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Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference 2018 Summary of Proceedings

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Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference 2018

Eden Court, Inverness, 5 October 2018

Summary of Proceedings

Introduction

The fifth Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference was held at Eden Court, Inverness on Friday 5 October 2018. 160 delegates were in attendance, an increase on the 2017 conference, with additional viewers watching the live stream of the Cabinet Secretary's keynote speech (available to watch on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/jA77pG3U-BU>).



While the conference was underway, 50 contributors sent 100 tweets, which reached 65,162 accounts and made 158,046 impressions. Articles announcing the conference, and then reporting the outcomes, have appeared in Fishing News and other trade press, and was featured on BBC ALBA, BBC Radio nan Gaidheal and BBC Radio Scotland, helping spread its influence to a wider target audience.

This summary provides edited highlights of the conference and by its very nature does not include all that was covered.

Setting the agenda

This year the conference was packed into a very full, single day which still allowed plenty of time for discussions to be continued through the various breaks between sessions. The day began with a brief introduction by Allan Gibb, Head of Sea Fisheries at Marine Scotland, who stressed that from Marine Scotland's perspective the conference was an excellent opportunity to improve engagement and representation of inshore fisheries.

Mr Gibb encouraged input from people "actually doing the job" saying that their comments filtered right through to policy decisions. He advised that the Cabinet Secretary receives feedback on a regular basis and gets to hear all of the views and concerns, hopes and aspirations of the sector; emphasising that "when you speak to me or the team, you are speaking to Mr Ewing".

He also struck a positive note at the beginning of the conference with his belief that the future of inshore fisheries in Scotland is a positive one, despite the likelihood of some challenges and uncertainties, and that working together to head in the right direction was crucial.

Keynote Speech – Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy

Taking forward Scotland's inshore fisheries management

Mr Ewing delivered the opening speech at the conference. His topic was the Scottish Government's plans to take forward Scotland's inshore fisheries management. He began by making it clear that he wanted an environment in which the whole fishing industry could flourish, one which encourages sustainable and inclusive growth for the Scottish rural economy.

Mr Ewing gave context to his speech by starting with a review of the progress made since the last conference showing how the Scottish fishing industry continues to grow, with 2017 landings of sea fish and shellfish of 466,000 tonnes and a value of £560 m.



- Management has been strengthened by legislation, including controls on the king scallop, crab and lobster fisheries, and catch limits for hobby fishers.
- Guidelines this year, to be followed by legislation next year, on marking static gear.
- Investigating local and spatial management with Inshore Fisheries Pilots (Mull, Outer Hebrides and Arbroath). These will inform future strategy and the potential for fishers to come together to determine appropriate local management.
- Government funding was helping the Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups to take forward projects to implement their management plans.
- Fishing shares the sea with other marine users - Mr Ewing wants to ensure any development plans are evidence-based and consider all stakeholders.
- Markets for crab and langoustine in Japan and continental Europe are being developed, with in-market specialists helping to deliver global market access to all Scottish seafood.

Safety is paramount and it is essential to properly consider the people who are vital to the success of the industry.

- Will ensure future funding is prioritised towards safety issues: ensuring vessels are safe to go to sea, stable and well equipped.
- Pointed out, however, that vital funding that has played a key role in safety will be lost upon leaving the EU. Clarity is needed from the UK Government about the long term, post-2020 Treasury Guarantee.

The Cabinet Secretary reminded delegates that the uncertainty of Brexit is a source of concern to many in the industry, despite trying to get on with 'the day job'. He has met with many who have aired their concerns about the future post-Brexit.

- The current success of the industry is a result of the hard work of those in fishing.
- Funding, trade and EU labour have all been essential contributors - 58% of processing labour comes from the EU. However, the UK Government refuses to take account of Scotland's needs, seeking to decrease this valuable migrant labour source from EU and further afield.
- UK Government's 'stubborn refusal' to recognise the benefits of the Single Market and Customs Union increases the risk of hugely damaging tariff and non-tariff barriers being imposed after Brexit. All modelled, plausible trade scenarios would leave Scotland worse off than the current position as an EU member.
- Customs delays and increased certification are major concerns. A supply chain (e.g. shellfish) can have as little as a three hour window to work in; delays can be catastrophic.
- On-going exit negotiations affect the End Year Negotiations – made even more difficult depending on deal, no deal, or transition period.
- The clear lack of will and leadership from the UK Government. Cabinet Secretary is 'deeply worried' about how they intend to protect Scotland's seafood industry. The Scottish Government will press hard to ensure Scotland's interests are given the 'attention and respect they deserve'.

