# Report of the first UK and EU expert workshop on the multi-year strategy for king scallops *(Pecten maximus)*

Specialised Committee on Fisheries

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## Contents

# Introduction

King scallop *(Pecten maximus)* is one of the most valuable non-quota stocks (NQS) both in the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK). The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) has established provisions regarding the management of EU and UK shared NQS, and according to Article 508(1)(c), the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF) may develop multi-year strategies (MYSts) for the conservation and management of EU and UK shared NQS. In the 2021 and 2022 Written Records of fisheries consultations under the TCA, the EU and the UK delegations, committed to developing MYSts for the conservation and management of shared NQS, as well as to start developing a “pilot” MYSt for Channel king scallops.

On 17 September 2024, the European Commission and the UK government convened a workshop to enhance knowledge and understanding of the king scallop fishery in the English Channel. Attending the workshop were:

- Member States
- UK Fisheries Administrations
- scientists
- environmental NGOs
- fishery managers
- industry representatives

The primary goal was to improve understanding of current EU and UK king scallop stock assessments and current health status of stocks.

The workshop also aimed to share information on data collection programmes and explore opportunities for improved data sharing. The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER) and Ireland’s Seafood Development Agency (BIM) delivered presentations on the status of the stocks in their respective waters, as well as the methods and data used for their assessments. Summaries of these presentations are provided below.

A main focus of the workshop was to provide an overview of the existing EU and UK management measures for king scallops in the Channel, along with candidates for future management measures and approaches, including exploring opportunities for enhanced collaboration. The UK government also highlighted the need to improve understanding and reduce, where possible, the environmental impacts of king scallop fishing, as set out in the king scallop Fisheries Management Plan (FMP).

The workshop was well attended and there were opportunities for attendees to share initial reflections and points of interest as well as information shared in presentations. It was acknowledged that while the MYSt was seen as a positive initiative to work more collaboratively around management of shared stocks, the varying existing measures already in place for scallop fisheries in EU and UK waters could present some challenges to achieving full joint measures.

The European Commission and the UK government agreed that the workshop and the sharing of information represented a positive step towards developing joint goals for management of shared king scallop stocks in the Channel and advancing the development of the MYSt. The MYSt is an opportunity to test new approaches in developing joint management and improving the supporting evidence for these important shared stocks.

# Background

NQS hold significant importance for both parties to develop effective, evidence based management because of their high value and vulnerability to over exploitation. Some high value NQS, such as king scallops, are highly targeted with other NQS caught as bycatch in mixed fisheries. Whilst many NQS are data poor species compared to some quota species, comprehensive king scallop data collection programmes and stock assessments are in place in the EU and UK.  King scallops are common in European waters and contribute to the livelihood of many coastal fishing communities, with some ports being heavily dependent on these fisheries. Therefore, the parties agree that a shared management approach for shared king scallop stocks could provide increased protection to the wider marine environment and to these shared stocks, ensuring they are being fished sustainably.

Currently, the EU and the UK have management measures for the king scallop fishery, such as:

- seasonal closures on scalloping using dredges in both EU and UK waters
- gear specifications
- days at sea effort restrictions for some sectors

Various local measures also exist in EU and UK waters, but on the whole management measures for NQS are relatively limited and vary considerably at the EU, UK, national and regional levels.

In July 2022, the EU and the UK delegations developed an overarching framework for approaching discussions on the development of MYSts, including high level principles, general structure, and the projected stakeholder input for MYSts. The parties agreed to use this overarching framework as the basis for developing the pilot MYSt for king scallops in the Channel. This species was selected due to:

- the shared nature of some Channel stocks
- its high economic importance for both the EU and the UK
- the existing scientific evidence available at research institutions of both parties
- both parties already having management measures in place for this fishery

Paragraph 13(e) of the 2022 Written Record outlines a set of principles for developing MYSts aimed at the conservation and management of shared NQS. These principles are reflected in a joint paper that establishes the framework for the development of the king scallop MYSt, as agreed in the framework of the SCF.

