

Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Rheynn Chymmiltaght, Bee as Eirinys



Isle of Man
Government

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Summary of Responses to Consultation

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

Part 1 Introduction

Background

The fishery for king scallops in the waters around the Isle of Man has been of significant commercial importance for the local fishing industry for several decades. The fishery operates from November until the end of May each year using toothed dredge gear. Landings have increased steadily over this time and increased substantially since the 2009-10 season.

With concerns over increasing fishing effort, both within the territorial sea and the wider Irish Sea, the Department introduced the Sea Fisheries (Scallop Fishing) Bye Laws in 2010. The purpose of these bye laws was to further regulate king scallop fishing in the territorial sea. Despite the introduction of these measures, the number of vessels fishing still increased over time, with Landings per Unit Effort (LPUE) declining.

Data published in the Marine Management Organisation UK Fisheries Statistics Report 2014 show that in the UK, scallop landings more than doubled between 2008 and 2012. In addition the waters around the Island showed the highest landings of scallops and the highest number of vessels.

Locally, the fishing and seafood industry is worth £7m per annum at first sale, with the king scallop fishery accounting for over £4m of this. The industry is worth £13m per annum overall to the Manx economy and employs around 300 people across the Island's towns. Indirect benefits from the industry are estimated at £44m. In 2015, the Isle of Man Government approved a five year strategy (Future Fisheries) for the sustainable development of the Isle of Man's sea fisheries and marine environment. The strategy identified a number of priority themes, including:

- Managing sea fisheries
- Safeguarding the marine environment
- Developing our sea fisheries
- Managing resources
- Working with our customers

Industry itself raised concerns with DEFA and other UK Fisheries Administrations with regarding effort within the scallop fishery in general, the lack of effective control measures for effort management and the threat to stocks.

In 2014 Marine Scotland consulted on measures to improve the management of effort in the Scottish king scallop fishery, and in 2015 Welsh Government consulted on proposed new management measures for the scallop fishery in Cardigan Bay.

The 2015-16 season saw a further significant increase in the number of vessels prosecuting the local king scallop fishery and this gave cause for serious concern.

To summarise, therefore, in recent years there had been a trend towards:

- Additional vessels prosecuting the fishery
- Increased fishing effort in the fishery (kWdays)
- Increased landings from the fishery
- Reduced LPUE

These trends prompted concerns from various sectors, including the industry, and the Department felt that it must investigate and take appropriate action, in line with the recently approved strategy.

Proposals for consultation

The measures proposed were informed by recommendations from industry, recommendations from the School of Ocean Sciences at Bangor University arising from scientific data, management measures implemented elsewhere and lessons learnt through the management of the queen scallop fishery within the territorial sea.

The proposals included:

- The capping or restricting the number of licences issued in respect of the fishery.
- The establishment of a management board.
- The introduction of new technical measures in relation to tow bar length.
- The introduction of new temporal measures in relation to fishing at weekends.

Existing management measures would remain and the fishery would continue to be managed through a combination of Regulations made under the Fisheries Act 2012 and conditions of licence associated with the Isle of Man Fishing Licence.

Part 2 The consultation exercise

A public consultation process was undertaken between 6th July and 17th August 2016. The objectives of the consultation were;

- To inform industry and other interested stakeholders of the Department's commitment to safeguard king scallop stocks within the territorial sea and develop sustainable fisheries, whilst safeguarding important marine species and habitats, by implementing various management measures, in line with the Department's strategic objectives.
- To seek views on a range of proposed management measures designed to regulate and reduce the level of fishing effort for king scallops within the territorial sea.

The consultation document was posted on the Government website, distributed via email to the Department's consultation list, posted on social media and also communicated to the UK fisheries administrations;

- DEFRA
- Marine Scotland
- DAERA (Northern Ireland)
- Welsh Assembly Government

A Government press release was made, and the consultation process was covered by the BBC, Manx radio and other media organisations.

At the close of the consultation, a total of 84 responses had been received. The results of all responses for each question are summarised below.

Part 3 Responses

The number of responses to each question differs. Therefore, in the following figures, the percentages shown are of the number responses received for each particular question.

