

# Scallop management in the Channel

## REPORT

19 June 2024  
NWWAC Webinar



# Welcome & introductions

## Emiel Brouckaert, NWWAC Chair

Emiel Brouckaert expressed his pleasure in chairing this webinar which he considered an important step towards the objective of a sustainable EU scallop fisheries management. He explained that in January 2024, DG MARE Unit C5 approached the NWWAC with a request to organise during the first half of 2024 a workshop on king scallop management in the North Western Waters.

Fisheries in the North Western Waters target a variety of so-called non-quota species (NQS), such as cuttlefish, squid, lobster, brown crab, whelks and of course the topic of the day, scallops. To achieve sustainable fisheries of these species, the EU and the UK agreed to develop multi-year strategies for non-quota species in the framework of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, starting with a pilot plan covering king scallops in the English Channel (ICES areas 7d and e).

The NWWAC has continually worked on addressing scallop fisheries management measures in its remit area. Work on scallop management in the English Channel started as far back as 2006 with a first advice to the Commission published in 2009[1], followed by a request in 2013[2]. A dedicated Focus Group was established in 2020 with advice to the NWW Member States Group published in 2021[3] on a draft joint recommendation on the King Scallop fishery framework in the English Channel.

Most of the NWW fisheries resources are shared between the EU and the UK, and fisheries is a specific chapter in the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

This chapter includes the objective to achieve sustainable management of NQS such as scallops. In 2023, the UK developed its king scallop fisheries management plan (FMP)[4], covering stocks in English and Welsh waters. The NWWAC submitted its response to the UK consultation on this in 2023.

UK authorities drafted the scallop FMP in partnership with the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) which is an industry forum describing itself with the rationale to work in collaboration with UK Fisheries Administrations to enable the UK scallop catching and processing sectors to contribute meaningfully to the development of policies and management mechanisms that deliver high-level objectives. The SICG has been in contact with some of the French industry members of the NWWAC and declared that it is looking into the possibility of participating in the NWWAC.

Today however, we focus on the EU with the aim to discuss the following topics from an EU perspective:

- State of play of the stock status
- State of play of currently available scientific information
- Overview of current management measures and identification of potential additional / alternative measures
- Identification of additional research needs and data collection.

[1] NWWAC Advice on MLS for Channel Scallops (link)

[2] NWWAC Letter on by-catch provision for scallop dredges (link)

[3] NWWAC response to NWW MSG Joint Recommendation on King Scallop in the Channel (link)

[4] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/king-scallop-fisheries-management-plan-fmp>

Brouckaert stated that the outcomes of this meeting and the result of the discussion should support the preparation for a workshop on scallop management in the North Western Waters to be organised in autumn 2024, involving EU and UK authorities, scientific experts and stakeholders from both sides, particularly NWWAC and SICG members.

He welcomed all participants, representatives of DG MARE and the NWW Member States Group, representatives of ICES, STECF and national research and development institutes, including for example IFREMER, BIM, Wageningen University and ILVO., as well as the members of the NWWAC, and more specifically of Working Group 3 (English Channel) and the Scallop Focus Group.

## Introduction - Commission overview of request and regulatory framework

Eva Carballeira, DG MARE Head of Unit C5

Eva Carballeira Fernandez thanked the NWWAC Chair for this extensive introduction and the NWWAC Secretariat for organising the webinar. She was looking forward to an active discussion on this important fishery involving all participants. She felt that the UK's Fisheries Management Plan for scallop was quite developed and referred to the written record under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) which foresees the possibility of developing multi-year strategies for NQS. In this context, king scallops in the Channel was selected by both Parties as the pilot multi-year strategy.

She added that while decision making has changed into a more international context, as

evidenced by the UK FMP for scallop published in December 2023, the regionalisation process must be considered and both processes interlinked in a dynamic EU-UK interplay on this subject. The UK will move forward quickly with their king scallop FMP, and the EU wants to ensure a level playing field between the EU and UK fleets involved in this transboundary fishery.

*"For this, the EU needs to move fast which is sometimes complex given the different layers of decision-making, but I count on that we can work together in an iterative and productive process that will make us deliver on time."*



# STECF 22-04 and 23-02 reports on NQS and king scallops

Dominic Rihan, KFO

While he is not involved with the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) any longer, Dominic Rihan has had long experience with STECF and in particular was STECF Vice-chair when the 22-04 report was produced and Chair during the preparation of the 23-02 report.

