



**Draft Inshore Fisheries Management Plan**

**Jan 2016**

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## **Introduction**

Fisheries are an important part of the local economy. The latest Orkney Islands Council Economic Review shows 354 full and part-time direct jobs in the industry employed among some 142 vessels. 102 of these vessels are under 10m and a further 32 between 10 and 15m. Gross annual fishing vessel income is around £14M. The local shellfish processing sector is also significant with the two co-operatively owned factories in Stromness and Westray employing over 130 full-time staff and turning over some £10M. As an island community Orkney is heavily dependent on marine resources for the future social and economic survival of its communities. Maximising the benefits from fisheries is of paramount importance to the local economy.

Although the European Union (EU) is responsible for much of the legislation relating to sea fisheries, the UK has exclusive rights to fish within six nautical miles (nm) of its coastline. Between six and 12nm, fishing by non-UK vessels is restricted to those with historic rights relating to specific fisheries and specific countries. Through Devolution, Scottish Ministers are responsible for the regulation of sea fishing around Scotland and within 12nm of Scotland's coast, the Scottish Government has the ability to take non-discriminatory conservation measures, provided that the EU has not already legislated in this area.

The Orkney Inshore Fisheries Management Plan (OIFMP) has been developed by the Board of Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd to formulate local objectives that will contribute to the delivery of Marine Scotland's high level objectives and help to ensure that local inshore fisheries are well managed, sustainable and profitable. OSF has already proposed measures to improve the management of creel fisheries in the IFG area and will consider the introduction of new conservation measures for other commercially exploited species in Orkney waters.

Despite the many challenges facing Scotland's fishing industry, the future for inshore fishing, in particular high valued shellfish fisheries should remain buoyant provided measures to ensure their long term sustainable management are adopted at local level.

## **Background to Inshore Fisheries Management**

Since 1984, inshore fisheries in Scotland have been regulated primarily through the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984. This Act provides for Ministers to regulate fishing for sea fish in inshore waters. A variety of Orders have been made under this Act since 1984, introducing a number of local and national measures for a range of fishery management purposes.

A strategic review of inshore fisheries was begun in 2002. The key output of this was the Strategic Framework for Inshore Fisheries in Scotland, which set out the strategic direction for policy and a network of Inshore Fisheries

Groups (IFGs) around Scotland to plan the management of inshore fisheries at a local level. Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd is recognised as the IFG for the area.

IFGs have the ability to implement many of the actions that stem from their management plans. However, some measures require implementation by the Scottish Government through legislation. Scottish Ministers will consider IFG legislative proposals which are in keeping with national high level objectives, stem from or complement local objectives, and have been formulated in an open and transparent manner.

Scotland's 2012 Inshore Fisheries Strategy set out high level objectives for the industry: improving science and data required for more effective management; improving engagement with fishermen; and supporting the Inshore Fisheries Group network. While these are still seen as central tenets of a devolved strategy a 2015 review highlighted a need for greater focus on integration with the marine planning system.

The 2015 inshore strategy focusses on:

- Improving the evidence base on which fisheries management decisions are made;
- Streamlining fisheries governance, and promoting stakeholder participation; and
- Embedding inshore fisheries management into wider marine planning.

### **Structure of Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd**

Orkney Sustainable Fisheries was established as a company Ltd by guarantee in 2006 with the aim of taking over the running of the successful Orkney Lobster hatchery and bringing forward various local research initiatives aimed at supporting the future of inshore fisheries . In 2013 the company was recognized by Marine Scotland as the local inshore fisheries group.

Membership is open to any active fishermen working in Orkney waters. Board members are elected on an open application basis with members co-opted to ensure widespread industry representation from each of the local sectors: static gear, scallop dredging, scallop diving, demersal fisheries, hand-lined mackerel, shellfish processing, live shellfish exports and local representative organisations. The Chairman is appointed by the Board with this being endorsed by Marine Scotland. The mechanism for appointing the Chair and their term in office will be determined in line with MS's national framework for IFG's.

