
Conservation in Action
Effective collaboration between the fishing industry and NGOs
giving nature a home
rspb
Rory Crawford
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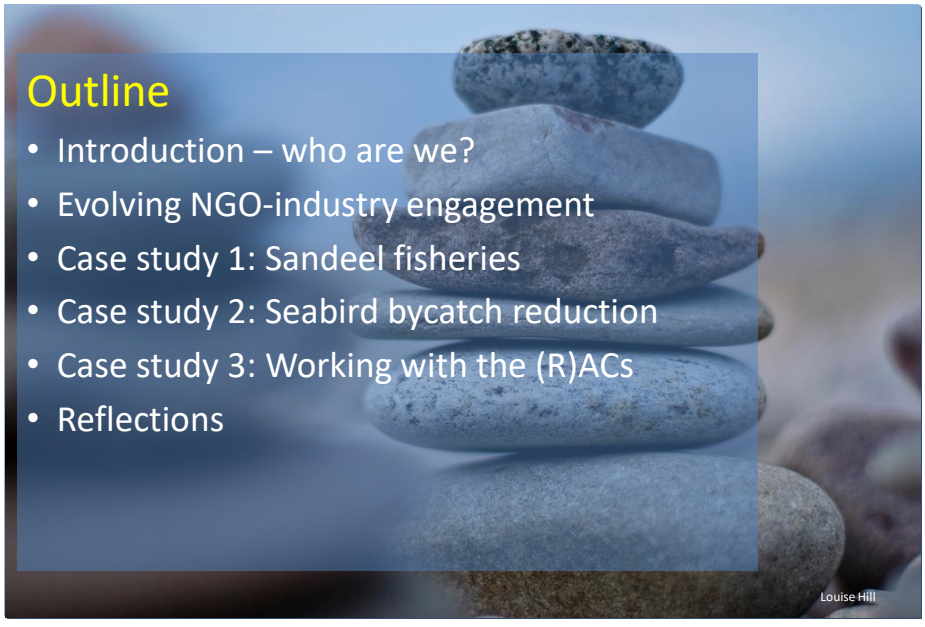
BirdLife INTERNATIONAL


Outline
• Introduction – who are we?
• Evolving NGO-industry engagement
• Case study 1: Sandeel fisheries
• Case study 2: Seabird bycatch reduction
• Case study 3: Working with the (R)ACs
• Reflections
Louise Hill

Who are we?

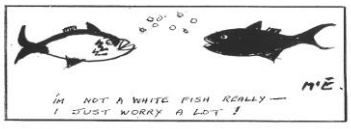
- RSPB the UK NGO charity that takes action for wild birds and the environment
- Largest of its kind in Europe (more than 1 million members)
- UK partner of BirdLife International (global network of over 100 other NGOs working to conserve birds and their habitats)
- Committed to work for sustainable fisheries in the interests of fish stocks, the wider marine environment, and dependent communities

RSPB has a long track record of working collaboratively with fishermen in the UK

… and internationally with our BirdLife partners, from Iceland to South Africa

Evolving industry-NGO context over 25 years of engagement

1990s	2017
Overfishing, declining stocks	Improved management, stock recovery
Little industry focus on environmental impact	Ecosystem-based approach more mainstream
NGO emphasis: problem identification	NGO emphasis: problem solving
NGOs perceived as threat, lacking legitimacy as stakeholder, leading to conflict and lack of constructive dialogue or trust: lose-lose	Industry still wary of NGOs but recognised as stakeholder, open to collaboration, leading to constructive dialogue and building trust: potential for win-win



Alan Steer, Devon crab fisherman: "*If we haven't linked silos yet, we've certainly put windows in them.*"

(GAP2 International Symposium, Barcelona, Feb 2015)

The context has also changed in other ways...

1990s

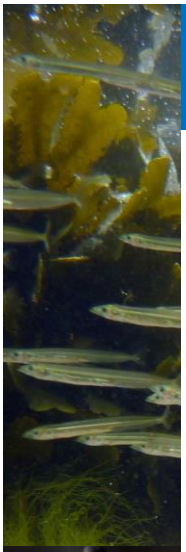
- Fishermen as 'victims'
- Not well organised as collective advocates ('lone hunters')
- NGOs seen as holding all the media cards

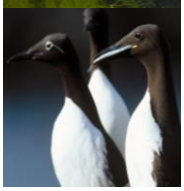
2000s

- Fishermen more outward-looking
- Engaged as advocates (more so the offshore sector)
- More-level playing field with NGOs

Ian Kinsey, Norwegian fisherman, originally from N Wales:
"*The role of fishers needs to switch from spectator to protagonist.*"

(GAP2 International Symposium, Barcelona, Feb 2015)





