



Marine Scotland

Inshore Fisheries Pilot: Inner Sound of Skye

Consultation Outcome Report

Background

The Scottish Government's Inshore Fisheries Pilots initiative¹ aims to explore alternative approaches to managing inshore fisheries. This involves trialling:

- A more localised approach, where fishing interests are central to the development of fisheries management arrangements.
- Spatial separation of fishing operations, such as static (creel) and mobile (trawl) gear fishing within specified areas.

A public consultation was carried out in 2017 on proposals developed by the commercial fishing industry for consideration as pilots. The outcome of this consultation concluded that three of the proposals offered unique learning opportunities, and these are currently being taken forward for implementation.

One of the proposals not taken forward concerned trialling management measures for the *Nephrops* fishery in the Inner Sound of Skye. This decision was informed by matters suggested might be issues by respondents to the consultation which included the potential for the pilot to have an economic impact on mobile gear vessels that target this fishery; that the pilot measures might lead to displacement of fishing effort; and that there may be health and safety implications.

Further consultation

Following the outcome of the 2017 consultation, representations were made to the Scottish Government which called for the Inner Sound proposal to be reconsidered. Marine Scotland agreed to revisit the proposal to establish if there were any unique learning opportunities to be explored. A revised proposal was then developed by local fishing associations that sought to address the issues highlighted.

A further public consultation containing 16 questions took place from 17 January 2019 to 11 April 2019.

94 responses were received, with 24 from organisations and 70 from individuals. Respondents were primarily those with a direct interest in the management of the fisheries in the Inner Sound Skye, with the majority of individuals and organisations being either fishers or fishing organisations respectively.

This outcome report provides a summary of the consultation responses, highlighting the main issues that emerged, and presents the conclusion and next steps the Scottish Government proposes to take forward.

¹ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesPilots>

Key Findings

This section presents a summary of the key findings from the analysis of the responses to the consultation. A full list of the consultation questions, and a quantitative analysis of responses, are available in the Appendices.

All responses to the consultation from respondents that gave permission to be published are available to view at <https://consult.gov.scot/marine-scotland/inshore-fisheries-pilot-inner-sound-of-skye/>.

Proposed Benefits (Qs 1-2)

Overall, a majority of individuals and organisations held a negative view of the proposed benefits of the Inner Sound of Skye inshore fisheries pilot. The main criticism expressed was that the question of an inshore fisheries pilot for the Inner Sound had been settled by the outcome of the 2017 consultation.

A majority of individuals and organisations also disagreed that the establishment of a pilot management group would be the most effective way of managing and monitoring progress of the pilot and appraisal of the benefits. However, the main issue leading to this view was whether membership of the group would be impartial and representative of all stakeholders concerned.

Proposed Mobile Gear Management Measures (Q 3)

A majority of individuals and many organisations disagreed that testing the mobile gear management measures being proposed might provide insight into improving local fisheries management of *Nephrops* fisheries. The main criticism was the view that the pilot proposal may not have been developed from a balanced perspective between both static and mobile sectors .

Additional concerns raised by respondents included:

- That there was a lack of scientific evidence to justify additional management measures for the *Nephrops* trawl fishery.
- That the pilot would not fairly test the benefits of trawl and creel fishing.
- That restricting trawling would have a negative financial impact on trawl vessels and supporting business.

Eligibility Criteria (Qs 4-5)

A majority of individuals and organisations disagreed that the eligibility of trawl vessels to fish in the pilot area should be determined by a track record of fishing activity. The primary criticisms were that restricting access went against the principle of 'right to roam', and that it would restrict fishing opportunities for new entrants.

A majority of individuals and organisations also disagreed that vessels eligible to trawl in the pilot area should be restricted to fishing in a 'trawl fishing control area'. The main concerns were that the area was unviable for trawl fishing as the ground was unsuitable for trawling, and too small in size for fishing to be carried out safely by multiple vessels.

Requirement for On-board Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) (Qs 6-7)

A majority of individuals and a large majority of organisations agreed that trawl vessels that were eligible to fish in the pilot area should be required to have on board VMS. Respondents felt that such a control was necessary to ensure compliance with the pilot management. It was also felt that all fishing vessels working in the pilot area should be equipped with appropriate monitoring equipment.

