

Clean Catch UK: Joint Action to Reduce Wildlife Bycatch

Report for National Steering Group Meeting 02



Meeting Date: 08 December 2020

Location: Virtual

This report summarises the presentations and key discussions from the December 2020 meeting of Clean Catch UK's National Steering Group (NSG). Key points and actions arising are summarised, with more detailed reports of panelists' presentations included as attachments.

Speakers' Summaries

- **Stuart Hetherington** gave an update on programme developments, including the launch of the programme website and continued development of the Clean Catch self-reporting bycatch app, as well as the steps taken in response to actions raised at the November NSG meeting.
- **Katrina Ryan** and **Bec Kaye** gave an overview of the programme's communications aims, including a virtual tour of the newly launched programme website, and an overview of how the UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub will work.

Breakout Rooms

Two breakout discussion sessions were held, in which NSG members were asked to contribute their thoughts and expertise to

1. The wording, prioritisation, and categorisation of the group's core priorities, which were drawn from the presentations given at the NSG's inaugural meeting (November 2020) and,
2. Types of mitigation techniques, gear modifications, and gear devices to reduce bycatch, to help shape the information to be uploaded on the 'UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub' app.

Items for information and decision

- **For Information** - BFG Technical meeting report from July 2020 meeting
- **For Information** - Update of Seabird Bycatch Plan of Action
- **For Decision** - Clean Catch UK National Steering Group Terms of Reference

	ACTION	Responsibility	Due Date
1	Draft TOR to be circulated for comment in January 2021 out of sessions.	Secretariat	January 2021
2	NSG members send organisation logos to the secretariat for inclusion on the programme website.	Members	January 2021
3	The Clean Catch UK Priorities will be amended to reflect the views shared in the breakout rooms, and will be circulated with the Terms of Reference.	Secretariat	January 2021

4	NSG members will send through detailed comments on the UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub to the Secretariat before the end of 2020.	NSG Members	Before January 2021
5	The Secretariat will update the spreadsheet to reflect the comments and additions of members, and ensure the updated information is used in building the UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub.	Secretariat	January 2021

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Attendees			
Amrita Rose <i>Defra</i>	Dan Jarvis <i>British Divers Marine Life Rescue</i>	Jo Barker <i>Zoological Society of London</i>	Russell Leaper <i>IFAW</i>
Ali Hood <i>Shark Trust</i>	Emma Kelman <i>Defra</i>	Joana Smith <i>Natural England</i>	Ruth Williams <i>Cornwall Wildlife Trust</i>
Al Kingston <i>University of St Andrews</i>	Eleanor Johnston <i>Marine Management Organisation</i>	Katrina Ryan <i>Mindfully Wired Communications</i>	Sarah Dolman <i>Whale and Dolphin Conservation</i>
Andrew Brownlow <i>Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme</i>	Elle Sibthorpe (Secretariat) <i>Mindfully Wired Communications</i>	Les Noble <i>Nord University</i>	Stuart Hetherington <i>Cefas</i>
Bec Kaye (Secretariat) <i>Mindfully Wired Communications</i>	Ellie MacLennan <i>University of St Andrews</i>	Mariel ten Doeschate <i>Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme - SRUC</i>	Tesni Clare (Secretariat) <i>Mindfully Wired Communications</i>
Cat Bell (Chair) <i>Defra</i>	Eunice Pinn <i>Seafish</i>	Marina Wild <i>Cefas</i>	Victoria Bendall <i>Cefas</i>
Clara Johnston <i>Marine Conservation Society</i>	Gareth Cunningham <i>RSPB</i>	Matt Parsons <i>JNCC</i>	
Sue Sayer <i>Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust</i>	Jayne Burns <i>Scotland Government</i>	Paul Botterill (Secretariat) <i>Mindfully Wired Communications</i>	
Dale Rodmell <i>NFFO</i>	Jed Nicholson <i>Natural England</i>	Rob Deaville <i>Zoological Society of London</i>	



Purpose of the meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to update member progress made since the last NSG meeting, give an overview of programme communications, and elicit discussion and input on core topics via facilitated breakout sessions.

Slide decks from all speaker presentations can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Agenda Item 1 | Welcome and Housekeeping

Cat Bell, Defra

Cat Bell welcomed attendees and thanked them for reading papers shared ahead of the meeting, she noted these were to be discussed later in the agenda. Cat noted that the structure of this meeting differed from the last one, with facilitated breakout rooms introduced to allow for discussion of the programme priorities and data gathering for the new bycatch reduction tool.

Attendees were asked to keep their microphones and cameras off during presentations, and to turn their cameras on during breakout rooms.

Agenda Item 2 | Programme Update

Stuart Hetherington, Cefas

Since the inaugural meeting of the NSG in November 2020, the programme has progressed its communications initiatives, launching a dedicated project website and continuing development of an interactive tool for fishermen to self-report bycatch incidents.