Board meetings are held quarterly with these being advertised widely in the area and on the Marine Scotland IFG website. All active fishermen are invited to attend, as are government sponsored representatives (MS and SNH) and project delivery partners (Seafish, OIC officials, HIE etc). Other marine stakeholders will be invited at the

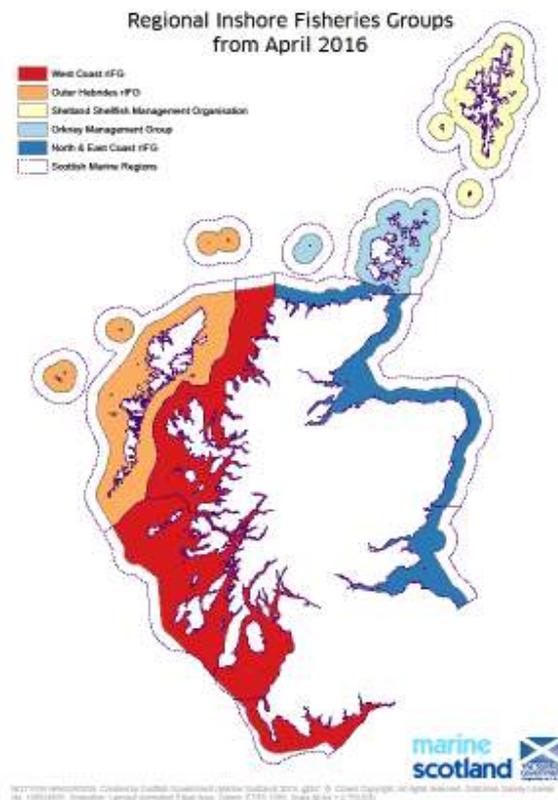
discretion of the Chair if and when items are being discussed which may affect these parties. Make-up of current OSF Board is shown in Appendix A.

Minutes of meetings will be publicly available and lodged on the MS IFG website other than items of a commercially confidential nature. Items of a commercially confidential nature will be made available to MS officials and would not be expected to need to be in the public domain. Copies of annual accounts will be forwarded to MS.

OSF employs a full-time shellfish research officer and engages part-time and seasonal researchers to deliver specific project.

### Characteristics of the area

The Orkney inshore fisheries management area currently covers the waters surrounding the main island group out to 6nm, and in addition the waters surrounding Sule Skerry to the west.



The operational remit of Orkney Sustainable Fisheries will mirror that of any future Marine Planning Partnership for the area. In that regard the offshore boundary of the group would be co-terminus with the Scottish Marine Region (12nm) for fisheries information purposes.

## Key Fisheries and markets

Marine Scotland's latest available statistics of landings (2014) show the following key components of the local inshore fishery.

	Total weight landed	Total first sale value
Brown crab ( <i>Cancer pagurus</i> )	2810 tonnes	£3,754,000
Lobster ( <i>Homarus gammarus</i> )	146 tonnes	£1,468,000
Velvet crab ( <i>Necora puber</i> )	490 tonnes	£1,277,000
Green crab ( <i>Carcinus maenas</i> )	117 tonnes	£78,000
Scallops ( <i>Pecten maximus</i> )	254 tonnes	£686,000

Lobster, velvet crabs and scallops are largely sold live. There are a number of UK based vivier trucks (with sea-water tanks on board) we come into Orkney on a weekly basis to transport shellfish to continental markets. The majority of velvet crabs and around 60% of lobsters leave by this route. The remainder of the lobster catch is air-freighted to markets in Scandinavia and Europe. Dived scallops are mainly sold live to the restaurant trade in mainland UK with the remainder sold for processing.

Around 80% of the brown crab caught and landed by local vessels is processed at the two co-operative factories in Stromness and Westray. The remainder is shipped live by vivier trucks.

## Ports

Orkney Islands Council is Britain's smallest local authority. The local harbor authority operates the ports and infrastructure facilities round the islands. Key ports for shellfish landings are Stromness, Kirkwall and Tingwall on the mainland, and Pierowall in Westray. Creel fishing takes place throughout the island group however and the ports in the outer islands are all important to the fishery as are St Margaret's Hope and Burray

## Environment

The waters in and around Orkney are rich in biodiversity, supporting a wide range of valuable and important habitats and species habitats; many of which are considered rare and/or vulnerable.

Habitats: There are four SACs in Orkney (Sanday, Loch of Stenness, Stromness Heaths and Coast, and Hoy), designated for the protection of marine and coastal habitats. Scottish Ministers are committed to setting up a national network of ecologically coherent Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to protect features of biodiversity

and geodiversity conservation importance in both inshore and offshore waters adjacent to Scotland.