Controlling Effort (Q 8)

A majority of individuals and organisations disagreed that there should be a limit on the fishing effort of eligible trawl vessels fishing in the trawl fishing control area. The principal view was that the *Nephrops* trawl fishery was considered to be well-managed and did not require additional controls.

Track Record of Creel Fishing (Qs 9-10)

A majority of individuals and many organisations disagreed that fishing for *Nephrops* by creel in the pilot area should be restricted to those vessels with a track record of activity. The shared concern was that this was a protectionist measure and would only benefit local creel fishers.

Respondents were also concerned that:

- Access could become a tradeable asset effectively privatising the *Nephrops* creel fishery.
- It could restrict opportunities for new entrants to creel for *Nephrops* in the Inner Sound.

Creel Caught *Nephrops* Minimum Landing Size (Qs 11-12)

A majority of individuals and organisations agreed that the minimum landing size of *Nephrops* caught by creel should be increased. The shared view was that this measure would improve the sustainability of the local stock, and that larger animals would be more profitable and have better marketability.

Annual Quota for *Nephrops* Creel Fishing (Qs 13-14)

Most individuals and a large majority of organisations disagreed that an annual quota should be established for *Nephrops* creel fishing. It was felt that the current quota system worked well and did not require local management.

Further issues mentioned by respondents included:

- That a local *Nephrops* quota for the pilot area would be difficult to both manage and enforce effectively.
- That a quota could become a tradeable asset that would restrict fishing opportunities.
- That a creel limit was preferred as a method for controlling effort.

Individual Vessel Creel Limits (Qs 15-16)

Nearly all individuals and organisations agreed that a restriction on the number of creels a vessel can deploy for *Nephrops* should be introduced. It was felt this would help to avoid an uncontrolled increase in creel fishing effort, prevent conflict between fishers competing for fishing grounds, and reduce fishing mortality in creels.

Conclusion

The responses to the consultation make it clear that there is continuing opposition to the proposed inshore fisheries pilot in the Inner Sound of Skye. While some of the management proposals were well supported, such as improving vessel monitoring and tighter effort controls in the creel fishery, the majority of the proposed measure set out in the consultation were strongly opposed by respondents.

Next steps

It is clear from responses that, whilst the pilot proposal lacked overall support, there was a clear undercurrent from respondents that a status quo of the current level of fisheries management, or lack of, in the Inner Sound of Skye area should no longer continue.

The Scottish Government remains committed to supporting the local management of fisheries, and has identified four strands of work that can be taken forward to deliver improvements.

- **Improving monitoring**

We are developing a vessel tracking solution for the Scottish inshore fleet to improve our monitoring and reporting capability for the sector. This will bolster our management, scientific and enforcement capabilities.

We intend to carry out early adopter trials to appraise potential monitoring technologies, and ensure they are appropriate for introduction across the fleet. With there being strong support among respondents for vessel monitoring, we believe the Inner Sound would be well-suited as an early adopter test site.

- **Improving management**

The *Future of Fisheries Management in Scotland* national discussion² outlines our belief in the merit of introducing a low-impact trial to separate mobile activity from static gear and recreational users.

We propose that once a suitable data set has been accumulated from the early adopter programme that Data Drive Innovative methodologies will be brought to light to inform the feasibility of a trial separating the various marine users in the area.

- **Improving the knowledge base**

Through the early adopter programme, there will be much opportunity for collaboration with local stakeholders and scientific partners to develop a local evidence base, which will inform local as well as national fisheries management decisions.

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-discussion-paper-future-fisheries-management-scotland/>

- **Improving communication**

Key to delivering management improvements for the Inner Sound is effective communication between local stakeholders. However, it is clear from consultation responses that tensions are high, and there is a lack of trust between the mobile and static gear sectors.

We believe an Inner Sound Management Advisory Group, as outlined in the consultation document, should still be established and aligned closely to the West Coast RIFG. However, we believe its immediate purpose should be to improve cooperation between local fishers across all sectors, and inform government as to how the other work strands should be taken forward.