Building on these principles, strategies should aim to support long-term sustainability across environmental, social, and economic dimensions, while minimising the harmful impacts of fishing on the marine ecosystem. They should be grounded in the best available scientific advice and outline how often advice will be sought, along with steps to improve stock status assessments and address any gaps in evidence. These strategies should also be subject to periodic review to account for any developments that may affect the sustainable management of NQS, including potential impacts of changes in fishing behaviour.

# Presentations

## A. The king scallop fishery in the English Channel. The case of the bay of Seine: a complex management system (by IFREMER)

In introduction, a few points are made about the life cycle of the king scallop and the environmental conditions and habitats that are suitable to the development of this species. The king scallop is at the southern limit of its area of distribution in the English Channel. It grows rapidly, reaching sexual maturity in its second year. It is a sedentary species, distributing during its planktonic larval phase, which lasts an average of 30 days. Connections between different seabeds also occur during this larval phase. The English Channel is characterised by a residual hydrodynamic flow from west to east (from the Atlantic to the North Sea). The particular areas and features which make up the French coast, with the Cotentin peninsula-oriented north-south, is an obstacle to this flow, creating gyratory currents to the west around the Channel Islands, and to the east in the Bay of Seine, resulting in a significant retention of larvae in these 2 areas. Based on these observations, previous work has shown the existence of 3 major king scallop seabeds in the Channel. Two are located in the western Channel, one to the north along the English coast (south of Cornwall and Devon), the other to the south around the Channel Islands (bays of Saint-Brieuc and Granville). In the eastern Channel, there is a single stock with several interconnected seabeds, the main located in the Bay of Seine.

France and the UK are the 2 main countries exploiting this resource in the English Channel. Ireland and Belgium also catch scallops, but to a very limited extent. In the Western Channel, the French and British fisheries are quite distinct, with the UK exploiting the northern stock and France the southern stock (although some limited catches are made by Jersey, representing only a small percentage of total catches). For the UK, landings, which is the amount of scallops brought ashore, fluctuate around 5,000 tonnes per year, with a stable trend between 2000 and 2023. For France, landings in the Western Channel show more marked variations over the period, with catches rising from 5,000 tonnes in 2000 to reach a peak of over 15,000 tonnes in 2008. They then gradually declined until the mid 2010s, reaching 7 to 8,000 tonnes between 2013 and 2018. Since 2019, catches have been rising sharply, reaching a record level of over 16,000 tonnes in 2022. These French catches are concentrated in 2 ICES statistical rectangles, the sea areas of Bay of Saint-Brieuc (26E7) and the Bay of Granville (26E8).

In the Eastern Channel, the situation is different, with both the French and British fleets exploiting the same stock. In France, catches are rising steadily, from less than 10,000 tonnes in 2000 to a record level of almost 25,000 tonnes today. These catches are concentrated in two main areas, the Bay of Seine (ICES statistical rectangles 27E9 and 28E9) and north of Dieppe (29F0). For the UK, the scallop fishery in the Eastern Channel was minimal for almost 10 years from 2000 to 2008, with less than 2,000 tonnes caught. It grew sharply in 2009, 2010 and 2011, with the arrival of an industrial fleet based in Scotland to fish in the 28E9, on the limit of French territorial waters, reaching almost 10,000 tonnes in 2010. These catches then stabilised over the last decade (2016 to 2022) at around 7 to 8,000 tonnes per year.

In France, king scallop fishing is highly seasonal, as it is only authorised by ministerial decree from 1 of October to 15 of May of the following year. It is  forbidden to fish for king scallops during the summer, when reproduction and growth are at their peak. Production peaks each year in December, when the Bay of Seine opens. In the UK, king scallop fishing is authorised all year round. In the Eastern Channel, even though it is less marked than for French fishermen, a seasonal pattern based on French fisheries (winter fishing) can  be observed. In the Western Channel,  the British fishery shows a reversed seasonal pattern, with catches mainly in summer (from March to September) in the 29E5 and 27E6. By contrast, there is no seasonality, with catches all year round, in the other statistical rectangles on the UK side.

