



World Class Seafood from  
**NORTHERN IRELAND**

Sustainable | Wild caught | Seafood

# MEMBERS LETTER

## AUGUST 2018

On 20th July 2018 the Anglo-North Irish FPO Ltd/Sea Source marked its 34th birthday. Formed in 1984 into what in many ways was a totally different fisheries world, the Organisation has reflected the fortunes of its members with some good years, not so good years, opportunities and challenges.

There have some noticeable developments in the history of the Organisation, one of the most recent ones being the decision by the members of the Fleetwood FPO to join with ANIFPO. This was a very welcome decision, with our new members officially joining on 1st January 2018.

For the Fleetwood members they see ANIFPO as offering enhanced representation across a range of issues, including Brexit. In addition, it opens new and we hope improved opportunities for quota management, not just for the Fleetwood members, but also the original ANIFPO members. New marketing opportunities for Sea Source via our alliance with Hooktone are highlighted by the decision to have a joint stand at the Conxemar exhibition in Vigo, Spain from 2nd to 4th October 2018.

**Photo: Conxemar 2017**



## SEA SOURCE OFFSHORE

Sea Source Offshore has secured important contracts during 2018 and currently six vessels are deployed on duties around the UK. The decision by members of the ANIFPO to establish an independent company to take ownership of guard vessels is being progressed.

## FISHERMEN'S WELFARE

The Organisation has been to the fore in helping to establish the Fishermen's Welfare Alliance. As its name suggests this new group comprised of fishermen's organisations, processors, retailer and maritime charities is designed first and foremost to promote the welfare of all our fishermen. Given the imminent introduction of ILO C188 this work is all the more important.



ANIFPO has continued to put crew welfare at the core of its policies and the maritime charity Human Rights at Sea has recently completed the first annual audit of the PO's policies in this area. Overall the report was positive, but more work needs to be done.

A critical issue for many of our members is access to qualified and experienced crew. The Alliance has been at the centre of lobbying on this matter, with a series of meetings with Government Ministers, MPs and officials already having been held and more in the pipeline, including a visit by the UK's Immigration Minister to Kilkeel in early August. There have 'false dawns' on this issue, but there is some sense that progress is at last being made. ANIFPO/Sea Source will be hosting the UK Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes MP during her visit to Kilkeel on 9th August.

One issue that has certainly slowed progress on the non-EEA fishermen issue is Brexit and specifically what the UK's post-Brexit immigration policy will be? Immigration policy is regarded by many as being highly influential to the outcome of the Brexit referendum - not that the majority of people oppose immigration, rather the policy is confused. As future immigration policy becomes clearer during the autumn, it maybe that policy towards admitting non-EEA fishermen to the UK becomes clearer too.

## BREXIT

Turning to Brexit, the Government recently published its fisheries white paper, setting out what the UK's post Brexit fisheries policy might look like. Entitled 'Sustainable fisheries for future generations' the paper discusses a range of potential future policy directions at a UK and devolved level.



An often-used phrase is that in future under international law the UK will have the right to decide on access to UK waters and the quotas within them. However, there is a real fear that as part of the wider negotiations between the UK and the EU that fisheries could be traded away as part of a bigger deal. The onus is on the industry to make sure that fisheries and the post-Brexit opportunities it offers for the UK remains to the fore in Government minds and that we are not sold out. Working with

the NFFO and other partners, ANIFPO has been active in London and at home promoting Brexit. Lobby days in the Houses of Parliament in London, regular meetings with Northern Ireland politicians who hold the balance of power in the House of Commons and the visual flag campaign 'No Fishing Sell-Out' are all examples of what ANIFPO, working with the NFFO has been doing.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to fix the 'sell out' the UK fishing industry was subjected to when it joined the EEC in 1973 and let's hope the opportunity is not squandered by any of the players.

## THE WHITE PAPER

The white paper consultation referred to can be accessed via the following web site and we would encourage all our members to have a look at the document and if possible respond via the PO or directly. Everyone should remember that this will be the biggest change affecting the UK's fishing industry in a generation, so the consultation probably represents a unique opportunity to try to influence Government fisheries policy.

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/sustainable-fisheries-for-future-generations>

As well as dealing with pan-UK ideas post Brexit, the white paper considers in some detail potential fisheries management measures within England. With the absence of an administration within Northern Ireland some of the English based measures may become applicable to Northern Ireland too, so they are worth considering for everyone in ANIFPO.



## Sustainable fisheries for future generations

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
by Command of Her Majesty

July 2018

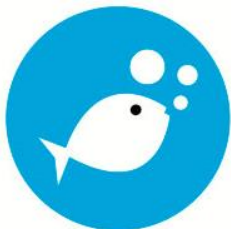
The future of quota management is clearly an important matter. Recent years has seen DEFRA 'top-slice' quota from the over 10 metre sector in England and allocating this fish to the under 10 metre fishing fleet. In England the under 10 metre sector is proportionally much larger than it is in Northern Ireland and in Northern Ireland the issues faced by the under 10 metre fleet have largely been dealt with via PO membership for that smaller, but important fleet sector. Ideas about creating a quota reserve, some of which could be auctioned off to raise funds to pay for e.g. fisheries science will cause some anxiety, but if this is a

direction Fisheries Administrations chose to follow then the payback must be a much greater say for the industry in e.g. deciding the priorities and direction of the science.

