



Clean Catch UK: Joint Action to Reduce Wildlife Bycatch Report for 4th meeting of the National Steering Group

Meeting date and time: 22 March 2022, 10:00 - 13:00

Location: National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth

Summary Points

- Slides for the 4th meeting of the National Steering Group can be found [here](#).
- An update was provided by Defra on UK bycatch policy, including the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI) and the Bycatch Monitoring Programme (BMP) invitation to tender.
- Members discussed the **differing responsibilities of the CCUK groups** (National Steering Group, Regional Working Group, and Local Focus Groups), and how they should **interact with each other**. It was confirmed that members can access the Terms of Reference and meeting reports for each group, which are made publicly available on the [Clean Catch UK website](#).
- Cefas gave an update on the **Cetacean Bycatch Mitigation Study**, currently being undertaken in the Southwest with the aim of investigating whether pingers, lights, and their combinations are practical, robust, and effective at reducing dolphin and porpoise bycatch in an inshore net fishery. Members discussed options for continuing, refining, or stopping the study, taking into account the practical needs of fishermen involved in the study and the conditions needed to ensure the scientific robustness of the study. **It was decided that the study should be refined and continue**, over a longer period of time, and a greater number of fishing vessels involved to increase sample size, with lights made easier to attach and use.
- In several breakout groups, members **discussed potential ways in which the NSG could support the implementation of the BMI** in England, and the resources that would be required to do this. Several points were discussed, including the following:
 - Play a coordination role by pulling together existing data and knowledge from within and beyond the NSG, to identify priority areas and species of concern. Comments were made regarding the need to effectively link UK-wide bycatch work together and avoid duplication of effort, and that NSG members are well positioned to do this.
 - Identify non-governmental sources of funding for trials and implementation of mitigation measures, and identify rapidly-accessible resources that can easily be mobilised e.g. in the event of a bycatch hotspot.
 - Drive improved communication and engagement with fishing industry members on the issue of bycatch, for example via a dedicated industry liaison officer.
 - Ensure that CCUK gives adequate attention to the different species groups affected by bycatch.
 - Break down silos between statutory and non-statutory organisations focused on different species groups.

- Act as a national and international knowledge exchange and disseminator.
- Incentivise fishermen to adopt mitigation measures, whether through financial or other means.
- The RSPB provided an update on its work to trial the ‘Looming Eyes’ buoy which is designed to reduce seabird bycatch, as well as other research on seabird bycatch risk.
- The Scottish Entanglement Association (SEA) gave an update on its recently published report on entanglements of multiple species in creel gear in Scottish fisheries.
- **It was suggested that future NSG meeting formats could alternate between online and in-person, with the next NSG meeting to be held in autumn 2022.**

Full schedule of actions

#	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Refine and continue the Cetacean Bycatch Mitigation Study.	Cefas
2	Broaden the membership of the Regional Working Group.	Cefas
3	Provide an update on the Bycatch Monitoring Programme and publication of the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative.	Defra
4	Collate all breakout session comments into a document, to guide the future work of the NSG.	Mindfully Wired Communications