The use of the CMSY++ Data Limited Stock (DLS) model, which estimates Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) based on historical catches, shows that stocks in the Bay of Seine and the Bay of Saint-Brieuc are currently in good condition. This is for both seabeds where B2023 is higher than Biomass Maximum Sustainable Yield (BMSY) and F2023 is lower than Fishing Mortality Maximum Sustainable Yield (FMSY). For the whole Eastern Channel, while B2023 is also lower than BMSY, fishing mortality has just exceeded FMSY in the last year of operation. In both cases, the trajectory of the stock status (Kobe matrix) shows that the stock was very heavily overfished in the early 2000s, and that the stock status has gradually improved over time. The state of the stock is also good for the Eastern Channel, but the level of fishing mortality has just risen above the FMSY threshold in 2022. In British waters in the western Channel, however, the state of the stock is worrying, with the 2 reference points (BMSY and FMSY) being exceeded.

### Focus on the French fishery in the Bay of Seine

Recent stock assessment surveys carried out by IFREMER have led to a record estimate of the biomass available in the Bay of Seine. This exceptional situation has never been observed since these fisheries began in the early 1960s, even though they are subject to considerable fishing pressure. The king scallop has now become the main species fished in France (in terms of tonnage and value).

The improvement in environmental conditions (for example, sea surface temperature, wind strength and direction) alone cannot explain this situation. Until now, it was thought that there was little or no relationship between spawning stock biomass and recruitment, but recent research has highlighted the importance of spawning stock biomass in population renewal. In fact, by increasing the density of adults on the seabed , the probability of fertilisation when gametes are released into the water column is considerably increased which is the first vital stage in the arrival of the new generation.

Strict conditions have been in place for a long time for these fisheries in France (for example, number of authorised vessels, limitation of the fishing season to the winter period only, limitation of the number of days per week and hours per day, setting of catch limits per trip). Measures to improve the selectivity of fishing gear (large increase in the diameter of the dredge ring from 92mm to 97mm in 2021) have been imposed on all scallop fisheries in France. Also, a system of annual rotational fallowing of an entire area of the Bay of Seine has been in place since 2016. The increase in catches combined with a drastic reduction in authorised fishing hours in the Bay of Seine has led to an exponential increase in yields. The yield, expressed in tonnes per hour of authorised fishing, has risen from 1.8 tonnes per hour in 2000 to almost 150 tonnes per hour in 2023.

The success of the French king scallop fishery is an excellent example of how fishermen, managers and scientists can work together to ensure sustainable fisheries. It is a model many of us can aspire to and can learn valuable lessons from it.

## B. Assessment of scallop dredge ring size selectivity in the western English Channel fishery (by BIM)

This presentation refers to:

- BIM’s scallop ring size report
- the SELEDRAG project which is a French language king scallop study from 2020

The main results of the report show:

- increasing dredge ring size from 85 mm to 92 mm could help optimise scallop size selectivity in the western English Channel fishery

- 97 mm ring size is too large in the western Channel but may be of benefit in the eastern Channel

The king scallop fishery in the English Channel or La Manche is economically important to the Irish scallop dredge fishing fleet. The area encompasses ICES division 7.d (eastern Channel) and 7.e (western Channel). EU technical measures are in place in both ICES Divisions including closed areas and different minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS): 110mm in 7.d and 100mm in 7.e. The SELEDRAG project reported that French vessels use a ring size of 92mm for scallop in 7.d and that French fishermen's organisations were proposing to further increase the ring size to 97mm.

Irish scallop vessels currently use 85 mm ring size and requested BIM to carry out a trial to assess the effects of increasing ring size in the western Channel (7.e) using representative fishing gear and practices.

BIM conducted a trial in November 2023 on board the scallop dredger named MFV Willie Joe from Wexford county. We assessed catches using 85, 92, and 97mm ring sizes in relation to the scallop MCRS of 100mm. A total of 36 valid hauls were completed over 4 days in EU waters of 7.e. Mean haul duration, towing speed and depth fished were 58 minutes, 2.5kt and 37m. All scallops were measured.

Less than one percent of the total number of scallops retained by all ring sizes measured less than the MCRS of 100mm (Table 1). There was no reduction in scallops greater than or equal to 100mm in 92mm compared with 85mm rings (Table 1). There was however a significant reduction in scallops greater than or equal to 100mm up to approximately ~ 110m in the 97mm compared with 85mm rings (Table 1 and Figure 1). Although very few scallops less than 100mm were retained, catch curves demonstrated significant reductions in scallops more than 100mm in 92 and 97 compared with 85mm rings (Figures 1 and 2).

