

Improving how we manage our whelk fisheries

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Here to give the UK seafood sector
the support it needs to thrive.

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Welcome (and thanks for joining us)

What do we want to cover..

- Provide an overview of the whelk FMP – what is it, what will it do, what it will mean for you.
- Get your views on
 - the whelk fisheries in your area and how you think they should be managed?
 - the FMP including any changes you think we need to make

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What we will cover

- What is an FMP?
- How has the whelk FMP been developed?
- An overview of the management objectives?
- Talk about the issues with your whelk fishery and how you would like to see it managed.
- Overview of timeline to get the FMP finalised and implemented
- How you can stay engaged?

We want your questions and your views....



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Before we start

Any Questions?



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FMPs: The short version

Q: What is an FMP?

A: An FMP sets out policies for maintaining stocks at sustainable levels, or restoring them to these levels if needed. This includes non-quota stocks.

FMPs provide the framework to build and maintain sustainable UK fish and shellfish stocks.

Q: How did FMPs come about?

A: Following Brexit, the **UK Fisheries Act 2020** has placed FMPs at the heart of UK fisheries management. FMPs detail the practical, fishery-scale delivery of the overarching Act.

Q: Who is developing FMPs?

A: Defra is responsible for preparing and publishing FMPs. They will be based on best available science, fisher experience, and policy objectives through participation of key stakeholders (fishermen, researchers, and regulators).

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What do we mean...

- Objectives: The things we want to do. Some will be easy to implement others will require more research.
- Evidence: The information we need to make decisions. This includes:
 - Biological information (e.g. whelk size),
 - Environmental information (how whelk fisheries interact with other marine life)
 - Socio-economic information (costs, earning, welfare of fishermen)
 - Spatial information

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What does an FMP do?

- It's a Plan
- It sets out:
 - What we know about the current state of our whelk fisheries
 - What we want to achieve for our whelk fisheries – Our Objectives
 - What we need to do to deliver on our objectives in the FMP
 - The actions we will need to take (research and evidence gathering /management changes) and to what timeframe.
 - How we will work out if we have been successful.



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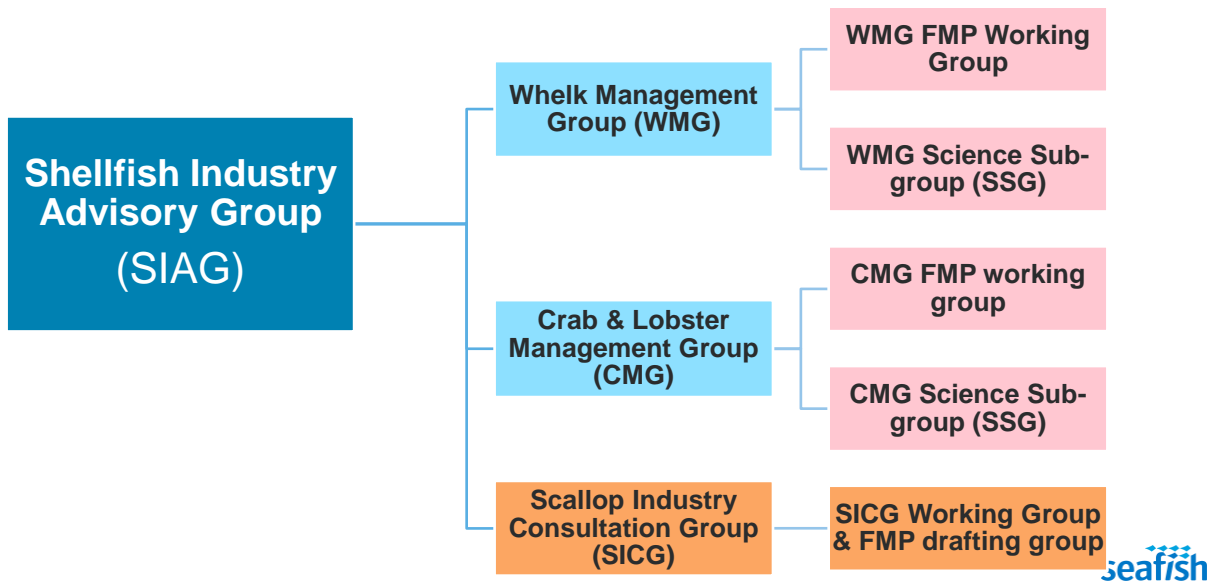
What is included in the FMP

- Whelks...just whelks



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Who is involved in developing the whelk FMP



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What's included in the FMP

Shared Shellfish Objectives

- Developed by the SIAG FMP working group
- Apply to all shellfish fisheries

Whelk specific objectives

- Developed by the WMG FMP working group
- Apply to whelk fisheries only

Scientific research plans

- Developed by the WMG Science Sub-group
- Provides the detail on the we will need to deliver FMP objectives

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Shared Shellfish Objectives



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Vision: “Contribute to the long-term sustainability and economic viability of the UKs shellfish fisheries.”



