

England and Wales Research Activities in the Channel (Andy PAYNE)

AP outlined the UK's current research activities in the Channel that contribute to the proposed research initiative underpinning the current proposal for collaborative ecosystem research. The UK in this context is taken to be England and Wales, i.e. not Scotland and Northern Ireland, both of which were collecting information and carrying out research in their own right.

As do many other countries, the UK is actively engaged in monitoring cruises and sampling, supporting either the DCR or the assessment advisory process. The at-sea work currently being engaged in includes inshore work right up to the coast as well as offshore research, in both cases on shellfish (including scallops, other molluscs, crustaceans and squid) and roundfish and flatfish. Additionally, the UK was expending serious effort in market and discard (i.e. at sea) sampling, for the same two targets, the DCR and assessment/advice.

England and Wales is also involved in a Fisheries Science Partnership initiative in which fishers are actively involved in co-commissioning the Science. This is the fifth year of the Partnership (1.5 million euros per year, 75% to researchers, 25% to fishers), and two of the four time-series projects still take place in the Channel. The project on Western Channel sole and plaice is totally within the Channel, and that on Western anglerfish, partially so. Every year too, *ad hoc* FSP projects are undertaken in the Channel, recent ones including gear selectivity, squid jigging and trawling, and the development of benthic release panels to minimize damage to other members of the ecosystem.

Further to this, research is undertaken through the UK Government's Fisheries Challenge Fund (small projects generally to industry and their consultants) and through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, through which levies for extraction of aggregate are pumped back to the research community inter alia to determine the effects on the system of extraction. Further initiatives take place around proposed windfarm developments. Some examples of all these initiatives are taking place in the Channel, though they also take place elsewhere around the coast of the UK.

Finally, the UK Research and Development fund managed by Defra's Fisheries Science Unit (Dr Lock) primed much research of an ecosystem nature in the Channel and elsewhere, and two projects had recently been commissioned, a small one looking at multi-species modelling in the Channel (starting in 2008) and a larger one, explained in some detail separately by Simon Jennings.