The Clean Catch UK programme website (www.cleancatchuk.com) has been designed and developed by the programme secretariat in response to feedback that a previous bycatch mitigation project lacked transparency and clear communications with stakeholders. The new website will function as a vehicle for open clear communication between all stakeholders, and the public, and will be explained in more detail later in the meeting.

The Clean Catch Bycatch Monitoring App is a tool for fishers to register their total catch, including wildlife bycatch, placing fishermen at the heart of Clean Catch UK's monitoring initiative. The app has been in development since February 2020 and is designed to collect high level data, specific to each of the fisheries relevant to Clean Catch UK research, to ensure that the tool is user-friendly, targeted, and relevant to individual users. The app allows users to capture the time and place where fishing activity is taking place, gear being used, and target catch information. Crucially, it allows users to record details of wildlife bycatch, capturing the species, the number, and sampling information such as sex and weight. The data collected in the app will be used by the Clean Catch UK research team to understand wildlife bycatch in relevant fisheries, including those participating in mitigation studies. Once the app is completed, Clean Catch UK's monitoring initiative will be expanded, involving more vessels.



The Clean Catch UK team has also been working with Arribada to develop a **passive acoustic reflector** to mitigate cetacean bycatch in static nets. After successful tank trials of early iterations in October 2020, development of a third prototype is underway, due to be tested in 2021, before at-sea trials during ‘fishing as usual’.

In terms of programme governance, the Clean Catch UK Local Focus Group - first convened in 2019 and previously known as the Cetacean Bycatch Regional Focus Group (Cornwall) - has not been able to meet due to Covid19 restrictions, although individual members were met quayside in September 2020. The Regional Working Group is due to be drawn together in Spring 2021.

Agenda Item 3 | Breakout Rooms - Priorities for the National Steering Group

All attendees

Attendees were split into three breakout rooms in order to discuss the Clean Catch UK National Steering Group (NSG) Priorities. Members were asked to comment on the draft priorities statements that the Secretariat took from the presentations delivered at the inaugural meeting - outlining species specific priorities for the Clean Catch UK NSG.

The Clean Catch UK NSG priorities are statements that will sit as an appendix to the group’s Terms of Reference. These priorities will outline the type of content and topics to be discussed at future NSG meetings - as all items raised for information or decision will need to relate to one of these priorities. The Terms of Reference will further describe how the priorities will work for the group, and will work to reiterate how the group sits into England-wide efforts to reduce bycatch around the country.

The draft priorities discussed in the breakout rooms are included below:

	#	Draft Priority Text
Overarching Priorities	1	Enhance the evidence base about bycatch in UK fisheries. Targeted data collection can support the development of adaptive management, and could be focussed on: 1) Increased data collection about bycatch of data-deficient wildlife species, 2) Support for broader bycatch monitoring across gear types and regions
	2	Support and be willing to explore novel approaches to bycatch mitigation, including both industry-led ideas and technical mitigation methods.
	3	Facilitate information sharing about best practice bycatch monitoring and mitigation across sectors, regions and wildlife species.
	4	Stronger emphasis on cross-sector and cross-species collaborations when developing bycatch monitoring and mitigation efforts.
Cetaceans & Marine Mammals	5	Incentivised adoption of existing mitigation measures for cetaceans and marine mammals.



Seabirds	6	Prioritisation of bycatch as a fisheries' sustainability issue at a policy level.
Elasmobranchs	7	Adoption of a cohesive and multi-faceted approach that accounts for species diversity and the distinction between wanted and unwanted bycatch.
	8	A greater focus on handling to improve post-release survival rates.

Agenda Item 4 | Summary of Breakout Rooms

Stuart Hetherington, Vicky Bendall, Cat Bell

Stuart, Vicky and Cat summarised the discussions held in their breakout rooms, reiterating that notes taken by scribes in the rooms will be used by the Secretariat to rewrite the priorities into statements reflecting the comments of the NSG members.

There was some confusion as to how these NSG priorities will sit in relation to the NSG Terms of Reference and the draft National Plans of Action (for cetacean and seabird bycatch). Members were assured that these priorities do not replace the National Plans of Action objectives, but instead seek to outline how the NSG's work will support them.

While one room considered the draft objectives of the National Plan of Action for Cetacean Bycatch - the other rooms focussed more on reworking the wording of the draft priorities.

Overall, discussions in all rooms agreed that most of the priorities listed would apply to all wildlife species relevant to the Clean Catch UK programme, rather than being species-specific. None of the given priorities were deemed unimportant for the NSG. The Secretariat has agreed to take on board members suggestions to finalise the draft priorities that will be disseminated along with the draft NSG Terms of Reference in early 2021.