Of course, fishermen in the Irish Sea are familiar with additional fees being levied upon them, in the shape of charges for Isle of Man fishing licences. These charges, which in 2018 have already seen an increase (and the Isle of Man authorities have signalled the possibility of a further increase in 2019) are used to help pay for the administration of fisheries and might set an important precedent for fisheries administrations all around the UK.

### ZONAL ATTACHMENT

Zonal attachment is another important aspect of the white paper, with the UK exploring different forms of this proposition to negotiate for a fairer share of fishing opportunities within UK waters post-Brexit. There is some concern the idea could be taken a step forward, with zonal attachment potentially being used to apportion any new or additional quota the UK might receive within the UK. Whilst nothing can be certain, it would seem that this new or additional quota will be distributed between UK Fisheries Administrations on the basis of the existing FQA system, with DEFRA and devolved FAs possibly using zonal attachment to allocate fishing resources within their jurisdictions.



**FISHING FOR  
THE FUTURE**

Future access is another important issue. For EU fleets to lose access to important UK fishing grounds would be a disaster. Likewise, for UK fishing fleets to lose access to important EU fishing grounds would be an equal disaster, including areas to the south, east and west of Ireland currently fished by all our members. A significant number of our members have already been penalised by the Dublin Government following Ireland's withdrawal from the reciprocal Voisinage Agreement. To date the UK has not prevented Irish registered fishing vessels from

accessing inshore waters around Northern Ireland. It is understood this matter continues to be discussed between London and Dublin at senior level, although regrettably the industry has not been made privy to the content of these 'high priority' negotiations.

We should be clear, overall EU fishing fleets need access to UK waters much more than UK fishing fleets need access to EU waters. Much has been made from the suggestion that UK fisheries need access to EU markets much more than the EU need access for fishery products to UK markets. Interestingly the export/ import figures are not too divergent, with the UK annually exporting £1.1 billion to the EU and importing around £1 Billion from the EU. Nevertheless, the desire must be to secure the most frictionless trade deal possible, which is vital for perishable products such as fresh shellfish. But to be clear - access to the UK's fishing resources and markets for the EU is much more valuable than the other way around.

## KILKEEL HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT

Having stalled for 18 months because of the political process in Northern Ireland, some better news has emerged around the proposed development of Kilkeel harbour. Economists in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs have confirmed the 2016 business plan remains valid and it is hoped that a phased approach to the next stage of the project will be launched before the end of September. The provision of adequate infrastructure is essential if Brexit is to work and UK fisheries are to flourish in the future. Clearly there is no point securing additional fishing opportunities from Brexit, if we don't have the crew to man our boats to catch that fish and then we don't have the harbours to land that fish into and the processing capability to handle the extra catches. The industry is certainly up for the challenge. All we need is for the Government to deliver the necessary tools to the industry.



## LEAVING THE EU

The UK leaves the EU at 11pm (GMT) on Friday, 29th March 2019. Assuming an overall Brexit deal is concluded the UK will then enter into an Implementation Period lasting until 31st December 2020. This will include UK fisheries being subject to the rules of the CFP. What happens after that (and indeed what happens during the Implementation Period) remains unclear, but as it stands at the moment the December 2018 EU Fisheries Council is the last time the UK will be represented around the EU Fisheries Council table. The future partnership SHOULD reflect the fact that the UK is an independent coastal nation, with all the rewards and obligations that brings with it. Let's see....

So, as we approach the December 2018 EU Fisheries Council, where as usual decisions will be made on TAC settings for the new year and as Brexit negotiations trundle on, the annual cycle of ICES assessment and stock advice is well underway. Most stock assessments our members are concerned about were issued at the end of June. Advice

for valuable pelagic species is not so positive, highlighted by advice for a 40% reduction in the TAC for NS herring. A cut of 53% has been recommended for Celtic Sea herring.

Demersal stocks in the North Sea have also been given a negative prognosis with ICES advising a 47% cut in the area's cod TAC and a 27% cut in haddock. In the Celtic Sea zero catch has been advised for cod, a 24% cut advised for haddock and a 18.5% cut advised for whiting. Better news in the Irish Sea comes in the shape of an advised 16% increase in the cod TAC and a 9% increase with haddock. Also, in the Irish Sea ICES have advised notable increases with plaice (+95%) and sole (+935%) - yes - **plus 935%**.



**ICES**  
CIEM

Important Area 7 stocks for our members include hake and ICES has recommended a 23% increase for that TAC in 2019. Increases are also advised for Area 7 monk (+10%) and megrim (+21%). The Advice for Area 7 nephrops will follow later this year.

Of course, it must not be forgotten the 1st January 2019 marks the full application of the EU's Landing Obligation or discard ban. Issues around that, including so-called choke species (where a TAC for one stock is so low and it could be exhausted so quickly that it could close or 'choke' an entire fishery) are still being worked on. In or out of the EU this is one issue that will not be going away.

So, looking ahead opportunities and challenges will remain, just as they did in 1984. One thing for sure is that the members of the Anglo-North Irish and Fleetwood FPOs are together better equipped to handle these challenges. Our combined ethos is simple - the PO exists to benefit our members - reduced PO levy, reduced costs to rent quota, accessing valuable alternative opportunities for our members - all designed to maximise the economic viability of our members, their crews and the communities in which they are based.



**Anglo-North Irish FPO Ltd/ Sea Source**

The Harbour, Kilkeel, Co. Down, Northern Ireland BT34 4AX

T: +44 (0)28 4176 2855

E: [info@seasource.com](mailto:info@seasource.com)