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Objective 1: Formalise the structure of the SIAG

Why is this included?

We want the SIAG to be the forum for industry, regulators, and the research community to work collaboratively on shellfish fisheries management.

What does this involve?

- Create the SIAG (and species sub-groups) as the key place to engage on shellfish issues across the UK
- Make sure we have the right people involved - from boat to plate (or exporter)
- Make sure we are sharing the right information in the right way so that everyone can stay up to date



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Objective 2: Assess impact of latent capacity

Why is this included? We want to:

- minimise the risk of an unsustainable increase in fishing effort,
- improve industry buy-in to future changes (jam today and tomorrow)
- implement options to address latent capacity if needed.

What does this involve? We need to better understand:

- Scale of the issue, extent of risk, and potential impact of changes.
- Likelihood and impact of effort displacement
- Case studies from where latent capacity has been addressed – what did they do, did it work, were there any unexpected impacts.



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Objective 3: Establish stakeholder engagement mechanism

Why is this included?

Although we are now outside the EU, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement can still influence:

- how are fisheries our managed
- what future fishing opportunities are available for UK fishermen.

Important that the fishing industry can share its views on the TCA and that government understands how any changes will impact industry.

What does this involve?

- Establishing an 'official' collaborative forum between industry and government to discuss TCA issues.
- Better understanding how the TCA has impacted NQS over the short, medium, and long-term.



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Objective 4: Address marine spatial conflict

Why is this included?

There is increased competition for marine space so important that the shellfish industry is equipped to engage in discussions with government and other marine users on marine spatial planning and access issues.

What does this involve?

- Better understanding the marine spatial planning process and how to deliver trade-offs and reduce conflict.
- Producing the right data and analyses (spatial and economic) and narrative about why the shellfish industry is important.
- Making sure the shellfish sector has a 'seat at the table' on marine spatial planning discussions.



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Objective 5: Promote consumption of UK shellfish

Why is this included?

We want more people to eat shellfish (in the UK and abroad).

What does this involve?

- Maintain a watching brief on trade issues and legislation that could impact shellfish consumption in the UK or abroad.
- Support work to build industry reputation (environmental and welfare issues) and provide businesses with information to promote shellfish consumption.
- Use the SIAG as a forum to horizon scan, identify possible issues and opportunities, and develop solutions.



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Objective 6: Facilitate & promote trade opportunities

Why is this included?

Strengthening current markets, and exploring new markets, provides greater business resilience.

What does this involve?

- Promote and facilitate UK shellfish suppliers' presence at international trade shows to promote UK shellfish and expand markets.
- Provide technical guidance for shellfish exporters to help them overcome trade barriers.



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Objective 7: Develop advice on shellfish welfare issues

Why is this included?

- New legislation means that crustacea and cephalopods are considered sentient
- Important that industry adopts best practices - for reputation reasons but also economic reasons.

What does this involve?

Produce Codes of Practice so businesses know how to take care of shellfish to minimise stress to the animal but also improve quality.



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Alternative Objective 8: Addressing welfare issues

Why is this included?

- There is a growing focus on welfare issues in the fishing industry (the treatment of crew, the payment of fair wages etc.).
- It is important that the shellfish industry understands these issues and has the means to fix such problems when they arise.
- These issues can impact crew retention and on the industry's reputation, which can influence consumers.

What does this involve?

- Maintain a watching brief on emerging issues and policy changes and produce guidance so that the UK shellfish sector can meet any social and human welfare requirements.
- Use the SIAG as a forum for stakeholders to raise issues relating to human welfare in the shellfish supply chain, work collaboratively to maintain or improve good practice, and build the shellfish sector's positive reputation.



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Objective 9: Understanding the shellfish sector's carbon footprint

Why is this included?

