

Proposals for Future Management of the Isle of Man Queen Scallop Fishery



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Rheynn Chymmiltaght, Bee as Eirinys

Consultation Summary

February 2015

Part 1 Introduction

The Isle of Man queen scallop stock assessment report published in May 2014 indicated that the stock biomass of the species had fallen well below the recommended total biomass reference point of 13,000 tonnes for the fishery. The stock was considered to be below the point at which future recruitment to the fishery would be expected to be impaired.

As a result, a much restricted fishery was permitted in 2014 on the advice of the Queen Scallop Management Board (QMB) with a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 1,000 tonnes. The use of variations to licence conditions to proactively manage fishing activity ensured the TAC was not exceeded and the fishery closed early October 2014.

Sustainable management of the fishery is the long term objective of both the Isle of Man Government and the Queen Scallop Management Board and in November 2014 the QMB met to review the fishery and discuss options for its management from 2015 onwards. The Board acknowledged that the management measures in place to date had proved insufficient to protect the stock from over-exploitation and further effort control measures were required.

It was therefore recommended that DEFA investigate various options to achieve a cap on effort, including restricting the number of licences issued in respect of the fishery and establishing eligibility for inclusion in the fishery based on historic track record. The Minister for DEFA accepted this recommendation and agreed to a consultation process.

Part 2 The Consultation Exercise

To fulfil the conditions within the Fisheries Management Agreement 2012, an impact assessment was prepared by Bangor University in advance of the consultation launch and this and a letter outlining the intentions of the Department was sent to the UK Fisheries Administrations in November 2014.

The formal consultation was released by the Department in December 2014, seeking the views of the fishing industry and other stakeholders on the need for additional effort restrictions to be introduced to the queen scallop fishery. The consultation was made available on the Government website and also distributed by email. A news release coincided with the launch.

The consultation closed on 9th February 2015, and a total of 50 responses were received.

Part 3 The Responses

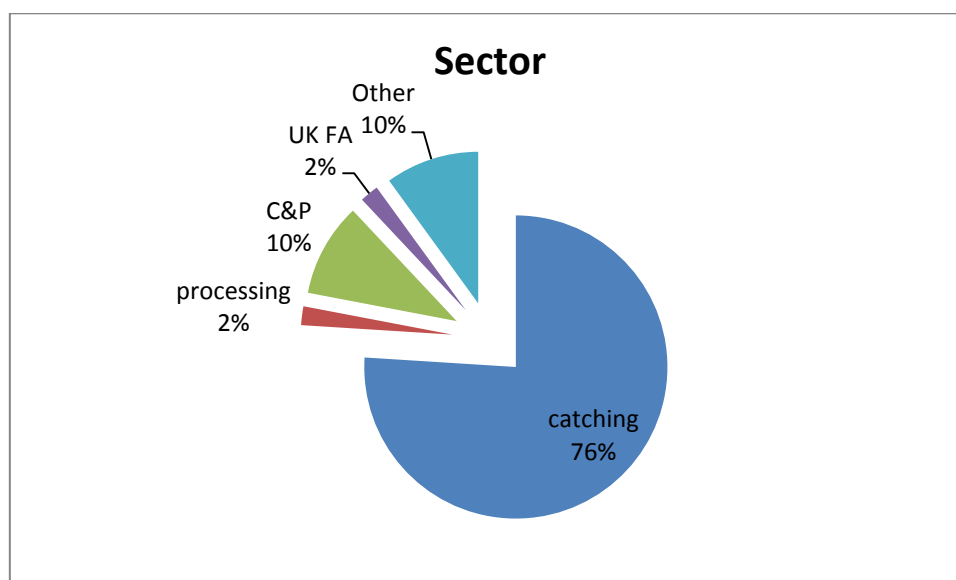
Question 1

Respondents were asked to identify which sector they were affiliated with.