Question 1:

Respondents were asked to identify which sector they affiliated with. Of the 84 responses received, the sectors represented, or identified with were as follows;

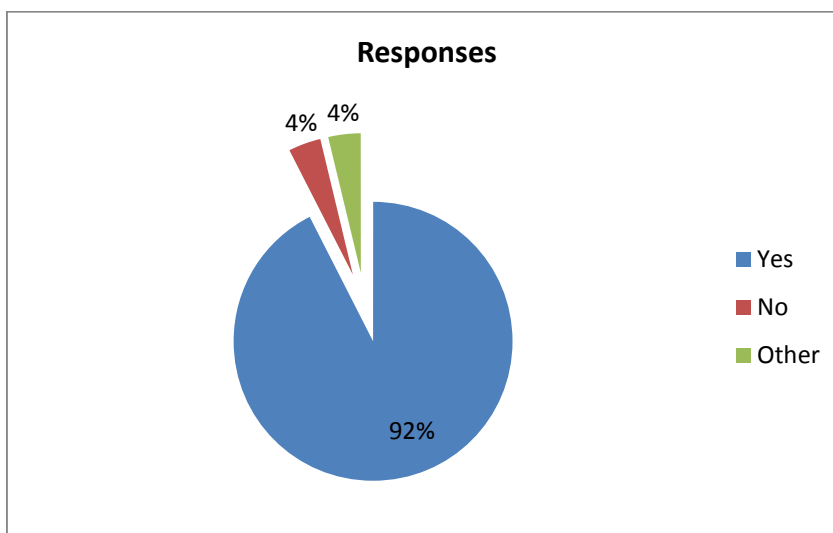
59	Catching
3	Catching/Processing
3	Processing
3	NGO
1	UK Fisheries Administration
15	Other
84	Total

“Others” included individuals, statutory consultees, Government departments etc. Not all consultees answered all questions. Some offered support in principle or, in the case of some statutory consultees, made no comment.

Question 2.1:

Do you support the introduction of a cap on the number of licences issued in respect of the Isle of Man king scallop fishery?

Yes	74
No	3
Other	3
Total	80



Comments:

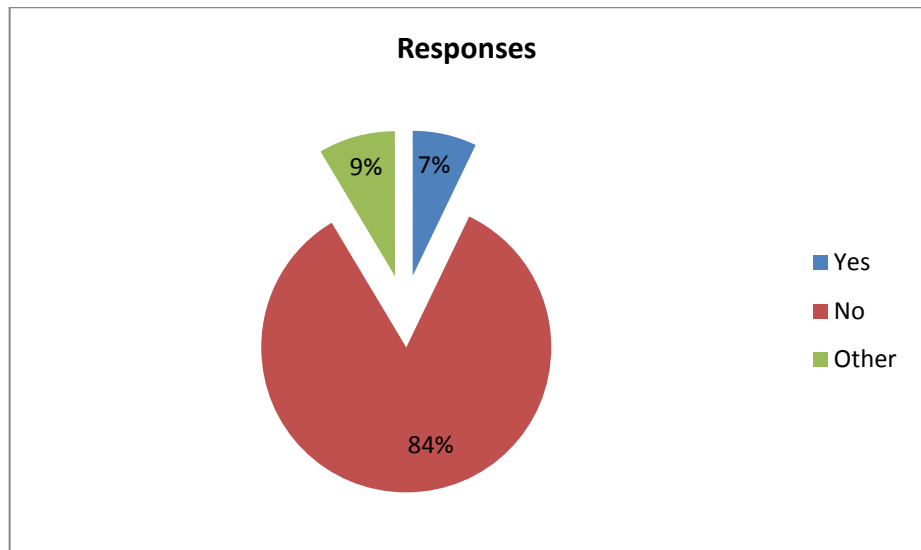
- There are too many vessels currently.
- The Department needs to consider sustainability.
- There is not enough evidence to support the proposal.

Question 2.2:

If you answered YES to question 2.1, please answer the questions below:

(i) Do you support a cap on licences at the existing number?