Dominic Rihan stressed that he was not presenting on behalf of STECF but simply presenting the results as published in the reports. He referred to the background to the 22-04 advice[5] as outlined by the previous speaker and mentioned that working with regard to the EU-UK negotiation framework was a new way for the STECF. It was asked to evaluate:

- Data availability and gaps in knowledge
- Stock status and assessment
- Existing and potential management measures
- Economic importance

The first report included nine species and three specific objectives in its Terms of Reference. Data from 11 Member States was analysed and multiple issues and gaps identified. However, the data set for scallop was one of the most complete particularly for the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, North Sea and the Channel. The report includes comprehensive fact sheets on scallop for 6 sea basins: North Sea, West of Scotland, Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, Western Channel and Eastern Channel. It also provides an overview of available management measures for NQS both in the

EU and in the UK, including:

- Gear based technical measures (ring size)
- Spatial and Temporal Closures
- Capacity and effort controls
- Marine Protected Areas

Following from that first expert working group and the STECF advice, the STECF-23-02[6] group reviewed the findings of a detailed ad hoc contract provided by DG MARE analysing similarities and differences between the current management measures for scallops in the EU and UK waters and addressing specific Terms of Reference. STECF concluded that current management measures are all viable options for the management of the industry.

As there is no agreed model for stock assessment of scallops, STECF concluded that suitable assessment models could use either harvestable biomass projection from annual surveys, or the ICES guidelines for assessing data-limited stocks (SPiCT, Cmsy+ or length based-assessment). This is dependent on the data sources being integrated. Rihan also identified that there was a lack of data sharing between the EU and the UK.

STECF was unable to carry out a detailed socio-economic assessment due to lack of data, however concluded that the protocol developed by STECF previously would be the most appropriate way of carrying out an impact assessment of future management measures.

[5] The report can be found [here](#).

[6] The report can be found [here](#).

Rihan concluded that both reports and the ad-hoc contracts which supported these provide valuable insight and context. Data gaps and data limitations have been identified and STECF suggested that carrying out an impact assessment for suture management measures would be beneficial.

He added that based on the synergies between the EU and UK a joint management plan could be developed that could “really protect the fishery in a good and sustainable way.”



The Chair thanked Rihan and opened the floor to questions.

Eric Foucher commented that both he and Oliver Tully participated in the working group that produced this report. He added that as a scientist for him ring size is the most important management measure. Historically it can be seen that fishing gear nowadays is much more selective and adjusted to the lifecycle of the species.

Ring size is the same for all of the French scallop fisheries and while scallops are differently sized, he believes that having a uniform ring size has an immediate effect on the fishery and would make management easier.

Dimitri Rogoff commented that in France one ring size of 97mm is applied to the two landing sizes of 102mm and 110 mm which is working well for everyone. Foucher agreed that a single ring size for all fleets working in the same areas would be the most effective and easiest measure to implement.

Rogoff stated that it is important to identify what type of strategy is wanted. For France, scallop as an NQS has the highest value and must be properly managed so that the stock remains abundant and the fishery viable. He expressed his annoyance regarding ring size discussions as this has been on the table for over 20 years and felt that the UK proposals were not useful.

He added that the uniform ring size used in French waters has worked very well and that other jurisdictions are slow in picking this up. Referring to the Bay of Seine he stated that an assessment is carried out after each season and felt that it would be important to understand the effect on inshore fisheries by vessels travelling from further away which are not following the same management model.

The Chair thanked Rogoff for his intervention.



# The work of ICES WG Scallop

Isobel Bloor, Bangor University

Lynda Blackadder, Marine Directorate

The Chair welcomed Isobel Bloor and Lynda Blackadder who are the two Chairs of the ICES Scallop Assessment Working Group (WGScallop), which discusses the key issues surrounding scallop species and is working towards the improvement and further development of appropriate stock assessment methods.

Lynda Blackadder introduced the work of WGSCALLOP which was formed in 2013 and whose 40 members meet annually. She provided a brief overview of how ICES works explaining that the expert working groups are the engine of ICES and are overseen by the Science Committee (SCICOM) and the Advisory Committee (ACOM).

Members of WGScallop discuss the key issues surrounding scallop species and are working towards the improvement and further development of appropriate stock assessment methods. Terms of Reference are established and agreed for a three-year cycle. 7 or 8 separate work areas are usually set, each with a leader or champion who takes responsibility to progress and provide updates to the wider group.

