

Clean Catch UK: Joint Action to Reduce Wildlife Bycatch

Report for the Cetacean Local Focus Group Meeting



Meeting Date and Time: 22 October 2021, 13:00-15:30

Location: Porth Avallen Hotel, St. Austell

Summary Points

- The preliminary results of the skippers' self-reporting bycatch monitoring programme along the south Cornish coast were shared with the group. Comparisons were made between reports in the app and Electronic Monitoring (EM) footage. It was noted that some bycatch events or species identification appeared to have been missed in the first instance by EM analysis, and that overall, skippers' observations showed more accuracy than EM. In light of this, members commented on the importance of additional layers of validation.
- Members were presented with results of the bycatch mitigation study in Mevagissey Bay, including a breakdown of bycatch incidents against type of mitigation device. Discussions centred around the impact of 'water ingress' and low battery on the functioning of pingers; and it was remarked that results were not yet 'statistically significant'.
- Members discussed approaches to communication, with industry members agreeing that they did not want to publicly share any trial outcomes at this early stage, and instead would wait until results were more certain. The option of using industry-led blogs (such as Seafood Cornwall) was discussed as a means to communicate the work of the group through a more nuanced, targeted approach, but no public-facing communication was deemed appropriate at this time.
- Cefas provided an update on the deployment of C-PODs in Mevagissey Bay, welcoming comments from industry members.
- Arribada Initiative provided an update on the development of Passive Acoustic Reflectors (PARs) for the inclusion within bycatch mitigation trials. Skippers provided valuable insight into how the design could be further tweaked to be resilient to real-life fishing activity.

Full Schedule of Actions

#	ACTION	Responsibility
1	The production of laminated cetacean ID guides, to help skippers distinguish between species, to be considered.	Cefas
2	The addition of a neutral observer on-board some trips, to validate skippers' observations of non-bycatch species which are being assigned as bycatch on EM systems, to be considered.	Cefas
3	A breakdown of data by month to be provided.	Cefas

4	A plan for the development of results to a statistically significant level to be presented at the next meeting of the National Steering Group (postponed until March 2022).	Cefas
5	An 'industry blog post' to be drafted, for presentation at the next Cetacean LFG meeting.	Mindfully Wired Communications
6	6 months' of C-POD data to be presented to the Mevagissey Fishermen's Association and the Cetacean LFG, when available.	Cefas
7	The design of the retrofit PAR to be developed in line with skippers' comments, by moving eyelet fasteners to the ends of the float and making the float neutrally buoyant.	Arribada Initiative
8	Initial samples of the retrofit PAR to be produced and tank-tested, by the next LFG meeting.	Arribada Initiative
9	A separate PAR design to be developed, produced as a single, solid float that could be added onto gear when re-set and manufactured to differing buoyancy levels.	Arribada Initiative
10	Risk of 'windage' from PARs to be investigated in a laboratory setting.	Arribada Initiative
11	CCUK app to be further developed, prior to the inclusion of new skippers in the trial.	Cefas
12	Results presented to be further reviewed and developed into a two-page document, alongside a timeline for continued studies.	Cefas
13	Aforementioned document to be approved ahead of it being shared with the National Steering Group in December.	Cetacean LFG members