**Marine Scotland
January 2020**

Appendix 1: Consultation questions

This appendix includes a full list of the consultation questions.

Proposed Benefits

- Q1. What is your view on these proposed benefits?
- Q2. Do you agree that the establishment of a pilot management group is the most effective way of managing and monitoring progress of the pilot and appraisal of the benefits?

Proposed Mobile Gear Management Measures

- Q3. Do you agree that testing these proposed mobile gear management measures may provide insight into improving local fisheries management of Nephrops fisheries?

Eligibility Criteria

- Q4. Do you agree that continued access for trawl vessels should be determined by a track record of fishing activity as described?
- Q5. Do you agree with the principle that eligible trawl vessels be restricted to fishing in the Trawl Fishing Control Area?

Requirement for On-board Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)

- Q6. Do you agree that eligible trawl vessels should be required to have on board VMS?
- Q7. Do you have views on the specification of the VMS?

Controlling Effort

- Q8. Do you agree that there should be a limit on the fishing effort of eligible trawl vessels fishing in the Control Area?

Track Record of Creel Fishing

- Q9. Do you agree that fishing for Nephrops by creel should be restricted to those vessels with a track record of Nephrops creel fishing activity in the Inner Sound?
- Q10. What are your suggestions for how a track record should be determined?

Creel Caught Nephrops Minimum Landing Size

- Q11. Do you agree that the minimum landing size of Nephrops caught by creel in the Inner Sound should be increased?
- Q12. What are your suggestions on what the minimum landing size should be increased to?

Annual Quota for Nephrops Creel Fishing

- Q13. Do you agree that an annual quota should be established for Nephrops creel fishing in the Inner Sound of Skye?
- Q14. What are your suggestions on how an annual quota should be determined?

Individual Vessel Creel Limits

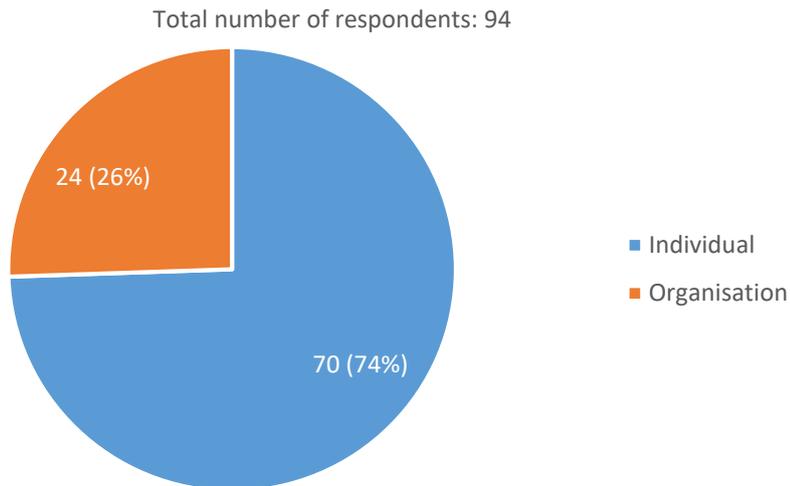
- Q15. Do you agree that Nephrops creels deployed by individual vessels in the Inner Sound should be restricted?
- Q16. What are your suggestions on what a maximum number of Nephrops creels per vessel should be set at?

