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All holders of 10 metre and under licences administered by Marine Scotland

BY E-MAIL:

Scottish pelagic POs and SPFA
IFGs and IFMAC
FAs and local concerns

4 May 2017

QM 1/2017

Dear Sir/Madam

SCOTTISH TEN METRE AND UNDER INSHORE (LINE) MACKEREL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS IN AREAS IV AND VI**Purpose**

1. To present a summary report on the quota allocation, quota utilisation and management arrangements in respect of the Scottish inshore (line) mackerel fisheries.

Background

2. We are in Year Four of a four year trial for expanded mackerel fisheries around Scotland's inshore waters. To date the following has taken place on an annual basis:

- 1,000 tonnes of NS mackerel has been allocated to the Scottish 10mu pool
- 300 tonnes of WS mackerel has been allocated to the Scottish 10mu pool
- All Scottish 10mu, non-sector vessels have had access to the fishery
- IFGs and local concerns have been consulted about the management of these fisheries
- No new controls on equipment have been imposed
- Marine Scotland has reviewed uptake in September and assessed if potentially unutilised quota should be returned to the Scottish sector. In each year, some tonnage has been re-allocated to the Scottish sector.

2016**3. North Sea mackerel fishery**

- 2016 saw the highest landings for this stock since the start of the trial, 765 tonnes
- Only 120 tonnes was re-allocated to the sector
- The landed value of the total catch was an estimated £1.1m
- 1,500 tonnes has been landed from the North Sea by the 10mu fleet in the last two years

4. Western mackerel fishery

- Since the start of the trial, there has been no sign of increased landings compared to previous years – average landings over the period have been only 20 tonnes per annum
- The additional 300 tonnes which has been allocated to the pool has been returned to the sector in each year

Considerations and proposals for 2017

5. The 2-weekly catch limit will continue for 2017. Feedback from active skippers has been largely positive and the two week period maintains an appropriate level of oversight in assessing uptake and potential data lags. Marine Scotland reserves the right to change this and revert to the previous management tool of weekly limits. Catch limits will be published every second week via the electronic Licensing Variations on the Marine Scotland website.

6. The Orkney mackerel fishery was opened earlier than usual in 2017 but a weekly limit only was set. This may revert to a 2-weekly period by the main season. All other fisheries may be opened from Sunday 13 May at the earliest.

7. As in previous years, Marine Scotland will review uptake within the pools in September and assess if any likely unutilised quota should be transferred back to the Scottish pelagic sector.

8. Openings, closures and changes in catch limits will continue to be announced via the Marine Scotland website. All skippers are obliged to check the variations section of the Marine Scotland website on a weekly basis.

Future reviews

9. The inshore mackerel quota allocation will be reviewed after the 2017 season.

10. At the same time, the 320 or so handline mackerel entitlements for the North Sea fishery, which are currently defunct but still associated with licences, will also be reviewed.

Yours faithfully

ROSS PARKER
Quota Manager
Sea Fisheries Division – Access to Sea Fisheries