Blackadder commented that pulling together fisheries data on scallops was difficult due to gaps and limitations as mentioned previously so that ICES issued a data call in 2020 to improve the availability. She mentioned the group's work on ageing and connectivity which helps to understand the biological stock area to determine if the assessment areas are appropriate.

She referred to a review paper published by members of the group on catch efficiencies of towed fishing gears targeting scallops ([link](#)) before addressing the stock assessment carried out by the group drawing attention to work carried out around the Isle of Man. She added that this was the first time that scientists worked on a shared area between the EU and UK.

She concluded by providing an overview of the next steps for the working group:

- Progress with work over the next few months
- ICES Annual Science Conference in September [ASC 2024 \(ices.dk\)](#)
- Annual meeting in October
- End of three-year cycle
- New Terms of Reference
- Incoming chair to work with Isobel.

*“Scallop species continue to be of commercial importance, and this group anticipates further advice requests to meet conservation management and sustainability goals for the benefit of the stocks, the fishing industry and the ecosystem.”*

The Chair thanked Blackadder for the presentation and asked that questions will be put forward in the discussions due to time constraints.

Rogoff wondered if ICES involved producers and fishermen in this particular working group.

# Current knowledge and management of scallop fisheries in the Channel

Eric Foucher, Ifremer

Oliver Tully, Marine Institute

Welcoming the next speakers the Chair explained that Eric Foucher is a fisheries biologist and researcher at Ifremer, with extensive experience in scallop research and stock assessment campaigns in the Channel. Oliver Tully is a fisheries scientist at the Marine Institute in Ireland with a long involvement in inshore as well as shellfish and crustacean fisheries.

In his presentation, Eric Foucher focussed on the management system in the Bay of Seine and started by introducing the life cycle of king scallop in the Channel. He explained that there are differences between stocks depending for example on temperature and that the species grows very quickly in the Channel achieving maturity at 2 years. He added that the residual currents in the Channel are also important to consider as they occur in areas where the scallops rest making these “source areas”. An additional important factor for scallop distribution is the habitat as they prefer sand to fine gravel.

Referring to work carried out in the Channel he pointed to a large study carried out 10 years ago which led to the main conclusion that there are three scallop beds in the Channel, one in the Eastern Channel, one in the south of the Western Channel (along the French coast) and finally the beds on the south coast of Cornwall.

Total landings for king scallops have been increasing in the Eastern Channel since 2002 especially since 2015. The same increase cannot be observed in the Western Channel where catches are more stable even though

over recent years higher catches have been recorded.

Foucher identified the changes in total landings in the various areas of the Channel and the importance of inshore areas for smaller French vessels and stated that for France the scallop fishery is highly seasonal, but less so for the UK. He provided a specific overview of total catches in ICES rectangles in the Eastern Channel identifying increases over the years and differentiating between French, Irish and British landings. Landings in 27E6, 29E5 and 29E6 are almost exclusively British. In the South Western Channel changes can be seen in certain areas for example around Jersey. Occasionally British vessels also fish in this area, more specifically in 27E7. He commented that French vessels tend to stay closer to shore to reduce their operating costs.



Stock status in the Eastern Channel 7d has shown that in the Bay of Seine the stock was able to recover due to the introduction of management measures. The stock is now in a healthy condition. In the Eastern Channel a good biomass can also be observed, and fishing effort has increased. Granville Bay has gone from being overfished to being in excellent condition. The stock in the South of Cornwall is not quite as healthy as the others.

The Scallop fishery is the most important fishery for French vessels with 700 vessels and 2500 fishermen engaged. In the Bay of Seine, a complex management system is in place. Fishing season is from mid-November to the end of March with a limit of 3/4 trips per week. A closure area is observed year-round in order to improve the reproduction of the stock which has been monitored by Ifremer in a long-term study. Landings have increased while the number of fishing opening hours has reduced over the past years.

The Chair thanked Foucher for presenting the management details in French waters and invited Oliver Tully to take the floor.

Tully provided an overview on Irish fleet activity and stock status to complement Foucher's presentation. He felt that it was important to focus on the lifecycle of the species when identifying a method for stock assessment as well as management. Stock recruitment relationship is still uncertain which is an important factor used in the age based analytical assessments that are done for finfish to determine FMSY and reference points.