## Table 1. Total scallop counts above and below MCRS by ring size

| Ring size (mm) | Scallops less than 100mm width | Scallops greater than or equal to 100mm width | Total scallop count |
|---|---|---|---|
| **85** | 10 | 984 | 994 |
| **92** | 5 (–50% compared to 85mm) | 1070 (+9% compared to 85mm) | 1075 (+8% compared to 85mm) |
| **97** | 1 (–90% compared to 85mm) | 914 (–7% compared to 95mm) | 915 (–8% compared to 85mm) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **All sizes** | 16 | 2968 | 2984 |

**Figure 1. Scallop size-frequency plots by ring-size**

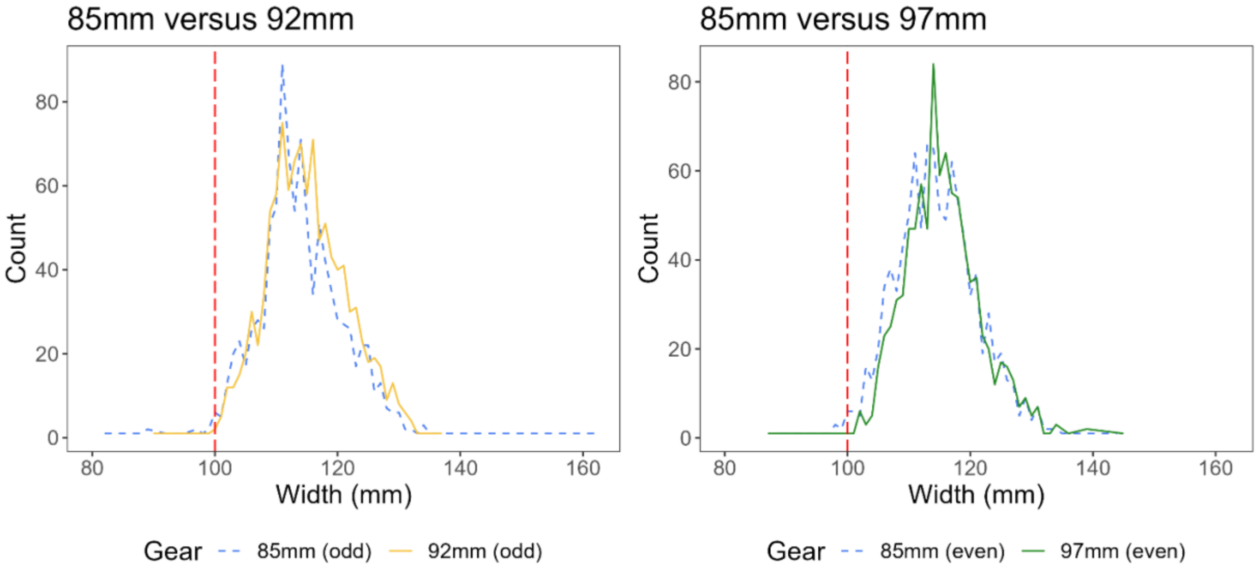


Figure 1: Scallop size frequency plots comparing the catch between 85 mm, 92 mm and 97 mm ring sizes. Vertical red dashed line represents the 100mm MCRS for scallop in 7.e. The 85 mm ring size line (dashed blue) peaks on the left, indicating a high frequency of small scallops. The 92 mm ring size line (yellow) is more balanced, showing a mix of small and large scallops. The 97 mm ring size line (green) peaks on the right, indicating a higher frequency of larger scallops.

