



Joint MAC/NWWAC/NSAC
Focus Group on Brown Crab
Meeting 2
21st January 2021

Report to MAC WG1
28th January 2021

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- Initial meeting of Joint FG Brown Crab identified

The difference between the long-time crab fishing countries (France, Ireland and United Kingdom)

and

New entrants to the fishery (Poland, Germany and Netherlands)

Questionnaire: 3 levels of information requested

1. National legislative framework
2. National crab fishing capacity and gear used
3. Animal welfare status regarding fishing methods, transport and sentience

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- **Brown Crab is a non-quota species which means access to the fishery is less constrained than many other species but there are a number of strictly enforced management measures**
- **France, Ireland and United Kingdom:**
- These countries have long-term fisheries and have been strictly regulated by their respective regulatory bodies, and the EU, for several decades. France, in particular, reports decreased landings in recent years and would like a similar stock performance update from Ireland and the UK .
- Management measures include vessel licencing, pot-caught, **Minimum Landing Sizes**, Effort Controls (KwDays). The individual countries have additional local measures regarding numbers of pots permitted and numbers of fishing licences permitted in specific areas.
- Numbers of vessels can vary from country to country and many target brown crab on a seasonal basis only and may fish mostly in inshore waters. There are a number of larger offshore vivier crabbers many of which are nomadic. In recent years their main focus is the eastern North Sea.

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- **Poland, Denmark, Germany and Netherlands**
- Being recent entrants to brown crab fisheries, these countries were not able to provide information at the same level as the traditional crab-fishing countries. But information provided showed:
 - **Netherlands** is a major transport hub for air-freighted crab to Asia, especially China.
 - **Netherlands** has 5 vessels fishing brown crab using 5000 pots (a significant number) but there was no information on landings
 - The regulatory requirement is a Category B licence which indicates there is a possibility of substantial growth in this fishery.
 - **Germany** does not have specific regulation regarding brown Crab but there is an on-going trial for a shrimp fishery within the boundary of a windfarm which, if successful, could open an opportunity for a similar small scale crab fishing.
 - *Continued:-*

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- **Poland:** the Polish representative did not have any background information regarding the Polish vessels targeting brown crab in the North Sea
- **Denmark:** The Danish representative was unable to attend

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Exports to People's Republic of China

Export of both live and frozen brown crab to China has been a very important development in the past decade as it has driven the price substantially with a knock-on effect for the smallest crab fisherman on the Atlantic coast.

Not without problems:

- Cadmium levels

 - Public Consultation,/ DG Sante, MAWG

- Covid-19 issues

 - New Health Certificates – requirements?

Representative of DG MARE (Marta Moren Abat) attended the meeting and will be kept informed.

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- .BREXIT
- Sarah Horsfall (EMPA) gave the meeting an update on the problems being encountered by the crustacean industry in the UK.
- She is available to assist EU shellfish industry where possible.
- The problems she sees are due to unpreparedness regarding completion of documentation
- The supply chain in general is experiencing major disruption

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Crab Market Developments

- Richard Curtin
- Senior Economist, Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)

- Analysis of trade data via GTIS database
- Overview global crab trade
- 'Atlantic' crab trade
- 'Brown' crab trade
- Conclusion

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- Global exports ~ 350KT p.a. + €4bn
 - Frozen and fresh forms increasing, prepared decreasing (volume, value & price)
 - Russia, China, U.S. main exporters
 - U.S., China, Japan main importers
 - Russia and Canada main net exporters
 - UK & IRL 5th and 10th net exporters
- COVID impact Jan-Oct 2020 vs Jan-Oct 2019
 - Volume UK -32%; IRL -46%;
 - Value UK -49%; IRL -31%;
 - Price UK -25%; IRL +26%;
- Ireland
 - FRA main driver ↓21% Fresh, ↓47% Frozen, ↑55% Prepared;
 - ESP 2nd driver ↑83% Fresh, ↓72% Frozen, ↓52% Prepared;
- UK
 - FRA main driver ↑27% Fresh, ↓46% Frozen, ↓44% Prepared;
 - CHI 2nd driver ↓91% Fresh, ↑79% Frozen, ↓13% Prepared;
- Netherlands exports up 80% in 2020 YTD
- *Richard Curtin, Senior Economist, BIM Ireland*

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• *Action Points*

- *Provide a recent report on stock status for those countries where available*
- *Provide Marta Moren Abat (DG MARE) with background information regarding Cadmium issue for brown crab exports to China*
- *Information on new health certificates for exports to China regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures*
- *Information regarding ongoing issues for brown crab as a result of BREXIT.*
- *Update the FG members circa 18th March 2021 (4 weeks after meeting) and agree agenda for next meeting.*

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“Thank you” to the Secretariats of

- The Markets Advisory Council
- The North Western Waters Advisory Council
- The North Sea Advisory Council

- And

- The MAC WG1

for facilitating this Focus Group

- Further information: Norah Parke, norah@kfo.ie, ++353 (0) 879055414