Yes	5
No	59
Other	6
Total	70

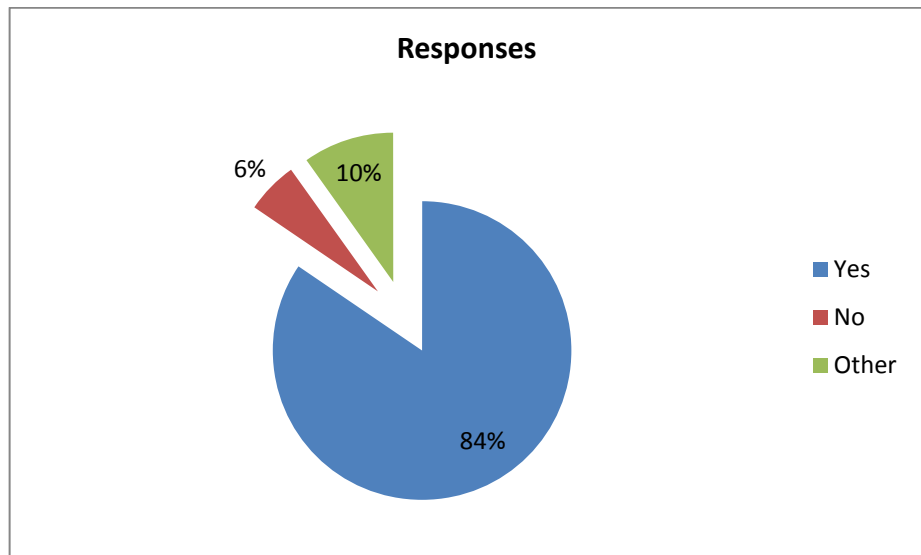


Comments:

- Current effort is unsustainable.
- This would be unfair on new entrants to the fishery.
- There is not enough evidence to support the proposal.

ii) Do you support reducing the number of licences issued in respect of the fishery to those vessels with an appropriate track record within a specified reference period?

Yes	60
No	4
Other	7
Total	71



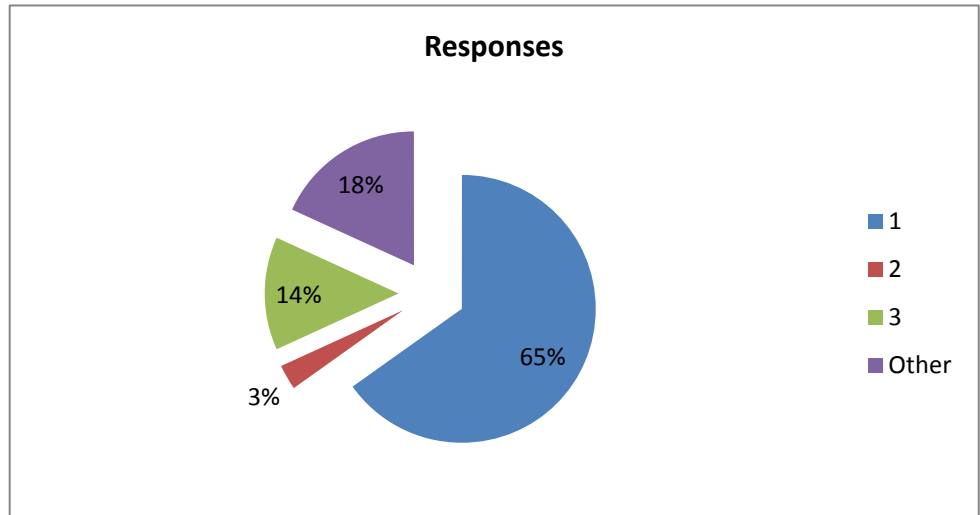
Comments:

- The Department needs to exclude opportunistic effort.
- The proposal is unfair and excludes those which have recently started fishing.
- The Department needs to consider those who have changed their vessel recently.

iii) Further to Question 2.2 (ii) which of the following do you think would be an appropriate reference period?