**Figure 2. Scallop ring size catch comparison curves**

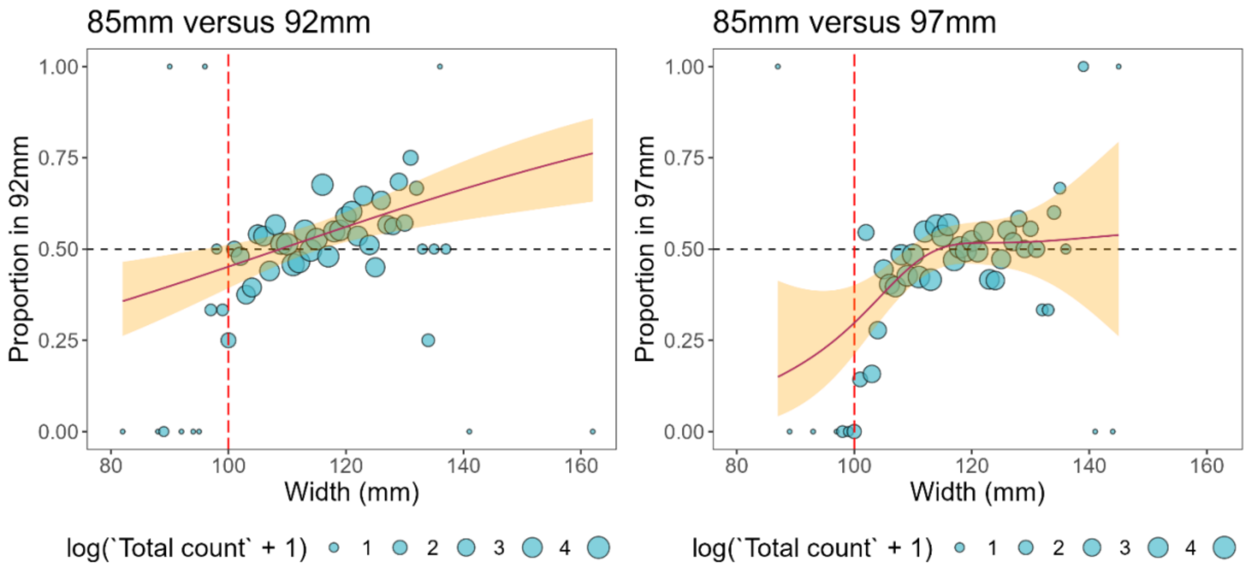


Figure 2: Catch comparison curves between 85 mm, 92 mm and 97 mm ring sizes, modelling overall proportions of scallop catch at width in control and test gears. Points represent the empirical proportions over all hauls and size is proportional to the count at width. Model fit and confidence intervals (yellow band) come from a generalised additive model (GAM). Vertical red dashed line represents the 100mm MCRS for scallop in 7.e. The graph illustrates how the proportion of scallops caught varies with size, with smaller ring sizes catching more small scallops and larger ring sizes catching more large scallops.

# C. King scallop in English waters: data collection, stock assessment and advice (by Cefas)

## Framework

Stocks of the king scallop in the English Channel and approaches to the Bristol Channel are commercially important and are exploited primarily by the UK and France using towed dredges although some commercial dive fisheries exist. Stocks in the Central North Sea are largely UK fisheries. UK stocks were not subject to routine monitoring or formal assessment prior to 2017. Since 2017, a survey-based assessment has been carried out on a biannual basis (in May and September each year) to monitor the exploited stocks of king scallop. These surveys were initially part funded by industry and now are routinely government funded. The coordination of the survey-based assessment is strongly collaborative between science, government and industry and is overseen by a project steering board which includes a range of stakeholders across these areas.

The assessments estimate scallop biomass (harvestable biomass). The report is usually released by late March and includes data to December of the previous year. Several data streams feed into the assessment report including:

- the primary data source of the dredge surveys
- the underwater video surveys (UVS)
- an Industry Scallop Sampling Scheme (ISSS)

The 2 annual dredge surveys cover exploited grounds covering the North Sea, Eastern English Channel, Guernsey, Western English Channel, Bristol Channel approaches and areas of the French Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). These occur just before the main fishing season in each area but the timing of the video surveys on the unfished grounds varies each year and is dependent upon the research vessel availability. The ISSS is an ongoing sampling scheme that continues throughout the year in collaboration with industry and processors.

The Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) within the UK at which scallops can be retained originate from EU legislation and are now retained in UK legislation. This is 100 mm shell round length except in the Irish Sea (Division 27.7.a) and the Eastern Channel (Division 27.7.d) where it is 110mm.

