

**Flapper skate conservation – Interim protection measures
Meeting with Scottish Creel Fishermen’s Federation**

**MS Teams online meeting
03 February 2021**

Attendees

- Marine Scotland
- Scottish Creel Fishermen’s Federation (SCFF)

Meeting notes

- Marine Scotland (MS) outlined the background paper and described the advice provided by NatureScot. MS explained that an urgent MPA with associated MCO prohibiting a number of activities on the seabed is under consideration.
- MS enquired about the impact the proposed measures may have on scallop divers. SCFF replied that scallop divers spend a lot of time in this area during the winter months as it provides shelter, particularly around and south-west of the Red Rocks. SCFF reported that the scallops in this area are not of the best quality.
- AH estimated that a No Take Zone in this area would cost his firm approximately 12 days fishing a year.
- SCFF stated that he was not going to argue that scallop diving has no impact but that he was concerned about being lumped in with the static gear.
- SCFF commented that flapper skate eggs tend to be an incidental observation for scallop divers as they return to the surface. By contrast scallop divers regularly see flame shell and maerl beds on the grounds where they harvest scallops.
- MS asked if it was possible to quantify the impact of the proposed measures on scallop divers. AH estimated the cost to be £15,000-£20,000 for his company annually and to his knowledge four other companies fish in this area.
- SCFF were unhappy about the notion of banning all activities across the board.
- SCFF said that sadly the scallop diving industry does not have evidence of its impact on the seabed.
- MS made the point that these are temporary proposals and that permanent measures would be preceded by a full consultation and a number of assessments and surveys.
- MS enquired whether scallop divers would consider a voluntary agreement to avoid the area while more surveys are conducted. SCFF said they would be happy to avoid specific areas where congregations of Eggs were found, not the entire area as outlined in visuals shown.

- MS asked SCFF to annotate a map with areas of importance to scallop divers, which SCFF provided.
- MS thanked SCFF for taking the time to participate in this stakeholder engagement.