He felt that aging can be problematic for some stocks and is uncertain in various areas. Some fisheries reference points may be more difficult to determine than expected as growth rate varies even within stock units. He added that recruitment may be episodic and that larval dispersal and quality may change over time.

This may result in spatially variable and time variable recruitment leading to biomass hotspots in space and time. That will present challenges for stock assessment and management. Maintaining adult density is vitally important, as low density reduces fertilisation rates and may lead to lower recruitment.

Looking at fishing data over the past 20 years Tully identified that scallop fishing has a large footprint which is relevant to other assessments, for example the seafloor integrity D6 under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Tully pointed out that fleet activity varies spatially over the years which may give credence to the idea that there may be spatial and temporal hotspots in recruitment. He explained that Ireland uses data from port sampling, at sea observers, VMS-logbook data and surveys and identified that the logbook and VMS data provide very detailed information helping to derive various expressions of stock abundance and fishing activity at high resolution.

He mentioned that Irish fleet activity in the Channel is seasonal and squeezed between UK and French limits accounting approx. to only 1-2% of total landings in the Channel. However, he felt that the Eastern Channel is becoming increasingly important for the Irish fleet in recent years as catch rates are higher than the Irish Sea or Celtic Sea making fishing there more profitable. This reflects the strong productivity of the scallop stock in the Eastern Channel.

While both France and the UK carry out detailed surveys in the Channel, one of the key features in the UK surveys is that since 2017 biomass has doubled in both the Western and Eastern Channel. French surveys also show increasing biomass. However, coarse resolution surveys may not be precise if information on seabed is not incorporated into survey design.





*“The coarseness of the resolution of the survey is important in determining the precision of the estimates.”* Doubling of biomass during a period when exploitation rates in some areas was 50-70% is surprising and points to very strong recruitment and growth rates.

Tully added that dredge efficiency is still uncertain and dependent on various factors, for example ground type and location. He referred to a recent paper from the ICES Scallop WG on dredge efficiency. Looking at the UK assessment he commented that different reference points allow for very different harvest rates, with harvest rate very high in some areas. He provided some perspectives on the assessment of Channel scallop:

- Can we ignore the risk of recruitment overfishing!? but
  - Preserve scallop densities in some areas to ensure fertilization success
- The assessment question could be limited to ‘how to exploit an observed recruitment’ (management of growth overfishing); size or age projection matrices for short term forecasts.
- Survey uncertainty (catchability, spatial resolution) should be addressed if surveys are to be the main source of information for assessment; the problem of noisy survey data!
- Stock status indicators can be developed from Logbook VMS data at fine spatial scale.
- Best use of VMS logbook data could enable relative abundance estimates and local or stock depletion estimates (and harvest rates and biomass) to be derived.

Tully finished by providing some conclusions and recommendations:

1. Different assessment approaches are taken by UK and by different EU Member States; no ICES framework as such
2. Need to identify and agree the stock assessment and management units
3. Data integration from all countries participating in the fishery within a given management unit (especially VMS and logbook data).
4. There should be a common survey design within stock units. Survey uncertainty needs to be addressed.
5. Need to identify the management objective, the best approach to management and therefore the scientific assessments required to service the management objective
6. Management to avoid growth overfishing may be sufficient. This would be particularly important in stocks with episodic recruitment.
7. Season management, improved selectivity, spatial management, rotation.

Rogoff reminded participants that Ireland does not have access to the 12 nautical miles off the French coast. He stated that as well as being more selective, the 97 mm rings improve dredging efficiency, as there is less detritus and less clogging, and a slight drop in fuel consumption.

In his opinion, the quality of scallops was also higher. He added that the French fleets are considering an increase in the minimum size of scallops from 10.2 to 11cm.

# Scallop Fishing Trials by Bord Iascaigh Mhara

Daragh Browne, Bord Iascaigh Mhara

The Chair welcomed Daragh Browne, Fisheries Conservation Technologist with the Irish Seafood Development Agency (BIM) who worked closely with Irish fishers on trials to assess the potential impacts of increasing ring size in response to French increases in dredge ring size in the English Channel scallop fishery.

Browne explained that the trial came about when the Irish scallop fishing industry approached BIM to assess the potential impacts of increasing ring size under conditions representative of Irish fishing practices and gear. This was in response to French increases in dredge ring size in the English Channel scallop fishery.