The assessment report includes estimates of:

- harvestable biomass
- exploitation rate
- harvest rate estimations
- MSY reference points estimations

## Dredge survey design (exploited beds)

In 2017, there were 5 stock assessment areas identified:

- 3 in ICES Division 27.7.e (Inshore Cornwall, 27.7.e.I; Lyme Bay, 27.7.e.L; Offshore, 27.7.e.O)
- 2 in Division 27.7.d (North, 27.7.d.N; South, 27.7.d.S)

In 2018, 2 additional assessment areas were defined in:

- the Bristol Channel approaches (27.7.f.I)
- Division 27.4.b (North Sea South, 27.4.b.S)

The Dogger Bank area was added to the assessment (27.4.b.D) in 2021 as a response to increased fishing activity. This area was  dropped from the assessment in 2022 after a dredge ban was introduced  in the Dogger Bank MPA. These areas are defined based on growth rates and fishery exploitation patterns.

The spatial definition of the dredge survey beds within assessment areas are reviewed on a 5-year basis using UK Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) data. This frequency of revision was agreed in collaboration with the project steering board and achieves a compromise between keeping the surveyed areas relevant to the existing fishery while maintaining a degree of consistency to provide a robust time series. As such, the assessed beds within these stock assessment areas have been developed to reflect the nature of the fishery, with the most recent revision taking place in 2022. At the moment, there are 11 beds which are routinely surveyed within these assessed areas.

## Dredge survey process and outcomes (exploited beds)

On a yearly basis across the 2 surveys (May and September), the survey duration allows for around 260 stations to be surveyed which are allocated using a stratified random design. The May survey covers a larger area and number of beds (approximately150 stations, 7 beds) than the September survey (approximately 115 stations, 4 beds). The number of stations surveyed per bed is informed by the bed size.

At each station, typically a 15 minute tow is conducted at around 2.5–3 knots to replicate commercial fishing activity. Two vessels have been utilised for the assessment but most recently and most consistently, a 21 metre fishing vessel with 10 Newhaven dredges on each side of the vessel has been deployed. On the sampling side of starboard, 4 of the Newhaven dredges are replaced with experimental gear (queen scallops) to capture the smaller pre-recruits. Scallops below and above MCRS are surveyed across all beds.

Primary data collected from the dredge surveys are length distributions and biological samples of scallops across all size bins, which are retained for ageing under light microscopes post survey. Secondary data collected when possible could include shell damage, meat yield and bycatch.

## Video survey design (unfished beds)

Since 2017, an underwater video survey (UVS) has been carried out to determine the spatial distribution and amount of scallops in the areas that are not accessed by the commercial fishing fleet. The UVS survey area boundaries were defined from habitat modelling and areas that are considered by industry to contain scallops, but commercial fishing cannot take place due to unsuitable ground type, conservation management, obstacles or gear conflict. The UVS is an appropriate means of assessing these areas due to the limitations stated, meaning dredging activity in these areas would not be unlikely.

Four survey areas close to current fishing grounds that are typically not fished by scallop dredgers were initially defined in 2017 (TV.7.e.A-D). In 2019, 10 further areas were defined and in 2021 an additional area in the North Sea was defined and added. These beds are surveyed using UVS on roughly a 5-year cycle.

## Video survey design process and outcomes (exploited beds)

On a yearly basis the survey duration allows for around 50 stations to be surveyed, which means one to 3 beds annually dependent upon their scale. At each station, the drop frame featuring a high-definition video and picture camera is towed with the tide at 0.4knots approximately 0.5m off the seabed, typically for 20 minutes. The Research Vessel Cefas Endeavour also conducts a multibeam run at each station check for seabed obstructions and to observe any static gear. When a new bed or substrate is encountered surveyed, the camera is re-calibrated.

The RV Cefas Endeavour has been consistently utilised to conduct the UVS surveys. At each station a high-definition video (field of View ca. 1.35m) is captured in addition to still images which are captured routinely throughout the tow or actively when a scallop appears in the field of view. The video footage is observed in real time during the tow to ensure reaction to obstruction and monitor footage capture and is reviewed by multiple scientists to reach an agreement.