How fishing affects seabirds

Direct impacts – mortality from fishing gears

- Seabird bycatch

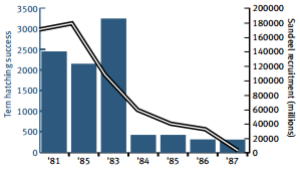
Indirect impacts – alteration of the food chain

- Discarding practices
- Removal of seabirds' prey, e.g. Sandeels
- Habitat damage

Case study 1: Sandeel fisheries – from Shetland to the wider North Sea

Rise and fall of Shetland sandeel fishery

- 1974: Fishery started, restricted to small inshore Shetland boats
- 1982: Peak landings (52,000 t) – all landed and processed locally
- 1980-1987: With declining sandeel stock, Arctic terns raised virtually no young, RSPB openly critical of fishery management, high media profile



- 1991-1994: Fishery closed due to stock collapse (no sandeels for fishermen or birds)

Breaking the deadlock

- Urgent need for dialogue to move forward
- RSPB recognised needs of the fishermen but critical of the management regime (not precautionary enough) and the regulator (Scottish Office Agriculture & Fisheries Dept – SOAEFD)
- 1995: Collective discussions between SOAEFD, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA), and RSPB on management conditions for re-opening fishery
- 1998-2000: Fishery reopened with precautionary management regime

1998-2000 management regime

- Closed season June-July (to protect seabird chick-rearing)
- Restricted annual Total Allowable Catch (7000 t)
- Annual TAC review (+ local fishermen agree share-out among themselves)
- Landings restricted to 2 ports
- Pioneering case of stakeholder collaboration and an ecosystem-based approach

The Shetland sandeel fishery

The Ecosystem Approach in action

Dr Euan Dunn
Marine Policy Officer
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

INTRODUCTION

The Shetland Islands to the north of Scotland have had a local inshore sandeel fishery since 1974. Compared with the massive, Danish-led sandeel fishery in the North Sea, the Shetland fishery is relatively small. Shetland landings reached a peak of 52,000 tonnes in 1982, compared with over 1 million tonnes caught in the wider North Sea in 1997. However, apart from its value to the local economy, the significance of the Shetland fishery lies not in its size but in its close overlap with the feeding areas of internationally important seabird populations. The collapse of the sandeel stock in the 1980s and the resulting widespread breeding failure of the birds brought fishers, fisheries managers

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SANDEELS FOR SHETLAND'S SEABIRDS

Shetland supports around 1 million breeding seabirds, several species in nationally and internationally important numbers. Shetland's seabirds are especially dependent on sandeels for food, having few - if any - alternative prey species to switch to in times of shortage. Moreover, the fishery extends close inshore, near to seabird colonies and their feeding areas, increasing the possibility of competition between seabirds and man.

After the peak of sandeel landings in 1982, catches steadily declined as a result of low recruitment which also caused massive breeding failure in the birds. Shetland's arctic terns, for example, raised virtually no young between 1980 and 1984, and the adult population had nearly halved by 1990. While not blaming the fishery for the decline, the RSPB argued that the management of the fishery, in particular the uncertain-

RSPB turned its attention to the massive Danish-led offshore North Sea sandeel fishery

RSPB attacks industrial fishing

By Alison Maitland

Industrial fishing in the North Sea is endangering the marine food chain and should be phased out, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said yesterday.

The RSPB, backed by a majority of UK fishermen, is campaigning for controls on the upsurge in industrial fishing in the run-up to tomorrow's fisheries debate in the House of Commons and next week's meeting of the European Union's council of fisheries ministers.

Industrial fishing fleets catch small shoaling fish such as sandeels, capelin and sprats, which are usually eaten by larger fish, seabirds and

of the total catch from the North Sea by weight, says the RSPB. Landings of sandeels, which are not subject to quotas, have doubled over the past 20 years to 800,000 tonnes a year and represent half the industrial fishing catch in Europe.

The UK charity is calling for quotas for sandeels and for a ban on all industrial fishing in areas where fish are spawning or where there are important colonies of seabirds or other wildlife.

It also wants the UK to stop granting licences for industrial fishing and says the European industrial fishing fleet should be phased out by decommissioning vessels.

Fishery scientists have cal

stopped catching sand there.

Mr Euan Dunn, R marine policy officer, s "Fish stock enhancement compelling argument for government to press for trols on industrial fish especially at a time when investing heavily in other r sures like decommissionin reduce fishermen's impact roundfish stocks."

One model for regulation government plan for restric quotas when the sandeel f ery off the Shetland Island reopened next summer, said.