Mr Ewing remains positive for the future, seeing an opportunity to undertake a fundamental review of fisheries management. He has aspirations to develop world leading fisheries management for Scotland, through an entire supply chain approach, with stakeholders at its heart. This would deliver the needs of inshore, offshore and onshore fishing and ensure the fishing cultural heritage is protected and supported to thrive in the future. With challenges come opportunities:

- Mr Ewing remains committed to maintaining the current FQA system, but if more fishing opportunities resulted post-Brexit a fresh approach may be appropriate. E.g. additional benefits could be shared more widely than current FQA holding mechanism, a proportion could be redirected to new entrants and inshore fishing interests.
- Opportunities might be directed to local communities and/or geographical areas; management being delegated to those that actually catch sea food. Scotland should take steps to be ready with infrastructure and markets, if they occur.

Space in inshore waters is subject to competition so the Cabinet Secretary reiterated that he wants to see values maximised while encouraging respect for all sectors.

- As mentioned above, piloting innovative management initiatives includes spatial separation.
- The improvement of technology and data on fisheries and habitats, lends itself to a more tailored approach to separating static and mobile gears. In some areas cooperation already works well, in other locations there may be a need to consider separation.
- It may be appropriate to test this approach to assess benefits or negatives for areas dedicated exclusively to trawl or static fishing; fishers should be at the heart of designing such an approach.
- Fairness is paramount, and while gear vandalism is a highlighted issue, it is only a minority of mobile and static operators that are wrongdoers, but “it undermines the ability of law-abiding fishers to make an honest living, and my ability to responsibly manage Scotland’s fisheries”.
- One way of removing the need for separation would be to take the strong approach of suspending or removing licences from vessels identified as being continually engaged in gear vandalism.
- Funding will be critical so focus on infrastructure to optimise benefits for Scotland.

Science and evidence were keywords for the entire day and Mr Ewing highlighted the need for a strong scientific base with effective compliance if Scotland is to have modern, comprehensive inshore fisheries management.

- Much work has already been undertaken to improve inshore management with £2.3 m for research in the last three years. This includes £1.5 m to the SIFIDS project, investigating innovative technology and automated systems to improve data collection. This could allow a step change to inshore fisheries data collection. Early results and partner engagement indicate the potential for a world-leading system.
- New Programme for Government highlighted need to modernise inshore fisheries and introduce vessel tracking. **Mr Ewing took the opportunity to announce up to £1.5 m investment to implement vessel tracking and monitoring to enhance reporting capability.**
- Two aspects will be the focus. Firstly, monitoring for the under 12 metre fleet, initially around MPAs where vessels with tracking equipment will be allowed within buffer zones. Secondly, exploring the use of a sentinel fleet to further improve science.

Mr Ewing ended his speech by reminding delegates that demand for Scottish sea food will continue to grow. “People want our seafood, they value it, they treasure it wherever they are. There is a market. You will succeed in accessing that and we will assist in every practical way we can.” Finally he reiterated his commitment to champion the interests of inshore fishing in the Scottish Government and in all the negotiations that will take place over the coming months.

Questions from delegates to the Cabinet Secretary

The Cabinet Secretary then welcomed questions from the floor. (Q&As are not verbatim quotes, but paraphrased for brevity. To view the live recording of this presentation and the Q&As go to <https://youtu.be/jA77pG3U-BU>.)

Q1 – There is a persistent rumour that you are considering opening up some MPAs that we fought so hard for, to mobile and often destructive fisheries. Is this true?

A1 – This is not a rumour that has any truth. To protect seafloor features there is a legal structure and a process based on evidence. The important thing is to protect the feature. The more we have better data about fishing activities the better we can determine where fishing is legal or illegal.

Science can assist in the effective legal management of fisheries and the appropriate and due protection of the precious features of our marine environment.