- 1) 01st November 2010 – 31st May 2013
- 2) 01st November 2011 – 31st May 2014
- 3) 01st November 2012 – 31st May 2015
- Other

1	43
2	2
3	9
Other	12
Total	66



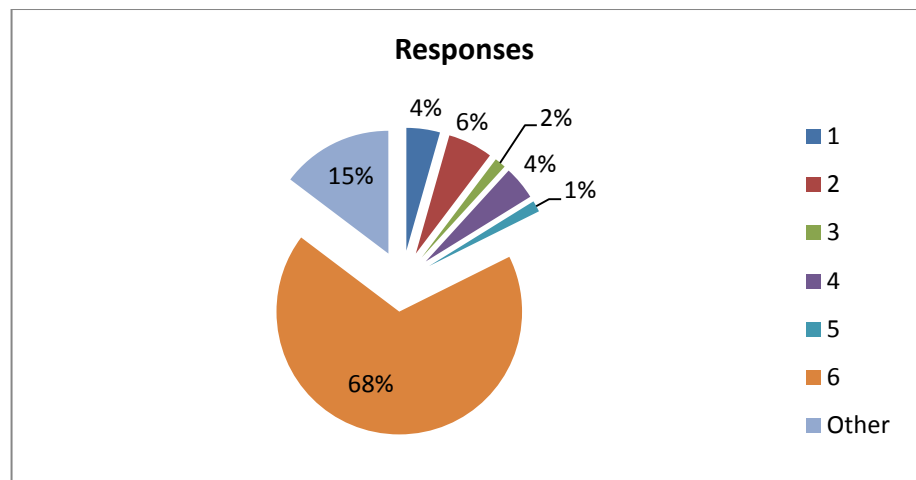
Comments:

- The reference period needs to be longer.
- The Department should protect those with historic interest.

iv) Further to Question 2.2 (ii) and (iii) which of the following do you think would be an appropriate number of fishing days, within that reference period, to constitute an eligible track record for entry to the fishery?

- 1) At least 1 day
- 2) At least 10 days
- 3) At least 20 days
- 4) At least 30 days
- 5) At least 40 days
- 6) At least 50 days
- Other

1	3
2	4
3	1
4	3
5	1
6	46
Other	10
Total	68



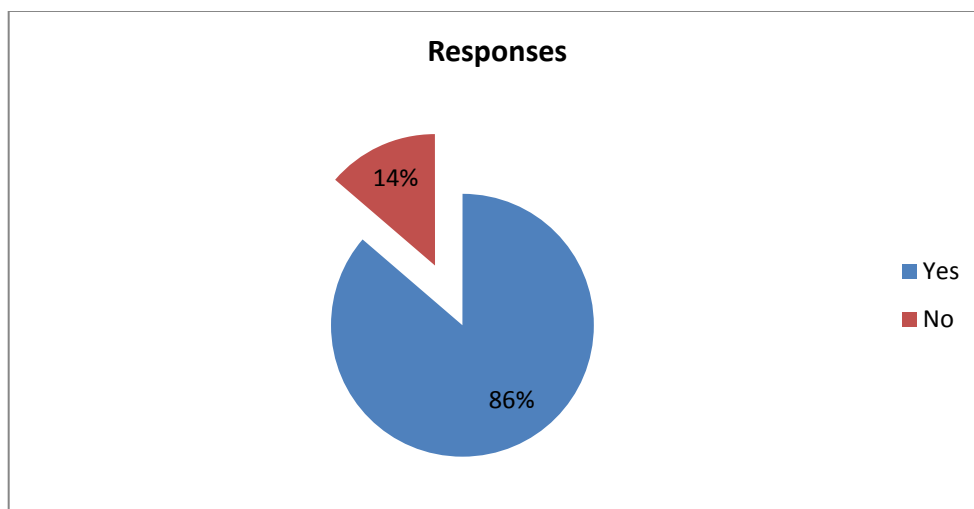
Comments:

- At least 100 days would be appropriate.
- Any one day since 2010 would be appropriate
- Licences should be issued to those that can demonstrate dependence on the fishery.

