power and leverage and not foreign interests/associations.
- It was strongly pushed that the Illex ITQ should not be charged for. If Illex is charged for it will burden companies with debt where the incentive should be in creating an environment for investment and development.
- FIFCA also pushed strongly for a 25 year duration and not 15.
- Allocation should be based on historical track record

3.2 Matters arising from the Minutes held on the 16th February 2016 Item 3.3 & Item 6.2.2 of previous minutes – In reference to the comments by DNR, FIFCA commented that the Blue Belt Initiative should not set our priorities. Our priorities should reflect what is best for the FI and not international pressures.

8.3 Delete “in” repeated in line 4

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd December 2015

4.1 On page 2 of the minutes, point 5.1. LC asked does the committee have access to the Rock Cod survey. SA replied that the results are available in 2 parts, the summary, and the results of the survey. SA will e-mail to FIFCA **SA**

4.2 On page 2, point 5.3. CR asked if the fuel pipe can be connected on the West berth, DNR said it is currently being looked into to ensure it doesn't interfere with the works on FIPASS. BM will keep the committee updated as to when this might be happening. **BM**

4.3 On page 3, point 5.4. CR asked about the TDF paper. IH said that he is having a meeting with Matt Bassford in the afternoon about it and will get back to the committee. The paper will go to ExCo later this month. The Industry Representatives indicated that they were unaware of any consultation on this and would welcome the opportunity to have input. **IH**

5. Fisheries Update

5.1 SA gave a brief overview of resources indicating that the Illex fishery this year was poor but not because it was overfished. Abundance in Argentine was also low at around 40,000t caught so far mainly in the North. Loligo was better than expected as there was concern about Illex impacting the 1st cohort of squid. Although the first few weeks were not good it seems Loligo delayed migration

into the fishing ground and catches increased. The reason why we thought the season might have been affected was because the 2nd cohort abundance last year was the lowest in 10 years. Hakes are doing really well, having a total catch in May of over 6,000 tonnes. An area restriction was put in place in the North-west section of the FICZ/FOCZ by DNR to reduce catches by vessels not having the relevant licence for hake. Rock Cod catches are low, but we do not think this is due to a low biomass, it could just be migration. Vessels are not targeting Rock Cod as there is less market demand. As we have closed the area for Hake it also had the most abundant area for Rock Cod. This will make it look like the Rock Cod biomass has decreased. SW mentioned that Hakes size was quite small.

- 5.2 DNR informed the committee that there are a number of tenders out on FIPASS at the moment relating to maintenance. Work has also been ongoing on berthing priorities and FIPASS charging systems. Also a tender is out for replacing navigation aids around the Stanley, Port William & Berkley Sound area.
- 5.3 DNR said that the Catch Verification has been approved in the budget and will be implemented in the new financial year.
- 5.4 CR asked if are we are getting a new Fisheries Observer, or a replacement. DNR confirmed it was a replacement. CR then asked what was happening with the Assistant Marine Officer Post, DNR advised that a final view needs to be taken on what role is required for an Assistant Marine Office and then that could be advertised.

6 Illex and ITQ consultation

- 6.1 DNR introduced the paper indicating that the intent was not to seek responses in this meeting but to discuss the process for consultation and the questions to be asked, and anything that people think we might be missing. SW observed that the draft is wider than he anticipated, as that process questions the basis of the ITQ system and he didn't feel it was what was intended. DNR said that the Illex can be a large fishery, in looking at moving to ITQ it is also worth considering the merits of the current system and indeed if there are any alternative options. The consultation is intended to establish the terms and conditions on which Illex will enter the ITQ system. Exco want to consider those terms and conditions further prior to a final decision being made. LC asked if that is how it was intended in 2002. FIFCA representatives do not agree with this, and believe that it is bringing up the question of ITQ after 15+ years in operation. DNR said that one of the main aspects of the 2005 law was the introduction of the ITQ system and it envisaged that Illex would enter that system at some point. The consultation needed to be wide ranging as otherwise the process might be questioned and that would risk introducing further delay. Chair agreed that was the sense of the

discussion and conclusion in Exco. CR said she would like FIFCA and individual views to be sourced. DNR said that the consultation will use the local media process, so is expected the consultation process will be finished by the end of August. No additional information was noted. Chair asked DNR if this was going to be in place by the 2017 season. DNR said that it is most likely to be in place for the 2018 season. It would be tight to finish the consultation in August and to be able to introduce it for 2017. DNR said that no legislative changes should need to be made, as the 2005 law is there to enable ITQ, and Illex was included in this from the outset.

7 Allowable catch and Effort 2017

7.1 This is set out in 2 parts including summary & recommendations in one part and more comprehensive scientific information in the second part. SA explained that 2 models were used to estimate the abundance of Rock Cod, unfortunately these gave us very different results. The survey results showed a decreased stock size whereas alternative modelling and parameters don't support those results to the same extent. The 2015 research survey indicates a 3 fold decrease in Rock Cod biomass, but there may be issues with timings of surveys and migration. The situation will continue to be monitored. Whilst there is evidence that it is not as dire as the survey results suggest, it also seems unlikely that rock cod is abundant as it was a few years ago. The recommendation is to keep the effort for all finfish vessels the same as in 2016 but to decrease the Rock Cod TAC from 60,000 to 30,000 tonnes. If the catch reaches 30,000 tonnes in 2017 measures will be put in place to avoid further rock cod catches of any significance.

