



# Marine Management Organisation

## Consultation Outcome: Western Waters demersal for scallop fishing effort swap in FAO area VII

October 2019



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Bronze



## Why did we consult?

The UK scallop industry negotiated a proposed trade in effort with the Dutch industry. This proposal was tabled at the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) and the group requested that the UK Government consider authorising the swap. In order to ensure a greater range of views were taken into consideration, including those outside of the scalloping sector, MMO put this proposal to consultation.

## The proposed swap

The Netherlands have offered to transfer 155,000 kW days of WW 15 m and over scallop effort in FAO area VII to the UK in exchange for 310,000 kW days of 15 m and over demersal Western Waters effort in the same area.

## Responses

This consultation was published on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and remained open for comment until 5 pm on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019. To ensure a wide awareness of the consultation the MMO's Communications team distributed a call for responses to its stakeholder mailing lists (including industry members, academia, NGOs and other public bodies) and publicised it on MMO's social media accounts.

Within the period of consultation we received 12 responses, 10 from fishers or organisations representing fishers and 2 from Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities. On the main question of whether the proposed trade was supported 10 respondents (83%) were opposed and 2 were in favour.

## Views of those in favour of the swap

The responses of those in favour of the swap focused on the following points:

- Benefit of increased effort availability in FAO area VII to scallop fisheries in the central North Sea by avoiding displacement of large scallopers to the North Sea, particularly its inshore fisheries.
- Refuting the purported negative impacts of Dutch fly seining in The Channel. Highlighting that the Netherlands limits the number of licences for these activities to 24 vessels; that the bulk of demersal WW effort used by Dutch vessels is in French rather than British waters and that the bulk of catches by these vessels (85%) are of non-TAC species, primarily squid.

## Views of those opposed to the swap

The responses of those opposed to the swap focused on the following points:

- Very high catching efficiency of Dutch fly seining and the consequent reduction of fish available for UK vessels.
- Gear conflict and displacement as a result of the presence of Dutch fly seiners.
- While The Netherlands can and does source effort from other EU member states, a trade with the UK would likely be in addition to other transactions and would probably increase the total amount of available effort for fly seining in comparison to previous years exacerbating the points above.
- Scallop effort in the eastern Channel is currently too high and that obtaining additional effort would not be sustainable.

- Negative impact of scallop dredging on other species (e.g. crabs, herring) and habitats, including designated sensitive areas.
- Negative impact on Channel quota availability, particularly choke species, and compliance with landing obligation.
- Negative impacts of the transaction primarily borne by fishers based in communities on the English south coast whereas the benefits largely felt by fishers outside of these communities.
- Growth of scalloping activity in the area, with large numbers of dredges, sometimes moving opportunistically into non-traditional areas.

## Further Considerations

During the period that the consultation was open the UK and Normandy/Brittany scallop industry groups managed to reach an accord to provide the UK with 720,000 kW days of FAO area VII WW scallop effort in exchange for UK 15 m and over vessels adhering to closures in FAO area VIId and VIle.

## Outcome

The UK Fisheries Administrations (DAERA Northern Ireland, MMO, Marine Scotland and the Welsh Government), DEFA Isle of Man and Defra have considered the responses to this consultation and have decided not to proceed with this transaction. The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- Having obtained additional effort from France, the effort from this proposed swap is now surplus to requirements.
- The lack of support for the swap from the responses received to the consultation.