Responses

Of the 50 responses received to the consultation, the sectors represented were as follows:-

38	catching
1	processing
5	catching & processing (C&P)
1	UK fisheries administration
5	other

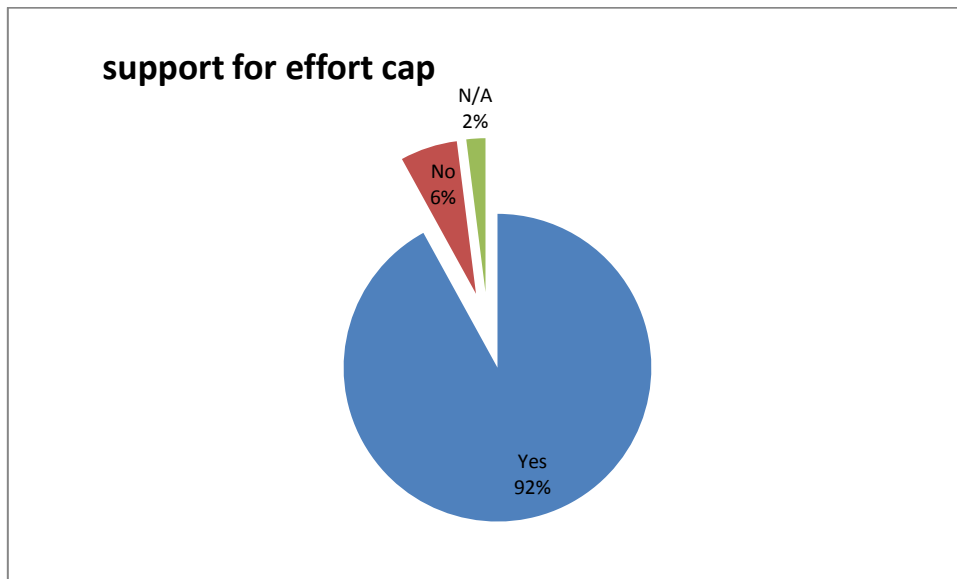


Question 2.1

The Department recognises the need to address the issues of declining stock and over-exploitation within the queen scallop fishery in order to rebuild the stock to a sustainable level. The consultation asked whether there was support for the introduction of an effort cap within the fishery.

Responses

Of the 50 respondents to the consultation, 46 were in favour of an effort cap, 3 were against this idea and 1 did not indicate either way.



Additional comments received in response to this question included:-

- *Too many licences issued by DEFA;*
- *Potential to overfish with current number of licences;*
- *Too many boats at present;*
- *Effort control by bags per day only;*
- *Existing number of licences is too high*

Question 2.2

Those respondents who answered **YES** to question 2.1 were then asked:-

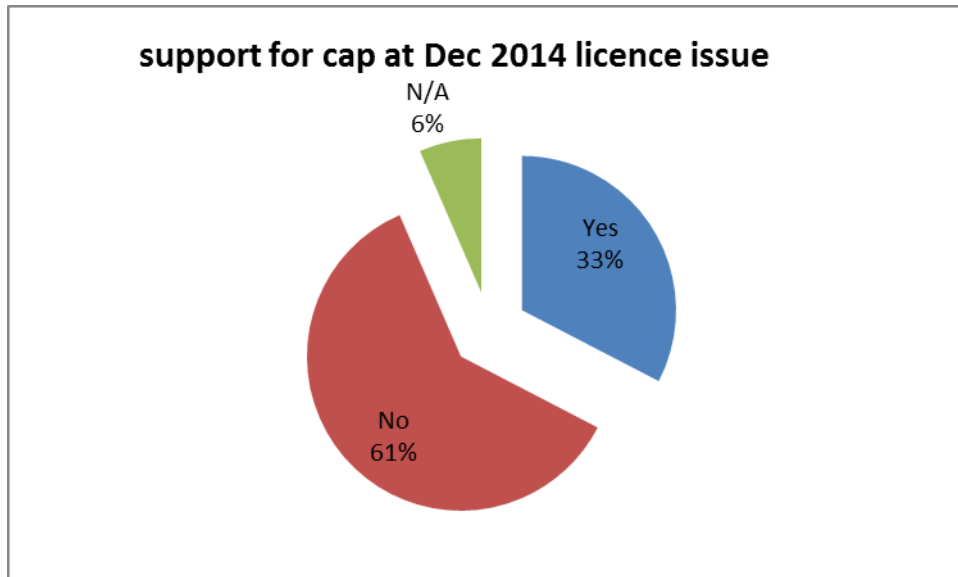
- (i) Would they support a cap on licences at the existing number as at December 2014, with no new licence issue considered until such time as the stock had recovered?