Appendix 2: Quantitative analysis

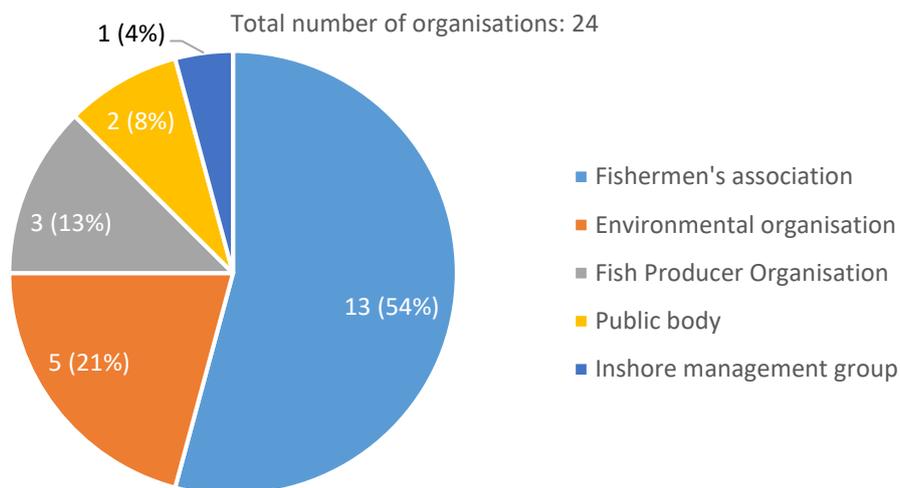
This appendix includes a quantitative analysis of the consultation respondents and their responses to the yes / no questions, presented as graphs.

Respondent profile

There were 94 responses to the consultation. This consisted of 70 private individuals (74%) and 24 organisations (26%).

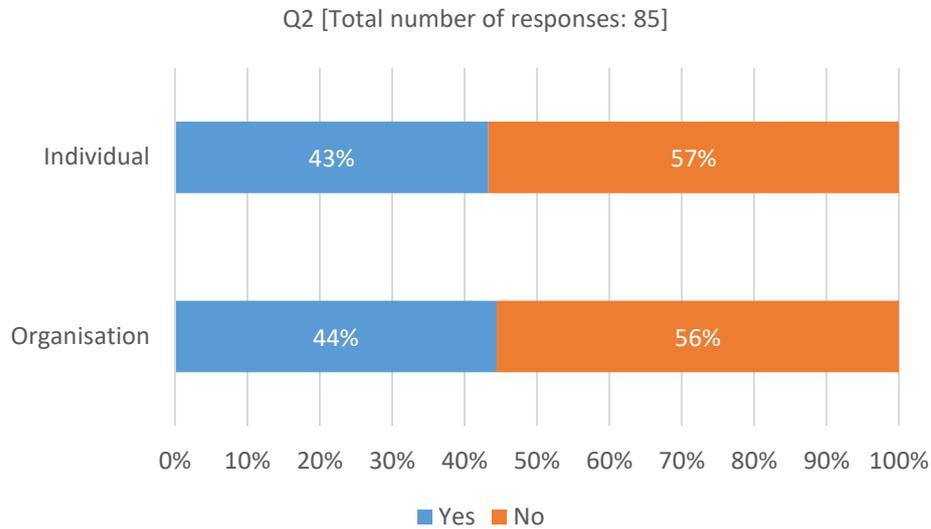


The organisations that responded break down by type as follows:

