

# **North West Fisheries Regeneration Study**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Prepared by**



**on behalf of**

**Government Office for the North West and  
the North West Coastal Forum**

**October 2002**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

- i. This study was completed by Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd<sup>1</sup> between June and October 2002. Funding was provided from the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) as part of the Regeneration Initiative for Fishing Communities, with the study managed by the Government Office for the North West (GONW) on behalf of the North West Coastal Forum (NWCF). The study involved a review of a large number of relevant documents, site visits to major landings sites in the North West (NW) of England, and extensive stakeholder consultation and input throughout the study period.
- ii. The study focuses on the key issues that the region will need to confront in order to maintain viable and sustainable coastal fisheries communities. To do this, an assessment has been made of the current strengths and weaknesses of the catching sector, the processing sector, and infrastructure provision. Following this assessment, an overall vision for the sector has been suggested, along with objectives in support of the vision, strategies to fulfil the objectives, and action plans to implement the various strategies proposed. Particular emphasis has been placed on the needs of Fleetwood and Whitehaven as the two principal fishing ports in the region. The strategies and actions recommended include those that apply to the NW as a whole, those that relate specifically to Fleetwood, and those that relate specifically to Whitehaven. While the problems facing the sector are significant, many can be addressed and it is believed that both the catching and processing sectors can, and should, continue to play an important role in the economic and social fabric of the region.

### Main findings

- iii. The catching sector in the NW region is currently facing a number of serious problems. Of foremost importance have been the decline in Total Allowable Catches (TAC's), reduced catches, and a loss of quota from the region due to poor quota management – all three problems are especially acute for whitefish stocks on which the region's vessels have heavily depended, and have adversely affected vessels in Fleetwood in particular. Scallop and nephrops fisheries are the only two significant resources capable of expansion in fishing effort, and increased landings of other species by vessels in the region in the future will be dependent on buying back additional quota. The decline in catches has resulted in falling profitability, low earnings and wages, and decommissioning.
- iv. Landings of nephrops dominate landings into Whitehaven. This compounds the problem of low earnings given that a) product is sold through agents to just one or two companies processing for the UK scampi market (rather than for sale to the higher value continental market) with limited competition for product resulting in low prices, and b) the main nephrops season in the Eastern Irish Sea over the summer coincides with massive landings of nephrops in Scotland, which depresses prices. Landings of whitefish in Whitehaven also suffer from poor prices because of the lack of any direct marketing to the retail or food service sectors.

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- v. Low earnings (in absolute terms, and relative to other sectors) in the region as a whole, in association with the poor image among the young about fishing as a worthwhile career, have combined to result in major difficulties in recruiting and retaining crew. The region does not have a significant history of local investment in the catching sector due to the previous presence of trawler companies, owned by companies based outside the region, which have now ceased to operate in the area. The level of morale and optimism in the industry is currently very low.
- vi. Analysis of cost and earnings of vessels reveals that they are operating under a competitive cost structure, and there remains a huge amount of skill and experience in the region. In addition, the quality of fish landed in the region is generally good, and both Fleetwood and Whitehaven are strategically well placed for access to the Irish Sea and more distant fishing grounds.
- vii. The main cluster of processing activity in the region is located in Fleetwood. The industry is dynamic with considerable entrepreneurial skill levels, and despite some rationalization in the number of businesses (consistent with the UK as a whole), others continue to invest and expand. Marketing is versatile, with specialization by different companies in different products and market outlets, primarily based around the sale of whitefish and shellfish. Secondary processing does occur but is limited, with primary processed product sold into local markets – the Manchester/Liverpool conurbation being one of the largest in the country. Analysis of the cost structure of the sector's businesses indicates that the size of businesses, their marketing strategy, and their costs, combine to ensure profit levels which, while low, can be favourably compared to other processing businesses in the UK. However, the processing sector faces its own problems. These are principally based around declining supplies and increased competition for raw material product, insufficient marketing and IT skills in many businesses, the availability of skilled filleters and the cost of training new ones.
- viii. Provision of infrastructure in the region as a whole is generally good. Fleetwood retains the basis of a strong port infrastructure although the decline in fishing activity requires the re-allocation of some space to non-fishing activity. The port's landlord remains committed to servicing the fishing industry, and some careful re-development will help to generate revenues to maintain the port and allow for continued investment and support for the fishing industry. Whitehaven has benefited from considerable recent investment in infrastructure to support both the fishing and tourism industries. Both ports would however benefit from some small additional investment in facilities and improved management to improve safety, waste management and health and hygiene conditions.
- ix. The industry as a whole plays an important role in the region, not just in direct and related employment, but also in terms of heritage and cultural "capital". The continued existence of the fishing industry is vital for the success of the tourism industry on which so much development in the region is being based. Fishing activity provides a major draw for tourists who like to visit places with a working industry, as well as attractions based on fishing heritage.

## Overall Vision and Supporting Objectives

- x. The overall vision for the fisheries sector in the NW should be:
- “An economically and environmentally sustainable catching and processing sector, creating employment and adding value in the NW region, based on production of quality products, and supporting economic development in the region as a whole.”*
- xi. Six key objectives are identified in support of this vision, all of which are mutually supportive. They are:
- a) *To encourage or sustain investment in the sector*
  - b) *To increase the economic benefit for those engaged in catching and processing fish in the region*
  - c) *To increase the status of the sector, the availability of qualified labour and crew, and the morale in the sector*
  - d) *To rebuild over-fished stocks so that effort levels are at sustainable levels*
  - e) *To improve the quality of products from both the catching and processing sector*
  - f) *To ensure that port facilities are sufficient to support the industry and its needs*

## Key Strategies, Actions and Responsibilities

- xii. In order to fulfill these objectives, a number of strategies and actions are suggested, with corresponding responsibilities in terms of implementation and funding. Interested readers are referred to the main report for further detail and explanation about the strategies, actions and responsibilities.
- xiii. To improve the investment environment in the region, effective strategies are likely to be based on:
- A collective response by the sector to an investment plan which embraces a dual purpose approach to whitefish (winter months) and shellfish (summer months) based on expansion in nephrops and scallop fisheries, and which takes in the need for quota / license purchase and vessel conversion
  - The ability of processors to identify a market niche for these products as an adjunct to their existing trade
- xiv. Further analysis by the Fleetwood Fish Forum (FFF), the Fleetwood Merchant’s Association (FMA), Whitehaven Third Millennium (W3M) and individual vessel owners in the region, of such a development scenario is therefore required. The sector as a whole must address whether:
- fisher / processor partnerships are sustainable
  - whether investment capital can be raised for conversion of vessels and purchase of quota and licenses
  - whether market niches exist for such products, particularly in the NW and the continent. For the former distribution costs will be low, while for the latter prices will be high – both of which therefore offer potential for good margins
- xv. Ways to increase the economic benefit to those engaged in the sector in the NW requires a number of further studies to investigate the feasibility of possible strategies. These are summarized in the table below with corresponding actions and responsibilities for implementation and funding:

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
<i>NW Strategies</i>		
Possible branding of local products	Study into the resulting financial benefits from local branding, possibilities for linkage with existing food initiatives, ways of working with tourism agencies to consider appropriate schemes to increase direct sales based on regional heritage theme (e.g. flyers, product naming etc), and investigation into supermarket requirements for locally branded products	FFF, FMA, Representatives of all Producer Organisations (POs), W3M Funds and liaison from/with rural recovery programme, tourism agencies, NWDA (North West Development Agency), and existing branding schemes such as NW Fine Food, NW Food Alliance, Made in Lancashire
Increase of non-fishing income	Study into demand for recreational angling and pleasure trips, the decline of such activities in recent times, and strategies to revive it. This will require liaison with tourism organisations and angling magazines to obtain relevant tourism data and trends, and customer requirements	POs, Tourism agencies (e.g. “Rediscover Whitehaven”, West Cumbria Tourism partnership, regional Cumbria Tourist Board), Angling publications, NWDA, W3M
Seeking a steady product supply for processors and harbours, and better marketing to increase value-added	Full marketing study to cover the feasibility of electronic marketing (in Fleetwood and Whitehaven), more direct sales and a wetfish outlet in Whitehaven, possibilities for processors to engage in more remote electronic buying, and a marketing strategy to consider new niche markets probably to the regional food service sector using the local van trade	FFF, FMA, Whitehaven merchants, POs, Fishermen, Associated British Ports (ABP), W3M, NWDA

xvi. Increasing the status of the fisheries sector, improving morale, and increasing recruitment, retention and skill levels of labour, require significant investments in new training initiatives and human capital. This is seen as a key strategy for the region as a whole. Again, necessary strategies, actions and responsibilities are summarized in the following table.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
Working with schools	Approach schools to establish vocational training, talks by industry representatives, visits to vessels/processing plants, and creation and publicity of intern programmes	FFF, FMA, W3M, Cumbria Seafoods, POs, NW Group Training Association (NWGTA)
Introduction of training schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate liaison with organizations and other schemes.</li> <li>- Investigation into Lowestoft scheme to train filleters for processing sector</li> <li>- Catching sector to itemize training requirements and submit proposals for modern apprenticeship schemes</li> <li>- Training for IT and specialist UK marketing expertise to assist the processing sector in</li> </ul>	Learning and Skills Council, Sea Fish Industry Authority (SFIA), Councils, the new Job Centre Plus initiative, NWGTA, NWDA FFF, W3M, FMA, POs

Strategy	Action	Responsibility / Funding
	Fleetwood - Training for Whitehaven harbour staff in financial and business management	

- xvii. The re-building of stocks in the Irish Sea can be supported through an active engagement in regional fisheries management, and an open dialogue about the status of fish stocks. This requires co-ordination and consultation between POs, the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (NFFO), the Centre of Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), and regional management groups that may be established. Implementation of the recommendations made in this report, will help to ensure that there is a local industry left in the NW to benefit from such stock recovery.
- xviii. Improvements in quality can be made through greater use of ice use by some vessels at Fleetwood, and sometimes in the market. Ice use in Whitehaven is good following the construction of the new ice plant. However, the quality of whitefish landed at Whitehaven is often poor, as it is taken as bycatch and treated as such with associated poor handling. Such handling practices should be improved where possible. In addition there is sometimes insufficient communication and trust between the processing and catching sector with regards to quality requirements and reward for top quality product in the form of appreciably higher prices. Such improvements require co-ordinated action by the FFF, POs, the catching sector, and the processing sector.
- xix. Ensuring that infrastructure provision meets the need of the industry can be achieved through the following strategies and actions:
- Continue attempts to attract more visitor landings. (Action by ABP, W3M, FFF)
  - Minor upgrading of necessary facilities identified by fishermen at key landing sites to bring about lasting improvement in conditions for landing fish and contributions to economic benefits or improved safety conditions. (Action by ABP, W3M, FFF to attract funding)
  - Improved waste management practices. (Action by ABP, W3M, catchers, merchants/processors, Whitehaven harbour commissioners)
  - Harbour management staff to be provided with training in financial and business management at Whitehaven. (Action by W3M to attract funding)

### Challenges for Successful Implementation

- xx. A number of challenges to the successful implementation of the above strategies and actions are noted. Perhaps most importantly is the lack of adequate, explicit recognition and support for the fisheries sector in most of the key policy and planning documents related to the region. This is true of the Draft Regional Planning Guidance, the NWDA’s Regional Economic Strategy, “A Strategy Towards 2020”, and the ongoing work commissioned by the NWDA on a “New Vision for North West Coastal Resorts”. The lack of such support is likely to impact on the ability to access funds and provide appropriate support for the sector, and would be short-sighted given that fishing plays an important part in preventing economic and social exclusion in the region, as well as providing a major tourism draw on which much of the region’s future prosperity is likely to be based.

- xxi. Wages being earned and associated working conditions in the fisheries sector, compared to other sectors, pose a risk to the effectiveness of training programmes for the catching sector, and ultimate recruitment and retention in the industry. Initiation of such programmes should therefore be carefully considered for their cost effectiveness, but it is believed that the strategies and actions proposed could be successful if implemented.
- xxii. There may be a lack of willingness of those in the industry to adopt recommended changes. We have attempted to present the long-term benefits of the catching and processing sectors making various changes, and of working more closely together to ensure their continued survival. We have also attempted within the budgetary constraints of this study, to be as participatory as possible so ensure that stakeholders feel a sense of ownership of the study's output in the form of this report. The FFF, W3M, and other relevant parties must be fully involved in any future implementation of the recommendations made in this report.
- xxiii. A key challenge for the successful implementation of the strategies and actions recommended is for these strategies and actions to be sustainable. A scoping exercise has already been completed based on the "Integrated Appraisal Toolkit" to assess the sustainability of the recommendations. This exercise demonstrates that the links between the economic, social and environmental impacts of proposals made are well considered in the report, and that the strategies and actions are sustainable.
- xxiv. Finally, there is currently little co-ordination between Fleetwood and Whitehaven. Some merit may be had in greater collaboration and co-operation between the two main ports in the region to share experiences, attract visitor vessels to the region, and manage landings so as to maximize prices and reduce any competition between the two ports. Such co-operation would be useful for many of the proposed actions: regional action on proposed wind farms, involvement in stock recovering programmes, and sharing of skills within the catching, processing and ancillary support sectors.

#### **Next Steps and Necessary Inter-Sectoral Co-ordination**

- xxv. There is still time as part of the consultation process to make recommendations on changes to a number of key policy and planning documents, and it is hoped that this study can be used to support a greater recognition of the need for assistance to be provided to the sector, and to demonstrate the opportunities for the sector in the coming years. The FFF and W3M, along with the NWCF and relevant staff in local councils, GONW, and the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) who have been involved with this project, are therefore urged to lobby to affect changes to policy and planning documents to make more specific reference to the fisheries sector. The FFF and W3M should be fully consulted on any proposed changes to policy and planning documents.
- xxvi. Some actions specified in this report require attention and action by individual organisations without the need for funding or collaboration with others. Many however require involvement of a large number of stakeholders and, in some cases, associated funding. A first step in the process should therefore be the creation of a co-ordination team, perhaps in the form of a sub-group of the NWCF. This team should review the full list of strategies and actions presented in the main report, initiate action, promote necessary co-ordination between stakeholders and with other relevant on-going initiatives and policy formulation, and identify possible sources of funding. The co-ordination team should consult with the GONW, SFIA, the NWDA, NWRA, local councils and all relevant stakeholders in the fishing industry identified in the action plans presented as part of this study.

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**ACRONYMS**

ABP	Associate British Ports
ANIFPO	Anglo-North Irish Fish Producer's Organization
BNFL	British Nuclear Fuels Ltd
BWEA	British Wind Energy Association
CBC	Copeland Borough Council
CEFAS	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
DARDNI	The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs
DETR	Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
FFF	Fleetwood Fish Forum
FFPO	Fleetwood Fish Producer's Organisation
FIFG	Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance
FMA	Fleetwood Merchant's Association
GONW	Government Office for the North West
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
H&G	Headed and Gutted
ISNT	Irish Sea Nephrops Trawl
ISSPTR	Irish Sea Semi-Pelagic/Twin Rig
ISWBT	Irish Sea Whitefish Bottom Trawl
IQ	Individual Quota
LDNPA	Lake District National Park Authority
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
LPUE	Landings per unit of Effort
MAGP	Multi-Annual Guidance Programme
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NAWAD	the National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department
NIFPO	Northern Ireland Fish Producer's Organisation
NW	North West
NWCF	North West Coastal Forum
NWDA	NW Development Agency
NWRA	North West Regional Assembly
PEFA	Pan European Fish Auctions
PO	Producer Organisation
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEERAD	The Scottish Executive Environment & Rural Affairs Department
SFC	Sea Fisheries Committee
SFIA	Sea Fish Industry Authority
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TBG	Tidy Britain Group
TTWA	Travel To Work Area
VCU	Vessel Capacity Units

Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd – NW Fisheries Regeneration

WBC	Wyre Borough Council
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
W3M	Whitehaven Third Millennium

## 1 Introduction

1. This study was completed by Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd<sup>2</sup>, between the beginning of June and the beginning of October 2002. Funding for the study was provided from the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) as part of the Regeneration Initiative for Fishing Communities, with the study managed by the Government Office for the North West (GONW) and the North West Coastal Forum (NWCF). The study takes place against a background of declining catches and vessel numbers in the North West (NW), vessel decommissioning, above average levels of unemployment in the region, low earnings and wages in the fisheries sector, and a poor image among the young about fishing as a worthwhile career. All these factors threaten the future of a viable and sustainable fishing industry in the region.

2. The Study focuses on the key issues that the region will need to confront in order to maintain viable and sustainable coastal fisheries communities. To do this, an assessment has been made of the current strengths and weaknesses of the catching sector, the processing sector, and infrastructure provision. Following this assessment, an overall vision for the sector has been suggested, along with objectives in support of the vision, strategies to fulfill the objectives, and action plans to implement the various strategies proposed.

3. The Study is intended to feed into the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan, to be developed as an EU INTERREG IIIb project, which focuses on fisheries management, climate change, pollution and water quality, marine litter and energy generation. It is also intended to complement and build upon work already undertaken by the NW Development Agency looking at established sectors and how they can modernize to remain of key significance to the ongoing economic competitiveness of the region.

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## 2 Study Methodology

### 2.1 Sources of information and community consultation

4. The study has been divided into three main phases. During the First Phase, background data and reports were collected and analysed, and initial site visits were made to the region. This first stage of the study was intended to identify all key stakeholders, and to generate background data and information on the current situation in the region, especially with regards to fisheries, but also in relation to other sectors and the context in which the fisheries sector operates. This context is regarded as important, as any development strategy for the fisheries sector cannot stand in isolation, but must be integrated with other sectors, plans and activities. This first phase of the study made use of various secondary sources of data, information, and literature as listed in Appendix B – Documents Referred To.

5. The Second Phase involved a scoping study and needs assessment of the various stakeholders, with the main strengths and weaknesses of the current situation and practices being considered, with particular focus on the fisheries sector. Interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders. The large majority of those interviewed were consulted using face-to-face interviews, but where key stakeholders were not available during the field visits, some telephone interviews were also used. This applied especially to owners and skippers of visiting vessels to the region. Interviews were conducted with those directly involved in the catching, processing and marketing of fish. But they were also conducted with those involved in harbour management, those supplying services to the fishing sector, other users of harbours and the coastal zone such as those in the leisure and tourism industries, and with local and regional government organisations. A full list of those consulted can be found in Appendix A (Sections 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3).

6. Based on the scoping study and needs assessment, and on the key strengths and weaknesses of the current situation, the Third Phase of the study involved identification of opportunities, and the formulation of development strategies for the fisheries sector. These were developed initially in outline by the consultant, and then reviewed and discussed with stakeholders during workshops at Fleetwood and Whitehaven prior to their finalisation. A list of participants who attended the workshops is also provided in Appendix A (Sections 9.4 and 9.5).

### 2.2 Scope of the study

7. The study is intended to focus specifically on strategies to ensure a sustainable fishing industry in the region, to regenerate fishing activities where possible following a period of significant decline, and to ensure that fishing contributes to the long-term sustainable strategy and recovery of communities on the coast. As such, other sectors are only considered to the extent that they can support the fishing industry. The study is not intended to provide overall economic development strategies for towns in which fishing happens to be an activity. It is therefore focused first and foremost at identifying solutions to some of the specific problems faced by the fishing industry so that fishing can play its part in contributing to economic development in region.

8. Comment is also required about the geographical scope of the work. Given the importance of Fleetwood and Whitehaven in terms of overall landings in the NW, the consultant was requested to focus work on Fleetwood and Whitehaven. We have however also conducted site visits and some interviews in Maryport. Development strategies are divided into those that relate specifically to Fleetwood and Whitehaven, and those that have wider applicability within the NW region as a whole.

### **3 Context in which the fisheries sector operates**

9. It is important for any strategy aimed at regenerating, supporting, and/or expanding the fishing industry, to consider the context in which fisheries in the NW are operating. This context affects how generalisable a strategy might be, which other sectors should be considered, what is likely to be most effective, and the balance of emphasis that needs to be placed on infrastructure developments and capacity building, skills training, management etc. In the sections below, some key factors relating to context are highlighted, all of which are subsequently borne in mind in the scoping and needs assessment, and in the subsequent formulation of development strategies.

#### ***3.1 Fishing Sector Context***

10. Perhaps most importantly is the availability and status of particular stocks, which will to a large extent determine the possibilities for regeneration and/or expansion of both catching activity in the region, and of processors to source product both within the region, and from elsewhere. Closely related to this is the current review of the Common Fisheries Policy and the proposed emphasis on regional management, and the current management regime for particular fisheries. The problem of declining quotas and rising prices for vessels with track record and licences, makes entry into the fishing sector highly problematic given declining catches, rising costs of production, competition from imports, and poor fish prices for some species. A development strategy must therefore consider ways to rebuild over-exploited stocks, identify any stocks that may be currently under-exploited, actively engage in regional management initiatives, and ensure that local vessels benefit from recovery programmes. Issues relating to resource exploitation in the NW, and the marine environment in general, are considered in detail in Section 4.