Primary data obtained from this video footage and stills apply to MCRS scallops, as it is assumed that any scallop visible within the footage is of MCRS size although work is ongoing to improve the ability to directly measure the size of observed scallops. Amount, spatial distribution and lengths are obtained from the footage and still pictures captured.

## ISSS

An overview of the Cefas industry sampling scheme for scallops was given where voluntary participants from the industry collect samples at Cefas' request. Two types of sample can be requested:

- a red bag sample (where lengths are measured at the processor and sent across electronically to Cefas)
- a blue bag sample (shells and retained and return to Cefas for length measures to be captured and age reading under light microscope)

A sample is requested within an ICES rectangle for every 3 tonnes landed. Since 2017, approximately120,000 length measurements have been obtained through this scheme. Cefas are currently looking at age composition data from this and dredge survey to see if we can track the groups and move towards age based assessment.

## Latest assessment results

The presentation also included the latest assessment results, highlighting the harvestable biomass for the dredged parts of the assessment from the 2024 report, showing the harvestable biomass over time. The exploitation status for the dredged parts of the assessment areas was also discussed highlighting that a consistently high harvest rate for Lyme Bay have been observed with other areas being around or below the MSY rate.

International landings for the 12-month periods following dredge surveys in 2021 and 2022 were not available. Instead, UK landings recorded on a national database were used. International landings and associated harvest rates presented will be revised when required data become available.

### Efficiency, larval connectivity and industry collaborations

Gear efficiency was explained in the context of the assessment. The efficiency is the percentage of scallops that the dredge encounters on the sea floor that are retained and caught. The parameters currently used are 30% (clean ground), 43% (stony “cobbles”) and are applied on a station by station basis. There has been some work ongoing to revise these using tagging as it has a direct impact on the biomass. Within this method, cameras are used to count the tagged scallops that are seen immediately in front of dredge and then count number of tagged scallops the dredge retains. Electronic tags have also been trialled using radio frequency identification (RFID). Other methods of capturing gear efficiencies were detailed including depletion experiments where the gear repeatedly tows over same ground and uses the rate of decline in catch rate to capture efficiency. This method was used to establish the currently used rates derived from 2001 Cefas work. Diver methods can also be used but are more challenging and cover a smaller area at any one time, whereby divers follow the dredges and count what has been left on the ground compared to what is within the dredges.

Connectivity modelling was covered in application to the question of what level do scallops in un-dredged areas contribute to the fishery. Hydrodynamic models have been used to explored links between different grounds and includes modelling the percentage of larvae retained and the percentage of larvae that is exported to different grounds.

## D. Environmental impact and existing and candidate UK measures for Channel scallops (by Defra)

### Environmental impact of dredging

In addition to the ecosystem objective and climate change objective in the Fisheries Act 2020, all Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are subject to legal obligations for environmental protection.

The king scallop dredge fishery poses 3 main environmental risks:

- seafloor integrity
- bycatch of sensitive species (low risk)
- litter from fishing gear (low risk)

Further details can be found in the king scallop fisheries management plan and supporting environmental report, both published in 2023.

The objectives in the king scallop FMP in English and Welsh waters largely relate to the management of sustainable fisheries (focused on data collection and management). Objectives are also included which aim to achieve environmentally sustainable scallop fisheries.

These objectives include:

- assessing the interactions with the marine environment and potential impacts associated with king scallop fisheries
- developing an action plan setting out appropriate measures to reduce damaging impacts
- exploring ways to address gear and other inefficiencies that currently exist within king scallop fisheries to reduce environmental impacts

These overarching environmental objectives will be achieved through specific short-term measures and actions that have been developed to:

- feed into wider work around exploring the potential of a focused Benthic Impact Working Group - this would complement existing groups already considering pressures on benthic habitats, with a remit to help progress achievement of the FMP and wider objectives relating to king scallop fishing impactsmap current fished areas alongside areas where king scallop stocks are present but where fishing is not permitted or feasible, such as in some Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and offshore windfarms, to improve understanding of the overall footprint of the fishery
- identify and collate information on existing evidence and data required to map the interactions of king scallop fishing with other fisheries and non-target species and the wider environment, including identification of potential evidence gaps and plans to address them
- complete a review of the fishing methods used to fish for king scallops, the evidence required to assess the environmental impacts of the different methods, and opportunities for innovations in catching methods

## Existing and candidate management measures for Channel Scallops

King scallops are a commercially important shellfish species in the UK, with the main fishery located in the Channel which is fished by both UK and EU vessels.

