

# Review of the Potential Management of Demersal Trawl Gear in Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ

## Officers' Recommendation

**To review the decision regarding access to demersal trawl gear in the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ by undertaking discussions with Natural England and consulting on limited access to demersal trawl gear, if appropriate.**

**The introduction of a prohibition to scallop dredges, agreed by the B&PSC, is appropriate for the site**

## Background

Agenda Item 8 of the B&PSC papers for the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 highlights the permit conditions and changes in annexes to be introduced for the Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ, Morte Platform MCZ and the South Australian Heritage site.

At the B&PSC meeting in February 2023 members agreed that scallop dredging should be prohibited across the whole of the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ (see Figure 1), in line with the outcome of the MCZ assessment for scallop dredges and the formal advice from Natural England.

Members also agreed that no management of demersal trawl gear is required in the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ and that access would not be restricted. This decision was made on evidence provided by officers which drew members to the fact that the assessment to fishing activity showed that no demersal trawl gear was taking place in the site and that officers had concluded that there would be no significant impact of demersal trawl gear on the **coarse sediment** feature of the site due to the lack of activity. Natural England agreed with this conclusion.

## Review of Management for Access to Demersal Trawl gear within the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ

Whilst preparing papers for this B&PSC meeting, officers reviewed the assessments associated with the MCZ sites. It became clear on the review of the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ assessment (version 2) for towed demersal trawl gear on the **rock feature** that Officers undertaking the assessment had concluded that:

*From the evidence, the level of effort for towed demersal trawls within the site on the rock features is currently thought to be none. At current levels of effort, i.e. no activity occurring, it can be concluded that there will be no adverse effects from this gear type of the rock features of the MCZ. However, if the activities were to occur on the features listed in this assessment, the evidence suggests there could be an adverse effect, and this could hinder the achievement of the conservation objectives of the features. Due to the conclusion drawn, D&S IFCA, through the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee, will carry out a review of the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw conditions to bring in the appropriate management to protect the rock features of the site from demersal trawling to ensure the conservation objectives are furthered.*

Unfortunately, but not intentionally, this information, relating to trawl gear on the rock feature, was not included in the papers presented to the B&PSC in 2022. Therefore, as officers are now aware that the conclusion of the assessment suggests that if trawl gear did interact with the rock feature then the conservation objectives of the site would not be met. Officers believe that in order to ensure that the correct management of the site is in place and to protect the rock feature from trawl gear that further advice from Natural England is required. Officers will seek to determine if implementing a Monitoring

and Control Plan is appropriate for trawl gear, as the risk of vessels accessing the site and interacting with the rock feature is low, or that with further assessment of IVMS data and the location of fishing activity, a further consultation may be appropriate to limit access to trawl gear to a smaller area of the MCZ.

Therefore, officers recommend that:

1. A review of the decision regarding access to demersal trawl gear should be undertaken;
2. The introduction of a prohibition to scallop dredges, agreed by the B&PSC, is appropriate for the site (Figure 1).



Figure 1 No Access to scallop dredges in Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

## Background Papers

Full Authority and B&PSC - Officers' papers and minutes of meetings – [Section B of D&S IFCA website Resource Library](#).

**End**