Question 3:

Do you support the establishment of an advisory board for the king scallop fishery within the territorial sea, similar to the existing Isle of Man Queen Scallop Management Board?

Yes	63
No	10
Total	73



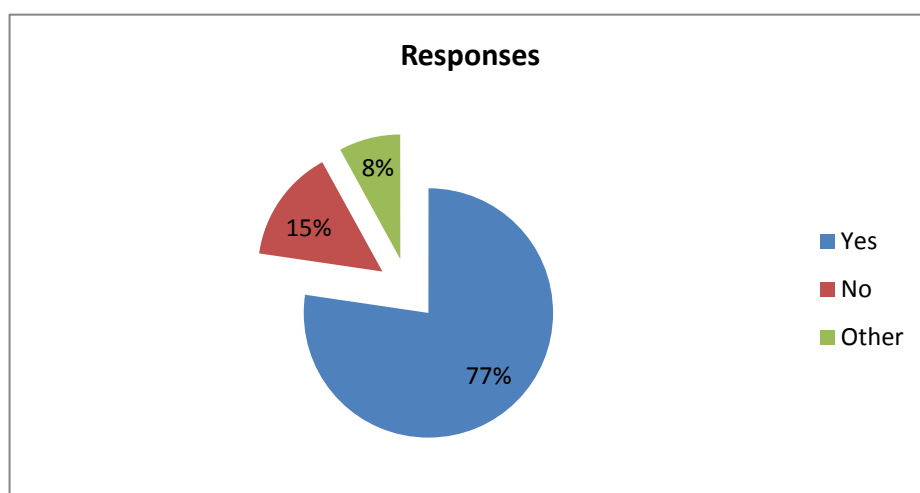
Comments:

- Needs fair representation.
- Queen Scallop Management Board works well.
- A Board is not required.

Question 4:

Do you support the introduction of a tow bar length restriction, within the Isle of Man territorial sea, which would prohibit a vessel from carrying a towbar of length greater than that capable of carrying the maximum permissible number of dredges? [currently 7 per side]

Yes	58
No	11
Other	6
Total	75



Comments:

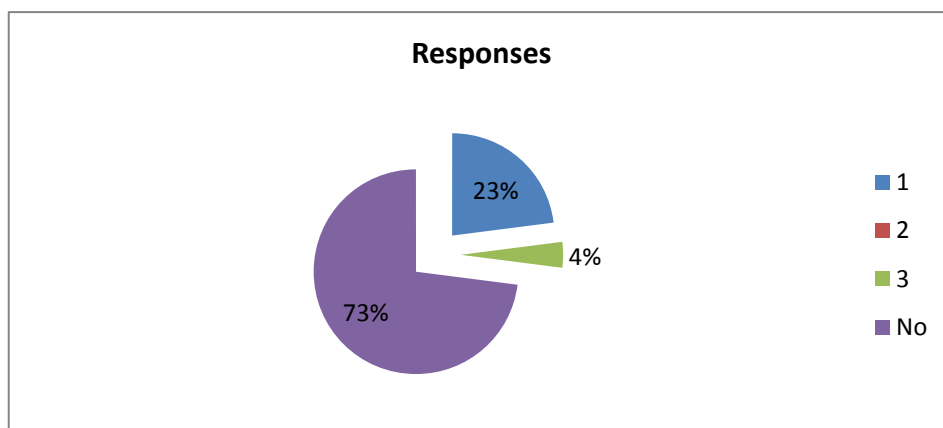
- Reducing towbar length would reduce effort.
- Towbar length should be harmonised with other jurisdictions.
- The Department should consider the number of attaching lugs as well as the length.

Question 5:

Do you support the introduction of a weekend ban on fishing for king scallops within the Isle of Man territorial sea?