Fishing gear comprised Newhaven-style scallop dredges, top elevation (top left), front elevation (bottom left). The bags or ring backs attached to the rear of each dredge are made up of steel rings and washers. Irish vessels typically use 85 mm diameter rings, whereas French vessels use 92 mm and plan to increase to 97 mm. The number of dredges varies from vessel to vessel but in this case, there were 10 dredges per beam and the trial vessel deployed port and starboard beams.

Browne pointed out that the trial took place during November 2023, in EU waters of ICES 7.e (the western English Channel or la Manche). Scallop Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) is 100 mm in this area. Whereas in ICES 7.d (the eastern English Channel) the scallop MCRS is 110 mm. A total of 36 valid hauls were carried out within the shaded area illustrated to the northwest of the Channel Islands.

Average haul duration was 58 minutes, towing speed was 2.5 kts and depth was 68 m. Control and test dredges were numbered 1-10, making up 5 pairs of dredges per side. On completion of a haul the same pair of dredges was sampled from both sides. This was to reduce bias related to dredge position along a beam. Almost 4,000 scallops were measured over 4 days. Less than 1% of the total number of scallops retained by all ring sizes was under the minimum conservation reference size of 100 mm. Scallop size frequency histograms were plotted and statistically assessed proportional differences in scallop catch at width using a generalised additive model (GAM) and catch curve outputs.

Key findings:

- Significant reduction in < MCRS (100 mm) scallops in 92 mm ring size.
- No loss of  $\geq$  MCRS scallops using 92 mm
- Significant loss in  $\geq$  MCRS scallops in 97 mm

Browne concluded that the sampling protocol attempted to account for differences in dredge fishing power along a beam. He explained that it was impossible to change the ring bags from one beam to another to assess differences in fishing power due to poor weather. In addition, the trial Skipper kept the 92 mm gear on board his vessel after the trial and reported some loss of above 100 mm MCRS scallops as the gear became more worn. *“These caveats aside the results are similar to the findings of a French study conducted in the eastern Channel”* (ICES 7.d) (SELEDRAG, Foucher et al., 2020). He added that a similar trial is planned in the eastern Channel in October 2024.

# UK king scallop FMP

Paulo Vasconcelos, DG MARE

As already mentioned in the introduction of this meeting, in 2023, the UK published its king scallop fisheries management plan (FMP), covering stocks in English and Welsh waters. The NWWAC submitted its response to the UK consultation on the FMP for scallop in October 2023. A summary of the responses received (including the response from the UK and Welsh Governments) was published in December 2023. The Chair invited Paulo Vasconcelos, policy officer in DG MARE Unit C5, to provide an overview of the content of the extensive documents publicly available on the king scallop FMP.

Paulo Vasconcelos commenced with an overview of background to the FMPs which set management proposals to accomplish the main objectives of the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS): deliver sustainable stocks, ensure a healthy marine environment, and support a profitable and sustainable fishing sector. Public consultation on 6 frontrunner FMPs was launched in July 2023 one of which was for king scallops. This was published on 14 December 2023 and comprises mainly generic actions with variable timelines:

- Initial / short-term measures: within 1-2 years of publication;
- Medium-term measures: in the next 3-5 years;
- Long-term measures: more than 5 years.

The short-term measures will be developed alongside the review of existing management approaches and the development of long-term management measures.

Vasconcelos explained the rationale and general objectives of the king scallop FMP pointing out that it was developed by Defra and the Welsh government in partnership with the Scallop Industry Consultation Working Group (SICG). He then outlined the three main management objectives:

- Improving the evidence base: continue developing stock assessment methods, indicators and reference points for stocks;
- Initial management measures: alignment of management measures (including gear requirements), mapping interactions with non-target species and impacts on seafloor;
- Long-term measures: develop science-based input measures (i.e. limit fishing effort) and output controls (i.e. limit catches) and review days-at-sea limits regime (retained EU Regulation).

He added an overview of specific management objectives:

- Develop science-based evidence to propose harvest strategies and harvest control rules (HCRs);
- Avoid overfishing risks (while establishing further conditions);
- Seek opportunities for broad alignment of measures (e.g. gear requirements);
- Assess scallop fisheries impacts and develop an action plan with measures;
- Address gear and other inefficiencies in scallop fisheries;
- Explore changes in marine spatial use, including the impact of nomadic larger UK scallop vessels;
- Develop climate change mitigation and adaptation measures for UK scallop fisheries.

