

What inshore fisheries evidence gaps currently exist?

Marine Theme Objective: Social and Economic Research in the Marine Environment

What's the problem?

The capacity of the English inshore fishing fleet exceeds available quota; at the same time, costs are rising in the industry. This is leading to increased economic pressure on the fleet. The situation is unsustainable and policy changes are required to ensure a sustainable future for the UK inshore fleet.

A package of measures was introduced as part of the Fisheries 2027 vision of long-term sustainability for the UK fishing industry. The short-term priority is to reduce fleet capacity through voluntary decommissioning of under 10m vessels. Short-term measures secure time to develop longer-term policy options. Policy objectives consider the economic efficiency of UK fishing, social and environmental impacts, and in particular maintaining healthy fishing and coastal communities.

What are the aims of the project?

The primary objective of this project was to analyse the availability of data relating to UK inshore fisheries and their management, identifying gaps and drawing conclusions for future research needs. The main aims included:

- analysing Defra's existing evidence base and providing key conclusions arising from this;
- identifying external research projects that might usefully contribute to the evidence base for inshore fisheries;
- identifying gaps in the evidence base;
- the delivery of a spreadsheet and Access database to allow individuals to search the evidence base for gaps relating to future policy requirements; and,
- Recommending priority areas for further research needed for the development of a long term strategy for a sustainable inshore fleet.

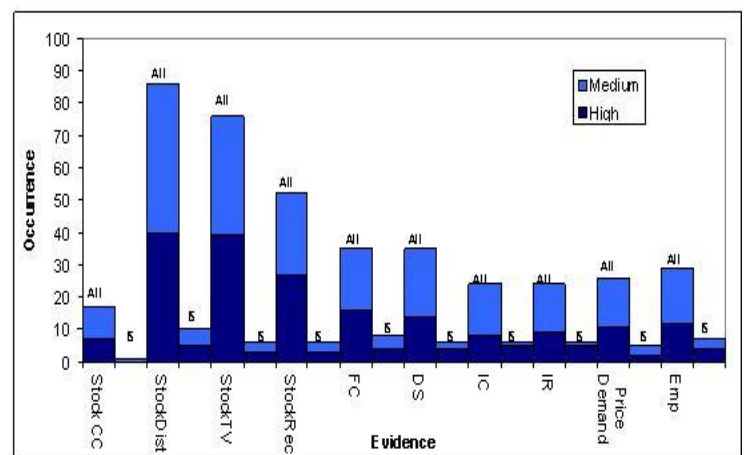


Figure 1: The availability of key data for inshore (IS) and all fisheries (All), grouped by relevance to inshore fishery policy (medium and high). Source: EFTEC.

Which policy areas will the research inform?

Policies relating to inshore fisheries management include the Marine Act, the Common Fisheries Policy reform, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as well as other national, regional and local policies relating to inshore fisheries management.

What gaps currently exist in the inshore fisheries evidence?

What are the results from the project and how will they be used?

The review of over 500 pieces of research has not revealed any 'absolute' gaps, in the sense of data types or policy areas for which there is no research available. There are however many relative gaps where the evidence base is thin. This is particularly the case for inshore fisheries specifically, and for particular inshore fisheries management options. Evidence on key reference points such as stock carrying capacities seems to be sparse, and in many cases social and economic data are lacking, in the sense of being considered only in a handful of studies.

Going to more specific levels (individual stocks, or individual ports) would be likely to reveal deeper gaps in the evidence base. It should be noted however that the gap analysis results derive from a meta-level assessment of what is covered in research papers, not on a detailed review of the specific data and results.

The stakeholder consultation identified several areas for which participants felt data were lacking:

- Geographical location of inshore fishing activity, notably the lack of Vessel Management System (VMS) data for the inshore fleet;
- Impacts of fishing on the environment;
- Catch per unit effort of inshore fishers;
- General socio-economic information; and
- Standard formats for data.

Overall, the following areas were identified for enhanced research effort:

- community and social cohesion;
- changing tourism patterns and implications for angling, local food and coastal communities;
- cross-impacts with the energy sector;
- the impact climate change will have on economic and social dynamics in inshore fisheries;
- further work on methods for including the local economy, environmental and social factors into bio-economic modeling; and
- further work on how inshore fishers respond to changing fishing opportunities, costs and policy instruments.

There is also a need for better tools for appraising management options for inshore fisheries, taking uncertainty into account, and fisher behaviour, and integrating management with ecosystem models. However work on these and other key topics is already underway, notably in studies being carried out by CEFAS.

A database including references to all of the evidence reviewed within this project has been produced. The database has been designed to allow a number of standard searches to be performed through a user interface, including the availability of key parameters in relation to:

- ICES area;
- Functional groups;
- Fishing type; and
- Research scale.

The results of these searches summarise gaps relating to key parameters and their relevance to inshore fisheries. This tool will be a useful aid to those searching for research when considering policy options.

Results Summary	CC	DD	TV	R	FC	DS	IC	IR	P	E
Relevance: High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Relevance: Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Relevance: Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Record List

FieldID	MACons	Eff	Quota	Rec	Flot	Stock CC	Stock Dist	Stock TV	Stock Rec	FC	DS	IC	IR	Place Dem	Emp
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Figure 2: Screen shot of the gap analysis search form. Source: EFTEC

Where can I find further information about this and related research?

The project was led by Economics for the Environment Consultant (Eftec). For more information contact eftec@eftec.co.uk.

Alternatively, please contact Defra's Marine and Fisheries Science Unit:

marinescience@defra.gsi.gov.uk

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