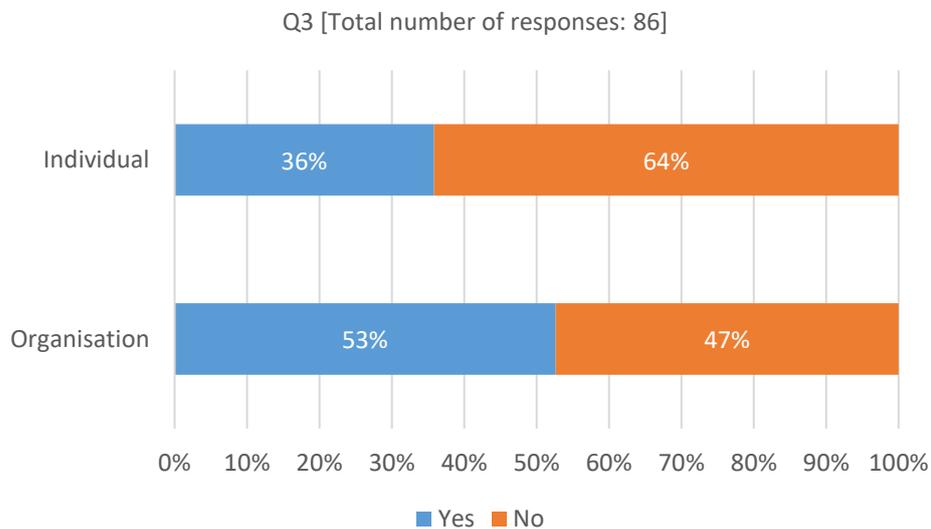


Percentages of yes and no responses to each multiple-choice question

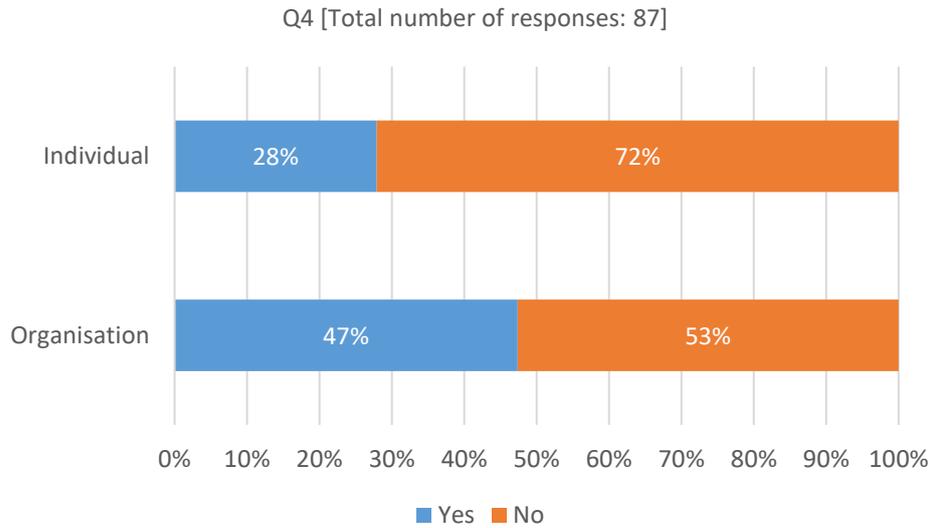
Q2. Do you agree that the establishment of a pilot management group is the most effective way of managing and monitoring progress of the pilot and appraisal of the benefits?



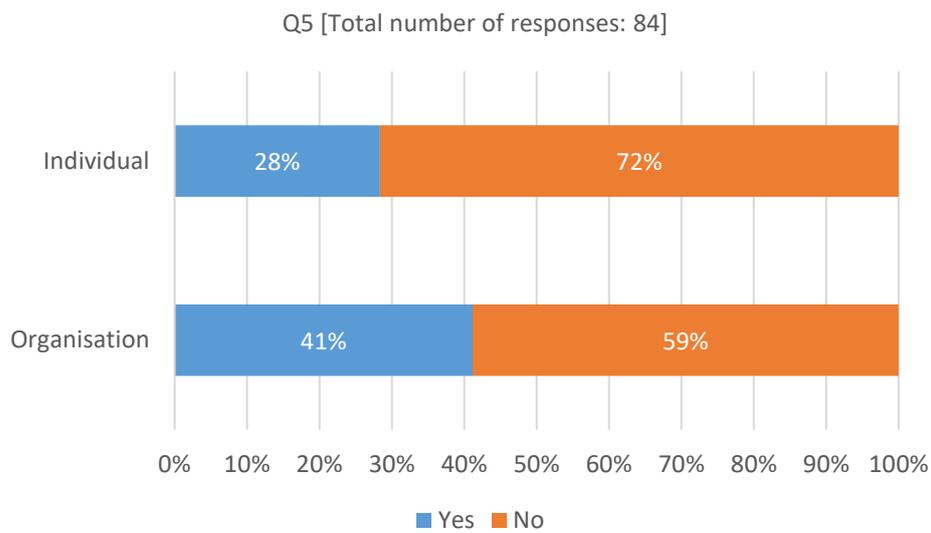
Q3. Do you agree that testing these proposed mobile gear management measures may provide insight into improving local fisheries management of Nephrops fisheries?



