

BGMCF - Meeting 21

Date: 22nd May 2018

Venue: BIM, Dun Laoghaire

In attendance: Mr Donal Maguire – Chairman of the BGMCF
Ms Joanne Gaffney – Secretariat
Mr Michael Murphy – Secretariat
Mr Nicholas Hoffmann – DAFM
Mr John McGuigan – DAERA
Mr John Kane – DAERA
Mr Michael Havelin – Industry Rep – Foyle
Mr George Golden – Industry Rep Carlingford/Dundrum
Mr Michael O’Driscoll – Vessel owner and operators association
Mr Arthur McCarthy – Industry Rep Castlemaine/Shannon/Cork
Mr William Dingemanse – Industry Rep Wexford/Waterford

Apologies: Mr Barry Fox – Loughs Agency
Mr Declan Quigley – SFPA
Mr Raymond Dougal – Industry Rep Belfast/ Larne

Donal Maguire (DM) welcomed all to the meeting.

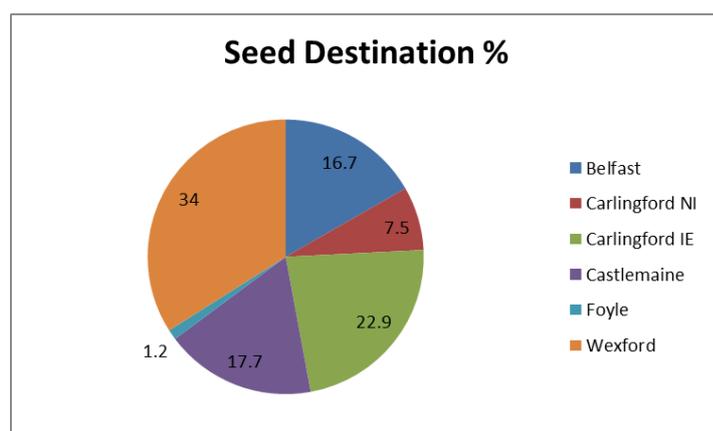
1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting from the 28th April 2016 were accepted as presented.

2. Seed Fishery 2017

The preliminary seed data was presented by JG, this data was yet to be cross referenced with the Departmental data but final data would be presented in the minutes (Data below).

Total Seed Fished	8755 (Gross)	6850.5 (Net)
Fishing events	111	
Days Fished	20	
Vessels	23	
Sourced ROI Waters	69%	
Sourced NI Waters	31%	



3. Seed Fishery 2018

Foyle

MH raised the status of allocations FOR Lough Foyle. Last year the situation was very difficult for industry members and they hope to see last year’s arrangements continued in 2018. He queried if the interim arrangements put in place for 2017 would be continued in 2018. NH indicated that DAFM are looking at this issue and hopefully would have a decision sooner rather than later.

Allocations

DAERA and DAFM indicated that there is no intention to amend allocations for the 2017 seed season.

Surveying

IE – Larval monitoring indicates that spawning is four weeks later than occurred last year. Therefore it is too early to survey or detect seed at this time. Nicolas will start the surveying effort in about three weeks' time and survey reports will be placed on the BIM website as they become available

NI- Initial survey has been conducted by AFBI; nothing has been detected at this time. There is a plan to resurvey in July

DM stated that based on these reports there are no grounds for considering a spring fishery. We would therefore look to an autumn fishery.

Industry surveys - With regard to industry surveys JG reminded all that in the case of IE industry surveys that DQ of the SPPA must be notified and for NI, the industry would liaise with DARD Fisheries with regard to observers etc.

Tides

Tide tables were circulated and the suggested first tide subject to seed availability is as follows:

Autumn Fishery - 20/08/2018 (This is a Monday and thus will align any opening in NI waters with that in IE). DAERA were asked if they would facilitate the opening on a weekend – 19th or if delayed 02nd September.

Action: *Issue to be discussed with Chief Fisheries Officer and revert to the forum*

4. Irish Sea Fishing Plan

NH indicated that the fishing plan was currently with the Marine Institute and should be back with the Department over the next week. Once received it would be open to public consultation and industry members would have an opportunity to comment. Outcomes of the consultation will determine the timeline of opening in the Irish Sea but it is hoped that the process will be complete in advance of the suggested dates.

5. MSC Certification

JG updated the meeting on the current situation regarding MSC for the sector. The public comment draft report has been completed. No conditions have been attached to the fishery which means that surveillance measures are less onerous for the next four years and thus annual costs will be reduced during the next 4 years.

GG thanked JG for all the effort she put into this project and reiterated the importance of MSC to the sector. JG acknowledged role of EMFF funding in IE and NI.

6. Mussel Husbandry Review, carrying capacity

The issue of the husbandry review and carrying capacity is under continual review by DAFM and DAERA to ensure that relaying activities are not causing any harm to the ecosystem of the relay areas. NH stated that DAFM wish to see all arrangements including allocation reviews codified in a stand-alone document.

Action: *JG to progress this document and distribute it for comment*

AOB

Representation status – industry members of the forum

Following a number of submissions to the forum on representation, the chairman DM restated the position of the Forum. The BGMCF is a consultative forum established to improve communication between industry members and the regulatory authorities. Industry members of the forum voluntarily seek to ensure that their area is considered in all discussions relating to the sector and do from time to time bring issues forward from other industry members in their areas. It is clearly understood that industry member of the forum do not and do not claim to represent or speak on behalf of all industry members in their area.

IAS

JG informed the group that BIM have contracted an Invasive Species advisor (Arjan Gittenberger of Gimaris) for a 4 year period. He will be involved in a number of initiatives including industry training and seed bed screening to facilitate movements into Natura 2000 areas for relaying

DM thanked all for attending the meeting which was then closed.

Clarification request.

WD requested that DAFM clarify the IE position on NI registered vessels working aquaculture sites in IE waters. He understood that NI vessels cannot engage in seed fishing in NI but queries if they could work on aquaculture sites and mussels on sites are the property of the licensee and if the licensee gave their permission surely this would not be a breach of IE legislation and the recent findings of the Supreme Court.

Action: DAFM to provide clarification on this issue.