Q2 – Ownership of data is difficult. Can access individual (own) data but not that of members of local inshore fisheries association, making it difficult to argue with renewable companies etc. Would the Minister allow access to data if needed for defence or as an evidence base?

A2 – Sensible question. The whole purpose of collecting data is to establish a range of things including location of vessels and the location of fishing effort so it can be used for stock assessment and detecting stock locations, improving knowledge of where best to fish. But also to establish where there is gear conflict or damage, and from a safety point of view. Access to that data is imperative but I don't think that there should be a public database, which could lead to disclosure of personal detail, so there is a need to limit the data access. But for assessing any dispute or issue, then I think there should be general availability of data. I will undertake that we have further debate with all the interests represented here, but also the money being invested in tracking and so on will achieve its intended purpose. This data is the base of evidence and will be valuable for a number of purposes, to be valuable it has to be available, subject to regulation, to make sure it achieves its intended aims.

Q3 – Data availability is great but if they can simply turn their tracking devices off, what use is it?

A3 – It's a question of regulation. There is already a regulation which applies to fishing activity but regulation will have to determine the way in which the equipment is being used, and should be used, probably, at all times. If the regulation is there the tracking should be used and from a safety perspective the precise location of any vessel, in real time, has obvious benefits in respect of safety in the event of an incident, to ensure the attendance of rescue services and the swiftest evacuation. The whole purpose is to improve safety, to improve operations and business opportunities as well as avoiding conflict and difficulties with different fishing interests and others, so having it and keeping it turned off is not a particularly sensible option. We will discuss with RIFGs, SFF and others. We want this to be a friend not a foe, something you value not fear and not something that is a liability.

Q4 – To protect inshore fisheries are there any plans after Brexit for a less-than-12 mile line?

A4 – That's something we will have to consider with you more carefully, there are obviously differing views, and we have to take into account all views. There are no immediate plans to do that – I'd be interested to hear your views in future. Our overall aim is to ensure the success of all fisheries, and the approach I've outlined in respect of fisheries management is, I think, the correct one, but I am happy to discuss this further.

Q5 – You appear to have come to a point in government where fishing is safe here and protection of fishermen is really important, how do intend to do that, and how do we respond to your request to get involved in conversation with your officials?

A5 – I think it's fair to say that I, and all my predecessors from whichever party, are all aware of the perils and dangers of the sea and the need for safety. Many are practical aspects of safety you can do, but the sea can be a cruel place and I and my officials are determined to do anything more that we can conceivably do, and I hope the announcement I have made will play a small part in safety. That's just one issue - the announcement I made on future funding towards safety on vessels is overdue and requires attention. We know the MCA has a wealth of knowledge. I'm happy to pledge to you that working with all fishing representatives that safety is an absolute priority. If you think there are other matters, please let us know.

Afternoon Plenary Talk – Jane MacPherson, Head of Catching Policy and Future Fisheries Management, Marine Scotland

Future Fisheries Management

Jane MacPherson was introduced by Alan Gibb, who firstly stressed that the presentation was not a preparation nor a consultation about quotas; that had been done elsewhere. This is about how we manage fisheries going forward and how we engage with the inshore fishing sector. It is about a [discussion paper](#) that makes suggestions, although some aspects are governed by legal responsibility and have to be maintained, but it is not pre-divined by the Scottish Government – input is required.

Jane MacPherson welcomed the opportunity to make her presentation in front of the diverse audience from all sectors of inshore fishing. Jane gave a recap of the status quo to set the scene:

- EU exit is the start of significant change in how we manage our fisheries.
- CFP has provided the legal and strategic framework for management. On Brexit we will leave CFP so a new regime will be needed for legal and sustainable fishing.
- This is an opportunity to take a fresh look at how fisheries managed – to 'stock take and sense check' existing policies etc.
- The time is right for an overarching sea fisheries strategy. The existing Inshore Fisheries Strategy will give a good foundation. Want to broaden to whole of sea fisheries.
- Not about change for its own sake, where things make sense we will continue to do those. Where change is needed we should be bold.
- Not a complete 'blank sheet of paper' many existing policies and procedures will continue to hold true. Much of CFP principles will continue to exist.

