



**Angling Trust National Summit On Bait Collection – Problems And Solutions
September 24th 2013
Fishmongers' Hall, London, London Bridge, EC4R 9EL**

Key Outputs

The following points were collated from notes made by four groups of delegates during the afternoon workshop sessions. They are not a transcript of the notes made by the four groups.

Question 1

Differentiating between 'commercial' and 'recreational' bait collection; can it be done?

- Does a difference need to be made? IFCA's have the right to regulate and no difference is made in law.
- Some groups agreed that differentiation is important to: A) manage resources effectively B) Maintain access to bait.
- It was also recognised that the provision of commercially supplied bait is essential for hundreds of thousands of anglers including those living away from the coast and the elderly or disabled.
- If angling participation increases, as a result of the national angling strategy or other factors, then the demand for bait could increase.
- Likewise, the changing demographics of the country could potentially see an influx of foreign nationals with a strong culture of sea angling.
- Recognition needs to be given of the high value of the bait fisheries and their economic impact on coastal communities.
- What is the extent of both recreational and commercial activity and what is the difference in impact (if any) of the two?
- The difficulty in assessing commercial activity due to black economy and a reluctance to disclose was highlighted.
- Research needs to be conducted to understand the two different sectors better.
- What role do landowners have to play in addressing this?
- Enforcement has been, and will continue to be, the challenge.
- Communication with the trade (tackle shops, online businesses) should be a starting point.

Question 2

Achieving conservation objectives and maintaining access to bait collection – what are the management options to achieve this?

- Establish what the driver for management of the resource is first? This will in turn influence the type of management. For instance is it: Bird disturbance; contaminated sediment dispersal; the impact on biodiversity?
- Is zonation a way of achieving both access and conservation objectives?
- Who 'owns' the bait organisms or the tiles, traps that might be used?
- Can you permit something without banning a common right on Crown land?
- Effort restrictions are one option – but how would they work: temporal, spatial, permitting?
- Enforcement through MMO-style cost recovery model paid for by permits was suggested.
- Traceability of the products – could legislation like the RBS help?
- Using tackle shops would be a common sense way of managing, in conjunction with the IFCAs.
- However, enforcement needs to be effective to prevent the trade going underground.
- Weight or volume limits on recreational collectors could be agreed at a local level with stakeholder engagement. Agree a MSY for commercial digging based on, for instance, number of worms per hour.
- Lack of evidence on the level of activity makes decision making very difficult and results in the precautionary approach being adopted. Surveys or assessments would provide a stronger evidence base from which to start the decision making process.
- Evidence needs to take into account the cumulative impacts of other activities.
- Research and modelling could identify an impact and a threshold or acceptable level of activity.
- Challenges will be made to decisions unless the evidence base is robust.
- However, data collection is expensive and relies on human resources. Who would pay for this and carry it out.
- Communicating with anglers and bait diggers through local meetings is essential.
- Bait collection working groups could be set up to discuss issues at local level.
- Decisions should be made at a site specific level (case by case) with a staged approach beginning with better engagement.
- Buy-in from all stakeholders is essential at local level but experience shows that both a carrot and a stick may be needed.
- Consistency between the approach by IFCAs and the sharing of information to facilitate solutions is important and where the Association of IFCAs could help.
- All individuals and organisations involved should be encouraged to share resources, ideas and experiences in order to help find solutions.
- Measures of self-regulation should be devised and encouraged.
- The role of the angling press in sharing any positive messages, rather than controversy, is important.
- The positive use of information/data should be used to improve awareness and buy-in to codes of conduct.
- The messages given need to be clear and easily understandable by all.
- Education should be used to promote buy-in and best practice.