

## Recommendation paper

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**Title: Loligo fishery – early entry**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**Report of: Sheena Ross**

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### **1. Background:**

- 1.1 The dates for the Loligo season varies a little each year but follows a rough pattern of 24<sup>th</sup> February – 28<sup>th</sup> April for the first season and then from the 29<sup>th</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September for the second season. Dates are agreed between the Loligo Producers Group (LPG) and FIG the previous year.
- 1.2 During the Second Season 2017 there were a number of seal mortalities in the Loligo fishery which caused a great deal of concern. At that time, some grid squares were closed in the southern area, in order to try and minimise mortalities.
- 1.3 From the first season 2018 a Seal Exclusion Device (SED) had to be available to implement on vessels if interactions between the whole fleet, resulted in 2 seal mortalities.
- 1.4 From the first season 2019 it was agreed between LPG and FIG that independent observers should be placed on board the vessels, to report on interaction with seals.
- 1.5 The dates for the second season 2020 were set as the 29<sup>th</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September. Due to COVID-19 restrictions (14 day mandatory quarantine on arrival in the islands) and weather related delays with the MOD flight, the MRAG observers didn't arrive in the islands until 2030 hours on the 21<sup>st</sup> July.

### **2. Presentation and consultations:**

- 2.1. In order not to delay the start of the season, it was agreed that vessels could begin fishing at 0001 on the 30<sup>th</sup> July. Vessels have been instructed to use a SED from the start of fishing operations as the MRAG observer cannot be deployed until completion of quarantine and training on the 6<sup>th</sup> August.
- 2.2. Vessels have been granted a non-fishing day on the 6<sup>th</sup> August in order to collect the MRAG observers. Once the MRAG observer is on-board, vessels don't have to use a SED until there are 2 seal mortalities between the whole fleet.
- 2.3. Prior to the start of every season, permission is sought from FIFD by LPG to allow vessels entry into the Loligo box, so they can find the best place to start fishing at the appointed hour. Criteria for permission for this to happen has been erratic and has been dependant on a number of factors.
- 2.4. Following email discussion between DONR, SFS, Duty FO, LO and SSAS it was agreed that a more consistent, formalised approach should be adopted, rather than seasonal changes.

**3. Recommendation:**

- 3.1. Vessels can enter the Loligo box at 1800 hours local, on the evening preceding the start of the season. In this case, the season starts at 0001 on the 30<sup>th</sup> July and vessels are approved to enter the Loligo box at 1800 hours on the 29<sup>th</sup> July.
- 3.2. If MRAG observers are available to be deployed at the start of the season, it will not be a requirement for vessels to use the SED until there are 2 seal mortalities within the whole fleet.
- 3.3. If MRAG observers are not available at the start of the season, then vessel should use a SED until observers are available for deployment.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Clasen'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

28<sup>th</sup> July 2020