**Species:** The Orkney coastline is recognised for its importance in supporting extensive colonies of migratory and breeding seabirds such as Atlantic puffins, Black-legged kittiwakes, Arctic skuas, Arctic terns, Razorbills, Northern fulmars, Common guillemots, Storm petrels, Northern divers, Slavonian grebes and Greater black-backed gulls. The region also plays an important role for seabirds that breed out with this area, and its coastal and marine waters serve as important feeding grounds. At the time of writing public consultation is due on draft marine Special Protection Areas (dSPAs) proposed for Scapa Flow and North Orkney

In addition to birdlife, the waters of Orkney also support a wide range of fish species and marine mammals, and are recognised for their importance for seal populations in particular.

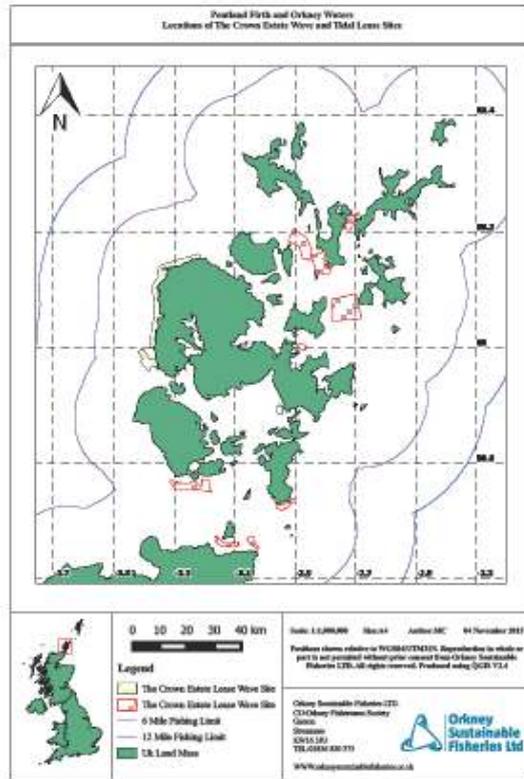
Approximately 38% of the world's grey seals breed in the UK, of which some 88% of these breed at colonies in Scotland, and the main concentrations are in the Outer Hebrides and Orkney. Many other species have been sighted around Orkney such as whales, dolphins and porpoises. Some nineteen cetacean species have been recorded in the since 1980, and of these, six species occur regularly (i.e. harbour porpoise, minke whale, white-beaked dolphin, Risso's dolphin, killer whale and bottlenose dolphin).

Scotland's waters support a rich variety of fish species, including several species that are known to migrate through local water. Orkney in particular hosts valuable spawning grounds for many fish species, including commercial species such as herring and whiting. Nursery grounds for species such as sandeels and nephrops are also located in or near to the region.

### Other Marine Activities

Orkney's inshore waters play host to a range of economic activities as well as commercial fishing.

Marine renewables – Map of Crown Estate wave and tidal lease sites



Aquaculture – Map of fin-fish and shellfish aquaculture sites



Shipping - Map of established regular shipping routes in Orkney waters



Leisure – there are numerous leisure activities conducted in local waters including pleasure sailing, diving, sea-angling, sea-trout fishing, kayaking and surfing.

Oil & gas – the Flotta oil terminal continues to process and store oil and gas while the waters of Scapa Flow are used for ship to ship transfer of both of these.

## Marine Spatial Planning

As can be seen the local marine environment support a diverse marine economy and a vast majority of the area is used for multiple activities. This means there is a potential for competition and conflict. The Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters was chosen to pilot the development of a marine spatial plan to support sustainable management of the area's seas. It aims to balance the needs of local communities and marine economic activities whilst protecting the environment on which they depend. The pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan is being developed by a working group that includes Marine Scotland, Orkney Islands Council and Highland Council.

This pilot Plan aims to put in place a planning policy framework in advance of statutory regional marine planning to support sustainable decision making on marine use and management.

Marine Scotland has made it clear that IFG's will represent the interests of commercial fishermen at a local level in the marine planning process, and will inform the marine planning process on all fisheries related matters.