The fishery was closed 1990 after a sharp fall in sto which had a crippling imp

Financial Times, December 1994

- 1990s: No TAC: up to 1 million tonnes landed annually, almost half the total North Sea catch
- No restrictions for sensitive areas, no management plan
- With cod and other sandeel-consuming whitefish in steep decline, UK fishermen also opposed unregulated sandeel fishing

In 1996, leading Scandinavian fisheries scientists declared the North Sea sandeel fishery a management vacuum

"... the present management of the sandeel fishery is clearly far from being precautionary. A management plan has not been elaborated and there is no limit on the access to the fishery, no stated agreed objectives and no target reference points available. Early warning signs have not been identified and pre-agreed management measures have not been established."

Henrik Gislason & Eskild Kirkegaard (1997) *The industrial fishery and the North Sea sandeel stock.* Seminar on the precautionary approach to North Sea Fisheries Management. Oslo, 9-10 Sep 1996. Fisken og Havet Nr 1.

Exploitation of the Wee Bankie (Outer Firth of Forth) was held responsible for breeding failure of kittiwakes

RSPB joined forces with local fishermen

THE VOICE OF SCOTLAND'S FISHING INDUSTRY

EDITED AND PUBLISHED IN SCOTLAND No. 12 MARCH 1996 PRICE £1.40

Stop this slaughter!

The perils of fishing today

DANISH Sandeel boats threaten Forth food chain, say Fife fishermen. CALL for total ban

Inside WIN

A Ranger Tough Foul Weather Suit . . .

In our special prize competition in conjunction with the Fishing Co-operatives (UK) Ltd. See page 29 The best prizes are in Scottish Fishing Monthly.

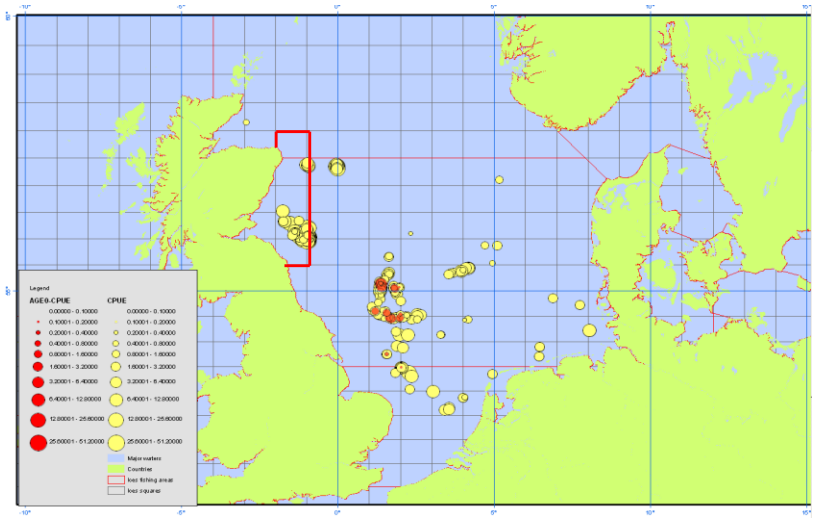
Fishing 96

Europe's biggest fishing event of the year kicks off at Aberdeen on March 14. Pages of pictures and news from Page 12 onwards

RSPB also gave joint presentation with NFFO's CEO (Richard Banks) to Westminster Parliamentary committee

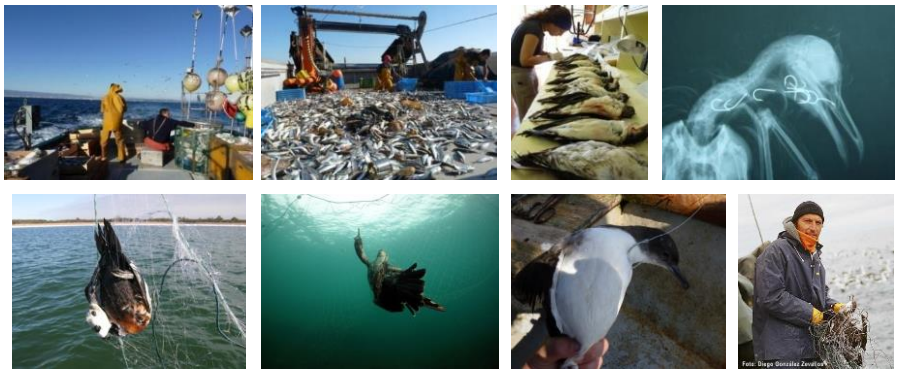
20,000km2 closed to sandeel fishing off E Scotland/NE England

(Box created in 2000 and remains in place to this day)