- Also many national and international commitments and frameworks which we will continue to deliver on in the future – National Marine Plan (NMP), UNCLOS, CBD, UN SDGs etc. We will not walk away from those commitments, we want to raise the bar and we want to maintain our world class fisheries sector. And deliver within the NMP – clean, safe, healthy, productive seas.

Jane MacPherson reflected on some of the high level principles of the Scottish Government's approach to sea fisheries. She wanted to articulate what underpins future policies, which will be in a discussion paper. Discussion and debate with stakeholders was encouraged.

- Sustainability is at the heart of this approach.
- Create an environment where fishing is seen as an attractive career of choice.
- Want to use the best available scientific evidence.
- Want to manage fisheries to maintain biological diversity.



The Scottish Government (via Marine Scotland) wants to develop future management in partnership: recognises that it is imperative to make use of the experience and expertise that exists across all stakeholders, to formulate future management policies.

- This means lots of debate, discussion and consultation; perhaps some argument and conflict along the way – that is healthy.
- Need to allow right amount of time for this discussion to get a strong evidence base and bring people with us.
- All voices should be given the opportunity to be heard, need to reach out and engage with large and small groups, large and small voices. We want to be inclusive, if we need to improve how we do that - tell us.
- Have already engaged with many groups across Scotland, asking what are your issues, ideas and aspirations for the future. Among those are the following:
 - Fishing sustainably – all committed to doing so.
 - Need for robust evidence base.
 - General support for TACs, in most cases.
 - Big emphasis on landing obligation and a more workable discards policy.
 - Allocation of post-Brexit opportunities.
 - Support for new entrants and diversification.
 - Increased quota shares.
 - Legislation.
 - Data collection and monitoring.

- Governance and co-management structures.
- All of these along with our own thoughts have been brought together and we will produce a discussion paper very soon. This is for discussion, we are evolving and putting ideas out for debate.
- We will ensure there is a protracted discussion period and request written responses, but also get out and talk to people. We want to be inclusive, and get this right.
- We will then analyse, draw conclusions, draw together some proposals and consider what the strategy should look like. This will be followed by a period of consultation to provide another chance to contribute to the detail.
- If legislation is required, it will follow.
- Important to not just have the strategy but also the implementation to translate into practicality.
- So plenty of opportunity to get involved, this is a national discussion, a two-way process.

Jane MacPherson then gave a flavour of the types of topics and approach for the discussion document.

- It will contain a range of ideas, aspirations, proposals for the future, trying to be bold if needed, but nothing is yet decided the discussion paper is not a set of proposals from Scottish Government, but putting forward things for debate and discussion.
- Underpinning whole approach is continuing need to fish in a way that is sustainable and responsible. To support this will look at a number of priority areas.
 - How will this translate from needs of National Marine Plan and other national and international commitments, strategic plans and goals are fine but how does that translate into something tangible, into operational detail?
 - Want to strengthen current co-management and governance arrangements, how can we do that?
 - Want to streamline how we engage with each other; who can get involved and at what point, we want to make it easier to communicate.
 - Want to devolve management to the most appropriate level and need to ensure the right structures are in place.
 - Improve confidence and accountability for both offshore and inshore fleets.
 - Look at role of technology
 - Want to maintain high degree of confidence in and reputation of our sea food products.

Jane MacPherson summarised with a flavour of what needed to be looked at, but if things were not included in the discussion paper the debate can be made broader:

- “We’ve listened, we want to reinforce and improve our evidence base.”
- There is a well-established scientific basis, technology has a role to play in that.
- We agree with many stakeholders that TACs should be maintained for managing most stocks.

- Agree that a more workable discards policy needs to be put in place. So while within EU the landing obligation continues, beyond Brexit we need to think about how can we be more flexible and responsive?
- Already started looking at our whole future capture policy.
- Want to consider most appropriate use of any future increased fishing opportunities after Brexit. I.e. new entrants, more localised quotas, inshore or offshore – there are many ideas out there.
- Committed to support for new entrants, how best to do that?
- Need to focus on inshore sector particularly in regard to governance, data collection and monitoring.

This is a fantastic opportunity to look at what exists and ask what do we want to do and how can policies support that?