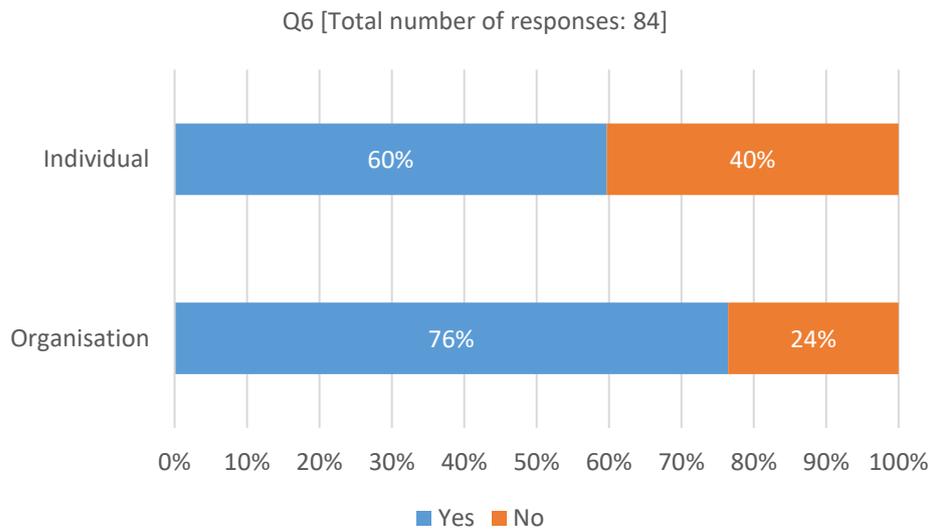
Q4. Do you agree that continued access for trawl vessels should be determined by a track record of fishing activity as described?



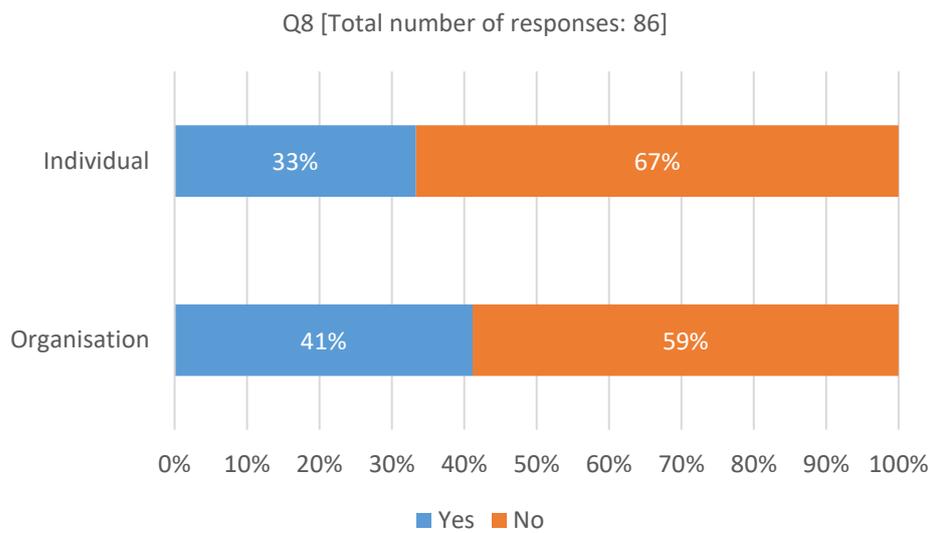
Q5. Do you agree with the principle that eligible trawl vessels be restricted to fishing in the Trawl Fishing Control Area?