11. Secondly, the economics of the business operations for both fish catching and processing, and the extent to which operating from Fleetwood and Whitehaven may be a constraint or an advantage. Policy makers at the regional and national level must be aware that, while some infrastructure developments may prove beneficial, funding for infrastructure is not necessarily the panacea for all the problems faced by the sector in the NW, although landings are often made where it is most convenient.

12. Thirdly, a consideration of the historical developments and decline of the industry in different ports is important as differences may preclude the development of one generic regional development strategy. It is noted for example that the Whitehaven fishing sector was not historically as important as Fleetwood. This means that important differences may exist in terms of the extent of the recent decline, the availability of fishing knowledge and related skills in the community, etc. The history of investment in the fishing sector, and of the ownership structure of vessels, is also likely to significantly affect the ability to attract investment back into the industry. It is possible therefore that some strategies may be appropriate for the region as a whole, while others may need to be tailored to the specific requirements of individual harbours. Cultural aspects should not be underestimated in their importance in determining the overall levels of dynamism and success of the sector in different locations.

13. Finally, in relation to the fishing sector context, possibilities for development must be based on a realistic assessment of the natural conditions in which vessels operate, and their ability to get to sea to catch fish. While this appears to be stating the obvious, the importance of bad weather and south-westerly winds in particular, place serious constraints on fishermen operating in the NW. The resulting constraint on fishing days, especially for smaller vessels, may be something beyond the scope of any strategy development, unless a move to larger vessels is considered possible. It also has implications for the diversification of fishermen into marine-based tourism, angling and leisure trips. However, it is likely that Fleetwood and Whitehaven are no worse off than other ports in the Irish Sea in terms of inherent problems of weather.

### **3.2 Infrastructure Context**

14. Infrastructure can play a significant role in either supporting, or restraining the fishing industry. This relates not just to a possible lack of infrastructure that may be restricting the industry, but also to the inappropriateness of any existing infrastructure for use by the fishing sector. The original motivations for investment can be important in this regard in terms of the layout and design of quays, and in the scaling of investment. For example, quays may not originally have been built for use by the fishing sector, which may have implications for how suitable they are. In addition, facilities (e.g. ice plants, quay wall lengths etc) may have been designed for use by the fishing industry in days when the scale of the catching and processing sectors was significantly different to today. Previous investment for smaller vessels than are used today may mean that facilities are too small, while investment that was made when significantly larger numbers of vessels and landed volumes were made in the past, means that some facilities may be over-sized.

15. In formulating a development strategy that supports the industry, it is important to consider both the historical legacy of infrastructure, recent developments, and what is actually most needed to support the industry. This requires an inventory of existing infrastructure, consideration of tidal access to/from fishing grounds, transport connections, and how infrastructure measures up to a minimum set of facilities that could be considered essential for the continued operation of a modern catching and processing industry (e.g. in light of HACCP, Environmental Standards etc).

### **3.3 Marketing**

16. Possibilities for development are of course not just determined by the amount of catches and supplies of product, but also by market considerations for key species that are caught. These considerations relate to a number of important factors to be borne in mind when contemplating strategies to support the industry:

- consumer demands and tastes, and current market trends at regional, national and European levels
- changes in prices
- proximity of landing sites to markets
- transport connections to markets, and to sources of overlanded/consigned fish bought by processors in the region
- issues of quality relating to the use of ice, on-board handling practices, the condition/status of onshore handling and storage and transportation
- the selling process, and relationships between the catching and marketing/processing sectors. The sale of fish under contract, through auctions (whether shout auctions or electronic), or direct, can have major impacts on prices paid to fishermen
- the shortage of supplies nationally, and the rising competition for imports, both of which create problems for the processing sector throughout the UK and are resulting in severe

rationalization of the processing sector. This must be taken as the context in which any strategies to support the processing sector will have to operate.

### ***3.4 Harbour Management***

17. Good harbour management can play a huge role in supporting local fleets, and in attracting visitor vessels to the region thereby generating revenue in the form of mooring and landing dues, provision of product to processors, creation of related on-shore jobs etc. Certainly good harbour management should be a pre-requisite for any proposed investment in fishing harbour infrastructure. It is important therefore to review existing harbour management at key landing sites in the region to identify any possibilities for improvement.

18. Furthermore, we take the view that development strategies must be based around three key concepts. Perhaps most importantly, appropriate levels of payments by harbour users should be expected to ensure the sustainability of any new developments. Any development strategy proposing additional investment should also seek to maximize both a) additionality i.e. ensure that to the greatest extent possible, facilities would not have been provided in any case in the absence of funding, and b) leverage - private sector investment which is invested as a result of public sector funds being provided.

### ***3.5 Fishing in the Context of the Coastal Zone and Other Resources Uses***

19. The fishing sector should not be thought of as standing in isolation from other sectors, and development strategies should consider the potential role of integration to benefit different activities. Fisheries have traditionally been the mainstay of many coastal communities and the NW is no exception. However as the Industrial Revolution took hold, other employment opportunities emerged (such as in the coal and textile industries and more latterly BNFL and the emergence of coastal tourism in the NW) and fishing has gradually been marginalized. This trend has been accelerated by the changes in fleet access patterns through the Common Fisheries Policy as well as the over-fishing of Irish Sea stocks. Thus today the fishing industry, especially in the larger ports of Fleetwood, Whitehaven and Maryport appears to have become isolated from other coastal activities and other users.

20. There is increasing understanding of the importance of integrated coastal management to identify and reduce conflicts between different coastal users. Fisheries are no exception and a number of important levels of interaction, together with potential conflicts and opportunities, have emerged. These are summarised below, but form the background against which fisheries strategies must be considered.

21. Energy production: offshore wind farming provides a core part of the NW 's strategy for increasing renewable energy production through utilising the strong prevailing winds. The Crown Estate has awarded 9 leases for offshore wind energy developments off the NW coast, including one site 10 km off Walney Island and 3 sites 7km off Cleveleys. If developed, each site may have 20-30 turbines, with each turbine generating enough electricity to supply 1,500 households. A number of proposals are already at an advanced stage in both Liverpool Bay and the Solway Firth. However the need to site these in open shallow inshore areas of the coast brings them into potential conflict with the fishing industry. Issues such as the impact on productive inshore flatfish trawling areas, the possible disruption to their nursery function (they are also important spawning grounds for the commercially significant roker) and presence as additional navigation hazards all need to be taken into account. Poseidon's recent work in Liverpool Bay shows that, with sufficient consultation and planning, many of these conflicts can be avoided and any

benefits, such as providing artificial habitats for benthic species and acting as a fish attracting device for pelagic species can be maximised.

22. Offshore mining: A number of major oil and gas fields are located in the eastern Irish Sea (over 16% of the blocks in the 1993 14<sup>th</sup> offshore oil and gas licensing) as well as licences for marine aggregate and shore-based sand extraction in Southport and Lytham St. Annes. Offshore oil and gas facilities can generally co-exist with deeper-water fisheries although the risk of major pollution incidents is inevitably heightened (witness the Sea Empress and Braer disasters, both of which had significant fisheries impacts). The development of oil and gas also provides considerable survey and supply opportunities for experienced fishing skippers and often has a number of other employment related benefits. Marine aggregate extraction has potentially more immediate impact and rarely has any benefits for fishermen. Without careful extractive planning, it has the potential to generate increased turbidity (although the NW has high levels of background turbidity), change the benthic ecology and impact particularly on crab fisheries. The ability of dynamic inshore systems to rapidly recover from marine aggregate dredging indicates that long-term impacts are less than that for deeper gravel extraction, but careful planning and liaison with vulnerable inshore fisheries is nevertheless essential.

23. Tourism: the post foot and mouth ‘Rural Action Zone’ strategy will see over £250 million being spent on tourism development in Cumbria over the next 5 years. This will be distributed through a NWDA strategy aimed at rural renaissance. A main thrust of this initiative will be at promoting “undiscovered” Cumbria, which will include much of the NW coast between Broughton-in Furness and Silloth. This presents a number of important opportunities for the Cumbrian seaports of Fleetwood, Whitehaven and Maryport but the potential for the fisheries sector to benefit is unclear. Certainly the visible presence of an active fishing port is an important draw for potential visitors – tourism planning in the SW England has focused particularly on this aspect – but the counter-flow of benefits to the fishing sector in the NW is less obvious, with the prevalent the weather conditions, treacherous currents and tides, and lack of good angling areas mitigate against this. The challenge of this study is therefore to look at the positive potentials in a realistic fashion. As noted above, this study is a primarily designed to focus on ways of assisting the fisheries sector, so it considers other sectors only to the extent to which they impact on, and can benefit, fisheries. But development strategies should certainly be guided by an integrated approach, recognizing that the fisheries sector is competing for harbour space and resources with other users.

24. Coastal conservation: A number of estuarine sandflat, mudflat and saltmarsh habitat sites of recognised national and European importance exist on the NW coast, notably Morecambe Bay and the Solway Firth. These are both now Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas under the EC Habitat Directive. Other important areas exist, such as the Dee Estuary and Duddon Sands. Together these cover over 80% of the NW coast. These areas also have important fisheries functions, providing inshore nursery and fattening areas for key flatfish and whitefish stocks as well as numerous shellfish species. As such, they are also targeted by many of the more traditional fisheries sub-sectors, such as inshore trawling, fixed engine and shellfish hand-gathering fisheries. The potential for conflict is increasing, particularly over the level of extraction and the potential for disturbance of these dynamic but sensitive habitats. There is also potential for increased understanding and mutual benefit – good fisheries management stems from habitat conservation and the increased understanding of these inshore coastal systems will eventually benefit targeted regulation of the fisheries. In addition, the existence of traditional, sustainable fisheries industries, such as the hand gathering of cockles, provides opportunities for certifying and promoting such fisheries to an ever-receptive public.

### **3.6 NW Strategic Policy Context**

25. Of course, any strategy for the fisheries sector must be compatible with regional and local plans, and with any related regional and local strategies that have already been developed. Again, this points to the need for an integrated approach, and recognition of work that has already been undertaken in planning for development in the region. Action for Sustainability, issued by the NWRA in July 1999, is especially relevant in this regard and provides the North West's Regional Sustainable Development Framework. It has influenced both the Draft RPG and the Regional Economic Strategy because it has informed the Sustainability Appraisal of both.

26. The NWDA's Regional (Economic) Strategy (published in January 2000) has as its main purpose, the improvement of economic performance and enhancement of the Region's competitiveness. This is to be achieved through addressing market failures that prevent sustainable economic development, regeneration, and business growth in the Region. The NWDA also has an overall "Strategy Towards 2020", and a Sustainable Development Appraisal as part of the Strategy Towards 2020.

27. The Draft Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) for the North West, is also a key policy document. The overriding aim of the RPG is to promote sustainable patterns of spatial development and physical change, through a focus on making the region more competitive and encouraging sectors with most potential for growth following the decline of many traditional manufacturing and related industries. The RPG provides a "regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans and local transport plans can be prepared". It also provides the longer term planning framework for the North West Development Agency's Regional Economic Strategy.

28. The fisheries sector is not a new sector that offers huge potential for new job creation, or one of the RPGs designated "established" or "target" sectors requiring support and development. However, support for its continued survival in areas of high unemployment is important in helping to fulfill a number of the key objectives of the RPG namely:

- To achieve greater economic competitiveness and growth, with associated social progress
- To ensure sensitive and integrated development and management of the coastal zone, and secure revival of coastal resort towns
- To ensure active management of the region's environmental and cultural assets

29. The RPGs four core development principals, which must form the background to any development and support for the fishing sector are:

- Economy in the use of land and buildings
- Enhancing the quality of life
- Quality in new development
- Promoting sustainable economic growth and competitiveness, and social inclusion

30. The RPG's Policy EC10 on tourism and recreation recognizes the importance of tourism as a major economic driver in supporting regeneration within the North West. Recent development of the harbour at Whitehaven shows how integrated development of harbour space, primarily driven by long term tourism potential, provides possibilities of support to the fishing industry, which in turn provides a tourist attraction within the harbour.

31. The RPG also contains a number of policies on the coastal zone relating to its definition (CZ1), coastal development (CZ2A), coastal defence (CZ2B), and coastal communities and economic development (CZ3). The latter is especially important for the planning context in which fisheries support must operate, and requires local authorities and other agencies to:

- Promote regeneration based on the region’s maritime heritage and addressing issues of environmental decline, and social and economic exclusion
- Preventing the loss of traditional boating and associated facilities to other uses not requiring a waterside location.

32. The RPG states “developments which require a coastal location include...ship building, servicing for offshore installations and sea fisheries. The regeneration of coastal communities is likely to involve the re-use of redundant docks...”. The Secretary of State’s proposed changes to the RPG relating to rural and coastal communities also include the statement that: “on the Fylde coast, economic decline and social deprivation are linked to change in the tourist and fishing industries. There is a need for sub-regional working to promote economic development and to help achieve more attractive and useful coastal frontages”.

33. Also of relevance is the ongoing piece of work commissioned by the NWDA “New Vision for North West Coastal Resorts”. While this work is not yet finalized, the Stage I Issues Report highlights various aspects of relevance to Fleetwood, although not specifically to the fisheries sector, except in so far as it acknowledges the rich maritime heritage (and heritage trawler attraction) and the plans to implement a heritage economic regeneration scheme funded by English Heritage. It also highlights the ageing public sector infrastructure and lack of recent private sector investment. Stage II of the study is to address, amongst other things, what public sector support is required for tourism and relevant infrastructure, and what is the potential to extend the hotel on offer in Fleetwood. It is urged that this Second Stage should consider the importance of working fishing harbours and a viable fishing sector as an important part of the tourism appeal, and that strategies should seek not just to expand tourism through specific tourist facilities and hotel provision, but also consider support for activities which will directly assist with the continued survival of the fishing sector, rather than just focussing on heritage issues.

34. Despite the obvious linkages between fisheries, sustainability and other sectors, and the importance of supporting the industry in areas of social and economic exclusion, the fisheries sector is seldom specifically mentioned as a sector that needs support in any of these key policy documents. Emphasis appears to be more on integrated coastal use, perhaps in which fishing just happens to be one activity, and diversification into other industries. This is a potentially serious problem, as adequate support for the sector is likely to be dependent on a more specific mention in the RPG’s policies and other relevant policy documents. The fisheries sector is not a dying industry that needs to be phased out, but rather one that, with careful management and specific support, does offer promise to create employment and value-added in areas of social and economic decline. This promise relates not just to direct employment within the sector itself, but also to the importance of a working fishing industry (rather than a themed heritage one) as a draw for tourism, and as a means of generating revenues to support harbour infrastructure. Whitehaven provides a good example of this. The harbour is just about breaking even, with a large percentage of harbour revenues coming from the fishing sector. The fishing sector itself is a key reason for the success of the re-development of the harbour and the attraction of tourism and leisure activities into the harbour, which themselves generate revenues.

### **3.7 Regional and Local Economic Context**

35. Finally, fisheries strategies must recognise the importance of the regional and local economic context in affecting the industry. It is especially important to consider unemployment rates, wages and employment opportunities in other industries that are competing for employees in the labour market. Obtaining crew to work on fishing boats is a major problem throughout the UK<sup>3</sup> given working conditions, crew earnings, the age of vessels across much of the fleet, and must be specifically addressed in any strategy for the NW if young people are to be attracted into the industry. Clearly the opportunities for employment with other important industries e.g. BNFL provide serious competition of vessel owners seeking to attract reliable crew. Unemployment rates have been falling in the NW since a peak of over 10% in 1992, to 3.6% in August 2002 (National Statistics), but have remained consistently above the UK rate (now 3.2% for the UK as a whole. However, within the NW, in coastal areas such as the Whitehaven TTWA and the Workington TTWA, unemployment rates have fallen less sharply than in the NW as a whole, falling from a peak of more than 11% in 1992 to 4.2% in August 2002 for both TTWAs. The NWDA's Economic Baseline Report highlights the vast difference between different parts of the region which is masked in regional averages, but also shows that coastal TTWAs of the NW tend to have higher unemployment than inland areas. It also highlights that wealth creation has improved in absolute terms over the last 10 years, but has slipped behind comparator regions.

36. The economic context is also important with regard to the linkages and multipliers (income and employment) between the sectors (directly and indirectly dependent), and other available services and skills that are necessary to support the fishing industry.

37. The investment climate and possible range of funding/grants can play a key role in determining the degree of investment in the industry. The ownership structure of fishing fleets, and whether company owners are local or not, can have a significant bearing on the extent to which local fishermen are able, and willing to invest in the sector. The banking sector can also be important in terms of lending conditions and their attitude towards providing finance. And the availability of grants and funds from local, national, or even European sources must of course be considered in the development a successful strategy.

38. Access to grant funding is increasingly difficult for the fisheries sector. Capture fisheries no longer have access many of types of funds previously available because to provide funding would be effectively seen as contributing to an increase in fishing effort in what are perceived as over exploited fisheries. Fleetwood has been caught in a void in this respect since the main beneficiaries of grant schemes in the Irish Sea have been in Northern Ireland. This is a contributory factor to the growth in fishing effort and possibly had a displacement impact on Fleetwood's fishing activity through the ultimate loss in quota. In contrast, Whitehaven has indirectly benefited from the Northern Ireland expansion since it is a strategic satellite port for the Northern Ireland Fleet. The processing sector also finds it increasingly difficult to access grant funding. This is largely because of the perception that funding one processor will have a detrimental affect on the operation of the other. Furthermore, the national (and European) processing sectors are under going a process of rationalization. Grant funding may be seen by DEFRA as simply delaying the inevitable rationalization.

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<sup>3</sup> A recent publication in the USA (Jobs Rated Almanac) found that, out of 250 job categories, fishing was ranked 249<sup>th</sup> overall, and ranked at the bottom in each of the six criteria used: work environment, income, outlook, physical demands, job security, and stress.

## **4 Fish Resources and the Coastal Marine Environment**

39. The DETR's strategic objective for fisheries in the NW is to "promote the sustainable management of fish stocks and the environment in the eastern Irish Sea, meeting local social and economic needs as far as is possible". The close proximity to the once abundant whitefish (cod, haddock, whiting) and herring stocks of the Irish Sea and Isle of Man allowed for Fleetwood's conversion in the 1980s from a distant water enclave to a successful inshore port. Whitehaven also benefited from the dynamism of a growing merchanting and nephrops processing sector. Both ports had local entrepreneurs with ambitions to expand their fleets. However a combination of over-fishing, natural environmental changes (influencing the trophic chain) and to a lesser extent pollution and habitat degradation, have depleted many species and led to restrictions in effort and efficiency that have in turn severely affected the coastal communities dependent upon their exploitation. The subsequent decline, in local investment, particularly in Fleetwood was dramatic, leaving a scar on the sector and causing some hesitancy on the part of would be investors to rekindle investment in the local fishing industry.

40. Despite a recent and real improvement in coastal water quality over the past 10 years, many key traditional fish stocks are still in a perilous position. Fishing effort on cod, haddock, whiting and hake are perceived as requiring a reduction in fishing effort of around 30 %, and the sector finds itself heavily restricted by a series of conservation and effort control measures, which go beyond any other control measures applicable in other EU fisheries which are deemed to be over exploited. As a result the catching sector has severely contracted in all the NW ports. It is therefore an important part of the planning process to assess the current status of the fish stocks and their coastal marine environment and to determine the most appropriate strategy that will lead to the recovery and sustainable use of these resources.

### **4.1 Key Commercial Fisheries Stocks and their Status**

The following section examines the major stocks being targeted by the NW fisheries sector and assesses their current status and potential for expansion. The main areas examined are (i) the inshore coastal areas of the NW England, (ii) the wider ICES Area VIIa (the Irish Sea) and (iii) ICES Area VIa (North-West Scotland) as this is an area targeted by the bigger boats from Fleetwood.

#### **4.1.1 Cod**

41. The main spawning grounds for cod in the Irish Sea are off Country Down and to the east of the Isle of Man. Spawning takes place chiefly during March, although cod eggs have been found in the plankton as late as May. The stock mixes with the Celtic Sea, with many young cod captured between January and April originating from the northern areas around St. Bees head.

42. Irish Sea cod stocks are in a very poor state and, according to ICES, "close to collapse". Over the early 1990's the spawning stock declined rapidly and is presently dominated by one year class, making it very sensitive to variations in recruitment. In 2000 the EU introduced a recovery plan for Irish Sea cod and established technical measures for the recovery of the stock. This included spawning box closures from 14 February to 30 April, although derogations were permitted for certain demersal otter trawls and beam trawls. The ban continued in 2001 although was lifted for the eastern Irish Sea on the basis that there were not even enough cod to protect to justify the restriction on fishing for other species.

43. To the north, NW Scotland stocks (i.e. Area VIa) are also in a very poor condition with constantly high fishing mortality and a spawning stock biomass that has been in decline since 1980. Recruitment is currently very low and a five year cod recovery programme has been implemented this year (2002) following the establishments of controlled areas from 6 March – 30 April 2001 to minimise cod catches.