Questions – questions were answered jointly by Jane MacPherson and Alan Gibb, as appropriate. Q&As are paraphrased for brevity.

Q1 – Getting next generation into fishing industry is not easy and when they are in, they cannot remain because of aspects of the broader economy, i.e. not being able to get a mortgage, so they move out of fishing. There is a need for those people to have access to loans, perhaps a national investment bank.

A1 – Good question. Many of these things are in the hands of the private sector. As a government we want to encourage small businesses, new entrants, young people etc and it's a point that needs broadening out and could be included in the discussion document to unlock some of these types of issues. (Alan Gibb added) reference to National Investment Bank is something we can feed into wider government, people may not be aware of the issue.

Q2 – There has been an analysis that if we were to crash out of the EU without a trade agreement, seafood exports could get hit with quite stringent tariffs and non-tariffs. As much of Scottish inshore product is exported, has the Scottish Government got any contingency plans to overcome this problem in the short term?



A2 – (Alan Gibb answered). A lot of things are outwith the control of the Scottish Government but there may be opportunities, but also threats and risks for the inshore sector, especially with the 'three hour window'. We are engaging the UK government on what their contingency is, but even for non-tariff there will still be costs for some parts of the industry. Hopefully, if there is a crash-out those things would be dealt with quite quickly, but we still don't have those answers yet.

Q3 – (an observation from Bertie Armstrong). We are facing many challenges, but also facing the prospect of the biggest thing that ever happened to UK fishing in the last 50 years. If this works properly then the uplift in raw material will be enough to lift us from present position as an EU state into a principal NE Atlantic fishing unit. Across the sectors, including inshore, we have the opportunity of increasing the volume of desirable product. This is full of opportunity, Iceland is a prime example to taking such opportunity.

A3 – (Alan Gibb) that topic is also part of the discussion paper. Opportunities and impacts will be scaled, will be different in different sectors. Opportunity will be a key word in the discussion document – if there are increased opportunities, what do we want to do with them?

A3 - comment on BA's observations – This is advertised as an inshore fisheries conference. I would hate to think that we used the Icelandic fisheries model, which led to the dissolution of small inshore fishery communities in favour of big companies. That's the last thing an IFC should be discussing. (Alan Gibb added) this is about fisheries management in Scotland and we will look around the world for good or bad ideas and doing what is right for us.

Q4 – Opportunity for world-class inshore fishing in Scotland should recognise all activity depends on a healthy seas so there is an opportunity to break down silos in terms of fishery management and marine conservation because there is enormous overlap.

A4 – We talk about ecosystem approach and wider marine environment, not just fisheries, it's imperative that we take account of that and ensure we are not just thinking about fisheries but also the wider impact.

Q5 – How can we get the discussion document to as many inshore fishermen as possible?

A5 – we need help with that, can you help? We try to reach out through our network of compliance officers, our fishing representatives. Let us know of other things we should be doing to make it easier, and as inclusive as possible. All Marine Scotland staff will be fully briefed and will listen to what you are saying, in addition to the usual channels. **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

Delegates were given the opportunity to choose to attend two out of four breakout session during the day; time was set aside for these following the Cabinet Secretary's presentation in the morning and following the afternoon plenary of Future Fisheries Management. More time was made available than in previous years to encourage more detailed presentation and discussion. Two of these breakout sessions were industry-led.

Breakout Sessions

What coastal fishing communities can bring to science, sustainability and governance

The Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance (CIFA) is a fishing focused, cross-industry and community-based organisation with the aim of addressing the economic and physical need of Scottish fisheries and associated communities.

The session explored how Scotland's coastal fishing communities can take an active role in improving the management of their local inshore fisheries.

Among topics discussed were:

- How important the fishing industry is to the communities in the Orkney Isles, Clyde, Fife and the Outer Hebrides.

- Initiatives to improve stock conservation and our understanding of the 'fisheries footprint'.
- The recognition that data is a good thing.

- It provided proof of fishing and steaming locations,
- It aided in the safety aspects of fishing,
- It was necessary in settling disputes,



- It gave much better understanding of target fisheries – Orkney brown crab, for example, can travel as far as the Western Isles, presenting management challenges.