Alternatively or as an additional measure;

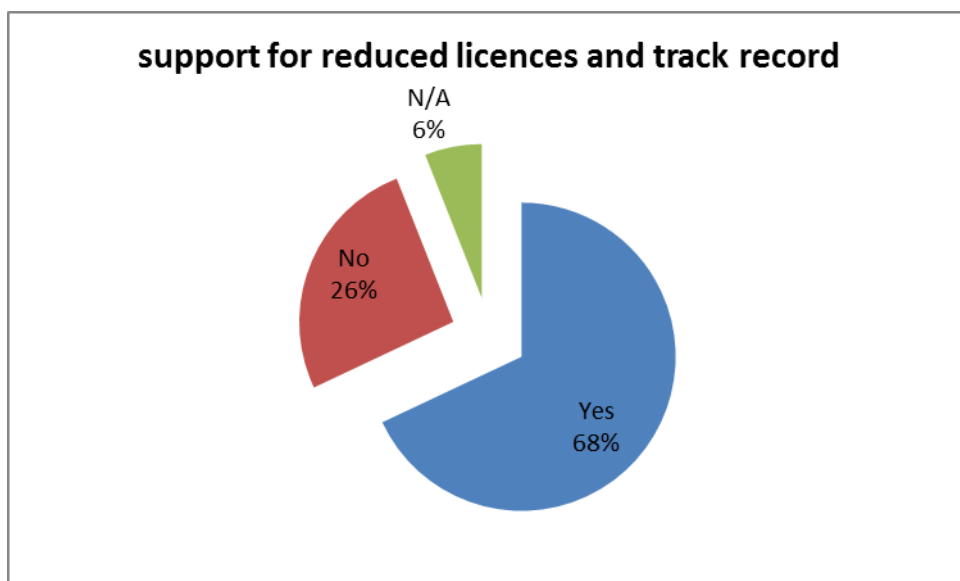
- (ii) Would they support a reduction in the number of already-issued licences and restrict entry to those vessels with an appropriate track record within the period 2010-2012?
- (iii) Within the reference period specified (2010 – 2012), respondents were asked their views on the appropriate number of fishing days to contribute towards a valid track record for entry to the fishery:-
- a. 19 days
 - b. 10-19 days
 - c. 20+ days

Responses

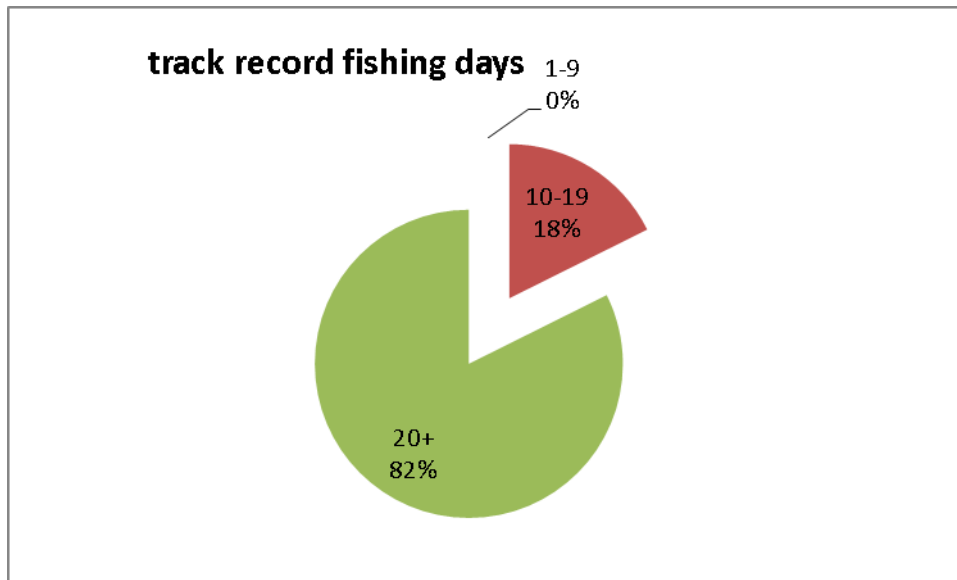
- (i) Of the 46 who responded **YES** to Q2.1, 15 supported the concept of a cap on licences at the December 2014 level, and 28 disagreed with this initiative. Three respondents expressed no preference.