#### **4.1.2 Haddock**

44. Stocks are mainly confined to the western Irish Sea and thus do not constitute a major proportion of the NW catch. Despite an increase in landings over 1996 – 1999 due to strong recruitment over 1994 and 1996, Irish Sea haddock stocks are in a poor condition. It is considered that the stock could recover fairly quickly if fishing mortality were reduced substantially.

45. In the NW Scotland fishery, haddock are taken with cod and whiting in a mixed demersal fishery. A high proportion (up to 42% in weight, 1991-2000) of the total haddock catch is discarded, although the proposed increased mesh size as part of the cod recovery plan will reduce discard levels, as will the introduction of square mesh panels.

#### **4.1.3 Whiting**

46. The main spawning areas for whiting in the Irish sea are off the Irish Coast between County Down and Dublin, to the south of the Isle of Man. Spawning takes place mainly between March and May. Irish Sea whiting may move considerable distances with the greater proportion moving south to the St. George's Channel and into the Celtic Sea, rather than north to the west of Scotland.

47. Whiting were heavily fished through the 1980's and 1990's and, like cod, stocks now contain a few good age classes that make it particularly sensitive to poor recruitment. Although landings have declined, fishing mortality has remained high due to the high level of discard of juvenile fish from the nephrops directed fishery. As a result, the whiting stock is currently in very poor condition.

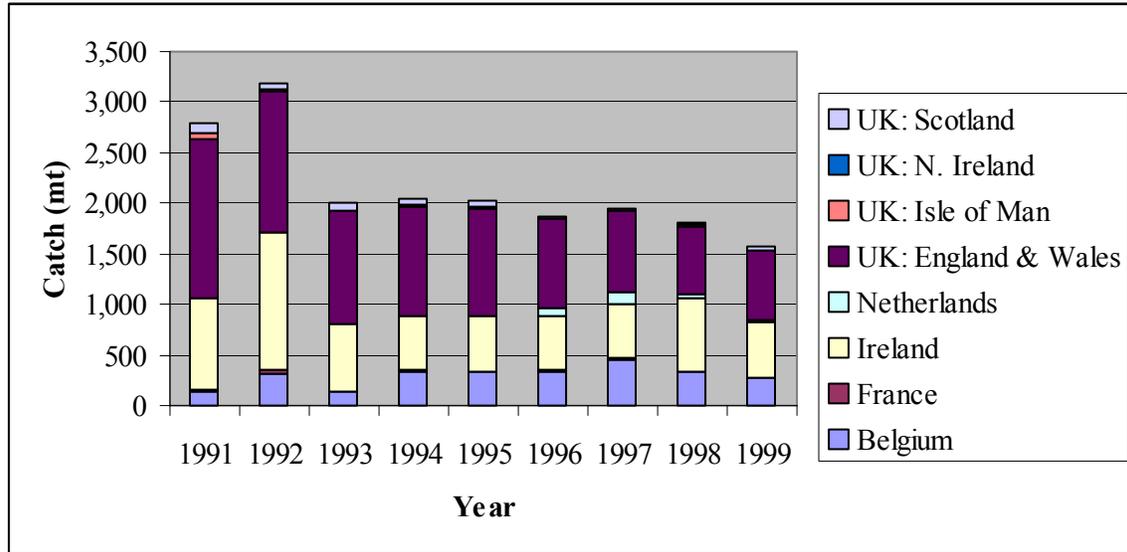
48. Like haddock and cod, whiting are taken as by-catch in the NW Scotland mixed demersal fishery. The cod recovery plan in this area may put extra pressure on the whiting in both VIa and the Irish Sea through displacement. A high proportion (around 50%) of whiting are thought to be discarded.

#### **4.1.4 Plaice**

49. The main spawning area for plaice in the Irish sea is off the north coast of Wales extending northwards to include the Cumbrian coastline. Spawning takes place mainly in March although plaice eggs have been found in plankton as late as May. Most of the fish live their lives within this area, and there are suggestions that the northern parts of the stock (i.e. north of St. Bees Head) move towards the Solway Firth after spawning.

50. Plaice stocks are considered reasonably healthy despite a number of below average year classes over the past decade. Fishing mortality and landings have declined over the past decade and are consistently below the ICES advisory limit of 2,800 mt per year.

**Figure 1: Irish Sea (Division VIIa) Cod Landings 1991 – 1999**



#### 4.1.5 Sole

51. Irish Sea sole are found in greatest abundance in the north-eastern Irish Sea, which is also the main spawning ground. These are generally in waters less than 40 m deep and within extensive areas of relatively shallow and generally shelving sediments near the nursery grounds. One and two year old sole are found exclusively in shallow (<20 m) parts of the NE Irish Sea whilst adults are found in the same area and also in deeper waters.

52. Like plaice, the Irish Sea sole stocks seem to holding up well, with mortality consistently below the advisory limit of 1,100 mt. However the spawning stock is still low, although not in imminent danger at present levels of exploitation. Discussions with fishermen in Whitehaven and Maryport indicate that inshore stocks are suffering from over-fishing, especially from SW-based beam trawlers targeting the spawning aggregations off St. Bee's Head.

#### 4.1.6 Skate

53. Skate (*Dipturus batis* commonly known as roker) are a demersal species found in shallow waters down to a depth of 200m. Although widely distributed throughout Europe, tagging studies indicate they spend the majority of their life in a relatively small area. Reproduction is very slow as fish mature late (males at around 10 years of age) and only produce about 40 eggs per year, deposited in shallow water areas in the spring and summer.

54. Skate is vulnerable to capture by many static and towed fishing gear; it is taken both in target fisheries for rays and as by-catch in other fisheries. Its slow growth and large size at maturity mean that juveniles have little or no chance of surviving to maturity in heavily fished areas. Although no longer targeted where it is very scarce, the common skate continues to be caught as by-catch in fisheries for other species, including more fecund rays. Under these

conditions commercial extinction can readily be followed by biological extinction. The common skate is currently termed as ‘endangered<sup>4</sup>’ by the IUCN Red List (<http://www.redlist.org>).

55. However, there is great uncertainty over the actual status of stocks. This is largely due to significant amounts of cod that are landed (by both foreign and local vessels) and logged as being skate. Landings of skate and rays in VIIa have increased from 376 tonnes (live weight) in 1999, to 700 tonnes in 2001. Given the uncertainty over the percentage of these landings that may be cod, while it is difficult to say with any great certainty whether stocks are currently over-exploited or not, it is likely that they are.

56. This skate (*D. batis*), the largest European rajid, was once an abundant constituent of the demersal fish community of north-west Europe. Fisheries data indicate that populations of *D. batis* have undergone an extremely high level of depletion in the central part of its range around the British Isles. It has been extirpated from certain areas, but is still caught in north-western and Scottish waters. Although landings appear stable in other parts of the species’ NW Atlantic range, this is attributed to the redirection of fishing effort from shelf seas into deeper water. No stock estimates exist for skates and other rays in the inshore waters of NW England but it is considered that expansion of this fishery should be taken with great caution. Over the longer term, the use of ‘no take zones’ might improve the conservation of this species and allow a limited, targeted fishery to continue.

#### **4.1.7 Nephrops**

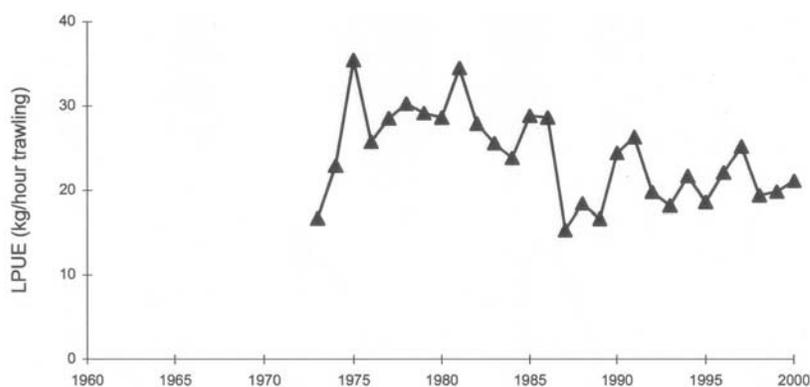
57. An important nephrops stock lies to the south-west of St. Bees Head in 20-30 metres of water, lying between 2.5 and 10 km offshore, although a new fishery has recently developed to the south of Wigtown Bay. Water circulation within the eastern Irish Sea has meant that this stock remains geographically static and concentrated in this area.

58. Landings from this fishery have stabilised at around 580 mt. Although yields (in terms of landings per unit effort - LPUE) are lower than the 30 kg/hour trawling over 1976-86, they have stabilised over the past ten years and even show a slight upward trend. Males tend to be caught over the first three monthly quarters whilst females are mainly caught over the third quarter between hatching and spawning. The Irish Sea fishery is unusual, in that the predominantly summer-based activity catches females outside their burrows. The mean size of nephrops caught has remained reasonably stable (around 32.3 mm for females).

59. In summary, although there are signs that male nephrops are slightly over exploited, trends in LPUE, landings and effort indicate no unfavourable changes in the stock or fishery over recent years. The last ICES Working Group in April 2001, which meets every two years, suggested that effort should not be increased and that the fishery should be carefully monitored.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Endangered’ is specified as being when it is not Critically Endangered but is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future

**Figure 2: LPUE of Nephrops UK Trawl Landings into Whitehaven and Fleetwood**

Source: ICES (2001)

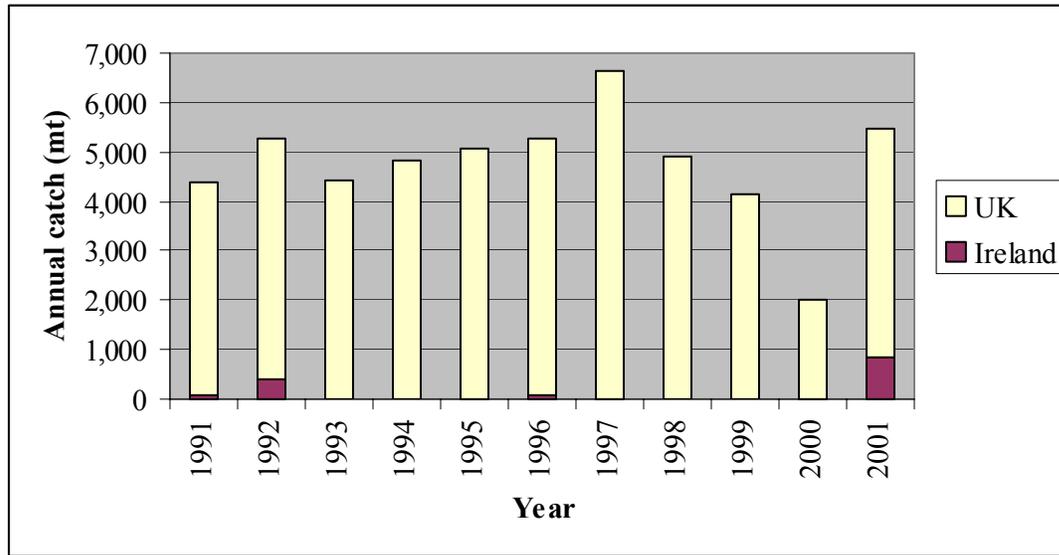
#### 4.1.8 Scallops

60. Two species of scallops are exploited in the north Irish Sea: the scallop *Pecten maximus* and the queen scallop or “queenie” *Aequipecten opercularis*. The scallop is larger (shell height around 150 mm), is a relatively slow swimmer and recesses in the seabed, so is fished by toothed dredges. The queenie is small (up to 90 mm shell height) and is a good swimmer and is therefore caught by both trawls and dredges. The main fishery is around the Isle of Man, where scallops are distributed in distinct fishing grounds around the island whilst queenie fishing grounds are mostly to the north, east and south. The *P. maximus* fishery has been well regulated, with a minimum landing size (currently 110mm shell length) and a summer closed-season (currently June – October inclusive) since 1943. A twice-yearly scallop survey has continued to provide data on stocks around the island, and shows a general increase in stocks over the last four years, although recruitment is highly patchy. Scallops from a strong recruitment in 1994 to the south of the island reached marketable size (110mm) in 1998-9, resulting in increased catches for fishermen in that year. At some fishing grounds catch rates doubled.

#### 4.1.9 Herring

61. Herring stocks are relevant to this study to the extent that herring is landed into NW ports by stranger vessels. Since the industrial fishing for herring in the 1970’s ceased in the early 1980’s, catches have declined from around 25,000 – 40,000 mt to 5,000 – 6,000 mt over the 1990’s (see Figure 3). Areas closed to herring were put in place around the east coast of Ireland and west coast of Britain to protect juveniles. Similarly a closed area exists to the Isle of Man to protect spawning aggregations. The actual status of the fishery is uncertain, but it is unlikely to recover significantly over the medium-term.

62. The herring landings into Workington are mainly from the Scottish purse seine fleet. The status of this stock is uncertain, although catches have been stable since 1991. There are indications that the stock may have declined considerably in recent years so caution has been advised in setting management targets.

**Figure 3: Irish Sea (Division VIIa) Herring Landings 1991 – 2001**

Source: ICES, 2002

#### 4.1.10 Lobster and crabs

63. Lobster and crabs are a growth area, especially since the introduction of a shellfish permitting scheme and conservation measures (v-notch and escape hatches) three years ago. Part-timers have been “weeded out”, and vessels now operate all down the coast from Maryport to Haverigg Point into Morecombe Bay. About 36 vessels operate mainly from Maryport but land into Maryport, Whitehaven (2 vessels) and Seascale. The main season is March to September, with fishermen switching to fixed nets (mainly cod) in winter. The fisheries are expected to continue to expand, but will never become major activities.

#### 4.1.11 Mussels

64. A new fishery, operating on the Upper Solway north of Dugrill Point / Allenby Bay, targets inter-tidal (hand gathering) and sub-tidal stocks. Approximate biomass is 8,040 mt with a current TAC of 1,570 mt, which will be fully utilised this year. 2002 spat settlement has been very good, and most spat is thought to come from Morecombe Bay stocks. It is currently an (open) public fishery, but the SFC is in the process of obtaining regulating orders for both the English and Scottish sides of the Solway Firth. The mussels are used for relaying in southern (Poole and Portsmouth) and eastern (King’s Lynn) waters, with buyers then selling on to France. About 40-50 people are active in the fishery, the value of which was £350,000 last year.

#### 4.1.12 Synopsis and Implications

65. The key whitefish stocks on which the larger vessels of Fleetwood and Whitehaven have historically depended have been heavily depleted through long-term over-fishing. Although a number of recovery plans have been developed, the road to recovery is likely to be a long for some species, especially where such species are both targeted and caught as bycatch<sup>5</sup>, and where critical mass has been exceeded. For other species, recovery may be quicker, and will be assisted by the reduced number of vessels now fishing in the area. Indeed, some anecdotal evidence suggests that fishing is improving.

<sup>5</sup> The NI nephrops fleet is widely credited with catching about 30% of the Cod TAC for VIIa

66. Some other stocks show more promise - the haddock stock is recovering but still subject to a strict TAC and national quotas (the 2002 UK annual quota for the Irish Sea is only 622 mt) but may be increased as the stock recovery is maintained. The other main offshore fishery, nephrops, is showing substantial resilience to fishing pressure from both sides of the Sea. Caution is suggested against any significant increase in effort – the Irish trend toward twin rigs is of potential concern. However, the recent decommissioning scheme has seen the reduction in the Irish Sea fleet dependent on this sector, which might leave the door open for some redirection of effort from traditional white fish fishing to nephrops. Certainly, in most national fisheries where white fish stocks are heavily depleted, conversion to nephrops is a natural development.

67. Scallop fisheries have benefited from regular recruitment to allow a low yield but consistent fishery from the Isle of Man and Kirkcubright.

68. Inshore stocks of plaice and sole are also in reasonable condition, although both are suffering from the offshore beam trawl activities. This is of particular concern to the sole stocks, since the Belgian beam trawl fleet (which has around half the Irish Sea TAC for this species) focus on the spawning aggregations off St. Bees Head over January – March.

69. Skate and ray stocks are unquantified, but are known to be extremely vulnerable to over-exploitation. With the concentration of fishing effort on inshore stocks, this species group may come under further threat so further expansion of this fishery is not recommended.

70. The implications of the current stock position are that long terms efforts to support the fishing industry must focus on ways of re-building the heavily over-exploited whitefish stocks, to the benefit of the local sector, while supporting fishing effort on other species such as nephrops and scallops wherever possible.

#### **4.2 *Exploitation Patterns***

71. Fishing effort in the NW is heavily weather dependant. The region is strongly affected by the prevailing westerly winds and south-westerly gales, especially over the winter.

72. Fleetwood, Whitehaven and Maryport are the NW ports retaining most of the larger vessels (>10m), although Maryport has the largest number of 10-17 m registered vessels in 2002 (see Table 1). Fleetwood and Whitehaven are investigated in more detail in Sections 5 and 6, but the larger boats use otter trawls and seine nets to take whitefish and nephrops throughout the eastern Irish Sea. They are joined by large visiting beam trawlers fishing the same grounds and often landing into Liverpool and Hollyhead to their own transport for overland consignment. Smaller otter and beam trawlers take whitefish on inshore grounds, sometimes as an alternative to shrimp. The majority of boats in the other ports are under 10 m and fish within 6 miles of the coast, netting for flatfish, rays, cod, bass, mullet, herring and potting for lobsters. Shrimps are taken in beam trawls in the Solway Firth and cockles, mussels and winkles are gathered from the inter-tidal zone.

**Table 1: Registered Vessels in NW England (1997 and 2002)**

Home	Vessel						Total	
	Over 17 1997	17 2002	10-17 m 1997	10-17 m 2002	10 m and 1997	10 m and 2002	1997	2002
Dee					15	11	15	11
Hoylake			2		11	5	13	5
Mersey			5	2	2	3	7	5
Liverpool		1			12	5	12	6
Southport					6	4	6	4
Lytham					10	6	10	6
Fleetwood	13	10	16	4	39	12	68	26
Glasson					1	1	1	1
Morecambe					18	14	18	14
Lancaster	1	1			18	11	19	12
Barrow			4	1	19	9	23	10
Whitehaven	4	4	2	6	21	23	27	33
Workington			4	1	23	22	27	23
Maryport	2	2	15	10	30	19	47	31
Silloth			1	1	9	6	10	7
Others	1		2		3	4	6	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>198</b>

Source: DEFRA

73. The key target species within the Irish Sea are cod, plaice, haddock, whiting and nephrops and scallops. Vessels from the Isle of Man and South West Scotland predominantly target scallops. These vessels are dedicated scallop trawlers some of which have been specifically designed for the purpose. Whitefish trawlers vessels from Northern Ireland predominantly target cod, haddock and whiting using midwater, as opposed to bottom trawls. Single rig and twin rig trawlers from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland target nephrops with by-catches of haddock and whiting. The main fisheries adopted by indigenous boats comprise inshore trawling, largely for benthic species such as plaice, sole and turbot (Whitehaven, Maryport and Fleetwood), offshore bottom trawling for cod and haddock (Fleetwood) and nephrops trawling, either on a year round (Whitehaven) or seasonal basis (Fleetwood). Targeting of nephrops by vessels operating from Fleetwood is a new phenomenon. About 75% of the landings by English vessels have been made to Whitehaven and 25% shared between Maryport and Fleetwood.

74. The market price for whole nephrops has varied in recent times from £5 to £26 per stone (1 stone = 6.4 kg) and for tails between £10 and £20 per stone depending on the count/kg and the season. During the peak of the 2000 season, buyers would only take whole prawns. At other times, buyers have taken landings of tails, with counts/kg in excess of the usual acceptable limit to supply the paella market in Spain. Nephrops are generally landed straight to merchants, who sell them on to processors, but some categories may be auctioned at Fleetwood. Prices always tend to be poor during the summer peak season, because of massive (black) landings into North East Scotland. This depresses the market price at a time when larger Irish Sea vessels convert to prawn fishing when whitefish landings are minimal.

75. The minimum landing size for nephrops in the Irish Sea is 20 mm. The large nephrops caught are landed whole and the small ones usually in the form of tails. Both categories are landed and sold fresh on ice. The extent of mis-reporting of nephrops landings in the Irish Sea is unknown,

but it is thought not to be a major problem. Whitehaven has historically benefited from a large number of Northern Irish vessels landing into the port, in part because of historical linkages between businesses on each side of the Irish Sea, and a large local resident population of Northern Irish in Whitehaven. Most of the Northern Irish landings from the Eastern Irish Sea are made between April and September. The vessels will target nephrops depending on catch rates, weather and tides. Trip duration is generally 3-6 days, depending on the size of the vessel. The twin-rig boats, which are on average the largest, make 3-4 tows of about 5 hours each day during 3-6 days trips.