- Why are facing a climate emergency that will change what we catch and where we catch it. The shellfish sector needs contribute to the solution.
- Understanding our carbon footprint will help identify opportunities to decarbonise and move towards next zero. It will also support positive environmental messaging – consumers what to know that their food is not contributing to the climate change.

What does this involve?

- Assess the carbon footprint of UK shellfish using a robust metric which considers the specifics of the shellfish industry (different fleet meters, carbon sequestration in shell material, etc.)
- Identify ways to reduce emissions in the shellfish sector and encourage improvements where possible.
- Maintain a watching brief on climate change-related issues of interest to the shellfish sector and use the SIAG as a forum through which to raise awareness and stimulate collaborative working.

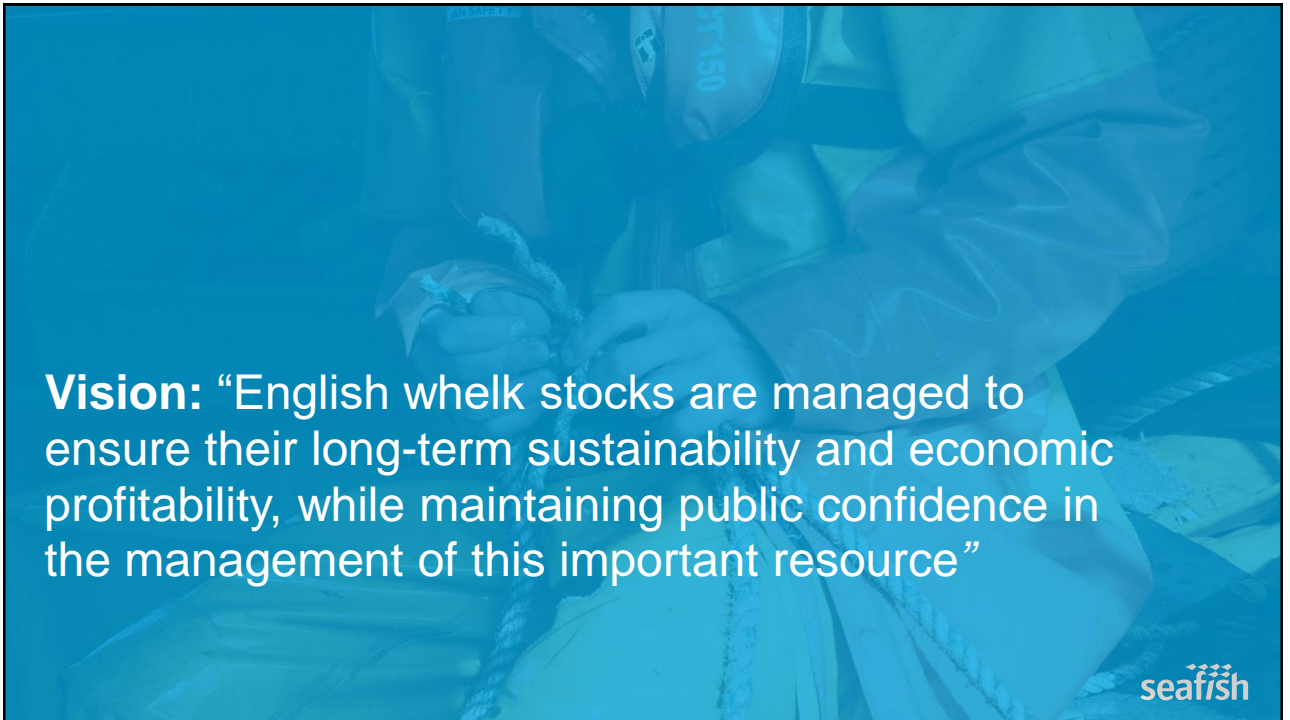


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Whelk Specific Objectives



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Vision: “English whelk stocks are managed to ensure their long-term sustainability and economic profitability, while maintaining public confidence in the management of this important resource”

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Objective 1: Improved data collection programme

Why is this included?

We need better information to:

- understand the state of our whelk fisheries
- ensure we are putting the right management measures in place so that they are sustainable over the long term
- make sure we are allowing the right amount of fishing effort– if we don't have good information we need to be more cautious.

What does this involve?

- Working out what data we need to collect.
- Implementing a regular and sustained data collection programme that is cost effective and makes best use of fishing vessels to build a long-term time series

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Objective 2: Develop key stock boundaries

Why is this included?