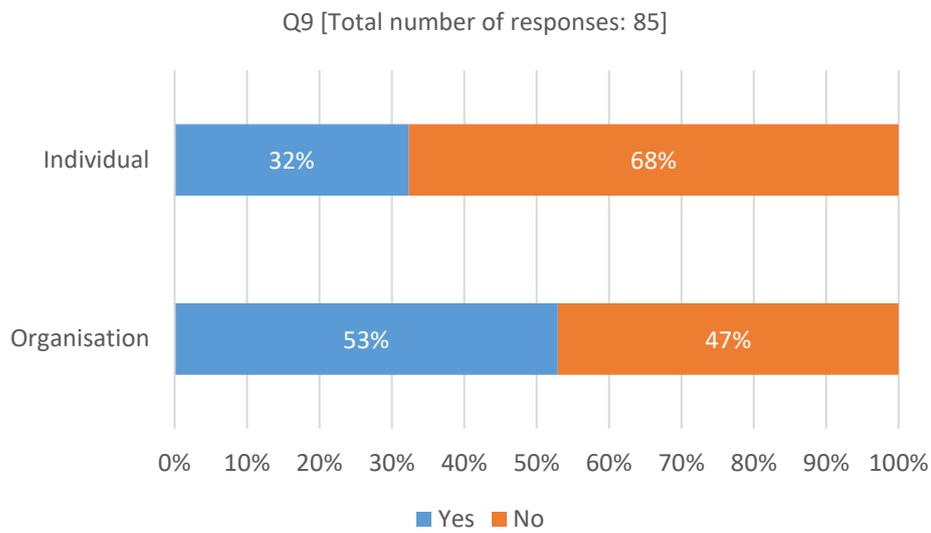
Q6. Do you agree that eligible trawl vessels should be required to have on board VMS?



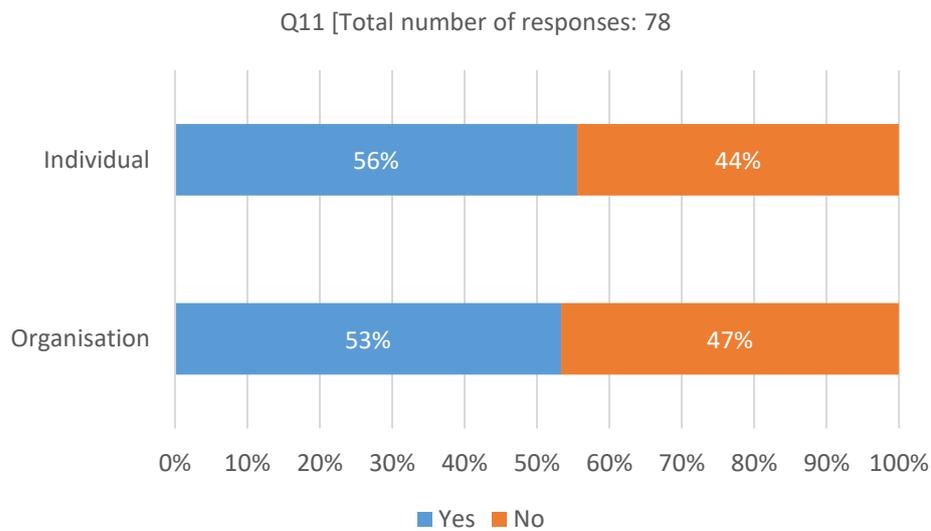
Q8. Do you agree that there should be a limit on the fishing effort of eligible trawl vessels fishing in the Control Area?



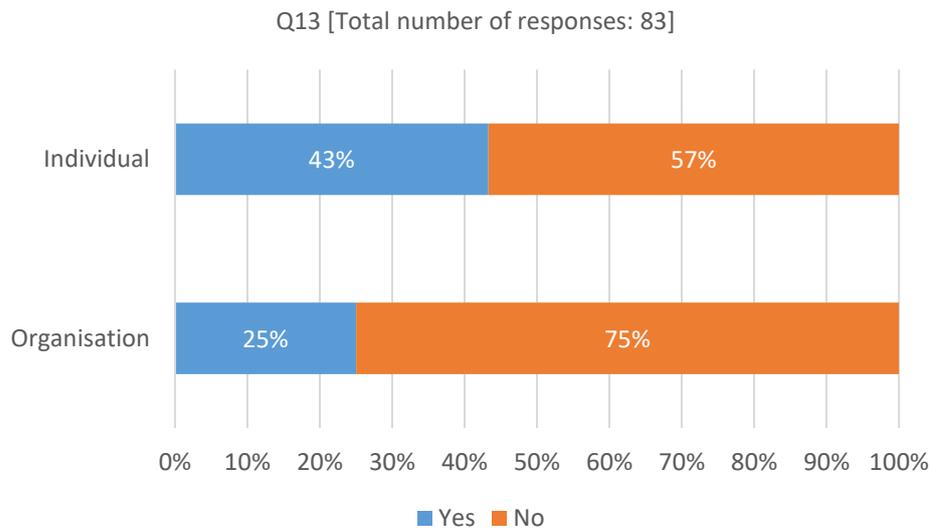
Q9. Do you agree that fishing for Nephrops by creel should be restricted to those vessels with a track record of Nephrops creel fishing activity in the Inner Sound?