76. There are also Republic of Ireland vessels targeting nephrops in the Eastern Irish Sea (21 in 1995 down to only 5 in 1997-98, and then an increase again to 20 in 1999), but these vessels do not tend to land to Whitehaven. In total, about 40 Irish vessels have occasionally landed nephrops from the Eastern Irish Sea over the past years. Most of these vessels have their homeports in Clogherhead and Howth, and are between 17m and 23m in length. All vessels traditionally fish for nephrops in the western Irish Sea and only occasionally fish in the eastern Irish Sea. Most of the vessels use twin-rigs with either a 70 mm cod-end mesh and a square mesh panel, or an 80 mm cod-end mesh without a square mesh panel.

77. Over the past 15 years, landings of nephrops from the eastern Irish Sea have been fairly stable, fluctuating around a long-term average (1991-2000) of about 580 t. The landings of 389 t in 1998 were the lowest since 1974, some 33 % below the average. Since 1998, however, landings have returned to levels within 10 % of the long-term mean. In 2000, most of the landings were made into England, with a high proportion (50% of the directed landings and 40% of the total landings) being made by visiting Northern Irish vessels. Nephrops directed effort too has remained relatively stable since the late 1980s.

78. The majority of boats in the other ports are under 10m and fish within 6 miles of the coast, netting for flatfish, rays, cod, bass, mullet, herring and potting for lobsters. Shrimps are taken in beam trawls in the Solway Firth and cockles, mussels and winkles are gathered from the inter-tidal zone.

79. The gears used, location and timing of the main commercial fisheries in the NW are summarised in the Table below.

**Table 2: Exploitation Patterns of Key Commercial Species in NW England**

Species		Gears used	Fishing ground	Timing
Finfish	Cod	Offshore: Otter trawls and seine nets; beam trawls; inshore: Gill & trammel nets, lines	SW of St Bees Head, small stock in Liverpool Bay	Oct - April
	Haddock	Otter trawls and seine nets	Mostly in western Irish Sea	Winter
	Whiting	Otter trawls and seine nets (75% by-catch of nephrops fishery)	South-west of St. Bees Head in water 20-30 m	May – September (by-catch) and Winter
	Plaice	Offshore: otter & beam trawls; inshore: Tangle & trammel nets	Outer Solway Firth and deeper areas of Morecambe Bay	April – September
	Sole	Offshore: otter & beam trawls; inshore: Tangle & trammel nets	Spawning aggregations SW of St. Bees Head & E of Isle of Man	Jan - March (offshore), May – September (inshore)
	Skates & rays	Offshore: Otter trawls; inshore: Tangle & trammel nets, lines	Morecambe Bay, the Gut, Liverpool Bay	Spring – Autumn
Shellfish	Lobster	Pots	Maryport to Haverigg Point	March/April - November
	Nephrops	Otter trawls	South-west of St. Bees Head in water 20-30 m; small fishery in Wigtown Bay	May – September (no closed season)
	Brown shrimp	Beam trawls	Solway Firth	
	Queen scallops	Dredges	Main stock to east of Isle of Man	
	Scallops	Trawl (by-catch) & dredge	Main stock around Isle of Man, some in Liverpool Bay	Closed season June - October
	Mussels	Hand & dredge	Fleetwood, Morecambe Bay, Upper Solway Firth	

80. Beam trawling is another method used in the Irish Sea. The irony at present is that the target fishery of plaice and sole are perceived to be in a reasonable position, but the stock is largely targeted by vessels fishing from Belgium, Netherlands and other parts of the UK (mostly from the port of Brixham). Vessels fishing for these stocks tend to land into Liverpool as opposed to Fleetwood. These vessels transfer their catches to their own transport for overland consignment to Belgium or the South West of England.

81. The table below summarises the distribution of international quotas.

**Table 3: TAC and National Quotas for ICES area VII and VIIa (2002)**

Species	Type *	ICES Areas	Total TAC (mt)	EU Allocation (mt)	National Quota (mt)								
					Belgium	Denmark	Germany	Spain	France	Ireland	Netherlands	Portugal	UK
Cod	A	VIIa	3,200	3,200	43	-	-	-	117	2,017	11	-	922
Haddock	P	VIIa	1,300	9,300	21	-	-	-	94	563	-	-	622
Saithe	P	VII, VIII, X, CECAF	8,710	8,710	20	-	-	-	4,900	2,450	-	-	1,340
Plaice	A	VIIa	2,400	2,400	88	-	-	-	38	1,364	27	-	883
Sole	A	VIIa	1,100	1,100	543	-	-	-	7	134	172	-	244
Blue whiting	A	I, II, V, VI, VII, XII, XIV	NA	107,281	-	2,218	8,582	14,304	11,944	17,165	26,963	1,073	25,032
Mackerel	A	IIa, Vb, VI, VII, VIIIabde, XII,	588,365	345,012	-	-	22,079	20	14,721	73,597	32,198	-	202,397
Nephrops	P	VII	17,790	17,790	-	-	-	1,067	4,326	6,561	-	-	5,836

\* Type: P Precautionary, A Analytical

Source: EC Council resolution No. 2555/2001

82. The Table illustrates the significance of other EU nationality activity in the Irish Sea. This comes about because these vessels have historically targeted the specific fisheries for plaice and sole when the only indigenous vessels to do so were from other parts of the UK. The opportunities for changing to other target fisheries such as plaice and sole are limited because access is prohibited partly because the quotas have already been assigned by nationality and where the UK has a specific share for species, the quotas are consigned once again to take account of historic activity.
83. Table 4 below summarises the distribution of the national Irish Sea quota to UK fish Producer Organisations (Pos). These Organisations act collectively for individual member fishers in each PO, each vessel having its own fixed quota entitlement based on its historic activity. The table makes very depressing reading in the context of the lack of dominance by Fleetwood, Whitehaven and Maryport vessels in the Irish Sea, and the dominance of the non-indigenous UK elements, comprising vessels from Northern Ireland (cod, whiting, haddock and nephrops) and the South West of England (Plaice and sole). Poor PO management in the mid-1990s is largely to blame for the decline in quota currently held by the FFPO. In 1992, the FFPO was allocated 83 tonnes of sole in VIIa, 589 tonnes of plaice, 620 tonnes of cod and 485 tonnes of whiting. These figures can be compared with those in the table below for Fleetwood.

**Table 4 - Distribution of the national Irish Sea quota to UK fish producer organisations**

Port of Registration	Fleetwood	% of national quota	Whitehaven and Maryport	% of national quota	Under 10 m vessels	% national quota	National quota
Species	Tonnes	%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes
Sole VIIa	9	3.8%	0	0.0%	24	10.2%	236
Plaice VIIa	191	23.1%	23	2.8%	83	10.0%	828
Cod VIIa	108	12.0%	6	0.7%	25	2.8%	898
Whiting	43	6.4%	139	20.6%	10	1.5%	674
Saithe	25	3.2%	12	1.5%	15	1.9%	786
Haddock	100	7.7%	7	0.5%	12	0.9%	1293
Nephrops	149	2.5%	269	4.5%	171	2.8%	6040
West of Scotland Cod	57	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3896
West of Scotland haddock	81	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8502
West of Scotland Whiting	22	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2541

84. It should be noted that scallops and one or two other species are not listed in the above tables by virtue of the fact that they are currently non quota species. The species include scallops, roker and dogfish. This arrangement might change in the foreseeable future. It should also be noted that the table includes quotas for non Irish Sea species. This reflects some historic activity by the larger Fleetwood registered trawlers in the west of Scotland grounds.

### **4.3 Fisheries Resource Management**

#### **4.3.1 European Common Fisheries Policy**

85. The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the European Union's instrument for the management of fisheries and aquaculture. It was created to manage a common resource and to meet the obligation set in the original Community Treaties. Because fish are a natural and mobile resource they are considered as common property. The CFP takes into account the biological, economic and social dimension of fishing. Total Allowable Catches (TACs), are divided among Member States with each country's share referred to as a national quota. These TACs are allocated as quotas to Member States in accordance with fixed keys based on historic fishing rights. They are complemented by a series of technical conservation measures intended to achieve more selective fishing, for example by setting rules on minimum landing sizes, minimum mesh sizes and gear design, as well as defining areas of seasonal closures, methods of fishing and target species. The 2002 TAC's and national quotas for the key species in ICES areas that include the Irish Sea (VIIa) are included in Table 3.

86. The CFP review in 1992 showed that if there are too many vessels for the available resources, technical measures and control alone cannot prevent over-fishing. As a result, the third Multi-Annual Guidance Programme (MAGP) III (1992-96) focused on decreasing effort by scrapping vessels or by keeping fishing vessels in port for set periods of time ('tie-ups'). MAGP IV continued this approach over 1997 – 2001. A CFP second review is being carried out over 2002.

87. In the context of fishery management, the Review focuses on two key elements (1) mechanisms to reduce fishing effort; and (2) increasing emphasis on local fishery management. The issue of fishing effort concentrates on two areas, the first is the continued emphasis on fleet decommissioning; secondly, is effort control, or control by allocating to each country specific fishing days that may be increased or decreased depending on the pressure in the fishery. It is likely therefore that these controls will continue to impact heavily on the local fishing industry. On a positive side, management measures may result in gradual stock recovery, on the negative side, such management measures, in particular control on sea days, is likely to create additional economic hardship on the existing vessel owners, particularly in the directed fisheries where stocks are perceived to be over-exploited – cod and whiting.

88. Local fishery management is an encouraging sign to the extent that stakeholders, and specifically the fishermen, may have greater say in the management of their fisheries. The difficulty for the present is that it remains to be seen how such a process will work. Similarly, in the context of overall influence, it should be recognised that the NW may not be a key player in the decision making since Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic dominate the key fisheries, but needs to retain an active participation in involvement in the Eastern Irish Sea.

#### **4.3.2 Producer Organisations**

89. Producer Organisations (POs) are established under the CFP to enable groups of fishermen to manage their own quotas and to market the fish they catch. POs manage quota allocations on behalf of individual member vessels for all quota stocks in Areas IV, VI and VII. This regime only applies to vessels over 10 m in length. Each vessel has its own share of the national quota, expressed in simple terms as a percentage of the total. Each vessel's share is transformed into a Fixed Quota Entitlement, in that it cannot be altered, but for a change in the national quota. POs can choose to manage the quota collectively on behalf of their members, setting management regimes which specify group access arrangements (monthly restrictions irrespective of group

access arrangements), or can operate an individual quota (IQ) system, whereby vessels in the PO can choose to fish against their own quota share. Fleetwood, and for that matter all UK vessels operating in the Irish Sea, choose to operate the former system. However, the national practice is for vessels to gradually gravitate towards the IQ system as the fisheries become more competitive.

90. Table 5 below illustrates the number of indigenous vessels assigned to each of the POs. FFPO is the Fleetwood PO operated from Fleetwood, NIFPO and ANIFPO are the two Northern Irish POs where membership of the organisations extend to Whitehaven (ANIFPO) and Maryport (NIFPO). There is one vessel in membership of the North Sea PO. This vessel is interesting to the extent that it is non active but in possession of significant IQs. The reason for highlighting this is merely to show that it is possible to accumulate quota, but to do so requires considerable foresight in the way in which the fisheries management system is likely to evolve. The failure to manage quota from Fleetwood, has been a contributory factor in the demise of fishing opportunities. However, it should be stressed that this is not a feature of the existing management structure of the PO, which with the assistance of a loan from Wyre Borough Council (WBC) and Associated British Ports (ABP) has been actively purchasing quota in an attempt to restore fishing rights.

**Table 5: Licensed UK Vessels**

Home Port	FFPO	NIFPO	ANIFPO	NSFPO	Non PO	TOTAL
Barrow	2	1				3
Fleetwood	13				2	2
Lancaster					1	1
Maryport		6	1		1	1
Mersey Estuary					2	2
Silloth					1	1
Whitehaven		6	2		1	1
Workington		2	1			3
Not known			1	1		2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>36</b>

Source: DEFRA (updated 28 Nov 2001 – next update 01 September 2002)

#### 4.3.3 UK Fisheries Enforcement

91. The UK Fisheries Departments comprise the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Scottish Executive Environment & Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD), the National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department (NAWAD), and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARDNI). Departments in the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey are responsible for administering fishing activity in their respective areas.

92. Two Sea Fisheries Committees (SFCs) regulating local sea fisheries around the NW coast out to 6 miles are, (i) the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries District and (ii) the Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee. SFCs were established in the last century and are empowered to make bye-laws for the management and conservation of their districts' fisheries. In 1995 their powers were widened to include the control of fisheries in their districts for environmental reasons.

93. It is likely that with the imminent administrative devolvement of Wales, that the current Sea Fisheries Committee structure will change, probably with a single SFC (combining Cumbria with Fleetwood) covering all of the NW of England. But no decision has been made about whether this will necessarily happen, and if so, where the new SFC would be based.

94. The structure of the UK fishery management regime is likely to see little change in the foreseeable future. The current system of licensing fishing vessels, and managing quota is likely to remain. Vessels under 10 m do not have specific quota shares and fish against either monthly management limits set by Government, or fish until their share of the national quota is exhausted. However, for the most part local vessels fish partly for quota stocks but also for non quota stocks. In addition, however, under 10 m vessels now have the right to purchase quota and fall into line with the general management regime. There has also been a national temptation, because of the lack of management in this fishery for owners of larger vessels to gravitate into the under 10m sector. This is not however a feature typical of the NW since poor weather is an overwhelming constraint to the effective operation of smaller craft.

#### **4.4 Integrated Coastal Management and INTERREG IIIb**

95. The NWCF intends to submit a bid for INTERREG IIIb funding to develop a ‘regional seas’ approach to the strategic management of the Irish Sea as a whole. INTERREG III is an EC initiative to encourage transnational co-operation on spatial planning, running from 2000 - 2006. INTERREG IIIb in particular focuses particularly on promoting sustainable development planning between local, regional and national authorities. In the case of NWCF bid, specific focus areas will include:

- Fisheries management;
- Climate change;
- Pollution and coastal water quality;
- Marine litter; and
- Energy generation.

96. Whilst many of these could be viewed as offshore issues, they have important inter-relationships with the inshore and terrestrial dimension and therefore cannot be considered in isolation. In particular, they exert a profound influence upon the sustainability of fisheries resource exploitation and influence their socio-economic dependencies. The strategy and action plans presented in Section 7, whilst not containing a separate section dealing with the INTERREG IIIb bid, contain a number of items that deal with the specific focus areas listed above.

##### **4.4.1 Fisheries Management**

97. The main elements of fisheries management in the northern Irish Sea are discussed above. However, there are a number of other aspects to regional integration of resource management that are wider than the fisheries-specific focus of the project, but which need to be considered to ensure their inclusion in the overall strategy development. These include:

- (i) *The Irish Sea as a Large Marine Ecosystem (LME)*. With the shift in the NW fishing industries away from offshore fishing of TAC-limited species to non-quota coastal stocks, there may be changes in the fisheries element of the Irish Sea LME. Reduced effort may allow demersal omnivores such as cod and whiting to recover with resultant impacts on benthic productivity. A shift from minimum size limited scallops to queenies may encourage more damaging use of queen dredges, which have been shown to have

considerable impact on benthic biodiversity round the Isle of Man. The increased focus of fisheries in the shallow waters of the NW, especially Morecambe Bay and the Solway Firth, may impact on their spawning and nursery functions (see below).

- (ii) *Coastal Habitats and Biodiversity Conservation*: the NW coast has a number of important shallow bays and estuaries that support extensive areas of saltmarsh as well as large areas of intertidal mudflats, sand flats and subtidal sandbanks of recognised international importance. Both the Solway Firth and Morecambe bay are designated European Marine Sites and are Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the EC Habitat Directive. As such they benefit from increased protection against inappropriate development, and improved linkages between the main management agencies such as the SFC's, the Environment Agency and DEFRA. The NW estuaries and shallow bays are important bass and mullet nursery areas and serve as important summer fattening grounds for many commercially important fish such as plaice, sole and cod.
- (iii) *Fisheries Heritage*: fisheries have been part of the NW heritage and community structure for many years. Whilst it is recognised that many of the more intensive practises aimed at offshore stocks are no longer sustainable, there is a need to conserve the knowledge of this heritage, and importantly to create new heritage through the continued survival of the industry i.e. building on historical heritage aspects for the future, rather than just looking backwards. This heritage is important as a tourism draw, and as a way of generating interest in the fishing sector itself.

#### **4.4.2 Climate Change**

98. One of the most significant long-term challenges to the NW is climate change. This will have a number of profound effects upon the coastal marine resources and their utilisation, including:

- (i) *Sea level rise* – estimated at between 1.5mm and 2mm per year for the NW. This will require forward planning for fisheries-related infrastructure, in particular docks, harbours and slipways. An example of proactive integrated planning are the new dock gates in Whitehaven that will now protect the town waterfront from flooding over a 60 year planning period.
- (ii) *Changes in weather patterns* - the exposure of the NW coast to onshore winds (both the prevailing westerly as well as the more damaging south-westerly winds) reduces access to fishing grounds and reduced regional competitiveness. The likely higher incidence of storms and a predicted annual increase in wind speed of between 2% and 5% will need to be reflected in fisheries infrastructure planning, and is likely to impact on the ability of fishermen to get to sea
- (iii) *Changes in the coastal marine environment* - that could lead to a change in species composition and availability. Already there are signs that changes in sea temperatures are affecting species distribution, and this in turn could have significant impacts in terms of alteration of the trophic chain.

#### **4.4.3 Pollution and coastal water quality**

99. The industrial heritage of the NW coast, together with urban growth in the south of the region, have resulted in a highly impacted coastline. In particular, the chemical and nuclear industries have had an affect upon seafood availability and marketability, although the situation has markedly improved over the past decade. Many of the traditional polluting industries, such as

coalmining and washing have also disappeared and led to lower effluent levels. The increased monitoring and publicity surrounding the EC Bathing Water Directive, as well as other legislation such as the 1991 Water Resources Act have led to substantial investment into wastewater treatment and a consequential improvement in coastal water quality. This in turn has improved the area available to shellfish gathering and aquaculture, but perhaps ironically may have reduced shrimp production due to increased amounts of clean, fresh water being pumped in the Irish Sea. Future efforts to improve coastal water quality and thus the availability and quantity of seafood must lie in two directions:

- (i) regular review and updating of water quality targets, timescales and resource needs; and
- (ii) the continued development of appropriate emergency planning for nuclear, oil and other pollution planning.

100. Experience of the Mersey and Sea Empress oil spills has shown how vulnerable marine resources and their dependant livelihoods are to pollution incidents – the heightened threat of terrorist attacks on nuclear installations since 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 and the potential consequences for Irish Sea fisheries are now of increasing relevance.

#### **4.4.4 Marine Litter**

101. Concern over the marine litter problem, and attempts to measure and quantify it, has initiated research at both regional and national levels. In the early 1990s it became apparent to the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) that a solution to Cumbria's marine litter problem required several strands of action to be brought together.

- Verifiable measurement of the problem
- An understanding of the sources of the rubbish, and processes which influence its transport
- Action to influence appropriate preventative measures at all stages from source to sink

102. The Cumbria Marine Litter Project was thus formed in 1996 as a partnership between the LDNPA, Tidy Britain Group (TBG) and Copeland Borough Council (CBC). The overall aim being to quantify the extent and nature of the marine litter problem on the Cumbrian Coast and find solutions to reduce it. Of particular relevance is the Port Waste Management Campaign which aims to address the issues of fishing-related waste which accounts for approximately 20% of coastal litter. Fishing debris not only originates from local sources, but from different areas in UK waters such as North Wales, Isle of Man, and also from Irish waters.

#### **4.4.5 Energy generation from Wind Farming**

103. The direct effects will include loss of fishing grounds, necessary changes in navigation and extra risks from collisions with service vessels. Indirect effects might be changes in the pattern of currents and siltation leading to altered stocks and spawning patterns.

## 5 Fleetwood scoping

### 5.1 Catching sector

#### 5.1.1 Fleet Segments

104. Although still recognised as one of the most important fishing ports on the west coast of England, the catching sector in Fleetwood has shown considerable decline over the past 10 years. In its heyday, Fleetwood had a large trawler fleet fishing throughout the Irish Sea as well as more distant North Atlantic waters. Now there are only about eight otter trawlers over 15 m active in the Irish Sea - the three largest boats (>23m) fish for cod, roker and occasionally haddock in the western side, the North Channel, Kish banks and ST George's Channel; and the others (15-23m) combine nephrops fishing (over May to September, landing in Whitehaven) with whitefish in the eastern Irish Sea over the winter months (see Table below). Some inshore vessels also target plaice. The vessels fishing the western Irish Sea usually land their catch in Bangor or Port Patrick a number of times (where it is transhipped back to Fleetwood for processing) before landing back in Fleetwood at the end of the trip. When fishing the northerly grounds and the eastern Irish Sea nephrops fishery, Fleetwood vessels will occasionally use Whitehaven as opposed to Fleetwood. Most of the vessels are old (29% are over 40 years old, 57% over 30 years and the remainder over 20 years old) and underpowered compared to their Irish equivalents<sup>6</sup>.