- (ii) Of the 46 who responded **YES** to Q2.1, 34 (68%) supported the concept of a reduction in the number of licences and entry restricted to vessels with an appropriate track record within the period 2010-2012.



- (iii) None of those supporting the concept of reduced licences and a track record considered the option of 1-9 fishing days to be acceptable, 6 respondents considered a track record of 10-19 days to be acceptable for eligible entry to the fishery and 28 (82%) preferred a track record period of 20+ fishing days.



Comments associated with Q2 included:-

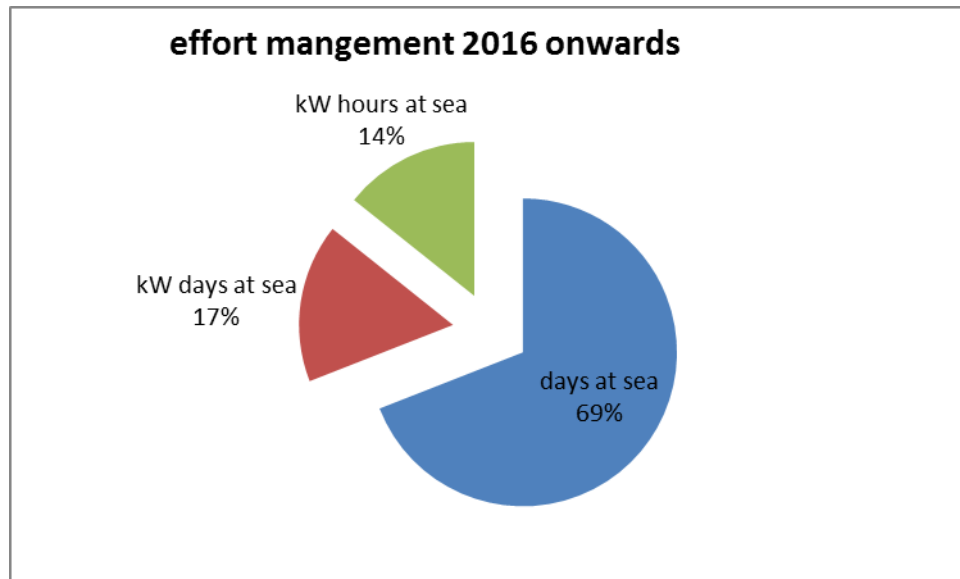
- *Capping at December 2014 licence number unrepresentative as some vessels may not have applied for licence due to restrictions;*
- *Cannot support cap at Dec 2014 level due to existing pressure on stock;*
- *The fishery cannot support the existing number of boats;*
- *Use maximum possible number of track record days;*
- *Track record day should be 50+;*
- *Prefer to use 90 or 100 days over three years;*
- *Prefer to use 2009-2011 or 2008-2010 reference period;*
- *Prefer 2010-2013, with more than one day of fishing;*
- *Make allowance for pipeline cases & historical involvement in fishery;*
- *Introduce an appeals system if licences restricted;*
- *Licence cap should not affect under 10m sector*

Question 3

To better manage the amount of effort within the Isle of Man queen scallop fishery, the Department was keen to seek opinion on the introduction of additional restrictions based on total historic effort within the fishery. Three different methods of allocation were suggested (days at sea, kW days at sea and kW hours at sea) and the consultation asked for views on which would provide most benefit to the queen scallop fishery.

Responses

42 responses were received to this question, with the majority in favour of a 'days at sea' regime:-



Comments associated with Q3 included:-

- *Days at sea works well with licence variation;*
- *No support for any measure other than bag limit;*
- *Already controlled by Western Water days, support Days at Sea only;*
- *kW days at sea complicated by Western Waters;*
- *no support for effort management –effort control severe on small boats ;*
- *kW days or hours would over-complicate management measures;*
- *kW days at sea – less power, keep big boats out;*
- *Days at Sea been trialled, fair for all vessels;*
- *kW days most sensible and relevant measure*

More general comments received in response to the consultation included:-

- a healthy marine environment is crucial;
- support measures that will safeguard natural resources in the marine environment;
- Department and industry must accept more robust and vigorous restrictions;
- Concern regarding potential displacement of effort;
- Clarification required on pipeline cases & criteria if additional capacity becomes available

