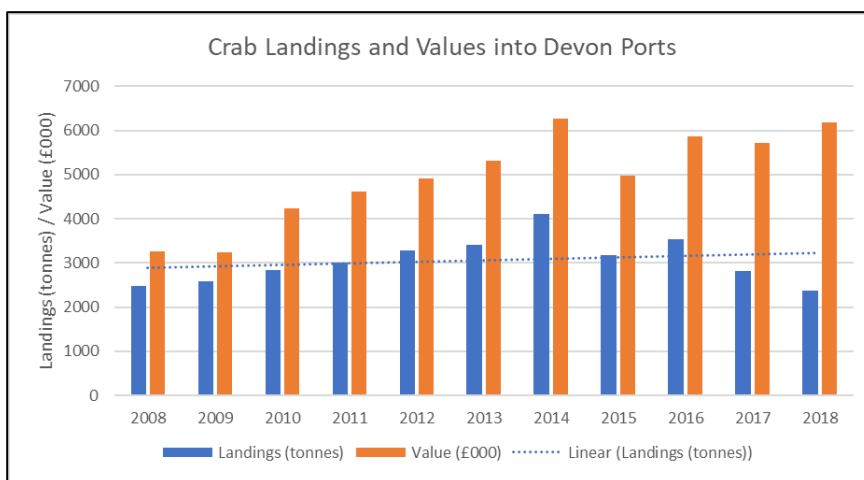


Devon and Severn IFCA News

Edible Crab Science Meeting

Devon and Severn IFCA attended an Edible (Brown) Crab Science Meeting in London on 23rd October 2019



Attendees

Fishmongers Company London organised and funded a science meeting to plan what comes next in the understanding of exploited edible brown crab (*Cancer pagurus*). The meeting was attended by seven of the IFCAs, Cefas, Jersey Department of Environment, Marine and Fisheries Wales, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, and Seafish Industry Authority and Defra. Prior to the meeting briefing notes were prepared on the brown crab fisheries in England and Jersey. The briefing notes for other IFCAs and Jersey will be available soon and D&S IFCA's report is available [here](#).

Discussions

The meeting provided the opportunity to discuss the current management measure in place; to understand Defra's Strategic View on managing brown crab exploitation and the most recent National Stock Assessments on brown crab were presented by Cefas. Attendees were asked to focus on the following questions:

1. Is there a problem with edible crab fisheries?
2. What are the knowledge gaps?
3. How to address the knowledge gaps?
4. What is the way forward?

Briefings notes and stock assessments highlighted areas around the coast of greatest concern on the population structure and landings. A large number of evidence gaps were highlighted and these included: lack of knowledge on migration routes and larval movement; lack of data on recruitment and cohorts recruiting to the fishery; stock boundaries; growth rates; catch per unit effort including accurate information on soak times and catchability of pots; impacts of climate change and acidification on stocks, and crab disease issues. Concern was also raised regarding the catch recording for under 10m vessels.

In order to fill the gaps, the group discussed possible data collection methods. Remote electronic monitoring was discussed and what the developments are in these techniques, as

well as gear in gear out technology to estimate soak times and infrared cameras to look at catch abundance.

Some IFCA's have introduced management measures for brown crab over and above the National measures. The SW IFCA's have the largest landing sizes e.g. in Cornwall and Devon the maximum conservation reference sizes are 150mm for female brown crab and 160mm for male brown crab, whilst the national size is 140mm. The group discussed the potential for a national increase around the coast, the introduction of escape gaps, capping efficiency of pots potentially through technical measures, and aligning management between the inshore and offshore waters. Further meetings will take place to further and broaden these discussions.

Information relating to D&S IFCA Potting Permit conditions can be found [here](#).

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