105. There is an inshore fleet (<15 m) of around 22 vessels in Fleetwood, but many of these are part-time, inactive or laid up. It is thought that only one vessel (Gee Bee) is fully active whilst around five work part-time. Most are rigged as either otter trawlers or beam trawlers, targeting sole, plaice, turbot, brill, rays and flounders. The inshore areas fished stretch from the Ribble - Blackpool to Walney Island. The medium size boats (10-15m) mostly target the nephrops fishery to the south of St. Bees Head, as do many of the 10-12m boats. A typical annual pattern of activity for the inshore mixed fishery is provided in Table 6 below:

**Table 6: Typical Inshore Trawl Fishery**

Winter months	<u>Cod</u> : Early Oct to Dec. Move into deeper water over Dec – Mar. Arrive Walney Island end March/April to be targeted by larger vessels. Mainly found south of St. Bees Head with a smaller stock in Liverpool Bay
April	<u>Cod</u> being targeted by boats >12m <u>Plaice</u> being targeted by boats < 12m, mainly around Blackpool and Walney Island
May – August	Mixed <u>plaice</u> / <u>sole</u> fishery, with some roker, brill and turbot Catch increasing numbers of sole.

106. There is a small gill-net fishery based from Fleetwood, mostly conducted by part-timers. The prospect for gill netting is limited by the lack of rough ground near Fleetwood, the strong tides and the shallow, turbid coastal waters. A small summer bass driftnet fishery supports 1-2 boats off Barrow and Morecambe Bay.

<sup>6</sup> Note that this is not meant to imply that vessels in Fleetwood should power up. There is already too much power in the Irish Sea, Fleetwood vessels have adequate power for the job that they do, and further increases could be expected to increase levels of bycatch. It is the over-powered nature of NI and Irish vessels that is perceived to be a major problem.

107. Similar problems also beset potting for lobster and crabs. A short (July – October) fishery exists, but strong tides cause a high loss of gear, which is exacerbated through losses from trawler activity. Another part-time fishery for brown shrimp exists in Morecambe Bay and the River Wyre. Shellfish gathering for mussels (near North Wharf in Fleetwood and in southern Morecambe Bay) is also based out of Fleetwood. A small fishery also exists for cockles in the Ribble and Morecambe Bay but is highly variable in output. Whelks are found in low densities throughout the region and are caught in small amounts as by-catch to the trawlers and sold to local markets. Again insufficient stocks, poor tides, high levels of turbidity and a low market price is unlikely to mean the development of a directed fishery of this species. Queenies and scallops are not found locally but lie outside the 6-mile limit around the Isle of Man (see Section 4.1.8 on page 26) although some beds lie in Liverpool Bay. One Fleetwood boat (Lady Edith) is currently targeting queenies and this could be a growth area for the larger Fleetwood boats. A constraint however, will be the need to acquire licences<sup>7</sup> to target scallops.

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<sup>7</sup> As a result of pressure from the industry, scallop licensing was introduced in 1998. The only stock deemed to be under-exploited was the Irish Sea queen scallop fishery.

**Table 7: Fleetwood-based Fishing Fleet**

Name	PO	Status (if known)	Fishing area and target	Overall length	GRT	Engine power	VCU
Natalie B	Non PO	Active (IoM)	N IS (Scallops)	26.5	110.0	373.0	337.1
Isadale	FFPO	Active	W IoM & NC	26.2	149.0	447.0	371.2
Replenish	FFPO	Scrapped	---	25.2	101.0	390.0	337.2
Aaltje Margriet	FFPO	Active	W IoM & NC	24.8	87.0	210.0	243.1
Resolute	FFPO	Active	W IoM & NC	23.2	117.0	295.0	271.0
Artemis	FFPO	Active	North Channel	23.1	131.0	354.0	307.3
Kiroan	FFPO	Active	Nephrops & E IoM	23.1	148.0	354.0	307.1
Korona	FFPO	Scrapped	---	22.0	96.0	235.0	244.4
Colinne	FFPO	Active	Nephrops & E IoM	21.2	49.8	171.0	207.6
Patricia Campbell	FFPO	Laid up	---	21.2	---	---	---
Ellen	FFPO	Active	W IoM	20.7	58.0	186.0	199.4
Helen Mona	FFPO	Active	Nephrops & E IoM	18.9	57.0	186.0	188.0
Red Rose	FFPO	Scrapped	---	18.3	63.0	245.0	207.0
Lady Edith	FFPO	Active	Inshore & IoM	15.4	23.8	201.0	165.6
Essex Girl	FFPO	Scrapped	---	14.3	19.6	82.0	103.3
Glen Carradale	FFPO	Laid up	---	12.2	15.3	134.0	115.9
Albion	FFPO	Active	Inshore trawl	12.2	15.2	112.0	106.9
Leslie	Non PO	Laid up	---	10.1	6.8	52.0	57.1
Two Boys	Non PO	Active	Inshore trawl / beamer	10.0	15.4	119.0	99.5
Boy Paul	Non PO	Active	Inshore trawl	<10	---	---	---
Inspiration	Non PO	Laid up	Inshore trawl	<10	---	---	---
Anturus	FFPO	Part-time	Inshore	9.9	9.6	71.0	70.2
Reiver	Non PO	Active	IoM (scallops)	10.0	9.6	79.0	78.6
Emma J	Non PO	Sold away	Inshore	10.0	8.1	89.0	78.6
Bay Venture	Non PO	Part-time(NW)	Inshore	9.9	16.3	187.0	124.9
Gee Bee	Non PO	Active	Inshore trawl	9.9	12.4	94.0	82.7
Wakil Ii	Non PO	NW	Inshore trawl	9.9	7.1	71.0	65.9
Kindly Light	Non PO	Laid up (NW)	Inshore trawl	9.8	6.2	51.0	56.1
Jagoro	Non PO	Active (NW)	Inshore trawl	9.5	10.2	90.0	72.4
Linda Louise	FFPO	Active	Inshore trawl	9.0	9.8	67.0	66.5
Zora	Non PO	Part-time	Inshore trawl & shrimps	8.5	4.3	48.0	45.2
Dark Star	Non PO	Laid up	Inshore trawl & shrimps	8.0	4.2	34.0	39.2
Lady Jane	Non PO	Laid up	Inshore trawl	8.0	3.6	42.0	42.5
Provider	Non PO	Laid up	Inshore trawl	7.8	5.8	63.0	52.1
Moian	Non PO	NW	Inshore	7.7	3.6	58.0	46.0
Amy B	Non PO	Laid up	Inshore pots & nets	6.3	2.4	45.0	35.8
Iain Og	Non PO	NW	Inshore	5.7	1.4	8.0	15.4
Charlotte B	Non PO	NW	Inshore	4.8	0.9	22.0	19.6

**Key:**

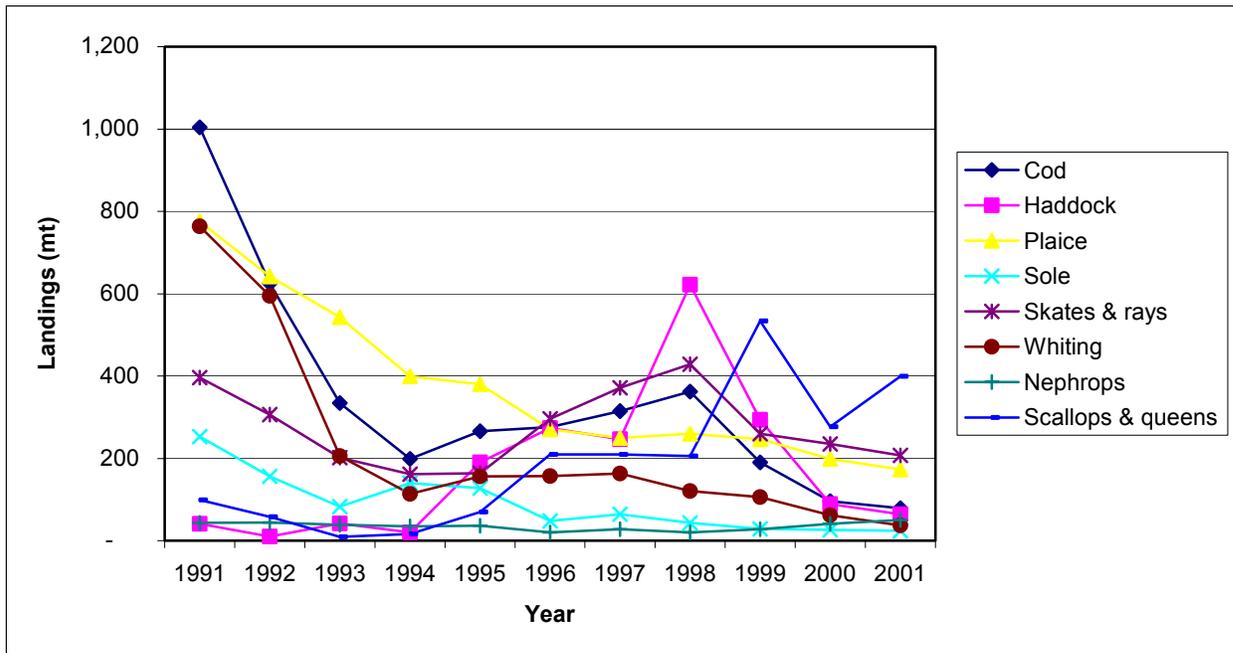
<b>PO</b>	FFPO Fleetwood Fishermen's Producer Organisation
<b>Status</b>	NW Based outside Fleetwood (mainly in the North-West coast) IoM Based in the Isle of Man
<b>Fishing area &amp; target</b>	IS Irish Sea W IoM West of the Isle of Man E IoM East of Isle of Man NC North Channel

### 5.1.2 Landings

#### Annual fish landings in Fleetwood since 1991 are provided in

108. Table 8 and summarised in Figure 4 below. It is clear that landings of the traditional trawled whitefish stocks, such as cod, whiting and plaice have declined substantially over the last 10 years. Landings of cod, haddock, skates and rays (mainly roker) increased during the mid 1990's but have since declined. The only species showing a steady increase in landings have been scallops and queenies.

**Figure 4: Landings of Key Commercial Species in Fleetwood by Volume (1991 - 2001)**



- Review of reasons for the decline in vessel numbers and landings in recent years.
- MAFF catch statistics for the Fleetwood district and merchant volumes by species
- Catch profiles throughout the year
- Quota, ICES boxes, resources and species that could be landed at Fleetwood.
- Seasonality of catch; quality and quantity.

109. Patterns in catching capacity and landings show a number of clear trends:

- With the restricted quotas in traditionally caught whitefish such as cod and whiting, the larger trawlers are switching to other species such as haddock (when available) and non-quota species such as roker and scallops. Scallops may provide a viable alternative for a small number of these larger vessels.
- There is a general reduction in the size of vessels as catches and profitability fall – this is exacerbated by the lack of crew for the older, larger vessels, which have longer duration

trips. If the present trend continues, there is only likely to be 2-3 larger (20m+) active vessels left in Fleetwood in the next few years.

- There is the possibility of the emergence of a new 15m ‘Eurocutter’ (around 300 hp) class multi-purpose boat. However the larger vessels are reluctant to switch to smaller, multi-purpose boats as the majority of skippers are older and less suited to intensive fishing techniques such as gill-netting.
- The inshore fishery is more versatile with new, multi-purpose boats. These can switch to different stocks as seasonal and other abundance factors dictate.
- However the Fleetwood-based inshore sector is not without its problems – tidal-limited access to Fleetwood make Whitehaven a preferable location, which is also closer to the nephrops fishery.

**Table 8: Fish Landings in Fleetwood by UK Vessels (1991 - 2001)**

Species	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Bass	-	-	-	-	-	n/r	1	n	n	n/r	1
Blue ling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n	n/r	-	-
Bream	-	-	-	-	-	n/r	-	n	n/r	-	-
Brill	24	24	16	20	21	16	19	18	10	7	7
Catfish	1	-	1	-	1	n/r	1	2	1	n/r	-
Cod	1,004	625	334	199	266	276	315	362	190	96	79
Conger eel	25	21	14	9	11	14	20	21	9	11	6
Dabs	70	41	37	38	38	49	48	32	27	14	10
Dogfish	99	91	70	32	50	108	109	60	105	99	50
Flounders	90	90	25	13	56	59	56	48	31	48	40
Gurnard	132	91	71	52	50	66	77	51	53	55	33
Haddock	41	10	42	20	190	274	247	622	294	89	64
Hake	43	32	25	10	10	15	23	11	156	128	3
Halibut	-	-	-	-	-	n/r	n/r	n/r	1	n/r	-
Halibut-Mock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lemon sole	12	10	4	11	5	7	8	7	5	2	1
Ling	15	12	12	7	8	12	15	17	35	19	5
Megrim	3	-	1	-	2	4	3	13	47	28	-
Anglers / monks	38	35	34	19	28	35	41	29	569	149	6
Mullet	-	-	-	-	-	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r
Plaice	775	642	543	399	380	271	250	260	247	199	173
Pollock	45	20	12	8	7	16	15	11	10	7	16
Redfish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/r	5	2	-
Saithe	53	28	45	6	9	43	102	25	37	31	2
Sandeels	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sharks	-	-	-	-	-	1	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	1
Skates & rays	396	306	202	162	164	296	371	429	260	235	207
Sole	253	156	83	140	128	48	64	43	29	26	24
Torsk	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	3	1	-
Turbot	9	7	6	5	4	5	5	6	5	3	2
Whiting	764	595	206	114	156	157	163	121	106	62	37
Blue whiting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whiting pout	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	n/r	n/r	2
Witches	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	13	9	n/r
Roes	8	2	2	-	1	2	1	3	4	1	1
Other demersal	47	33	22	30	14	5	8	12	49	139	1
<b>Total Demersal</b>	<b>3,949</b>	<b>2,871</b>	<b>1,808</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>1,601</b>	<b>1,784</b>	<b>1,967</b>	<b>2,207</b>	<b>2,301</b>	<b>1,460</b>	<b>771</b>
Herring	1	-	-	-	-	-	n	-	-	n/r	n/r
Horse mackerel	-	-	-	-	-	-	n	-	-	-	-
Mackerel	3	3	1	1	-	-	1	n	-	n/r	n/r
Pilchards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sprats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other pelagic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total pelagic</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-
Clams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/r	-	-
Cockles	-	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: DEFRA

### 5.1.3 Access to the Resource - Quota and Licensing Restrictions

110. The traditional quota system required that vessels sustain their activity in order to retain quota ‘use it or lose it’. This they failed to do in Fleetwood as a result of poor management, and an economic downturn (largely from increased imports and levels of blackfish landings which drove prices down) which resulted in a diversification of fishing vessels to other offshore activities (e.g. pipeline support work) during the period from 1994 to 1996, which MAFF used as the period to demonstrate track record and allocate quotas. By the time the PO officials and members realized the consequence of their lack of strategic thinking on this issue, much of the quota had been lost to other POs whose members had been correspondingly more active during the same period, thus gaining to the demise of the Fleetwood vessels.

111. Despite valiant attempts by the Fleetwood PO and its members to acquire fish quota, with the assistance of a £100,000 loan from Wyre Borough Council and ABP, financed by an increase in levy to the members and allied to a donation from incoming Anglo Spanish fishing members, the PO still faces a significant shortfall in quota.

112. The evolution of the quota and licensing system to one of property rights (quota and licenses now being purchased on the open market) has resulted in an additional hurdle to be overcome by any would be investor. A further problem has been that access to traditional quota species in the Irish Sea – cod and haddock - has been constrained because of seasonal restrictions on fishing activity.

113. The PO estimates its existing shortfalls in quota opportunities against its capacity to catch quota species to be as follows:

**Table 9 – Shortfall in FFPO quota requirements**

	Current quota	Demand for quota	Difference	Anticipated value of extra quota in £
<b>Cod</b>	108	200	85%	92,000
<b>Whiting</b>	43	180	319%	54,800
<b>Plaice</b>	191	280	47%	89,000
<b>Sole</b>	9	29	222%	120,000
<b>Haddock</b>	100	170	70%	28,000

Source: Fleetwood FPO

114. Whilst the PO has been actively buying quota, and attempting to diversify into nephrops<sup>8</sup> and scallops, the principal problems lie in the fact that the PO cannot extend itself any further than its present activity. A limiting factor is the fact that the PO members require quota values to be realized as and when they decide to leave the sector. Therefore, any appreciable gains also run the risk of being dissipated.

### 5.1.4 The Economics of Fishing Operations

115. The 2001 Economic Survey of the UK Fishing Fleet, published by the SFIA analyses costs and earnings data for 25 fleet segments. The following table shows some key data taken from the survey for Irish Sea vessels. While it is acknowledged that data are likely to be an approximation given mis-reporting, the fact that they show average data for a variety of vessel

<sup>8</sup> By buying Scottish nephrops which can be swapped one for one

sizes, and probable caution by owners about releasing commercially sensitive information, the data are nevertheless interesting.

**Table 10 – Costs and Earnings Data for 2001 by UK Fleet Segment**

Item	ISNT	ISWBT	ISSPTR
Average Annual Vessel Income	£112,169	£147,153	175,519
Income per Vessel Capacity Unit (VCU)	£560	£540	£590
Non-Fishing Income as % of Total Income	2.7%	18%	0.8%
Total Direct Fishing Expenses as % of Income	59%	62%	69%
Average Annual Vessel Crew Share per man	£23,373	£11,890	£15,410
Average Vessel Owner Costs as % Income	21%	21%	22%
Average Vessel Gear Costs as % of Income	4%	4%	4%
Average Vessel Repair Costs as % of Income	7%	8%	7%
Average Vessel Net Profit as % of Income (excl. interest)	19.9%	16.9%	9.2%
Average Vessel Net Profit	£22,375	£24,935	£16,086

Notes:

2. ISNT = Irish Sea Nephrops Trawl
3. ISWBT = Irish Sea Whitefish Bottom Trawl
4. ISSPTR = Irish Sea Semi-Pelagic/Twin Rig

116. However, what is perhaps of more interest is a consideration of how the costs and earnings structure for vessels in the NW compares to that of non-NW vessels in the three Irish Sea fleet segments for 2000/2001. In order to explore such a comparison, data have been obtained separately from the SFIA for the NW vessels interviewed as part of each fleet segment. In the ISWBT segment, 5 of the total sample size of 7 in the SFIA data were vessels from the NW (probably from) Fleetwood. In the ISNT segment there were 19 returns, with just 2 from the NW (probably from Whitehaven or Maryport). In the ISSPTR segment 2 of the 13 returns were from the NW. As vessels are not actually identified as being from Fleetwood, Whitehaven, or other NW ports, this section on the Fleetwood scoping assessment considers the costs and earnings for all NW vessels, but also has relevance to the catching sector in Whitehaven.

117. Given the small number of vessels from the NW in the ISNT and the ISSPRT segments, and the possibility of vessel identification, due to reasons of confidentiality the SFIA have requested that figures are not quoted directly in the comparison. The small sample size also points to caution over analysis of comparisons, but such a comparison is nevertheless thought to be useful. The review of data for the NW vessels, compared to data for each fleet segment as a whole reveals the following:

- For the ISWBT segment, total earnings for NW vessels were only slightly lower than for the segment as a whole, but fishing expenses and vessel owner expenses were both considerably lower in absolute terms and as a % of earnings, resulting in greater profits (excluding depreciation and interest) than for vessels in the ISWBT segment as a whole. Particular expenses that appear to be lower for NW vessels are commission, subscriptions and levies, food and stores, repairs, and hire and maintenance. Given that the average

vessel age for NW vessels is higher than for the segment as a whole, this indicates either that a) material costs in the North West are noticeably cheaper, b) that vessel owners are doing more repair and preventative work themselves, or that c) corners are now being cut which are likely to result in higher repair and maintenance costs in later years

- For the ISNT segment, NW coast vessels (2 of the 19 returns) also displayed lower fishing expenses as a % of earnings than the segment as a whole, especially for crew share, and for fuel and oil costs, probably reflecting the fact that vessels are fishing closer to home than non-NW vessels given the location of the main nephrops grounds. With regard to total vessel owner expenses as a % of earnings, they were lower than for the segment as a whole, especially for repairs, but hire and maintenance costs were higher, suggesting that preventative maintenance may be proving effective (vessel ages are similar for NW vessels and the segment as a whole). Net profit as a % of earnings was considerably higher for NW vessels than for the segment as a whole given the lower fishing and non-fishing expenses
- For the ISSPTR segment, fishing expenses as a % of total earnings were only slightly lower for the 2 NW vessels than for the total sample size of 13, primarily due to no “other expenses” – fuel and crew share costs (the majority of fishing expenses) were roughly comparable for NW vessels and the total segment. However, total vessel owner expenses for the segment as a whole were considerably higher (almost double) due to greater repair costs and gear costs. Total expenses as a % of earnings were thus greater than for the segment as a whole, and net profit before depreciation and interest considerably lower.