Vasconcelos summarised the main issues raised during the consultation:

- Prioritise a management framework based either on input or output controls;
- Mitigate impacts of scallop dredging and map scallop fishery footprint;
- Technical measures to increase selectivity and reduce impacts on the benthic environment;
- Develop a co-management approach to continue working closely with stakeholders.

He stated that the FMP also includes an overview of current management measures for king scallop in UK waters which vary to a certain extent in fishing areas to allow for regional specificities.

In his final remarks he stated:

- FMP management objectives are accompanied with specific actions and possible management measures;
- However, those actions are mostly generic and exploratory, still without concrete management measures;



- Management framework and actions based on input controls (e.g. limitation of fishing effort, such as days at sea limits and area / time closures) and output controls (e.g. catch limits);
- Possible different approaches between inshore (SSF fleet) and offshore waters (nomadic larger scalloping fleet).
- FMP proposed approaches are still at high-level, but provide the basis for developing concrete management measures;
- Further developments and detailed management measures will follow a co-management approach (analysis / discussion by managers, researchers and industry);
- Nevertheless, the proposed management framework includes harvest control rules with output controls (i.e. catch limits);
- Some indications that UK might eventually seek TAC setting and quota management aiming to achieve MSY objectives.

The Chair felt that this detailed overview was highly valuable and thanked Vasconcelos for his presentation.

Rogoff thanked DG MARE for differentiating between artisanal and inshore fishing fleets and fleets fished by large non-inshore vessels that have a more opportunistic attitude and a wide range of action. He added that the French fleets insist on extending their 7d management model to the entire Community zone stating that while they are fishing less and less in the UK EEZ, they will be vigilant to the measures deployed by the British. Their intention is to impose specific measures, including ring sizes, weekly closures, in the joint management zone below 49°42.

# Socio-economic aspects of scallop fisheries in the Channel

Olivier Guyader, Ifremer  
(Marine Economics Unit -UMR AMRE)

The Chair welcomed Olivier Guyader, an economist at Ifremer, to present on trends in shellfish fleets in the Channel, including some key figures on socio-economic aspects of king scallops which is the top species in terms of weight and value of landings at French level.

Guyader explained that he pulled together specific information regarding the French fishing effort in the Channel which represents the main area of French fisheries overall in terms of landings and value. While there are some scallop fishing grounds in the Bay of Biscay, the majority are in the Channel. Focussing on the Eastern Channel he explained the various approaches used across the EU for evaluating socio-economic aspects and how to arrive at vessel viability and profitability grouped in fleet segments.

Looking at the main scallop fleets in 2022 in the Eastern Channel the main segments based on EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) classification were identified and related to dependency to scallop landing value and contribution to scallop stock 7d fishing mortality.

Guyader then looked at the evolution of the number of active vessels for the DRB (dredge) segments showing that new vessels have been added in recent years. The added value has strongly increased since 2011 and fleets have become more profitable over the past years in relation to scallop catch per unit of effort increase but also cost reduction. He provided information on fuel consumption of the vessel and stated that while a downward trend can be observed, fuel costs still represent a significant cost for vessels.

The effect of the COVID-19 crisis can clearly be seen with a reduction in fishing effort and landings in 2020 subsequently leading to an increase in scallop stocks resulting in an increased profitability of the fleet which is producing more while using less fuel.

Remuneration for fishers has also increased since 2011 making the sector more attractive. This can be observed when looking at the age structure of crew members involved in this particular fishery with quite young fishermen involved compared to other French fleets. Guyader added that the wealth distribution is not as unequal as in other parts of the French fleet. This can be related to management measures established for the scallop fisheries.

Finishing with a look at the market he concluded that figures should be updated, and that processing and direct sales are probably underestimated. The structure of demand for scallop at auction hall (% of purchase by fishmongers, processors, etc) in the different management areas is different but markets are interconnected.



Scallop markets and supply chains differ between France which imports scallops (mainly from UK) and the UK which exports to France, the French market being estimated at 130-180 000 tonnes in live weight. This supply chain relationship between France and UK could be an element to integrate in the negotiation of a scallop management plan in the Channel.

The Chair thanked Guyader for his detailed presentation.