King scallop fisheries in English waters, including the Channel, have a range of management measures in place to protect stocks and the environment, which are applied at national, regional, and local levels through fisheries licensing, legislation and byelaws.

These measures include technical gear specifications, MCRS, king scallop licences or permits with conditions, seasonal closures and days at sea effort limits.

King scallops in English and Welsh waters were prioritized for a FMP due to the vulnerability of these stocks to overexploitation, their economic value and the need for more evidence and data to properly assess and monitor the state of the stocks.

The main aims of the king scallop FMP are to improve the evidence base and develop science based management, deliver short-term management measures to protect stocks as the evidence base improves and develop targeted long-term management approaches.

Specific short-term measures and actions to achieve these overarching objectives have been developed, which include:

- developing science-based output controls and input controls
- consideration of broad alignment of measures where there are environmental, social or economic benefits of doing so
- area-based closures and management
- partnership working; further development of the collaborative approach to FMP development and implementation

These high-level approaches provide a starting point on which measures can be further developed. Detailed analysis is required to inform any potential specific measures, the evidence supporting decisions, impacts and benefits, and legal implications of the TCA with the EU.

Proposals around future measures will be subject to wider discussion with stakeholders and the EU ahead of public consultation, and any necessary impact assessments prior to being introduced.

The king scallop FMP is the product of collaboration between fisheries policy authorities, statutory environment agencies and the king scallop industry (catchers and processors). Another main aim of the FMP is to build on this collaborative approach to support the development and implementation of the FMP and, where appropriate, support progress towards co management. Specific actions included in the FMP to help achieve this aim, include carrying out analysis around the interpretation and application of the term ‘co-management’, reviewing the structure and representation of the relevant UK scallop management groups, boost management ‘literacy’ within the scallop sector, and create a new King Scallop Implementation Group to support delivery of the FMP.

## E. Existing and candidate EU management measures for Channel scallops (by DG MARE, Unit C5)

The selection of king scallops for the development of a multi-year strategy (MYS) was based on their significant economic value and the availability of scientific evidence from research institutions in both the EU and the UK. The existing management measures in EU and UK waters further supported this selection.

In the European Union, current management measures are implemented at various levels. Some are established at the European level under the Technical Measures Regulation 2019/1241, while others are set at national and local levels.

These measures include:

- MCRS
- VMS
- maximum vessel length
- mesh size regulations
- catch limits
- vessels maximum capacity
- seasonal closures with dredges
- access limitation

Some EU member states are discussing the introduction of additional technical measures for the king scallop fishery through the regionalisation process.

# Next Steps

Overall, the workshop facilitated a first step to gathering information on the technical measures currently applied in EU and UK waters. It also provided a good starting point to share information on existing data collection and stock assessment programmes and highlighted the importance of collaboration between experts and managers.. Both parties recognise that the development of MYSts for king scallops begins with the inventory of the best available data and scientific information from both parties, including biological, environmental, and socio-economic data. This collaboration is crucial to define clear objectives to support the conservation and sustainable future of the king scallop fishery and NQS management in general.

The EU and UK delegations acknowledge the scientific work undertaken and have reaffirmed their commitment to continue collaborating on the development of the MYSt for king scallops as a  priority. It has been agreed that a follow-up meeting between the European Commission and the UK government should take place in early 2025 to agree in the next steps. More discussions and meetings involving the member states, stakeholders and experts will be scheduled throughout 2025.

The large amount of knowledge on the current state of the king scallop fishery in the EU and the UK will enable the parties to increase understanding of the purpose and effectiveness of the existing measures and the evidence underpinning them. If appropriate this could lead to new management approaches or measures agreed between the parties to increase protection to NQS and the environment, potentially through input controls to limit fishing effort or output controls to limit landings.