118. Vessels costs and earnings have also been examined for 13 whitefish vessels at Scarborough/Whitby involved with demersal trawling, to examine their comparable performance against the whitefish vessels from the NW. These vessels were found to have earnings about 70% greater than vessels in the NW, but slightly higher fishing expenses as a % of earnings, and vessel owner expenses as a % of earnings of almost double the NW vessels. Total expenses as a % of earnings were thus much higher than for the NW vessels, and net profit considerably lower in absolute terms and as a % of earnings, suggesting that the NW ISWBT vessels are performing well compared to other similar vessels around the UK.

119. What does all of this signify? Given the decline in the catching sector in the NW, we had expected (based on reports of fishers) to find that NW vessels were operating under heavy costs as a % of income compared to other vessels fishing in the Irish Sea, and compared to other similar fleet segments around the UK. But this is evidently not the case. While efforts should be continued to be made to reduce costs wherever possible, the analysis of comparable costs suggests that future strategies to support the sector in the NW should focus on ways of generating greater earnings through higher prices. This points to new marketing strategies, better quality of product being landed so as to raise prices, and perhaps to investigation of electronic auction marketing or internet based direct sales so as to increase buyer competition for product.

120. However, the analysis also suggests that certain cultural factors may have great significance in the decline of the catching sector. These relate to general issues of crew availability, competition with other economic activities, availability of investment capital, and the general level of optimism and enthusiasm in the catching sector compared to some other ports. Such factors are considered in Section 5.1.6 below.

### 5.1.5 Fish Prices

121. There is a belief amongst many of those involved with the catching sector that while supplies of product are falling, fish prices are not increasing to levels comparable with those in Europe. A recent survey conducted by Poseidon staff for MAFF<sup>9</sup>, examined such views, their validity, and reasons for differences in fish prices for different species at ports around the UK, compared to those in Europe. The survey showed that:

- Most fish prices in the UK have increased in real terms over the last 10 years by between 20% and 60%, with the exception of haddock and nephrops, but in many cases considerable price differentials still exist between the UK and European average prices
- While there may be inefficiencies in the selling systems in the UK (i.e. few electronic auctions compared with on the continent), problems with fish prices are only partly related to the selling system itself. Other problems include the decline in buyer numbers, the failure to orientate fishing activity and post harvest care of the catch to maximize quality, and inefficiencies within existing infrastructure
- Price ringing is certainly a problem at many ports, especially where buyer concentration increases. However, such “restrictive” practices are seen by the merchanting/processing systems as a necessary means by which price increases may be tempered so as to control the cost of purchases and maintain buyer margins at levels that keep companies trading
- Markets remain strong where quality is known to be good
- Prices for nephrops have remained static in real terms of the last 10 years. The only positive development has been the transition to selling a growing proportion of the catch as whole nephrops, and to export. This has allowed for some increased in individual port prices. Prices of the smaller nephrops remain vulnerable to the influence of a reduced number of buyers, and in some cases have seen a steady decline
- The analysis of European fish prices showed average price differentials for many species compared to UK prices. Significant differentials exist for monkfish, whole nephrops and cod (+200%, 100% and 30% respectively). In some cases, there are no differentials (plaice and sole)
- Buyers and fishermen both realize that the key supply-side determinants of price are volume, quality and size. High volume markets sustain good prices because they attract and retain buyers. Larger sized fish sustain good prices, and when quality fish is landed, most buyers respond by offering higher prices
- Main demand variables are buyer concentration and consumer demand. Evidence for buyer collusion is strongest for nephrops tails (ports surveyed for nephrops included Eyemouth, Fraserburgh, Kilkeel, Mallaig, North Shiels, Peterhead, Pittenween and Troon)
- Selling charges were not found to vary enormously between ports, suggesting a well-developed degree of competition between ports, and transaction costs being an important reason why fishermen chose to land product at particular ports

122. Prices at Fleetwood were investigated for plaice and sole as part of the study, but unfortunately not for cod. Average prices for sole and plaice at Fleetwood were consistently low compared to other ports surveyed. But cod, haddock, and dogfish prices are reported in the MEP study to be slightly above national averages. If this is indeed the case, it is likely to be as a result of strong demand for these species in Fleetwood’s main regional markets. Given the numerous problems of analyzing price data, it is difficult to comment with any great degree of certainty, and

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<sup>9</sup> Fish Prices and Electronic Auctions, Richard Banks Ltd, 2001

to make generalisations, about price levels. However, buyer numbers are relatively low at Fleetwood compared to many other ports, and annual quantities purchased per merchant also lower, indicating a small size of business compared to other locations. If there is indeed a question about prices and the failure of Fleetwood to realize higher prices relative to other ports, it may be the result of such factors. Certainly one would usually expect that concentration of buyer numbers demonstrates distinct competitive advantage from the buyer's point of view compared to the perspective of the catching sector. Fleetwood does not have any really large processors of the scale found in some other ports and the requirements of such large firms to keep factory production lines fully utilized, and the need to maintain supplies to supermarkets at whatever the costs or risk losing orders, mean that these large firms are likely to pay above the odds in such circumstances. Companies at Fleetwood also rely heavily on imports, which could also have a significant impact on domestic prices. Finally, any low prices paid to fishermen at Fleetwood may also be the result of a high degree of buyer specialization (see Section 5.2.1), with individual buyers tending to have niche markets and specialist product requirements, meaning that competition for particular species, sizes and quality, may be more limited than at other ports.

#### **5.1.6 Investment, Human Resources and Cultural Factors**

123. With the relatively low earnings from fishing, which are more or less universally true for all sizes of vessels based at, and operating from NW ports, and with crew employed on a share basis, it is hardly surprising that it is proving difficult to recruit young people into the industry. Such recruitment is essential if the knowledge currently held by those fishing is to be passed on to a new generation. The traditional hand-over of vessels from father to son has become less popular as vessel owners often see a high value 'retirement fund' in terms of fishing units earned that can be sold. This pattern is not unique to the NW, and is being reflected across the UK.

124. A lack of investment in the catching sector is partly due to the historical presence of large trawler companies operating out of Fleetwood. The presence of such companies constrained investment by local fishermen, and when the companies moved from Fleetwood, there was a lack of financial resources left in the local community that could be used for re-investment. The lack of any "city fathers" involved with the fishing industry to provide support, motivation, and a drive for development, has also proven a factor in the general decline of the catching sector in particular.

125. Another reason for the decline in the offshore fleet activity has been the increasing lack of crew willing to commit to relatively long trips to the western Irish Sea and the NW of Scotland. This partially reflects the lower profitability of the Fleetwood offshore fleet, the conditions aboard the ageing vessels, and the need for appropriate safety and at sea training (which just about all fishermen have completed). So while unemployment in Fleetwood itself is 4.4% of the urban workforce (almost 600 people, and 490 of them male), the difficulty of obtaining crew reflects the status of fishing as an occupation, and the working conditions involved. In addition the recent growth in white-collar alternatives, such as in the retail sector of the 'Freeport' complex, has again eroded the ability of the industry to attract young people into the sector.

### 5.1.7 Strengths and Weaknesses

#### 5.1.7.1 Strengths

126. In summary, the main strengths of the catching sector are:

- Good pool of local knowledge and skills
- Good freshness of fish landed by most local boats (as measured by the SFIA in a confidential quality audit of Fleetwood)
- Strategically well-placed for the Irish Sea and more distant grounds (Celtic Sea and West of Scotland)
- Strong ancillary support industries
- Some stable fish stocks (nephrops, scallops, plaice)
- Competitive cost structure compared to other vessels in the Irish Sea
- Versatility of inshore sector

#### 5.1.7.2 Weaknesses

127. The main weaknesses of the catching sector are

- In recent years the catching sector has been in decline
- Lack of investment in the industry, and the high costs of investment
- Inadequate use of ice and temperature control of fish by some (smaller) vessels
- Low fish prices relative to other Irish Sea ports (Kilkeel)
- High average age of vessels
- Adverse weather and wind conditions which severely restrict days spent at sea, especially for the smaller vessels
- An additional constraint to inshore vessels is that inshore waters, whilst historically finding it lucrative to fish for benthic species, find it difficult to work in the local strong currents. Fish availability in these areas is also perceived as being highly seasonal
- Over-exploitation of many fish stocks. Some of those not over-exploited or with some potential for increased catches e.g. plaice, have low market values, or are located too far for inshore vessels to target (e.g. scallops)
- Shortage of quota
- There has been little attempt by any of the vessels to diversify their fishing activities into fishing for other species. There has been a poor response to other fishing methods because:
  - gill net fish are perceived within Fleetwood (as opposed to other ports) as being of very poor quality.
  - seine net fish is perceived as having good quality but is too small
  - no tradition for scallop dredging or nephrops trawl fishing
- A negative attitude of many traditional fishermen in the community typified by the practice of ensuring that landing days correspond with unemployment benefit collection
- Difficulties of obtaining reliable crew on both larger vessels, and the inshore fleet, because of crew earnings, and other factors related to working conditions, trip lengths and the low status of fishing as an occupation, general pessimism about the future etc.

128. However, despite the rather long list of weaknesses presented above, there are some positive movements:

- PO members have been acquiring quota on a gradual basis, indicating some confidence in the sector. However, quota might also be deemed to be an investment asset as opposed to development opportunity, as members require remittance to the acquired value of the quota, on leaving the PO
- Investment by at least one processor into a fishing vessel, with possible additional investment from other processors in the port
- Diversification into prawn trawling by the same said processor
- Some young progressive family skippers entering the fleet

## **5.2 Processing and Marketing**

### **5.2.1 Background and Specialization**

129. The port appears to have reached a watershed and is recovering from the significant declines in activity in the 1990s. There is a dynamic and vibrant trading cluster (supporting the RPG's Policy EC5), that can only exist in an area with strong fishing traditions. The labour force remains conducive to working in the fishing industry and several processing companies (M&J, C&G Neve, John Wilson, and Haytons) are expanding. There are few constraints in terms expansion regarding land, capital, and transport. But the crucial constraints are ones of product supply and labour. Whilst all western European processors face similar difficulties of product supply, the limited number of processors in Fleetwood, as compared to Humberside, means that Fleetwood has to compete heavily for supplies destined to Humberside from the Faeroes, North East Scotland, Iceland and Norway. With regard to labour, although labour is available, there is also a problem of appropriate skill levels and labour retention.

130. Fleetwood's processing sector is strategically well-placed for access to markets in NW England, which represent one of the highest concentrations of demand for fish throughout the country. One constraint however, if any, is that the market is mainly responsive to traditional consumer preferences, such as fresh cod, haddock, plaice and roker (skate). Demand for under-utilized species is limited. In addition, attempts by some processors to diversify through product innovation have been hampered, not because of a lack processing ideas, but rather because of insufficient marketing knowledge about how to push new products into new markets.

131. Competition for supplies within the port is healthy given the fact that there remains a hard core of active processors and smaller scale buyers on the market (35 buyers). A key strength to the marketing for Fleetwood's processors is that each company tends to specialize in specific outlet types e.g.:

- C&G Neve – supermarket trade
- John Wilson – export and supplies to wholesalers
- M&J Seafoods – UK choice fish retail markets
- Rick Horabin – fish & chip retailers
- Oban Fish – local salesmen
- Haytons – Fish wholesalers in Manchester, Birmingham
- A&M Seafoods – International export and domestic markets for value added shellfish products

132. With the exception of A&M Seafoods, the local processors are focused towards selling primary processed (fillets and a large number of other related products) fish. Some smoking also takes place. However, unlike Grimsby and Hull, large-scale diversification into secondary value added processing has not occurred. This is by no means a weakness. It is simply that the main focus of Fleetwood processing has been on producing a good quality fresh fish product. A constraint in this respect has been sourcing product on the UK national and international market. A further problem is that when supplies are available, they are available on mass, and Fleetwood's existing capacity finds it difficult to respond to high supply flows. Poor supply periods, can also result in heavy competition for fish between the competing ports, thus given the limited number of buyers relative to Grimsby, Fleetwood may well be second choice, as a destination. The fact that two specific companies, one of which includes Wyre Dock Management, successfully attract supplies is a credit to the dynamism of the existing entrepreneurs.

133. A key feature of the current arrangements is the independence and accountability of the auction system. WFDM is ABP's contractor appointed to run the auction, which is financially and organisationally independent of processors/producers. The sender has access to WFDM auctioneers tickets (i.e. transparent sale) and is also protected by a cheque guarantee system. This has brought confidence in the auction system which 10 years ago was not the case.

134. Of course what the port crucially requires is a steady flow of product. The traditional main flows for this have been:

- Fish from Northern Ireland. Much of this (prime cod) tends to by-pass Fleetwood for Humberside, although haddock is usually available regularly
- Fish from the Irish Republic. Whilst this has filtered through the port, the move towards centralized selling in Ireland has resulted in direct links between Irish primary and UK secondary processors, thus by-passing the port
- Fish from other west coast ports. Much of the fish from Whitehaven and Maryport is sold directly to the Continent, although some still finds its way from these ports when high landings are made, particularly into Whitehaven
- Supplies by Spanish owned vessels. Much of this catch was simply unloaded and consigned to Spain. Spanish vessels are most unlikely to want to use the port again as a result of one of its vessels recently bottoming out in the harbour channel.

135. A large proportion of supplies now tend to be fish from Scrabster, landed by Faeroese vessels, consigned to Fleetwood. The quantity of local supplies coming through the market now accounts for as little as less than 10 % of the total. The advantage of this locally landed supply is that it is of very high quality with the majority of local fishermen (especially on the larger vessels) well orientated to producing a top quality product. The problem stems from the fact that there has been an increasing rate of decline in supplies, caused primarily by retirement and decommissioning of the local fleet. A further problem is that where the processor has an investment in the vessel, on occasions fish may be sold direct to processors as opposed to being sold over the market. Consequently, some processors are denied the facility of competing for the fish.

136. One processor has taken the initiative of acquiring its own fleet. The advantage this has for the business is that it can trade on the basis of guaranteeing complete traceability for the product, improved quality, as well as helping to reduce variations in supply from product bought on markets. This issue of traceability is increasingly important, and open's up possibilities for

new sales opportunities. The processor is also best placed to decide when to deliver fish which is excess to his processing requirements onto the market.

137. One way to achieve better and more consistent volumes on the market is likely to be an increase in the buying capacity. Electronic sales are a means to achieve this. The PEFA system was considered for Fleetwood in the late 1990's but did not appear to fit well with Fleetwood's trading patterns<sup>10</sup>, and ABP opened some discussions with Grimsby on an electronic link. There is already a lot of complementarity between the ports (trading/transport/weather factors) and both are after similar raw material, especially for the chip shop/restaurant/hawker type trade. A strategic link with Grimsby needs greater consideration and could bring benefits to both ports and also strengthen the auction system as a conduit for producers to market their fish. Fleetwood merchants will increasingly be competing with everyone else for supplies via other markets and direct sales, so it may make sense to secure more fish availability actually on the market at Fleetwood. A DEFRA funded study<sup>11</sup> into the costs and benefits of electronic auctioning was unable to categorically state how new electronic auctions would respond to change. The principal constraint to the development of electronic auctions lies in the fact that a very substantial part of the UK's trade is illegally caught black fish. This inhibits the functioning of a market since sales may by-pass conventional trading channels, and also results in over supply that reduces prices. Electronic auctioning is transparent and quantities traded can be traced to catcher and processor alike, hence the reluctance by some to trade through the system. However, the report concludes that a proper functioning electronic auction will produce winners – larger processors and catchers, and losers, smaller localized processors. It is arguable, that with existing rationalisation of the processing sector, the loss of small-scale processors is inevitable in the long term.

138. In the context of Fleetwood, the DEFRA study suggests the following:

- The catchers will gain as a result to greater competitive marketing
- Stranger vessels will be attracted to the port
- Smaller processors will find it harder to compete for supplies with remote buyers entering a market
- A strong electronic auction will inevitably attract greater supplies, a link with the Humber ports might result in a reduction of throughput through Fleetwood as opposed to an increase, and processors thus subjected to additional transport costs
- It will be easier to sell the more marginal species where local demand is limited e.g. nephrops

139. ABP, the catching sector and processors also need to have discussions and consultation between themselves on the implications of the registration of buyers/sellers and of lobbying for Fleetwood to become a Designated Auction System.

## 5.2.2 Costs and Earnings

140. Like the catching sector, the processing sector in Fleetwood has undergone significant rationalization. This trend is consistent with the rationalization process that is taking place in the processing sector throughout Europe, and in the UK as a whole. In the last 10 years, the number of UK fish processing businesses has halved. However, the average throughput for those remaining has increased reflecting, in some cases, company amalgamations. A survey completed

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<sup>10</sup> PEFA's primary focus has been on flatfish with some expansion into selling nephrops to the Spanish, French and Italian markets. Evidence suggests that PEFA's network of buyers is inadequate to address the problem of purchases and sales of primary whitefish.

<sup>11</sup> Fish Prices and Electronic Auctions, Richard Banks Ltd, February 2001

in 2000 by the SFIA, and which compared data with that collected in 1995, revealed a number of key factors for the sector in the UK as a whole:

- The primary processing sector has been worst hit, with a 30% reduction in the number of processing units and a 2% decline in employment since 1995, as firms either cease trading, amalgamate with others, or take on some secondary processes
- There was an increase in the proportion of firms noting difficulty in recruiting trained staff
- The primary sector has been worst hit because supplies have fallen with imports not managing to offset the decline in local supplies, and these firms are particularly dependent on fish via local markets
- Fish available via auction markets in the UK has declined considerably. Overall shortages of supply appear to be a greater problem than variability in supply, but processors of pelagic fish and shellfish have not experienced the same difficulties obtaining supplies
- Primary sector sales direct to the retail sector have decreased, but there has been an increase in sales to pubs, hotels and restaurants
- Although sales have increased in value in real terms since 1995, so have costs, and margins have decreased further for the primary sector. Fish purchases continue to make up around 75% of the value of sales. Many primary processing firms' operating profits were hovering around the break-even point
- The mixed sector also suffered from low margins and operating profits, with smaller margins than in 1994. With tight margins, it is necessary to maintain a certain minimum volume of throughput to enable fixed costs to be covered
- For many firms, chances of survival may hinge on diversification and/or being able to merge to form bigger firms, with greater power to buy fish on direct contracts from boats or through importing
- Cash flow is a major concern for most firms, with processors extending much longer credit to their customers than their fish suppliers afford them. Competition between processors is often on credit terms so firms are unable to demand shorter terms from their customers for fear that they would simply transfer their business to another processor
- Quality is a major issue of concern for many processors, with buyers avoiding fish from particular vessels if they know quality is usually poor

141. These overall trends are likely to be much reflected in the story of Fleetwood, with the number of processors having fallen dramatically in the last 25 years. In 1976, the Fleetwood FMA (Fish Merchants Association) had 76 members. The current membership is 30. However, very few processors have historically supplied the SFIA with sufficient data to enable an analysis of costs and earnings for the Fleetwood sector on its own, compared to other UK processors. Some companies have filled in questionnaires, but most have declined to provide information on turnover, which means that it is not possible to profile cost structures. This is a great shame, and had the SFIA held such data, it would have been possible to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of processors in Fleetwood compared to other areas in the UK. This would no doubt have thrown up particular problems and assisted with the recommendation of appropriate strategies. As a result, all that is possible is to examine the business profile of whitefish processors of under 25 employees in the SFIA 2001 update, and use this as a proxy for the costs and earnings of processors in Fleetwood. The 2001 update is intended to categorize the UK processing industry into more detailed categorizations than was possible in the 2000 survey, so that benchmarking is possible between different sectors, and so that firms can consider which sectors are currently most successful, and can compare their own financial results with average figures. Some key points from this update include:

- Secondary processing companies have performed worse in terms of operating profit as a % of sales than mixed and primary processors during the years ended 2000 and 2001. Reasons may include the fact that research and development costs that larger processors have to undertake to stay popular with supermarkets may not always carry a positive net present value, or that associated costs are not passed on to the customer. It is also possible that indirect costs (overheads) of secondary processors in such items as advertising and marketing may be higher because primary processors tend to sell to an established client base, are not attempting to expand turnover and therefore have lower indirect costs. However, large secondary processing companies generally performed better than smaller secondary processing companies and did still make profits (suggesting perhaps that small primary processing firms in Fleetwood would not be served well by a move into larger and/or secondary processing units)
- Primary processors with fewer than 25 employees had the highest direct costs as a % of sales, as would be expected, and pre-tax profits were higher for primary and mixed processors with fewer than 25 employees than for larger mixed processors and secondary processors
- Days granted by creditors for payment of debts by primary processors of less than 25 employees, and for mixed processors of less than 25 employees are about 15 and 30 days respectively. For both categories of processors, this is about half the time taken by processors to collect their debts from customers, but generally less than for other types and sizes of processing companies
- Demersal processors have, on average, lower indirect costs as a percentage of sales than pelagic, shellfish and crustacea processors. Since the average fish purchases as a percentage of sales was found to be significantly higher for demersal processors, this suggests that demersal processor's profits will be highly variable according to the price and availability of fish supplies. Given that pre-tax profits were 2.4% for firms sampled, there is a concern that any significant reduction in supplies of demersal species, or price rises, could threaten the viability of some demersal processors.