- Different whelk stocks have different characteristics which can influence how they are managed.
- We need to understand the boundaries between stocks so that we are assessing the health of the stock correctly.

What does this involve?

- Undertake research to better understand stock delineation and the role environmental parameters play in determining stock boundaries.
- Collate information on whelk biology, patterns of exploitation, management and the enforcement landscape to identify gaps in our understanding of boundaries.
- Explore how we can manage fisheries if there are no clear defined stock boundaries.



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Objective 3: Establish reliable CPUE assessment method

Why is this included?

If we can learn more about fishing effort and catch volume this will help us understand the health of our whelk fisheries which in turn will improve how the fisheries are managed.

What does this involve?

Collecting robust abundance and fishing effort data to meet modelling/assessment requirements (building on Objective 2). This will involve:

- Getting fishermen to record pot numbers at sea, pot numbers hauled and soak time.
- Looking at other options to collect the information we need e.g. collecting whelk size information from processing businesses.



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Objective 4: Develop a method to better assess whelk stocks

Why is this included?

Accurate information regarding stock status is essential for informing management decisions and protecting our whelk stocks from overfishing.

What does this involve?

- Build on existing stock assessment work (e.g. SPiCT and age/size structured models) to determine an appropriate model for whelks.
- Explore the use of alternate indices of abundance (e.g. CPUE) for whelk stocks, which can be used to give an indication of stock status.



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Objective 5: Impact of fishing activity on marine environment

Why is this included?

- Good fisheries management is more than just about understanding the state of our whelk stocks.
- We also need to understand the impact that whelk potting can have on the wider marine environment – other fish species and marine life (seabirds, seals etc.).
- Where this impact is problematic then action should be taken.

What does this involve?

- Undertake desk-based review of the environmental impacts of whelk fisheries on non-target species, by-catch species, and benthic habitats.
- Map existing mitigation/avoidance measures used in static gear fisheries prevent or minimise these impacts.



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Objective 6: Addressing interactions with other fisheries

Why is this included?

Understanding the interactions between whelk fisheries and other fisheries is important to help sort existing conflicts/issues and to make sure that management measures don't cause new problems.

An example of this is the perceived problem of using crab as bait in the whelk fishing.

What does this involve?

- Review interactions between whelk fisheries and other fisheries to understand:
 - a. Where conflict is occurring and why.
 - b. The economic and environmental impacts of these interactions and their impact on stock sustainability.
- Improve understanding of other fishing activities as a source of whelk mortality
- Explore alternative bait sources for whelk fishing



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Objective 7: Align fishing effort with stock status

Why is this included?

- If we have better information on the state of our whelk fisheries it should make them easier to manage. There are also tools that can help such as Harvest Control Rules' (HCRs).
- HCRs are agreed rules that decide what management action should be taken as the health of a fishery increases or decreases. They are a way to ensure management is responsive so that fishing effort is reduced when a stock is under pressure but increased when it is in good health.
- HCRs can be difficult to develop but once we have them, they are straightforward to use, and they make it easier for everyone to understand what is happening in the fishery.

What does this involve?

- Developing HCRs over time based on the work delivered under Objectives 2, 3 and 4) which better aligns fishing activity with stock status.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of existing management measures (MLS) and undertake scenario modelling to explore alternate management regimes.
- Review effectiveness of current technical conservation measures (escape gaps) and if required make changes to make them more effective.



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Where should we focus first?

- We will need to consult on the Whelk FMP
- We also want to consult on the first suite of measures to help improve the state of our whelk fisheries.
- We think we need to reduce fishing effort or at least put in place better measures to control it.
- What do you think?
- What changes would you like to see happen first?



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Scientific Research Plans



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Why does the FMP have a scientific research plan?

Each FMP will have a scientific research plan. The research plan for the Whelk FMP was developed by the Science Sub-group of the WMG.

Research plans:

- Identify knowledge gaps
- Explain what scientific research should be carried out to achieve the objectives of the FMP

Research plans will help guide research activities to ensure that science is aligned with the FMP and helps improve fisheries management



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What happens next?



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Next Steps

- Stakeholder engagement events to gather feedback on the draft FMP – **November to December 2022**
- Update the FMP to reflect what we have heard – **September to January 2023**
- Provide the first draft FMP to Defra – **January 2023**
- Formal public consultation on draft FMP by Defra – **April to June 2023**
- Whelk FMP will be finalised and published – **Autumn 2023**



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Get in touch..

Please contact us at
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We want to hear from you.



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