Part 4 Summary

In brief:-

- The majority of the 50 respondents were from the catching sector (72%);
- 92% of respondents supported the introduction of a cap on effort;
- Although there was some support for a cap on licence numbers at the December 2014 level, 61% of respondents did not support this;
- However 68% of those in favour of capping effort supported the concept of a reduced number of licences and eligibility based on track record within a 2010-2012 reference period;
- 82% of those who supported restricted entry to the fishery based on historic track record, preferred the number of fishing days to qualify for entry to be 20+;
- The majority of respondents (69%) expressed a preference for further effort management to be based on a Days at Sea system.

Part 5 Outcomes and Timescale

In March 2015, the Isle of Man Queen Scallop Management Board (QMB) met to discuss the outcomes of this consultation and to discuss proposals for the future management of the Isle of Man queen scallop fishery.

Noting the overwhelming support from industry for capping effort through responses to the consultation, the Board made the following recommendations to the Department:-

- The number of licences issued for queen scallop fishing within the territorial sea to be reduced from the existing level to a number that will encourage the rebuilding of the stock within the fishery.
- The proposed reference period of 2010-2012 to be adopted with eligibility based on a track record of a minimum of 20 days within that period.
- All licences must remain the property of DEFA and these will not be automatically transferable or saleable
- A number of valid 'pipeline' cases associated with these new measures are expected and a range of criteria to be taken into account when considering these cases was suggested.
- The QMB would be the most appropriate body to consider appeals arising from unsuccessful pipeline cases.
- A draft timetable for the implementation and completion of the process, with the aim of all Isle of Man queen scallop licences being issued by the end of June 2015.

Departmental Response

In response to the advice received from the QMB, the Minister for DEFA noted the continuing commitment of the QMB to the recovery and rebuilding of queen scallop stocks in the Isle of Man territorial sea and, in endorsement of this advice, accepted the recommendations from the Board.

Accordingly, Isle of Man queen scallop licences have been issued in respect of those vessels that were licenced to fish for queen scallops when the consultation was published and which could demonstrate a track record of having fished for 20 or more days for queen scallops within the territorial sea, over a reference period spanning the queen scallop seasons of 2010-2012. Eligibility to fish for queen scallops within the territorial sea has been removed from the licences of those not meeting the criteria.

The Department recognises that there will be a number of genuine 'pipeline' cases as a result of these new measures and it has agreed to consider these on a case-by-case basis. Full details of the application process will be placed on the website by 13th April 2015 at <http://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/commercial-fishing/iom-licencing>.

Discussion on the future management of Isle of Man queen scallop licences is currently in progress within the Department, and once the pipeline cases are resolved, further details of this will be released.

Appendix I

Consultation Stakeholder List

Individual owners of:

Isle of Man registered fishing vessels

UK registered fishing vessels with scallop entitlement, holding Isle of Man licences

Fishermen's Organisations:

Manx Fish Producers Organisation Ltd

Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Organisation Ltd

Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd

South Western Fish Producers Organisation Ltd

Scottish White Fish Producers Association

Scottish Fishermen's Organisation Ltd

Scottish Fishermen's Federation

National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

Clyde Fishermen's Association

Maryport & Solway Fishing Co-op Ltd

Mallaig & North West Fishermen's Association

Welsh Federation of Fishermen's Associations

Isle of Man Queen Scallop Management Board

Processors & their organisations:

UK Scallop Association

IOM Scallop Processors Association

Gourmet Foods

Devereaus

West Coast Sea Products Ltd

Island Seafare

Isle of Man Seafood Products Ltd

C B Horne and Co

AM Seafoods

Robinsons

Falfish

Environmental Groups:

Manx Wildlife Trust

Manx Basking Shark Watch Manx Whale & Dolphin Watch Sea Search

Friends of the Earth

Manx Conservation Forum

Manx National Heritage

Society for the Preservation of Manx Countryside & the Environment

Marine Conservation Society

Other:

All Members of Tynwald

Attorney Generals

Local Authorities

Isle of Man Government Departments, Chief Officers

Chamber of Commerce

Law Society

Bangor University

Fishing News

Isle of Man Government

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DEFRA
DARD
Marine Scotland
Welsh Assembly Government