- 1) A complete weekend ban
 - 2) A ban on Saturday only
 - 3) A ban on Sunday only
- No

1	17
2	
3	3
No	54
Total	74



Comments:

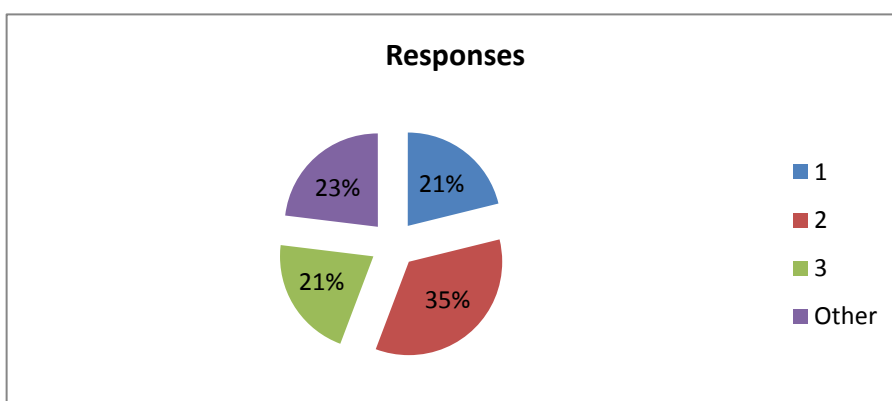
- Weekend ban should be the same as in other jurisdictions.
- Banning fishing at the weekend may make fishermen fish in dangerous weather.

Question 6:

Which of the following options would you support in relation to managing the king scallop fishery within the Isle of Man territorial sea? (select multiple options)

- 1) An effort based system e.g. Days at Sea
 - 2) A catch based system e.g. Total Allowable Catch / quota
 - 3) A closure based system e.g. Closed Areas
- Other

1	11
2	18
3	11
Other	12
Total	52



Comments:

- No need for further measures once licence numbers are reduced.
- Remove historic Grandfather Rights from vessels with an engine power over 221kW.
- TAC and quota is a fairer approach.

Part 4 Conclusion

Responses to the consultation indicated considerable support for a reduction in fishing vessel numbers by means of entry restrictions based on track record and number of days fished; there was clear support for an early reference period and a high number of track record days whilst acknowledging the need for the protection of vessels that have demonstrated commitment to and dependence on the fishery.

In attempting to balance the biological need of the stock with the socio-economic impact, whilst taking into account the detailed consultation feedback, various combinations of different reference periods and track records were examined to identify a balanced and effective solution.

In order to best accommodate all interests, a four year reference period comprising the Isle of Man king scallop fishing seasons 2011/12 to 2014/15 has been selected, combined with:

- For <15m vessels, a minimum of 50 days fishing in ICES rectangles 36, 37 & 38 E5;
- For >15m vessels, a minimum of 26 days fishing in ICES rectangles 36, 37 & 38 E5
(in acknowledgement that the number of days at sea was restricted for vessels >15m under Western Waters Effort Regime)

Licenses to fish for king scallops were issued to the owners of those vessels that were licensed to fish for king scallops when the consultation was published and which could demonstrate the required track record within the specified reference period. Authorisation to fish for king scallops was removed from the licences of those vessels not meeting these criteria. An appeals procedure was held for those vessels not qualifying for entry. This resulted in a reduction in the number of licenced vessels from 154 to 94.

A stock assessment for king scallops within Isle of Man waters remains under development to improve knowledge of these stock levels. The Department will consider the stock assessment outcome when available and reserves the right to introduce further management measures should there be a need. Should it be apparent the stock can sustain additional effort, the Department will consider the release of additional licences.

The Department is working on the establishment of a combined Scallop Management Board, with representation from all sectors of the industry from other Administrations, to provide advice on king and queen fisheries within the territorial sea.

No action was taken on the introduction of a restriction on towbar length or on a weekend ban. However, the Department reserves the right to review this decision should additional management be required. The preference for a Total Allowable Catch and quota based management system was noted along with the industry suggestion to remove grandfather rights from vessels with an engine power over 221kW.

Consultation distribution list:

Individual owners / nominated representatives of:

Isle of Man registered fishing vessels
UK registered fishing vessels, 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

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
Chamber of Commerce
Isle of Man Government Departments, Chief Officers
Law Society
Fishing News
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Marine Scotland
Welsh Assembly Government

Isle of Man Government
Proposal for Future Management of the King Scallop Fishery