Tully wondered if the drop in fuel consumption per vessel is due to less effort per vessel, or if this is also due to increased efficiency (catch rate and lower fishing effort required to take a unit of catch or a unit of quota) given that the biomass is high.

## Discussion

The Chair opened the session with some of his own observations on the presentations. In relation to the STECF reports he commented that these must be kept in mind when evaluating the UK work on FMPs. He added that the French experience with managing scallops is certainly relevant for wider aspects on scallop fisheries and needs to be taken into account. He wondered if the information from France and Ireland as presented by Foucher and Tully had already been taken into account by the ICES working group, as well as BIM's work. He felt that what was missing from the presentations were the overall effort limits in place in 7d. He added that it might be useful to amalgamate all of this information into the management plan and that this would be included in the upcoming meeting of the NWWAC Working Group 3 in Ghent on 01 July in order to discuss preparation of advice. He reminded participants that these meetings are open to observers and encouraged anyone interested to register.

Brouckaert then opened the floor to all participants welcoming opinions regarding the information put forward in the presentations as well as the objectives of the webinar.

Foucher expressed his satisfaction that the Irish trials arrived at the same results as the French trials. He felt it might be better if the new trials were conducted in richer areas than where the May trial had happened, to allow for better comparison. Regarding losses he stated that French trials with 97mm ring size had also experienced a slight drop in commercial interest for scallops with 10cm minimum landing size. However, these scallops that remain on the seabed will continue growing and catch is simply delayed to a later stage. Therefore, this loss is just temporary and linked to the increase in selectivity. It is just a matter of months before these scallops increase in size, bigger than the medium size that was initially targeted by a smaller mesh size. This was the case in the Bay of Saint-Brieuc where the landing size is now up to 102mm.



Julien Dubreuil agreed with Foucher and felt that the costs related to this transitional loss could be temporarily offset by other levers, such as an increase in fishing time or quotas, and that an increase in ring size has been requested and regarded as very efficient by fishers. The increase in landing size from 10,2 cm to 10,5 cm has improved the economic performance.

Foucher commented that increasing the selectivity of dredges is fundamental to reducing the work required of crews on board, e.g. less sorting, fewer stones.

Tully added that optimum harvest size and harvest rate depends on the balance of growth and mortality. Where growth is fast, there is clear argument to delay harvest. But the opposite is also true.

Manu Kelberine felt that efficiency of higher selectivity and increase in size as seen in the Irish trials is positive for both fishermen as well as the stocks. He thanked John Lynch and congratulated BIM for carrying out the trial.

John Lynch explained that the two different ring sizes were tried and the reason for trial site was that the minimum landing size (MLS) was smaller. The next trial will be carried out in an area where the MLS is 110mm. He explained that one problem for Irish vessels relates to what possible measures may be introduced by the UK and will they align with EU measures. He added that the most comprehensive cooperation with the UK is desired as changing gear when at sea is too difficult. *“Management measures need to make operational sense for the fleets that work there.”*

Browne acknowledged that the release of under MCRS shells is a long-term plus.

Vasconcelos stated that a lot of interaction between Parties is needed as well as better connection of information, data and research among the colleagues from the EU and UK. There is room for harmonisation and alignment of some measures which would be beneficial for the sector. This can be taken forward through the work of the NWWAC FG Scallop which can propose measures for this species/fishery. These can then be discussed bilaterally in the context of the SCF. Harmonisation is desired to reduce operational difficulties and applies to stakeholders of both Parties. He emphasised that the main features of the species' biology do not change between EU and UK waters and therefore alignment of management measures is the ideal approach for both fisheries and stocks.

The Chair mentioned that the scallop industry in the UK has expressed interest in communicating with the NWWAC on this topic which is something to follow up.

Foucher commented on the UK position that there are several things that are positively surprising. However, these remain a theoretical list and the statement on more scientific data was slightly worrying. The French surveys provide evidence twice a year and it is known what measures to put in place to best support both stock health and fisheries. He felt that it is very straight forward and that the UK's most recent response where fishing is stopped during certain months proves this.



In response to Brouckaert's question, Blackadder confirmed that the issues raised during the presentations are discussed in the working group and included in the WG reports. However, she was unsure how these contribute to advice and management at UK level. For WGSCALLOP to formally discuss these issues special requests to ICES may need to be put forward as individual discussions between group members may not be fully documented in the group's report, especially if the issue does not fall under a specific term of reference.

