

# THE CORNISH FISH PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION

DECEMBER 17 NEWSLETTER



## HERE'S WHAT'S NEW

The Year Ahead – A few words from CFPO's CEO Paul Trebilcock  
 Latest quota agreements from December Council

## Looking Forwards

### ***What's on the horizon in 2018?***

With the UK's future as an independent coastal state on the horizon, we are working to ensure our fishing industry is profitable, sustainable and resilient. December has brought the usual, hectic negotiations to secure fair fishing opportunities for our diverse South West fleet. As ever, there were some disappointments and some useful 'wins'. (A full break down can be found within this newsletter). Brexit has kept us busy this year, and will do throughout 2018 – where we will continue to defend our fishing grounds, navigate the challenges of the Landing Obligation, and support the engagement of our fishermen in science and management. With the UK continuing to operate under the CFP until 2019, we will also work at the European level to defend CFPO's interests.

To keep members engaged as we work throughout the year, we will be sharing quarterly print and digital newsletters, which will include all our latest policy and position papers as well as quota updates and community news. In addition to this, we'll be launching a new CFPO website in January – your news and views are most welcome, and we hope you'll help us make this a real hub for CFPO members.

Finally we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a **Merry Christmas** and a **prosperous New Year** – with plenty of good fishing!

## LATEST UPDATES

### December Council

***Cod, haddock & whiting***

***Bass***

***Positives***

***Overall***

### A Review of 2017

***Brexit***

***Science partnerships***

***Representation***

### The Year Ahead

***2018 priorities***



## December Council Review

Finally, after two long days in Brussels and tortuous, through-the-night negotiations, fisheries ministers from across the EU eventually agreed quotas for the year ahead, including those important for the SW.

For the 12 months before the Council and throughout the negotiations themselves, the CFPO, working with the NFFO, liaised closely with CEFAS, DEFRA officials and the UK minister to ensure that the scientific, economic and community based arguments were well understood in an effort to deliver the best possible deal for our members.

## Celtic Sea Cod, Haddock and Whiting

Although a small increase in the cod TAC was achieved, nothing should take away from the significant problems that will be presented by the wholly unnecessary reductions in the haddock & whiting TACs.

Despite the ritual calls to “follow the science” the EU Commission throughout elected to reject the ICES-evaluated scientific advice based on mixed fishery maximum sustainable yield (MSY) range. Instead, the Commission prioritised the arbitrary timetable for achieving maximum sustainable yield. The option was available to continue progress towards MSY in the mixed fisheries, whilst simultaneously reducing discards (i.e. increasing the TAC) in the year before the full implementation of the Landing Obligation. Bizarrely, the Commission chose to ignore the realities of our ultra-mixed fisheries and, aided and abetted by the NGOs, went for the option which can only lead to a significant increase of discards in 2018.

It is certainly true be that the cuts in haddock and whiting were not as large as originally proposed but ultimately this was a missed opportunity to harness the industry’s support and engagement to build the stocks and reduce the level of discards in these complex fisheries.

The Defra delegation in Brussels argued long and hard in favour of the mixed fishery MSY range advice (supplemented and supported by work done by CFPO members working with Cefas during 2017), but the Commission were from the outset completely intransigent, obsessed with adding to the number of stocks under MSY. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that this Council illustrates everything that is bad about the CFP decision-making process.



Cuts in the 2018 TAC for hake and megrim were driven by single stock MSY advice. Although the cut for hake was mitigated (from 19% to 7%) it was not possible to make any further progress on these stocks. This will have a negative impact for SW fishermen, particularly those working from Newlyn.

### Bass

The Commission's approach on bass is difficult to understand. In SW mixed trawl fisheries where bass are taken as an unavoidable by-catch, the Commission have chosen to ratchet down the by-catch provision. The only possible outcome will be to increase dead discards with no effect on bass mortality. Surely this approach represents the exact opposite of sound fisheries management and it is difficult to understand the logic of an approach that will only increase discards.

A promised review of the science on bass during the first part of 2018 offers some hope that the measures agreed can be subsequently amended. Hopefully a more sensible and practical approach can be introduced then.

### Positives

There were more positive outcomes for SW flatfish. Bristol Channel sole (7.fg) and Western Channel sole (7.e) saw increases of 9% and 2% in TACs respectively, whilst for sole 7.hjk a rollover of the 2017 TAC was secured.

There were also increases in TACs for plaice in the Bristol Channel and English Channel as well as a rollover secured for 7.hjk plaice from the Commission's initial proposal of a zero TAC.

The ray TAC in area 7 saw a welcome overall increase of 15%, although specific small-eyed ray restrictions remained in place that are problematic.

A rollover in the TACs for ICES area 7 pollack, saithe, ling and monkfish were all welcomed.

### Overall

Although the overall package for the south west fisheries was mixed in terms of TAC increases and reductions, the way the negotiations were conducted, the outcomes on the haddock and the bass situation will do everything to convince the vast majority that the sooner we can leave the CFP, and its dysfunctional way of



reaching management decisions, the better. A full table of TAC changes can be viewed here: <https://issuu.com/cornishfpo/docs/final-table>.

## A Review of 2017

2017 has been a year dominated by Brexit and of course the CFPO has been and continues to be extremely active in this area. Our priorities have been clear and consistent:

- The UK must ensure full and absolute control of UK waters out to 200 nautical miles (or the median line).
- The existing 0-12 mile limit to be secured for the exclusive use of UK vessels.
- The UK must secure a greater share of Total allowable Catches in UK waters.
- The UK must secure the continued tariff-free and unrestricted access to European Markets.

There was a snap General Election called early in the year resulting in a Conservative led Government, supported by the DUP in power. Locally Derek Thomas and George Eustice retained their seats. George Eustice remained as Fisheries Minister within DEFRA and Michael Gove was appointed Secretary of State at DEFRA.

This political line up and the appointment of Michael Gove at DEFRA has certainly been seen as a positive in political terms for the fishing industry especially in the context of Brexit.

We have met directly with ministers from Department for Brexit, and with Michael Gove and George Eustice several times through the year. On each occasion we have pressed home our priorities. We now have a seat on DEFRA's high level External Brexit Advisory Committee that meets and advises DEFRA regularly, and will continue to do so throughout the Brexit process.

Beyond Brexit on the domestic front we have worked closely with CEFAS, DEFRA and the MMO across the diverse and varied range of issues impacting, and of importance to, our members.

As we will continue to be under the CFP until at least 2019 we have remained active within both the North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWW AC) and the European Associations of Fish Producers Originations (EAFPO), ensuring that our interests are defended at European level.



## Looking Ahead

Obviously Brexit will dominate 2018 but there are plenty of other big and extremely concerning issues facing the fishing industry in the coming year, not least of all the continued implementation of the landings obligation or 'discard ban'.

Domestically DEFRA and green NGOs will continue to push for more progress on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and our involvement at local and national level through the NFFO and MPA Coalition will be vital in defending our fishing grounds.

As always there will be many other challenges that effect CFPO members such as bass management, gear conflict incidents, marketing and fish prices, shellfish management, fishing industry reputation (both public and political), and of course many others.

The CFPO will be working hard to vigorously defend the interests of all of our members; under and over-10m members, mobile and static gear members. As always your efforts and contributions over the last 12 months have been immense and we hope that continues.

There is no question that the CFPO continues to be regarded at the highest level as one of the most credible, progressive and effective fishing organisations in the UK and that is only possible because of you.

**Thank you & here's to a prosperous 2018!**