7.2 SA explained that the vessel units are in the 2nd row of the table and that he will ask Michael Gras to make that clearer in the final version of the draft. Skate effort was reduced by 12% due to the amount of fishing days for category 5 & category 8 vessels. In 2014 there was a category 8 vessel working 30 days and in 2015 there was a category 5 vessel working for the same period with a different catchability coefficient. As category 5 is more efficient the effort had to decrease. The FIFCA reps asked for a presentation to be made. SA will arrange this. SW asked SA if we have more research time would we know more about Rock Cod, SA explained that this would be helpful, but we don't have the resources for this. LC said that if it wasn't for the low bunker prices at the moment the economic viability of some finfish operations would be threatened, if bunkers prices were still as high as they were are 3 or 4 years ago it would all be very different. LC noted that finfish fishery management had changed from being based on SBW to rock cod. The bycatch issues and closed areas made it increasingly difficult to fish economically.

SA

7.3 DNR indicated the paper was out for consultation and comments. The deadline for any views is the 12th August 2016. Responses would be considered and a final version of the document produced.

8. Seabird Mortality Mitigation-Fixed Aerial Array-Requirements

8.1 SA indicated that there were Fixed Aerial Arrays (FAA) on 3 vessels in the calamari fishery and it would be useful to have one on a finfish vessel to gauge performance. There had been a trial using fibreglass poles. It had the benefit of being lighter but not so robust at least not for this initial version. The FIFD have criteria as to what size and shape the Aerial arrays should be, but the fishing vessel will need to work closely with their technical staff to decide what size would work for their vessel. The new system is better for scaring the birds, easier to install and can be installed at the beginning of the season and taken down at the end of the season, unlike the tori lines. BM commented that the FPO would not be able to check the efficiency of the Aerial array as they would not see it in use in a variety of conditions, but as long as an observer had been on board for at least two weeks and approved the system, that would be good enough. The FIFD would like to encourage some finfish vessels to try this method. The first recommendation has been approved, with some more work done on the design. DNR indicated it is difficult to provide exact specifications as the FAA could vary from vessel to vessel. It was essential for the vessel operators to calculate what was required for the FAA to extend beyond the warps in all conditions with a safety margin. LC noted that it might not be feasible to use this system on all vessels and stability criteria would need to be assessed.

SA

9. Seabird Mortality Mitigation- Waste Management Systems-Trawlers

9.1 SA indicated that there are 2 elements to this paper. The department is trying to find a solution as to how we can stop attracting birds to the fishing vessels by storing offal/waste for a couple of hours. SA explained that firstly the industry is being requested to investigate a preliminary design and estimated cost for building a waste management system on their vessels and the feasibility of doing that. This information is requested by June 2017. Secondly, the department is seeking expressions of interest from ITQ holders in a cooperative project to design and install a waste management system on a trawler operating in the finfish fishery. The Fisheries Department has some limited funding to contribute to the project. The Industry would like a copy of the Santa Marina's Waste management system report this will be provided by SA in due course. DNR said that Santa Marina's system was OK but need more work to have 100% efficiency. CR mentioned that installing on an older vessel may be a problem. DNR indicated this may come out of the survey. Until vessels are made unattractive to seabirds the seabird mortality problem will persist albeit those measures already

SA

in place have reduced the problem. SA explained the birds will still be fed by the waste, just at a safer time than before. The population of seabirds have increased but this may be due to the effectiveness of the bird scaring lines.

10. Marine Spatial Planning Workshop Report – May 16

10.1 DNR introduced the paper and workshop report provided by Dr Augé. Some members had participated in the workshop. LC asked about Item 7.3 The move towards ecosystem based management for MSP and wondered where it is in regards to the yearly policy on Fisheries. SA said that Michael Gras going is to be working on this later this year. LC said that he felt there were areas where the data and figures needed further work. Chair said that the Darwin Initiative provided £100,000 to do the Marine Spatial Planning report over 3 years and agreed that some aspects provided a ‘snapshot’. Data could continue to be added. CR would like to see a peer-review on the paper. SW queried whether funding would not have been better put into Marine Operations. Chair said the report went to ExCo as part of the budget process and there was a bid for another £100,000 for a further 2 years of funding. However the decision was to limit funding at present to £30,000 in the Natural Resources Department budget who are to work with SAERI on implementation and the longer term operation of the process. Chair said that amongst other things it was very relevant to showing what had been done which was relevant to initiatives such as the Blue Belt Initiative.

11. Date of next meeting

11.1 The date of the next meeting will be 15th September 2016.

12. Exclusion of Press & Public

The Chairman moved as follows:

“I move that the press and public be now excluded on the ground that the next items of business to be considered are likely to disclose exempt information under Paragraph 17 of Schedule 3 of the Committees (Public Access) Ordinance 2012.

13. Confirmation of the Exempt Minutes held on the 16th February 2016

13.1 The minutes were confirmed.

14. Matters Arising from the Exempt Minutes held on the 16th February 2016

14.1 13.6 SW asked if the Scientific budget has been decreased, DNR said it had just been reorganised.

14.2 13.10 DNR said the funding bid for the 30th Anniversary did not succeed, but it is hoped to plan a number of things with the industry to celebrate the event.

14.3 LC asked when the catch verification will be implemented, DNR said as soon as possible.

Not for publication by virtue of paragraph 17 of Schedule 3 of the Committees (Public Access) Ordinance 2012, relating to the preparation of budget

Minutes confirmed this day of 2016.

Chairman

Secretary