- The need for more engagement with local authorities (LAs) was also highlighted. Island Councils do this well, but some LAs do not really appreciate the real value of their local fishing communities.
- The question of access to new fishing opportunities post-Brexit followed on from Mr Ewing's earlier presentation, proving it was obviously not far from the minds of everyone.
 - Opportunities in Blue Fin tuna were given as an example.
 - The need for developing local structures for managing existing and any new quota, was highlighted.
- Both the fleet and its fishermen are ageing. The need to attract 'new blood' into the inshore fishing sector was raised.
 - The example of Denmark's National Recruitment system was given; it selects and trains new fishermen and then allocated them where they are needed. It was suggested this was worth looking at.
- There is a need to develop opportunities and new collaborations that allow communities to be part of the picture.
- Pointed out that CIFA allows community representatives to join, not just fishers.

Low Impact Fishing

This session was delivered in two parts by Jerry Percy and Alistair 'Bally' Philp. It looked at the potential for low impact fishing.

Jerry Percy (Low Impact Fishers of Europe) began by pointing out that Coastal communities face more problems than rural communities, especially the lack of opportunities.

- There had been a decline in fishing landings and jobs since the introduction of the CFP (he made the point that while maximum sustainable yield had been embraced by the EU, its originator had since changed his conclusion).

- LIFE is a platform for small scale fishers across Europe, its role is to highlight the different issues they face; he gave examples from Finland (global warming), Azores (no tuna quota) and the multiple issues faced by Cyprus.
- LIFE as a platform for small-scale fishers is a recognition by the EU that 80% of fishers are small scale and needed better representation.
 - Of the 86,000 fishermen in Europe, 68,000 are small scale operators, and 75% of vessels are under 10 metres, but control only 4% of quota.
 - These small boat operations also play a major part in local communities and are attractive to tourists who bring in secondary spend. He pointed to the Norway example, where tourism had been increased after communities had bought quota to reinvigorate small boat fishing fleets.
 - The New Under-Ten Fishermen's Association (NUTFA) was created and looked at alternative management practices in Norway, Iceland, Denmark, the United States and New Zealand.
 - The idea was to create an inshore Producers Organisation (PO), this led to the Coastal PO which is now the largest PO in the UK by membership.
- Conclusions from the workshop included:
 - UK/EU fishing model affected employment and the sustainability of small-scale fishers.
 - Fish are a finite resource and need to be shared more fairly.
 - Small-scale fishers need recognition and support.
 - The UK fisheries white paper identifies inequality.



Alistair 'Bally' Philp then introduced an idea that he agreed would be contentious. Bally, a creel fisherman from the west coast, wants to investigate the return of the three-mile limit to protect and enhance static gear fishing. His logic is that:

- By removing small trawls from the area adjacent to the coast, *Nephrops* creeling could increase. Those trawler fishermen who were displaced could be compensated and encouraged to take up creeling within the designated area.
- He turned to history to show how trawling had caused the decline in west coast fin fisheries and how a three-mile limit that had been imposed, was then removed.
- His admittedly 'back-of-the-envelope' calculations suggested that under-10 metre trawler owners could be bought out, and he used a notional figure of £100,000 per vessel for the current trawl fleet of around 36 boats.

- As creel-caught *Nephrops* are a better and higher value product, everyone should benefit, including the environment which suffers little damage from creels as opposed to trawls. The BUTEC extension Strategic Environmental Assessment had identified this high value, and the low environmental impact of creels. Recognised there were 'consequences' including potential to flood the creel-caught market if more effort due to transfer from trawl to creel.
- Not surprisingly such a suggestion was not universally applauded:



- Disagreed with the notion that 'efficiency is bad'.
- Norway and Iceland models may not be relevant to Scotland which has a far more complex coastline to manage.
- Concerns over the idea of doubling the creeling effort. Bally responded that there would be more area and that there would be a need for regulation.
- East coast had problems too.

- Bally insisted this was an idea that seemed to satisfy a lot of concerns and while he recognised there were challenges and arguments ahead, it was worth at least discussing and he did acknowledge that his ideas were centred on the west coast and would not work everywhere.

Inshore Fisheries Data

The session on Improving Inshore Fisheries Data was led by Estelle Jones and Liam Mason from Marine Scotland and largely concerned initiatives to better understand under 10 metre fishing. More specifically it focused on changes to the Fish1 form for landing declaration which under 10 metre vessels must complete following fishing activity.