142. A table comparing key costs and earnings data for different types and sizes of processor is shown below, and could be used by Fleetwood processors to benchmark their own financial performance.

**Table 11 – Financial performance of processors, 2000/1**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>Total costs</b>	96.3	94.2	98.4	95.0	96.6	94.2	95.3	97.4	96.3	101.2	98.7	101.0	99.2	94.6	94.9	96.6	93.5	95.8
<b>Direct costs</b>	81.0	77.4	88.3	81.4	89.6	79.5	79.0	80.7	89.1	87.4	90.0	87.8	66.1	79.4	79.7	85.1	83.2	78.5
<b>Gross profit</b>	18.8	22.6	12.2	18.6	10.4	24.7	20.5	19.3	10.9	12.6	*	12.2	33.9	22.6	20.3	14.9	16.8	21.5
<b>Indirect costs</b>	15.3	16.7	10.1	13.6	7.0	14.7	16.3	16.7	7.2	13.8	8.7	13.2	33.1	15.2	15.2	11.5	10.3	17.3
<b>Operating profit</b>	4.1	5.9	1.9	5.2	3.4	6.4	5.2	2.9	3.7	-0.5	2.1	-0.6	0.8	6.1	5.1	3.5	6.5	4.2
<b>Pre-tax profit</b>	3.6	5.1	1.6	2.9	3.3	4.0	4.3	2.6	3.6	-0.6	1.3	-2.0	-2.4	5.4	1.8	1.8	6.4	2.0
<b>Debtor days</b>	41.3	56.9	50.7	59.9	28.7	52.1	39.3	47.9	36.2	55.7	59.8	47.5	N/a	49.9	65.4	74.6	48.1	56.8
<b>Creditor days</b>	26.3	35.1	30.7	22.8	12.8	17.6	21.0	20.1	23.6	N/a	24.8	24.1	N/a	27.0	18.1	35.5	20.2	20.5

Notes:

All figures are % of sales, except for debtor and creditor days

\* = fewer than 3 cases available

1 = mixed processors, processing mixed fish types

3 = mixed processors, processing demersal fish

5 = primary processors, processing demersal fish

7 = mixed fish type processors with 1-25 full-time employees (FTE)

9 = demersal processors with 1-25 FTEs

11 = demersal processors with 51-100 FTEs

13 = pelagic processors with 1-25 FTEs

15 = shellfish processors with 51-100 FTEs

17 = crustacea processors with 1-25 FTEs

2= mixed processors, processing pelagic fish

4 = mixed processors, processing shellfish

6 = primary processors, processing shellfish

8 = mixed fish type processors with 26-50 FTEs

10 = demersal processors with 26-50 FTEs

12 = demersal processors with 101+ FTEs

14 = shellfish processors with 1-25 FTEs

16 = shellfish processors with 101+ FTEs

18 = crustacea processors with 51-100 FTEs

143. The type of processing businesses now left in Fleetwood include importers and exporters, primary fish filleters, and shellfish processing, although whitefish remains the major product type passing through the processing units. Encouraging features include young entrepreneurial management, significant locational advantages in respect to good access to factors of production (land, labour and transport) and good access to the local market, the Manchester / Liverpool conurbation being one of the largest in the country. In addition, the town benefits from the cluster effect of the relatively large number of firms still in operation. On the negative side is the lack of IT skills in many of the smaller processing companies.

### **5.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses**

#### *5.2.3.1 Strengths*

144. The key strengths remain:

- A dynamic industry, with some recent expansion by individual companies
- Current auction system arrangements
- Good processing skills
- Access to good quality fresh fish landed by local vessels
- An industry associated with second generation buyers
- Some willingness in the local sector to invest in fishing vessels
- Access to a strong market
- Versatile marketing, and specialization by different firms in different market outlets
- Access to good transport linkages (with the exception of problems relating to the A585)
- Available labour which isn't so stigmatized with the negative attitudes associated with the catching sector
- A significantly improved confidence in the financial standing of the ports processing sector
- Access to land

#### *5.2.3.2 Weaknesses*

145. The key problems experienced by processing/marketing companies in the port relate to the following:

- Insufficient local supplies
- Competition for supplies from other ports, increased internationalization of market supply and demand, and a danger that electronic market evolution may by-pass Fleetwood
- The small size of many processing companies?
- The lack of IT skills and interest exhibited by many smaller processors
- Lack of marketing skills to push new products, and the costs associated with doing so
- More variable freshness of consigned fish
- The costs of training filleters (costs relating to upgrading youngsters to cut prime fillets, without incurring financial losses due to un-saleable fish used during the training process) and availability of skilled personnel
- The danger to smaller scale processors as electronic marketing comes in. Evidence suggests that rationalization of the local processing sector throughout the UK may not yet be complete

### **5.3 Infrastructure, harbour management and support services**

#### **5.3.1 Background to Port Development**

146. Fleetwood port developed initially as a trading port, but local entrepreneurs quickly adopted steam technology in the early part of the century and developed the town's steam trawler fleet. Fleetwood has historically been home to many of the deep-water and local trawlers fishing the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea and the North Atlantic as far as Iceland. The port has long had a major fish market and important trading and processing industries. This level of activity helped justify investment in the Fish Dock. However, with the decline in vessel numbers and capacity, the scale of infrastructure has become misaligned with the capacity now required by the industry. There is thus increasing pressure on harbour space, and on surrounding land, for re-development for leisure activities such as marina berths, housing developments, shopping facilities (e.g. The Freeport).

#### **5.3.2 Facilities and Location**

147. Tidal access to the harbour is perhaps the biggest problem for the larger local vessels, and the biggest obstacle to attempts to attract more visiting vessels that would bring revenue to ABP, Fylde Ice, and local ancillary services, and help to increase supplies of fish to the market and local processors. Since the 'Erimo' ran aground in the dock channel, Spanish vessels have been reluctant to return to the port. Fleetwood used to have SW beamers landing, and the remaining Belgian beamers now land in Liverpool where ice is cheaper, and where the port is easier to negotiate (Fleetwood has difficult tides) and is non-tidal. Efforts have been made to get Belgian vessels in through marketing and presentations, but this hasn't worked, partly because the Belgians are on 'days at sea' so tidal access is a problem as they want to come late to maximize fishing time. Other reported reasons for the decline in stranger vessels include less stringent policing of landings in Liverpool, proximity to the airport, antagonism from local crews on the dock in Fleetwood, better proximity of Liverpool to fishing grounds at certain times of the year, road access on the A585, and the "night life" in Liverpool.

148. Nevertheless, it is certainly true that stranger vessels tend to follow the lead of other vessels of similar nationality, and that favoured landing locations do vary with time for a variety of reasons. So, while the economics of landing into Fleetwood mean that efforts to attract vessels are unlikely to be successful, this is not to say that the issue shouldn't be re-visited from time to time. Liverpool may at some stage in the future be less keen to have visiting fishing vessels, and there may be some scope to attract these vessels back to Fleetwood.

149. However, the basis of a strong port infrastructure remains, both in terms of quay wall (800m), landing berths, lighting, safe ladder access, life-saving equipment, and the condition of the concrete apron on the quay. Larger vessels moor in Fish Dock, while inshore vessels moor at Jubilee Quay (where tidal access to vessels is also a problem, but where charges are lower). The fish market, with a floor space of 1300m<sup>2</sup>, is in good condition, with potable water, adequate lighting and signage of prohibited practices, and well-maintained staff facilities.

150. The port's landlord, ABP, whilst acknowledging that rationalization to the port's infrastructure is still required, has publicly committed to the port, and to fisheries as one of a number of uses. In this regard, ABP acknowledge that the future of the port relies heavily on a combination of incomes from different activities – specifically property rentals, the marina and the fishing industry. Quayside requirements for the fishing industry have contracted over the years, and this provides ABP with the opportunity to progressively release redundant land for

economic use, e.g. the Freeport expansion along the northern quay if approved<sup>12</sup>. While government policy on ports may work to ensure that fishing remains an integral part of Fleetwood harbour, commercial pressures on ABP are such that they must satisfy their shareholders through generation of greater profits, and this naturally places pressure on under-utilized space that may have previously been used by the fisheries sector.

151. The Fish Dock itself is well located for good access for vessels landing fish, and for many of the processors who have facilities close by. The location on the edge of town is close to good transport connections out of Fleetwood, and reduces problems of traffic and congestion within the town. However, the A585 itself is perceived by the processing sector, which has to bring large quantities of fish in and out of Fleetwood, as being a major irritation, adding time and costs to the transport of fish.

152. The active wholesale market in No.2 Fish Market and Processing Hall takes place on the west quay wall, while the No 1. Fish Market and Processing Hall is currently under-utilized, although has been subject to some recent capital works with the extension of vessel transshipment berths and the creation of a new lorry bay. The wholesale market has recently been re-furbished with funds from within the industry, and no major concerns exist about hygiene conditions or lack of facilities in themselves, although issues of waste management are a concern and are discussed in Section 5.3.3 below. Cold storage capacity with some processors is probably adequate to supply the needs of the port (given that other companies do not appear to have problems utilizing this capacity), as is potential ice production (although the quality of ice is reported by the catching sector to be poor), and there is adequate provision for fuel, oil, and water. Two areas of concern however are the inadequate provision of washroom facilities for fishermen, which can't help with attracting stranger vessels, and the quality and timely availability of ice.

153. Support infrastructure is also good with engineering, welding, painting etc still readily available, although some concerns now exist about future engineering support services. The slipway at Fleetwood is run by ABP, and considered to be very adequate for the needs of the fishing industry. Stranger vessels who were interviewed as part of the study also support these general conclusions about the availability of infrastructure and services as being sufficient.

### **5.3.3 Harbour Management and Charges**

154. The issue of harbour management and charges is perceived by many of the local catching sector to be a problem. Certainly the price of ice (£50/tonne) is significantly above the price at Whitehaven where it is £36/tonne, and many users consider charges for the slipway and ice to be excessive. However, recent analysis (MEP report of 1998) suggests that Fleetwood is no more expensive than other similar ports, although it is difficult to make direct comparisons. One visiting beamer vessel interviewed did report that dock charges were a major concern about landing to Fleetwood, along with the fact that there is not enough plaice and sole sold across the market. This means that it pays for them to pay for a wagon and transport fish to Holland for sale at a better price. Others interviewed did not report that Fleetwood has a reputation for high charges – rather that visiting vessels do not land there because of poor fishing in the area, tidal access, and other reasons discussed above in Section 5.3.2. But vessels reported no concerns over the quality of service provided by ABP, or with support services and infrastructure in Fleetwood.

155. Some of those in the catching sector interviewed feel that ABP remains more concerned about other harbour users, while others interviewed stated that charges weren't excessive, and that ABP were always open to negotiation. Certainly the general appearance of the No 1. Fish

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<sup>12</sup> This proposal has been called in to the Secretary of State to assess retail impacts

Market and Processing Hall in particular, is one that suggests a certain level of decline and neglect, which may in some way be reflective of management. However, it is acknowledged that much of the appearance of decline is due to the shrinking of the fishing sector and subsequent under-utilization of assets. It is hard therefore for ABP to deal with some issues prior to major re-developments taking place which would generate greater revenues to be used for harbour management. Having said this, there does appear to be a waste problem in the dock area, related to both dry and wet waste storage and disposal, but especially to offal storage, which is unacceptable. This could be tackled through relatively easy joint action by ABP and the industry.

#### **5.3.4 Other Harbour Users and Activities**

156. In addition to fisheries usage of the harbour, the dock channel, harbour and its environs are used for a number of non-fishing activities, although these uses are not thought to create any conflicts with the fishing industry:

- The assembly point for the RO/RO ferry
- Marina berths in Wyre Dock
- Marina Amenities
- The Freeport retail area, and associated parking, along Wyre Dock
- Housing development along Wyre Dock
- The 'Jacinta' Heritage Trawler Museum, which lies along the northern (condemned) quay wall in Fish Dock

157. It is noticeable that a large proportion of tourism activities in Fleetwood, trade on, and benefit from Fleetwood's fishing heritage. This is evidenced from publicity brochures for the Fleetwood Museum, the Fleetwood Mini Guide, and the Fleetwood market. However the fishing industry in no way benefits from the sale of its image and historical legacy.

#### **5.3.5 Strengths and Weaknesses**

##### *5.3.5.1 Strengths*

158. Infrastructure strengths include:

- The location of the harbour and market facilities in relation to the town, processing companies and transport networks from the M55 onwards to markets
- Plenty of space to accommodate all vessels and processing companies
- Market hall facilities
- General level of facilities for the catching sector and availability of support services

##### *5.3.5.2 Weaknesses*

- Some perceived concerns by the catching sector over the level of service provided by ABP and Fylde Ice to the fishing industry, based around charges and quality
- Access into and out of Fleetwood on the A585
- Fleetwood lacks some of the strengths associated with competitor ports, largely due to tidal access (access to the fish dock and market quay are restricted to a 2 ½ hour window on each tide via the lock at the entrance to the Wyre Dock)
- Inadequate provision of washroom facilities for fishermen
- Room for improvements in general cleaning and housekeeping practices in the market hall and box-washing room areas, and in the dock estate in general
- Scale of local catching sector not sufficient to generate adequate revenues to cover maintenance costs in the harbour

- Commercial pressure on ABP to use the Fish Dock for development or other activities generating more revenue than the fishing industry
- Northern Quay wall in Fish Dock is condemned, although still being used by the 'Jacinta'
- Lack of visiting vessels
- Offal and dry waste management

## 6 Whitehaven scoping

### 6.1 Catching sector

#### 6.1.1 Fleet Segments

159. Although Whitehaven has always been predominantly a commercial rather than a fishing port, fisheries have historically represented an important income-generating opportunity for the area. Whitehaven used to be the base for a number of large trawlers and a significant plaice seiner fleet but many of these vessels have left or been decommissioned. There are currently 28 vessels registered in Whitehaven, of which 11 are over and 17 under 10 m in length (see Table 12). The majority of the larger boats target nephrops over the summer (May to November), with many moving to the North Sea to target whitefish over the winter. The nephrops fishery also attracts large numbers of visitor boats, especially from Northern Ireland as well as other regional UK ports, including Fleetwood. A couple of boats also fish the Manx scallop grounds. The smaller vessels also target nephrops as well as fishing inshore for flatfish, brill, turbot and roker. An increasing number of smaller boats are also potting for lobsters, although the number is stabilizing as the recently introduced shellfish permit scheme has reduced the number of part-time operators. Many of these fishermen switch to fixed nets, mainly for cod, during the winter.

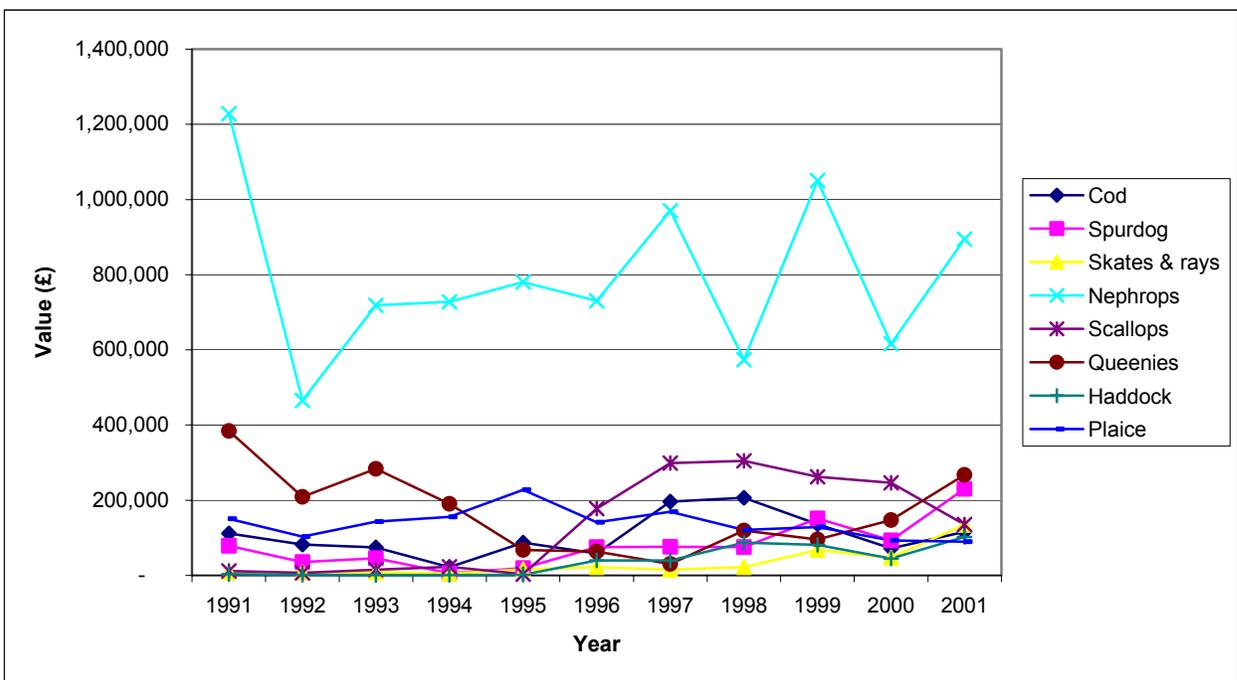
**Table 12: Fishing Vessels Registered in Whitehaven**

Name	PO	Status (if known)	Fishing area & targets	Overall length m	GRT	Engine power	VCU	Year built
Radiant Light	NIFPO	Active	North Shields	21.4	81.0	317	270.4	1967
Siskin	NIFPO	Active	Irish Sea	20.9	72.0	336	267.7	1969
Sunbeam	NIFPO	Commissioned	---	19.6	96.0	232	224.7	1972
Karen	NIFPO	Active	Irish Sea / North Shields	19.2	50.0	201	197.8	1975
Sanrene	NIFPO	Active	Irish Sea / North Shields	17.8	34.2	111	143.9	1969
Kinloch	ANIFPO	Active	Irish Sea / North Shields	12.8	18.6	128	113.0	1969
Seascan	NON PO	Non-active	Research for BNFL	12.6	17.2	95	103.4	1962
Syrinen	ANIFPO	Active	Not known	12.1	17.7	82	92.4	1959
Patsy Anne	NIFPO	Active	Eastern Irish Sea	11.6	10.2	104	88.8	1969
Becca		Active	Eastern Irish Sea	>10m				
Justyn		Not known	---	>10m				
Tolerance	NON PO	Active		9.8	13.6	96	85.5	1997
Nan	NON PO	Laid up	---	9.6	5.6	93	75.5	1992
Revenge	NON PO	Laid up	---	9.5	4.8	52	55.1	1976
Marie C	NON PO	Not known	---	9.5	5.5	87	69.1	1970
Teddera	NON PO	Active	Eastern Irish Sea	9.5	13.2	149	107.7	1992
Fruitful	NON PO	Laid up	---	9.4	7.4	59	57.4	1955
Pisces	NON PO	Part-time	Inshore	9.2	5.6	82	68.9	1988
Dabar	NON PO	Part-time	Inshore	9.1	6.3	90	71.0	1970
Sapphire	NON PO	Active	Inshore (lobster/crab)	7.3	1.5	121	71.7	1982
Lady Emma	NON PO	Active	Inshore angling trips	7.3	5.6	60	45.6	1987
Midweek	NON PO	Not known	---	7.2	2.2	52	43.9	1973
Alison II	NON PO	Active	Inshore (lobster/crab)	7.0	0.9	16	21.1	1982
Daybreak	NON PO	Laid up	---	7.0	1.8	48	39.1	1991
Sea Spray II	NON PO	Laid up	---	6.8	1.8	38	37.2	1973
Laura	NON PO	Active	Inshore (lobster/crab)	5.0	0.8	30	22.1	1979
Steven Claire II	NON PO	Active	Lobster	4.4	0.8	22	17.7	1969
Sea Nymph	NON PO	Laid up	---	4.3	0.6	6	9.8	1992

### 6.1.2 Landings

160. Landings into Whitehaven are dominated by nephrops, which account for 45-50% of the value of the total (see Figure 5 below). Between 50-60% of the nephrops catch is landed by Northern Ireland registered vessels. Other key landings include queen scallops that have steadily increased at the expense of their larger relation, scallops. A similar trend is shown for traditional whitefish species such as cod and plaice that have declined in favour of skates (mainly roker) and spurdog. Together these species account for 80% of the landings (by value) in Whitehaven. Other species of lesser importance include sole, turbot and brill which each account for around 1% of the landings by value. Tidal access for the very large pelagic boats means that they have been landing to Workington instead. This has cost Whitehaven an important business segment, although it is retained in the region.

**Figure 5: Landings of Key Species into Whitehaven by Value (1991 - 2001)**



161. There appears to be a relative lack of skill in handling and landing whitefish due to the strong fleet emphasis on shellfish. For this reason Cumbria Seafoods prefers to buy from Fleetwood or even Iceland rather than purchase local supplies.