Tully stated that various comments were made that scallops were data poor and felt that this was not really the case especially on the French side. He felt that there was a lot of information available from recent time series as well as logbook and VMS data. *"Scallop is not data poor, but assessment poor and we have not yet decided on how best to use the available data in which assessment framework as we are also not sure what the management objectives and strategy might be"*. He added that this is clear for TAC stocks as the advice is requested to determine TAC. But there is no such request for scallop, so scientists do not know whether TAC advice is requested or something else, such as MCRS, or ring size.

*"These are reasonably simple problems to address as it is a simple yield per recruitment type of assessment to see what the optimum fishing mortality rate should be in relation to MCRS."*

Once MCRS is determined, the optimum ring size can then be identified with good selectivity and as close to MCRS as possible. He concluded that these are not insurmountable problems but that they need to be put into a structure and discussed between scientists and management. This could then be fed into the ICES working group which could potentially develop an assessment framework accordingly.

Brouckaert felt that based on this there is no longer a "chicken or egg" situation, but that data is available, and a discussion is needed regarding management principles and what type of assessment can be done.

Foucher agreed with Tully and felt that reference points could be included in the ToR of the ICES working group. But the usual terms of reference as used for FMSY stocks are not often applicable to stocks such as scallops as this is a species with varying recruitment peaks. He concluded that this could be discussed at the October meeting of the ICES working group.

Lynch wondered if there was a scientific basis for the MCRS in the different sea basins or was that purely market based regarding meat content.

Tully responded that this is likely based on the different growth rates in the different areas. Foucher added that scallop in the Eastern Channel has the fastest growth rate though maturity only sets in at 2 years. Therefore, a different MCRS to ensure that all scallops are able to reproduce.





Kelberine felt that France and the UK seem to have different strategies for the management of this resource between the UK and France.

The EU minimum size in the Western Channel is 10cm, while in France it is 10,2cm and is likely to increase to 10,5cm. The French strategy is in place for the optimisation of the stock given the importance of the fishery.

This is not the same as the FMPs in the UK as

these seem more concerned with protecting the seabed rather than optimising the stock.

Brouckaert agreed that the underlying considerations are important to take into account on top of stock management considerations for the *“amalgamation of all available information and alignment across management identities.”*

## Next steps

Alannah Gourlaouen asked regarding attendance at NWWAC meetings in July and October and how to attend as observer. She also wondered if there is a timeline regarding the UK FMPs and as to when more details might be available.

Finally, she referred to comments made by Rogoff and specifically the 12-mile limit where there are issues fishing alongside the British colleagues as mentioned in an earlier comment regarding the 2018 “scallop wars”. She felt that this was an important topic and how this can be resolved.

She thanked the NWWAC for organising the webinar.

Brouckaert assured Gourlaouen that all comments made in the chat would be recorded.

The Secretariat commented that CRPMEM Normandie is a member of WG3 and that their main representative would be on the mailing list. Everyone is welcome to register via the NWWAC website, however, the agenda has not been fully finalised yet.

## Close

The Chair thanked all presenters and participants for their contributions to the webinar.

## Participants

Tetyana Albers	DGAMPA
Anabel Anduja Vazquez	DG MARE
Lynda Blackadder	Marine Directorate
Isobel Bloor	Bangor University
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Daragh Browne	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Eva Carballeira Fernandez	DG MARE
Vincent Dauchy	DGAMPA
Pauline Depickere	Agency for Agriculture and Fisheries
Julien Dubreuil	CRPMEM BZH
Eric Foucher	Ifremer
Coline Giraud	CRPMEM Normandie
Alannah Gourlaouen	CRPMEM Normandie
Norman Graham	DG MARE
Olivier Guyader	Ifremer
Eileen Harmey	DAFM
Marouso Kyriakou	DG MARE
Manu Kelberine	CRPM de Bretagne
Servane Le Calvez	CDPMEM des Cotes d'Amor
Olivier Lepretre	CDPMEM Hauts de France
Quentin Llavori	Comite Peche Normandie
Franck Le Barzic	COBRENORD
John Lynch	ISEFPO
Muriel Mariet	DGAMPA
Mo Mathies	NWWAC
Solene Prévalet	FROM Nord
Dominic Rihan	KFO
Dimitri Rogoff	CRPMEM Normandie
Delphine Roncin	FROM Nord
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Thomas Brégeon	DG MARE
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