Importantly, all groups agreed that the purpose of the Clean Catch UK NSG - and that of the group's priorities - needs to be clearly outlined in the draft NSG Terms of Reference, to ensure members are aware how this group fits into the England- (and UK-) wide bycatch policy initiatives.

Actions from Item:

1. The Clean Catch UK Priorities will be amended to reflect the views shared in the breakout rooms, and will be shared with the Terms of Reference.

Agenda Item 5 - Clean Catch UK Website Launch and UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub

Katrina Ryan & Bec Kaye, Mindfully Wired Communications

Katrina Ryan provided an overview of the Secretariat's communications aims, and how they interlink with the programme website:



1. To ensure that all information is transparent, and that knowledge-sharing processes are simple, enabling intuitive access to information about discussions and work being carried out by all Clean Catch UK groups.
2. To provide communication support within and between groups, enabling the flow of information via processes which are efficient, predictable, and dependable.
3. To employ the website as a core resource for members of the Clean Catch UK groups, housing information on each of the national, regional, and local groups, as well as general programme news and updates. In addition, the website will function as a central hub of knowledge on bycatch monitoring and mitigation in the UK - to be accessed by the wider public. As such, it has been designed to offer high level, accessible information that can be interpreted by various stakeholders including members of the public, students, researchers, and Clean Catch UK members.

Fundamentally, the Secretariat exists to ensure the smooth functioning and clear, transparent facilitation of the programme's internal and external communications, and its overall governance. Katrina stressed that the website is a channel for showcasing the work of the Clean Catch UK programme. To this end, the Secretariat welcomes feedback from the NSG on the website, or on the governance of the NSG and programme in general.

Bec Kaye gave a brief tour of the website, highlighting key areas and features of interest to the NSG. From early next year, the website will be used to house the Bycatch Mitigation Hub - an online portal to house information about bycatch mitigation methods applicable to UK fisheries.

The Hub is due to be completed in early 2021, and will collate high level information about all bycatch mitigation measures in use across the world. The hub's goal is to communicate possible mitigation measures with a broad audience and, as such, has been designed to offer a simple user experience which allows users to search by gear type and/or the species they wish to avoid. The hub will provide concise summaries of how each measure works, and where it's been studied - directing the reader on to further information if they need it.

Actions from Item:

1. NSG members to send their logos to the Secretariat to be included on the Clean Catch UK website.

Agenda Item 6 | Breakout Rooms - UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub

All attendees

Attendees were split into three facilitated breakout rooms in order to discuss the data intended for use in the UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub. Members were address four core questions:

1. Are any mitigation techniques, gear modifications or gear devices not on the excel spreadsheet?



2. Are any techniques miscategorised or mislabelled?
3. Do you have any comments about whether specific mitigations could be applicable to UK fisheries? Are any of the mitigation measures already used in the UK?
4. Do you know of any additional, key research studies that we should link to for specific mitigation measures?

Discussions in the room highlighted some additional mitigation measures to be added to the spreadsheet and so the UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub. NSG members agreed to send through any further detailed information to the Secretariat email before the end of the year to ensure the beta version of the Hub incorporates correct information. Moving forward, the Secretariat welcomes additional feedback from the group on Hub content - as it will be reviewed regularly once it is launched.

Actions from Item:

1. NSG members will send through detailed comments to the Secretariat before the end of 2020.
2. The Secretariat will update the spreadsheet to reflect the comments and additions of members, and ensure the updated information is used in building the UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub.

Agenda Item 8 | Items for Information and Decision

Cat Bell, Defra, and Stuart Hetherington, Cefas

8.1 For Information - BFG Technical meeting report from July 2020 meeting

Cefas and Defra are working in close cooperation with the Cornish fishing industry to test the efficiency and power of the new acoustic pinger, and light bycatch mitigation study, during 'fishing as usual' activities. Progress made is covered in the paper - in **Appendix B.1**.

8.2. For Information - Seabird Bycatch Plan of Action

The Soaring To Solutions stakeholder workshop, hosted by Defra in November 2020, was well attended. The presentations and discussions shared during the workshop are being used to help inform a UK Seabird Bycatch Plan of Action, which takes stakeholder views into account. A draft will be available for comment in due course, and published in 2021. Further information is in the paper - in **Appendix B.2**.

8.3 For Decision - Clean Catch UK National Steering Group Terms of Reference

A draft of the NSG Terms of Reference will be circulated for comment in January 2021 out of session, and will be proposed for decision in the meeting of March 2021.



Conclusions and plan for next meeting:

Cat Bell thanked all participants for attending the meeting and contributing their thoughts, questions and feedback, with a particular thanks to the speakers for their presentations. The next meeting will be held in Spring 2021, with the exact date to be confirmed.

Meeting closed.

Appendix

- [Appendix A: Slide Deck from NSG02 Meeting](#)
- **Appendix B: Items for Information**
 - [Appendix B1](#)
 - [Appendix B2](#)