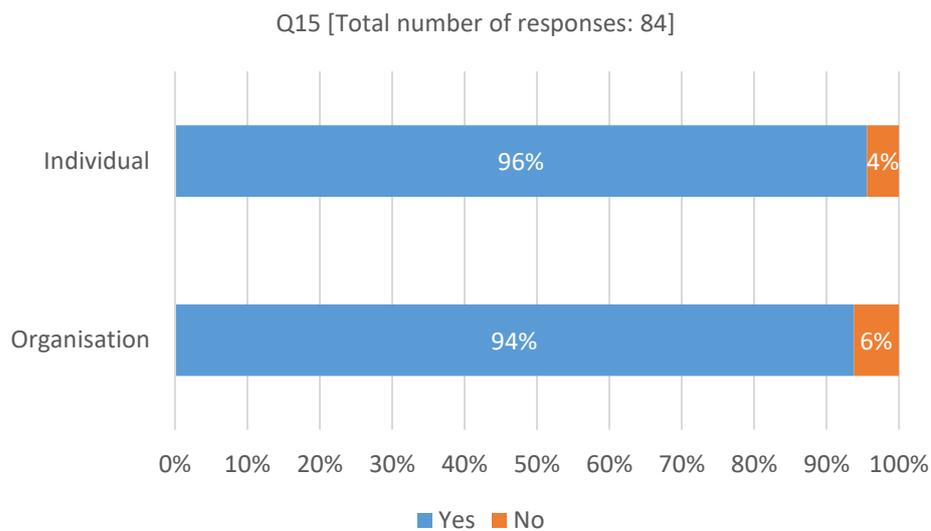
Q11. Do you agree that the minimum landing size of Nephrops caught by creel in the Inner Sound should be increased?



Q13. Do you agree that an annual quota should be established for Nephrops creel fishing in the Inner Sound of Skye?



Q15. Do you agree that Nephrops creels deployed by individual vessels in the Inner Sound should be restricted?



Appendix 3: Consultation respondents

This appendix includes a full list of the organisations that responded to the consultation, as well as those individuals that responded and gave permission for their names to be published.

Organisations

- Blue Marine Foundation
- Clyde Fishermen's Association
- Community of Arran Seabed Trust
- Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance
- Mallaig and North West Fishermen's Association
- North West Responsible Fishing Association
- Open Seas Trust
- Orkney Fish Producer's Organisation
- Orkney Fisheries Association
- Ross, Sutherland Skye & Lochalsh Fishermen's Association
- Scottish Creel Fisherman's Federation
- Scottish Creelers and Divers
- Scottish Environment LINK
- Scottish Fishermen's Federation
- Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Scallop Divers Association
- Scottish Water
- Scottish White Fish Producers Association Ltd
- Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust
- West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
- West of Scotland Fish Producer's Organisation
- Western Inshore Scallop Group
- Western Isles Fishermen's Association

Individuals

- Andrew Renwick McLean
- Audrey Lamond
- Chris Rickard
- Colin MacLeod
- David Fraser
- Donald MacKenzie
- Donald Matheson
- Finlay MacDonald
- George Brown
- Iain MacKinnon
- James Corrigan
- Mark McLean
- Mark Philp
- Max Blinkhorn
- Michael Morrison
- Neil Grant
- Neil Robertson
- Robert Summers
- Robert W Younger
- Steve McLaughlin
- Thomas Bryan-Brown