Discussed in the session were:

- The importance of understanding under 10 metre activity.
- Understanding the format of Fish1, how the data is analysed, how it can show changes in important fishing grounds.
- Weaknesses and proposed changes to Fish1 were also identified.




Feedback from the workshop included:

- The need to compare data with that from elsewhere in UK.
- How the data can be shared.
- The potential to inform future management.

Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Data System

The Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Data System project is funded by the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and itself funds and continues to fund individual projects aimed at improving understanding of inshore activity and the communities that rely upon it (detailed information can be found at <https://www.masts.ac.uk/research/emff-sifids-project/>).

During this workshop an overview of the SIFIDS projects and progress were given – a broad remit was ‘go out and see what can be done’. The meeting was then opened for contributions from the audience.

- Following up on a point from earlier during Fergus Ewing’s presentation was the question of making collected data available back to the communities and fisheries groups as evidence, should the need arise. GDPR regulations were making this more difficult but it is important to identify how the data could be made useable within the boundaries GDPR imposed.
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- The photograph shows a woman with glasses and a blue lanyard standing and speaking to a group of people seated at a table. She is gesturing with her hands. The seated individuals, including a man in a grey shirt and red tie, are listening attentively. A laptop and a red object are on the table.
- It was noted by a retailer that knowing where seafood had been caught was of great interest to customers who increasingly demand high quality products from sustainable sources.
 - A working fisherman added that not long ago having a camera on board watching your every move felt ‘alien’ but times had changed and fishermen were more open to change. There was still some resistance, and some challenges.
 - A fisherman pointed out that in future the ability to autonomously measure crab and lobster would be very useful.
 - More questions about how data can be accessed, and what format, by a fisherman wanting to look at past tracks. Explained can be downloaded from server as a CSV file, which can be accessed into common formats. Excel, for example.
 - There were questions also about whether remote imaging was suitable for scallop assessments, they bury themselves. It was pointed out that this sort of technology was intended to gain baseline data. Current data about scallops and their habitats needs improvements. SIFIDS technologies looked down from expensive state-of-the-art to find a place when data was still useful, lower cost. Need to cover a wide area. Combine sonar and photography. Side-scan sonars are better and cheaper (<£1000) and produce good scientific data, cheap cameras (£35) can now also provide good ground-truthing. Now gives better coverage than expensive research vessels.
 - Are there similar projects elsewhere that could use this technology? Big issue is the cost of other systems – are the expensive options really needed? Balancing act and debate over whether it is better to get a small amount of high-quality data over small area or more, lower quality data over a wide area? Statistics appear to show the latter for fisheries management purposes, so more relevant for the ‘business end’. Now need to bring all of this together as a package for Scottish Government

- SIFIDS, it was reported, is now working with industry in Peru and India, where there is need for a 'complete management package', indeed there is world-wide interest in SIFIDS products, which are aimed at cost-effective, reliable high-quality data collection.

Conclusion – Allan Gibb, Head of Sea Fisheries, Marine Scotland

I would firstly like to thank the over 160 delegates who helped to make the 2018 Scottish Inshore Fisheries Conference the most successful one to date. Improving engagement and representation of the inshore sector is a key priority for Marine Scotland. This is not always easy, given the wide range of interests across Scotland, and so it was very pleasing to see so many in attendance with, particularly a noticeable increase in active fishermen.



I would also like to thank those who organised and ran this year's breakout sessions, especially CIFA and SCFF. We are always seeking ways to give a more active role for stakeholders at the conference, and feedback shows that most delegates found these industry-led sessions to be both informative and thought provoking. We hope to build on these going forward and evolve them into a format where both sides of a topic are discussed and debated.

The future of Scotland's inshore fisheries should be a positive one, and much progress has been made since the first conference in 2013. While there are uncertainties ahead, it is important that we all work together to make sure that we are heading in the right direction. I look forward to seeing what further progress we've made together when we meet again at the sixth Inshore Fisheries Conference.

Finally, I would also like to thank all those who contributed to the organisation and running of the conference, and to Kelvin Boot for his work in compiling this report.



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