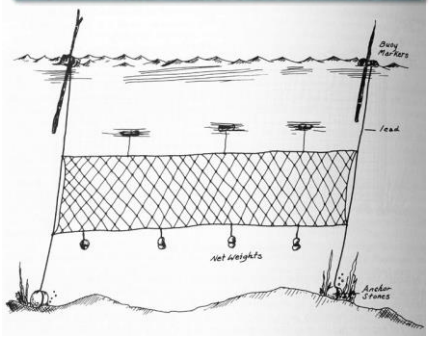
Case study 2: Seabird bycatch

Over 200,000 seabirds drowned annually in EU fisheries, mostly in gillnets



In UK, auks the most common victims

Mitigation – a few things trialled, but no best practice



Filey Bay salmon fishery – a bycatch hotspot

- Formerly annual conflict between RSPB and the salmon/sea trout fishermen (T- and J-nets)
- Media exposure a 'lose-lose' (both fishermen and RSPB seen as failing to act strongly enough)
- Finally one fisherman took the initiative to adapt his nets

www.fileybay.com

Rex Harrison, pioneer of high-viz netting – greatly reduces auk bycatch risk

Rex and RSPB collaborated on raising awareness among fellow fishermen – in the UK and beyond, through a GAP2 exchange to the Puget Sound, USA

Natural evolution of work – from grassroots on industrial vessels to small vessels, developing solutions that work for wildlife and fishermen



Conclusions

• Helps to **start without conflict** (see Filey Bay!) – while issue of bycatch is emotive, it is possible to find mutually beneficial solutions (if time is on our side)

• Honesty and transparency, and an ability to accept that we might not agree on everything, but we do agree on some things – including solving the problem at hand

• Respect for each other's expertise and point of view – lots to learn from each other

Case study 3: NGO engagement in the Advisory Councils

RSPB a founding member (2004) of the North Sea AC (NSAC)

- RSPB (representing BirdLife International) among the first few NGOs to sit on the NSAC Executive Committee (ExCom)

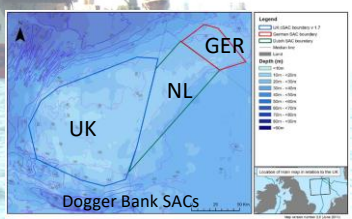
- ... also on the NorthWest Waters AC (NWWAC)

Working Groups are the 'engine room' - generate advice for ExCom to approve

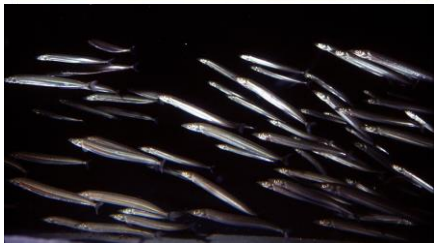
- In NSAC, RSPB chairs the Ecosystem Working Group (EWG)
- We work with the industry to formulate advice on low-impact fishing and marine spatial planning for the European Commission, European Parliament and Member States

Examples of key Working Group initiatives of mutual benefit to RSPB and fishing sector

- Protocol between industry and Forewind (Dogger Bank windfarm developer), e.g. agreement to avoid curved arrays of turbines (more difficult for trawling)
- Inter-AC workshop on fisheries management measures in MPAs, including demand for uniform management regime across the UK, Dutch and German Natura 2000 sites on the Dogger Bank

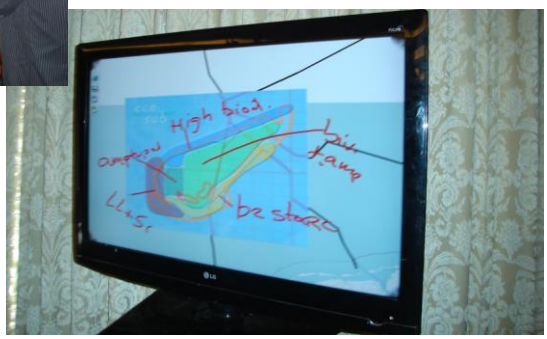


Seeking industry-NGO consensus on closures for mobile bottom gears within Dogger Bank MPAs



Over 3 years of collaboration between industry and NGOs in efforts to reach compromise on measures, facilitated by an EU-funded project (MASPNOSE)

We used interactive spatial tools – joint fact-finding, drawing on fishermen's knowledge of Dogger Bank habitats and fisheries, and NGO knowledge of sensitive areas and species



Lessons learned from the 3 case studies for working effectively together

- Somebody always needs to make the first move!
- At the outset, agree a common objective, a process and responsibilities
- If you start from widely differing perspectives, be willing to *resolve* the issue, not default to a partisan position
- Get to know, respect and spend quality time with each other (e.g. the familiarity between stakeholders in the NSAC over 10+ years!)
- Acknowledge the *scale and needs of the task* (how much time & resource?) – it can be a long game!


Thank you – questions?
(c) Louize Hill