## **Objectives**

OSF and this management plan are all about securing the future of inshore fisheries in Orkney and maximising benefits to the local community – through protecting stocks through local management measures, through developing our scientific knowledge on which management decisions can be made, and in ensuring that local governance is both transparent and accountable. Marine Scotland's vision is to support the development of a more sustainable, profitable and well-managed inshore fisheries sector in Scotland. The government aims to do this by modernising the management of inshore fisheries in Scotland and reaping long-term sustainable rewards for the inshore sector, the marine environment and coastal communities.

OSF believes that its aims and aspirations are fully compatible with those of Marine Scotland and that it can play a major role in helping to meet national high-level objectives as well as delivering improved and enhanced management at a local level.

## **Accreditation**

OSF believes that accreditation is a necessary part of securing access to high quality markets for local shellfish species. Accreditation of the local shellfish fisheries and processing facilities are recognised as being key to developing the local industry (eg Marine Stewardship Council and British Retail Consortium) and will be supported in a local context by OSF.

## **Management Measures**

New technical measures for landing shellfish species into the Orkney Islands are due to come into force from early 2016:

- Minimum landing sizes (MLS) will be increased to:
  - 70 mm for velvet crab
  - 88 mm for lobster (moving to 90 mm one year thereafter)
- A minimum landing size for green crab will be set at 70 mm
- The landing of berried (egg bearing) velvet crab caught around the Orkney Islands will be prohibited

These measures were developed and proposed by Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd and are intended to help improve the sustainability of these fisheries through the regulation of harvesting controls.

Marine Scotland consulted on OSF's behalf from 20 February to 15 May 2015. Following a successful outcome to the consultation, the Scottish Government is now proceeding to bring the measures into force.

OSF wishes to bring forward technical measures for controlling effort in the dredged scallop fishery:

- A beam length restriction will be introduced to limit the size of scallop dredgers and the dredge removal of the scallop stock.
- A minimum landing size of 110mm will be introduced for all king scallops fished inside the Orkney 6nm limit (currently 105 mm).

Further management measures may be developed in the future, where local science and stock assessment demonstrates that they have a value to the future of the fishery, and where local consultation shows that these measures are supported by the active fishing community.

### **Local shellfish research**

OSF currently employs a full-time shellfish research assistant and proposes to continue to do so. This will be augmented with seasonal assistant support where funding becomes available (generally project driven). Heriot-Watt University Orkney campus is contracted to provide scientific guidance to the group on an ongoing basis through scientist and academic Dr Mike Bell (based at ICIT in Stromness).

ICIT/ Dr Bell will produce ongoing stock assessments on local crustacean and scallop stocks on a 3 year rolling basis. The basis of this work is market sampling (measuring crustacean), fishermen's logbooks, and fishery observer trips on board vessels. The data gathered from such activities will continue to be fed into Marine Science Scotland in a format compatible with their requirements, and will be used to inform local management measures.

It is intended that a workshop open to all local fishermen will be held in March 2016 and that this will inform a wider science plan for the future.

There is an opportunity for Heriot-Watt to develop a specialisation in inshore fisheries management and research. Exploratory discussions have taken place between ICIT and OSF and this will be developed over the next 12-18 months.

## **Implementation**

Ongoing local based research and data collection, along with and increased levels of devolved management require funding. It is as yet unclear as to how Marine Scotland intends to support IFG's financially in the future. It appears clear however that a combination of private and public sector funds will be needed to maximise the potential benefits to the local community.

The core research activities of OSF are currently funded until Dec 2016.

## **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

It is envisaged that a review panel comprising ICIT, Marine Scotland, 2 OSF Directors and a representative from OIC will meet annually to review and evaluate the work of OSF for the previous 12 months and endorse plans for the year ahead. An annual report from such a review process will be a public document and available on the OSF website.

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## **Appendix A**

### Current Board of Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd (Nov 2015)

Chairman	Stewart Crichton, Orkney Fishermens's Society, shellfish processor
Vice-Chair	Dawson Shearer, O-Fish Shell, live shellfish merchant, hatchery manager
Secretary	Fiona Matheson, Orkney Fisheries Association
Members	Heddle Costie, creel fisherman and merchant
	Sean Dennison, creel fisherman
	Tommy Tulloch, demersal fisherman
	Robbie Hutchison, scallop dredger
	Gary Miller, scallop diver
	Neil Matheson, hand-line mackerel fisherman
	Gina Brown, scallop dive boat owner

