

Email: Mr M Gilbert

Comments on the Fisheries White Paper: Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations
(submission to Cornwall Council)

I have some concerns with the claimed number of full time jobs of 8,500 at 1.5.

“Fishing is highly interlinked with the wider marine and maritime sector, which in Cornwall is estimated to generate between £300 and £500 million to the Gross Value Added each year and it is estimated that that the sector supports towards 8,500 full time jobs excluding tourism.”

Is this the number of jobs within the entire marine & maritime sector including fishing (commercial& resident recreational angling), all boat building (including the high end luxury yachts built at Falmouth), renewables, resident sailing & leisure boating, resident diving, resident seal & cetacean watching, shipping, ferries, scientific research, R.N.L.I, film production, resident surfing etc. or is it being suggested there are 8,500 full time jobs dependent on commercial fishing in the county?

If the later, at 1.3 it states that in 2017 some £46 m worth of fish & shellfish at first sale value was landed in the county. If £46m is divided by 8,500 jobs it suggests that each £5,411 worth of landings supports a full time job. That simply doesn't appear to be tenable.

Moreover, in a report titled Socio-Economic Baseline Study of the South West Fishing Industry (attached) researched by Nautilus & Ekos Consultants on behalf of Pesca & the SWRDA, published in 2003, the number of direct jobs was stated as 1332; indirect jobs were given as 2013 and induced jobs as 614. That's a total of 3,409 for the entire South West including ports like Plymouth & Brixham.

At 3.2 it reads:

“An alternative approach would be to adopt a more ambitious high stock policy which would lead to a more stable income and better management of fish stocks.” Might I suggest a little more detail to support a High Stock strategy be included. Something along these lines.

“An alternative approach would be to adopt a ‘High Stock’ policy so as to provide a buffer against annual recruitment volatility. Additionally, more resilient stocks represented by a more natural age structure would contribute to stability of annual catches and incomes with increased catches per unit of effort (CPUE). It is time to be more ambitious.”

At 3.14 this sentence *“The recreational sector is also a component of the tourism offer.”* could be replaced with: *“Cornwall enjoys a diverse range of angling species that combined with the County's proven tourism credentials makes the development of a thriving saltwater recreational fishery highly desirable. There are lessons to be learnt from other parts of the globe to guide this process.”*

I was surprised at the content of 4.6. In my opinion we must move towards a 'User Pays' system. It is widely acknowledged that globally, public support for fishing (boats, gear and quay side facilities) has been a major contributor to overfishing. We heard from David Muirhead (commercial handline association) how public funding of pots simply aggravated the situation of there being too many pots being worked. Even Paul Trebilcock (CFPO) accepted the industry should stand on its own feet and not be reliant on subsidies.

I do however accept that the benefits of a healthy marine environment, one in which depleted fish stocks are rebuilt, would be beneficial to the wider society and therefore agree some of the costs of marine management should be met from general taxation. One failing of EMFF funding is that because of the failure of the CFP to officially recognise recreational fishing (the public exploiting public fishery resources for personal consumption) alongside commercial fishing and aquaculture, EMFF funds were never accessible for the development of recreational fishing. If the UK Government are to replace EMFF funding, given the economic and employment impacts from recreational fishing, any such funds should be accessible to all fisheries sectors on a level playing field basis.

I believe the relationship between harbours – fishing and tourism is not as simple as it is made out to be. I moved to St Ives to live in the early 1970s. Since then the number of fishing vessels and the amounts of and volumes of fish landed have plummeted. Simultaneously, St Ives has become one of the leading tourism destinations. If those two scenarios were plotted on a graph, one inevitable conclusion would be that as fishing declined, tourism increased. A couple of years ago whilst visiting Padstow in the height of the summer I was aware that the inner harbour was devoid of fishing boats but instead full of what I'll loosely refer to as gin palaces. The wharf was thronged with tourists! They clearly weren't there for the fishing boats. Later in the evening I walked north up over the footpath and joined a large number of tourists just taking in the incredible view across Padstow estuary towards Rock. The water was full of boats; dive ribs, rowing gigs, kayaks, tripper boats, angling boats returning, water skiing, sailing yachts of all sizes and leisure motor launches. Not a fishing boat in sight and yet the tourists were enthralled.

Incidentally, recreational angling in Southern Ireland has been valued at three quarters of a billion euros. See: <https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Press-releases/new-study-angling-worth-075-billion-to-irish-economy-and-supporting-10000-jobs-in-rural-ireland.html>

Thank you for seeking the views of all stakeholders to inform Cornwall Council's response to the White Paper. There are great opportunities with regards to marine fisheries across the UK and especially in Cornwall, but realisation of those opportunities requires the courage to adopt a fresh cultural mindset that prioritises the wellbeing of the marine environment.