162. In 2001, 1,943 tonnes (live weight) was recorded as landed in Whitehaven. Of this 799 tonnes was finfish, with 1,121 tonnes of shellfish. 739 tonnes was landed by Scottish vessels (665 tonnes of shellfish and 74 tonnes of finfish), 603 tonnes by vessels from Northern Ireland (287 tonnes of shellfish and 316 tonnes of finfish), 584 tonnes by English vessels (175 tonnes of shellfish and 409 tonnes of finfish), and 2 tonnes by Irish vessels. The proportion of landed product from different countries has fluctuated over the years, but remained roughly equivalent to these proportions.

### **6.1.3 Access to the Resource**

163. Whitehaven is generally well positioned to access key resources in the Irish Sea, in particular the high value nephrops and Manx scallop fisheries. In addition, it has reasonable access to the inshore resources of Solway and Morecambe Bay, although both may be out of reach of the smaller vessels. However, the two major constraints are (i) the exposure to poor weather, and (ii) quota restrictions. These constraints must be seen against a background of over-exploitation of many species, especially whitefish, which now means that access to resources is severely restricted. While the main nephrops grounds are off the coast from Whitehaven, ownership of quota to exploit the stock is now largely held by Northern Irish and Southern Irish vessels. While it may therefore appear ludicrous that so much product is caught so close to Whitehaven and landed back into Northern and Southern Ireland (especially as much of it ends up back in Scotland again), this is the result of the property rights nature of quota management, and issues relating to prices as discussed below in Section 6.2.2. There is little that local vessels can do about it, except attempt to slowly acquire quota as resources allow.

164. As at Fleetwood, the weather conditions in Whitehaven mean that local vessels (especially the smaller ones) are often forced to stay in port for considerable periods. Where net earnings over the course of the year are marginal, even allowing for variable costs saved from not fishing, these lost days can have a significant impact on overall yearly profitability.

### **6.1.4 Earnings, Investment and Human Resources**

165. Again, much of the comment made about earnings for vessels operating out of Fleetwood also applies to Whitehaven (See Section 5.1.4, 5.1.5, and 5.1.6). Costs of fishing are up on recent years, fish prices have remained largely static for nephrops in recent years (and have declined for chat plaice), and costs of licences and quota have increased. However, as for vessels at Fleetwood, the cost structure of fishing vessels is thought to be relatively competitive. The main problems with regard to earnings and profitability relate to human resource issues, prices as discussed below in Section 6.2.2, and the weather. Given the status of stocks and associated catches, it is increasingly difficult to obtain reliable crew due to poor earnings, especially compared to other employment activities. A recent report<sup>13</sup> suggests that wage rates in Copeland Borough are relatively high due to wages on offer from BNFL. Craft/related occupations earn an average of £528/week gross earnings in the Borough, while plant/machine operatives earn £459/week. The average equivalent wage for fishers in Whitehaven is £ 197/week. It would therefore be an understatement to say that other job categories might be considered as competing for employment with the fishing industry. Added to this, the working conditions will inevitably be seen as a major disincentive. In addition, although unemployment levels remain high in the region compared to the UK average, it appears difficult to attract young people into the industry due to working conditions, working hours, safety etc. Many owners also report problems of obtaining reliable crew who will continue to want to go to sea once they have a bit of money in their pocket from the last fishing trip. Because of the above factors, many local vessels are now being forced to use semi-retired fishermen as crew, rather than training up young people.

### **6.1.5 Strengths and Weaknesses**

#### *6.1.5.1 Strengths*

166. The key strengths of the Whitehaven catching sector are:

- Close proximity to fish resources, both inshore and further a field in the Irish Sea
- Some stable fish stocks (nephrops, scallops, plaice)

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<sup>13</sup> An Economic Assessment of Cumbria, DTZ Pieda Consulting, 2002

- Versatility of the inshore sector

#### 6.1.5.2 Weaknesses

167. Key weaknesses are:

- Lack of investment in vessels, and costs of licences and quota
- Declining number of vessels
- Weather conditions
- Difficulty of obtaining reliable crew
- Poor prices
- Lack of quota
- Poor earnings compared to non-fishing employment
- Emphasis on nephrops which results in poor quality whitefish as bycatch

## 6.2 Processing and Marketing

### 6.2.1 Processing

168. There has not been any processing in Whitehaven itself, since the Salvessons factory closed and moved to Motherwell. However, Cumbria Cold Storage, a subsidiary of Cumbria Seafoods in Maryport, is based in Hensingham on the edge of Whitehaven. The company mainly processes mackerel and herring - for fresh and frozen whole, fillet, H&G and smoked products. They also process some whitefish and scallops. The factory was built in 1978 by R. Donnan to process nephrops, but was changed to pelagics in 1996, with the conversion funded by West Cumbria Development Agency with soft funding from British Steel. The company has the capacity to process 250 tonnes of mackerel a day, and employs around 25 persons full-time, with up to 65-70 during the peak periods. Mackerel is sourced from Norway in October then from NW Scotland after Christmas. They also buy from the NW coast and Irish fisheries. Main markets are located in Northern Europe (90%) with the rest largely smoked and sold into the UK retail sector. All pelagics are purchased from large boats and tidal access means that such vessels prefer to land at Workington. Supplies of scallops and nephrops come mainly from Whitehaven with product sold to Scotland. Supplies of raw material in general are limited, and whitefish quality is reported to be generally poor as it is taken as a bycatch of nephrops. Some concern is also expressed about the age of boats in Whitehaven and the quality of on-board handling. The company therefore tends to buy whitefish from Fleetwood or Iceland, both of which provide excellent quality. Most whitefish is smoked, with a newly installed 8 mt/day smoking capacity. Mackerel is hot-smoked and all others (herring, cod, haddock and a little whiting and halibut) cold smoked.

169. Cumbria Seafoods, the parent company of Cumbria Cold Storage is based in Maryport and was established just five years ago, but already has a 55 million turnover and 400 employees. The company doesn't do any processing itself, but just buys in primary processed product for use in their supply chain and distribution network. The company sells only fresh and chilled products, with the main markets being Tesco (haddock and cod, chilled coated fish e.g. fish cakes, chiller peeled prawns and prawn cocktails) and Morrisons (surimi, smoked salmon, wet pre-packed fish, chilled peeled prawns and prawn cocktails, and product for the fresh fish counter e.g. smoked and chilled, chilled coated, chilled shellfish e.g. cockles and mussels). The company also has a smoked salmon business within the group and sells into the food service sector – e.g. to Brake Brothers. Product is sourced from all over world, with Icelandic cod and haddock being especially important. In the UK, supplies come mainly from Grimsby, Peterhead, Fraserburgh, and Fleetwood. Fleetwood supplies consist primarily of haddock and coley from C&G Neve. Cumbria Seafoods also buy Morecambe Bay potted shrimp, but only on a small scale. Some of

the Whitehaven landings may ultimately be bought by Cumbria Seafoods, if sold on the Fleetwood market, then sold on to Tescos, only to end up in the Tescos store a few yards from Whitehaven harbour! There is currently no other retail wetfish outlet in Whitehaven.

### 6.2.2 Marketing

170. With regard to marketing of landed catch in Whitehaven, there is no auction market, and all product from both local and visiting vessels is sold through one of just three agents based at the port – R. Donnan Enterprises, Ralph Calvin, or Kilkeel Fish Selling Company. Ralf Calvin's business is the smallest of the three, but is also involved in the catching sector. These three agents then sell on to other buyers, but most nephrops ultimately end up at Youngs in Scotland, or at Ken Bell/Border Lairds. Youngs have a policy of only buying from one agent per port which can't help the catching sector to receive good prices, and in combination with tie-ups between some vessels and agents, it is widely acknowledged, not just by vessels based at Whitehaven, but also by vessels at other ports, that prices for product at Whitehaven are considerably lower than in Northern Ireland. While the agents are widely vilified by the catching sector for the low prices being paid, they themselves face constraints imposed by the lower prices being offered by Youngs and Border Lairds than for product in Northern Ireland because of the larger number of processing companies bidding for product in Kilkeel. Equally, the Whitehaven buyers are able to source a competitive product from other mainland UK ports, and in such instance, are not reliant on Whitehaven for supplies. This difference in price is estimated to result in at least £4-5 million (perhaps more) of nephrops being caught in the Eastern Irish Sea that is landed back into Northern Ireland each year.

171. However, low prices are also in part due to the reliance on the scampi market, rather than fulfilling the European demand for higher quality product, and the unfortunate fact that the Eastern Irish Sea nephrops fishery happens to coincide with huge amounts of (black) nephrops being landed into Scotland, which inevitably pushes the market price down.

172. Ways to solve the problem of low prices, to the benefit of both local merchants/agents, and the catching sector are not immediately apparent. Based on our initial investigations, electronic marketing at Whitehaven is not considered to be viable given the low throughput, competition with an already competitive market in Northern Ireland, and the fact that supplies of nephrops and other species landed in Whitehaven are so seasonal. There simply does not appear to be the critical mass necessary to make an electronic market viable, and given set-up costs, it is unlikely that an organization like PEFA would be interested. In addition, a link with another electronic market might offer the potential to bring in new (smaller?) buyers, but would run the risk of the existing companies (Youngs and Ken Bell) moving elsewhere to purchase cheaper product in Scotland. However, we would not want to rule out the possibility of such an electronic link altogether. Given that Section 7 recommends a full feasibility study into electronic marketing in Fleetwood, such a study could also consider in more detail the opportunities for electronic marketing in Whitehaven. The merit of electronic systems throughout the UK may improve considerably with increased legitimacy in the UK and European fish trade. This requires strong enforcement, which for the NW ports will be a double-edged sword. However, greater regulation and a reduction in black fish will result in significantly increased prices.

173. It is also difficult to see new individual investors or the POs being attracted to Whitehaven to set up a grading/processing, packaging and distribution system for the export of high value product to Spain and France, on the basis of a 3-5 month season for nephrops, and small local landings, especially when such a business would be competing against the year-round Scottish fishery for nephrops. There does not appear to be the entrepreneurial base within Whitehaven to do this in any case, and no cluster benefits as exhibited in Fleetwood.

174. While some concrete recommendations for Whitehaven are made in Section 7, W3M already appear to be doing most things possible to support local vessels and attract visitor landings through reasonable charges, incentives for greater landings, provision of good facilities etc. Greater amounts of product landed and marketed through the port by visitor vessels could perhaps be achieved with local buyers increasing prices and reducing margins wherever possible, so as to increase turnover. However, whether this would increase their profits given lower margins, is unclear as we have not been privy to this sort of commercially sensitive information.

### **6.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses**

#### *6.2.3.1 Strengths*

175. The main marketing strengths are
- Established clients for the three agents

#### *6.2.3.2 Weaknesses*

176. The main weaknesses are:
- Low prices compared to other ports
  - Irregular supply of product due to weather
  - No dedicated wetfish outlet in Whitehaven
  - Lack of any direct selling by fishermen or agents into local markets e.g. Lake District hotels, restaurants, Whitehaven tourism etc
  - Lack of any real processing in Whitehaven of product landed at the port
  - Poor quality of whitefish bycatch from the nephrops fishery

## **6.3 Infrastructure, Harbour Management and Support Services**

### **6.3.1 Historical Motivations for Development**

177. The port of Whitehaven, and the development of the town, was based on the trade in coal to Dublin, which began in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, with the first quay in the harbour constructed in 1634. Around this time, entrepreneurs also began to commission trips to American and the Caribbean to bring back cargoes of rum, sugar, spices, exotic timbers etc, which were mostly re-exported on to Europe. Whitehaven probably reached its peak of prosperity in the 1740's and 1750's, and while it was still a busy port at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, its importance was declining. Shipbuilding became increasingly important in deep-water ports such as Liverpool with increases in the displacement of merchant vessels, and the advent of the railways in the 1840's also meant that other coalfields were able to capture some of the Dublin coal trade. The last coal mine in the area closed in 1986, while Albright and Wilson imported phosphate rock in large quantities until 1990 using 2,500 tonne vessels. This historical background is important, as it provided the motivation for the harbour development, and associated infrastructure. The harbour did not develop primarily as one to service the fishing industry, and the size and construction of quay walls and harbour layout was very much intended to serve the needs of large bulk commodity vessels, rather than fishing vessels.

178. Against this background of decline, and resulting unemployment, the Whitehaven Development Company (now renamed the Whitehaven Third Millennium – W3M) was established in 1993 with the principal aim of re-focusing the economy away from its industrial background towards services and tourism. A key objective was to get the community involved

with the harbour. The company set about defining a business development plan, and an ambitious programme of re-development.

### **6.3.2 Facilities and Location**

179. The harbour now has 10ha of permanent water due to the construction of lock gates, which were completed in 1997. The gates a) provide flood protection (the town used to flood once or twice per year, whereas the gates are now designed for 1:200 & 1:500 flooding events), b) create a stable environment for investment, and c) enable fishing vessels (and pleasure craft) to access the harbour irrespective of the tides. The gates have a 60 year projected life-span. Developments, which were financed through a variety of grants channeled through W3M, such as the European Development Fund, the Environment Agency, Single Regeneration Budget, the NWDA etc. have also provided:

- an ice plant with 30 tonnes/day capacity and a storage of 50 tonnes
- A fuel tank with 900,000 litres capacity available 24 hours per day
- A market hall (with chill room, cabins for net repair, offices, market floor, toilets and showers)
- A new concrete apron around harbour
- Marina facilities with 153 berths, 120 of which are rented to resident vessels
- A boat lift (45 tonne capacity)
- Dredging of the harbour

180. The above list of facilities mean that the fishing industry is now extremely well catered for in terms of facilities, and the lock gates in particular have made a huge difference to the ability of local and visitor vessels to access the port irrespective of the tides. However, the market hall appears to be being underutilized. In addition, a number of small improvements to harbour infrastructure could also be made which would be of benefit to fishermen.

- Many fishermen interviewed expressed their concern over the lack of bollards and ladders around the Queens Dock and the North Harbour
- The overhanging quay wall in the Queens Dock makes access to small vessels problematic
- The boat-lift is too small for many of the fishing vessels, and there is no slipway in the harbour, meaning that vessels are required to go to Maryport if they need to be slipped
- No rubbish collection facilities where vessels unload catches.

181. Funds for recent developments were not made available for developments to Bulwark Quay, or to remove two large cranes located on the west wall of the quay which were previously used for unloading phosphate rock, as the quay was designated as being for commercial usage. Bulwark Quay represents a key asset of potential benefit to the fishing industry that is currently being little utilized. Investigations have revealed that selling the cranes is not feasible, and that their removal would cost in the region of £5-8000 each.

182. Some concern has also been raised over the availability of skills in support services in Whitehaven. There is currently just one shipwright, who is close to retirement.

### **6.3.3 Harbour Management and Charges**

183. Harbour management is reported to have improved significantly since the new facilities were completed, and harbour revenues for last year were in the region of £400,000. Certainly the general appearance of the harbour is one that seems to reflect good management. The decision to allocate the Queens Dock and the North Harbour for use by the fishing industry, and the Inner

Harbour, the Custom House Harbour, and the South Harbour for use by other sectors, is working well.

184. Harbour charges in Whitehaven are also serving to support the fishing industry. While fuel costs are slightly higher than in Fleetwood, ice costs are reasonable, and in addition to annual mooring fees, fishermen pay 2.5% landings dues. These are not considered high compared to other ports in England. It is also noted however, that harbour management has successfully increased these user fees since the investments were completed (of course to the dismay of most of the catching sector who were used to getting use of facilities for free), and in addition has levied a 1% landings fee on agents for landings of less than £6,000. The inherent principles in these charges of a) user pays, and b) incentives for those landing greater quantities, is to be recommended. It is also noted however, that some parties have expressed concern over the financial skill-base of harbour management in terms of billing, etc

185. The ability of the harbour to generate revenue to pay for its upkeep and management, is dependent not just on revenue from local vessels, but importantly from visiting vessels. While the number of visiting vessels have increased in recent years, charges at Whitehaven, while competitive with other English ports, are not reported to be competitive compared to ports in Northern Ireland. Visiting vessel boat owners are critical of the level of charges at Whitehaven, and suggest that charges would need to be reduced to significantly increase the level of landings. However, how real this criticism is, is not clear as landings charges are 2.5% in Whitehaven and in Northern Ireland. Fuel costs may be higher at Whitehaven, but it is likely given discussions held as part of this study that lower prices paid for product at Whitehaven (as discussed above) are a bigger factor in Northern Irish vessels preferring to land in Northern Ireland. In addition, there is likely to be considerable incentive for crews to prefer to land in Northern Ireland at the end of the week, and have the weekend at home, especially now that many vessels have chill facilities onboard.

186. No major infrastructure problems have been reported by visiting vessels interviewed as part of the study, although one vessel owner suggested that the depth of water is not as great as thought, and reported considerable keel damage after contact with the harbour bottom. One local vessel owner also reported periodic problems of larger visiting vessels tying up outside small vessel, hindering their ability to get to sea if the weather turns fine over the weekend when visiting boat crews have gone home. Such problems could be resolved through better harbour management, perhaps with designated areas for vessels of different sizes.

#### **6.3.4 Other Harbour Uses and Relation to Other Sectors**

187. Whitehaven harbour currently supports the activities of many other businesses and activities in addition to fishing activity. This is largely due to the integrated approach to development pursued by W3M. The whole harbour is viewed as a business, and the role of W3M itself has been crucial in accessing grants, facilitating development, devising business plans, changing working practices related to harbour management and so on.

188. Non-fishing activities, especially tourism and leisure, are now important activities within the harbour, as evidenced by the list of following organisations and activities based around the harbour:

- The Beacon – a tourism attraction and museum with gallery space and a coffee shop
- Beginning of the Sea to Sea cycle route
- Diving club
- Open World Yachts Ltd – yacht design and construction, and vessel servicing

- Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project – outdoor activities and training for the young
- Sea cadets
- 153 marina berths
- Visits (and possible permanent moorings) for tall ship tourist attractions
- Space for open-air events e.g. the recent concert provided by the Liverpool Symphony Orchestra, attended by 9,500 people
- Proposed fish restaurant
- Mobile refreshment stalls
- A bi-annual marine festival which generated 117,000 visitors over two days in 2001

189. While these activities do not, in themselves, provide any direct benefit to the fishing sector, they, and other activities related to tourism, do create possible revenue-generating opportunities for the harbour. And of course, a financially viable harbour is a pre-requisite for the continued operation of the fishing sector. Non-fishing revenues also offer the potential for charges to the fishing industry to be kept modest, while still ensuring the harbour as a whole has sufficient resources to engage in necessary maintenance and repairs, important for long-term sustainability of all activities and uses.

190. However, some current conditions and facilities could certainly be improved to attract greater tourism use. Car parking close to the harbour is currently a problem during special festivals and events, there are no public toilets in the harbour, and nowhere for tourists to sit and have a coffee/meal overlooking the harbour. There is certainly business potential for such an establishment, if space can be found.

### **6.3.5 Strengths and Weaknesses**

#### *6.3.5.1 Strengths*

191. The main strengths of the current infrastructure are:

- Recent provision of facilities which is adequately providing for local vessels, and helping to attract visitor vessels, mostly from Northern Ireland
- Integrated planning, and a layout which minimizes conflict between fishing and other sectors
- Good relationship between harbour management and users
- Expansion of tourism usage of the harbour
- Many weaknesses being addressed

#### *6.3.5.2 Weaknesses*

192. The main infrastructural weaknesses are:

- Under-utilisation of Bulwark Quay, and lack of power points on quay wall
- Under-utilisation of new market hall
- Overhanging quay walls which result in difficult access to and from vessels
- Lack of sufficient ladders and bollards
- Siltation of the harbour
- Some concerns over the efficiencies of business practices employed by harbour management e.g. for paying bills, invoicing etc.
- Boat lift too small to be used by many fishing vessels, and no slipway in the harbour
- Pressure on land usage, and little available space for development
- A lack of some facilities and amenities, which would be beneficial for tourism usage.

## 7 Development Opportunities

193. The above scoping assessments for Fleetwood and Whitehaven have highlighted a number of key strengths and weaknesses of the catching sector, processing sector, and infrastructure facilities in the NW. The challenge is to build on these existing strengths, turn some of the weaknesses around, and identify opportunities and strategies to assist the sector for the future. Such strategies and development opportunities must support, and comply with, the planning and wider policy framework in the region as discussed in Section 3.6. There are many problems that can be tackled, and it is our belief that the catching and processing sectors can, and should, continue to play an important part in the economic and social fabric of the region.

194. Some of the achievable development opportunities relate to the region as a whole, while some refer specifically to Fleetwood or Whitehaven. The following text therefore includes both overall regional opportunities, and opportunities for Whitehaven and Fleetwood.

195. To support the sector (at both regional and local level) it is necessary to follow through a certain number of key steps, and to attempt to mitigate against the threats to implementation discussed in Section 8. First is to develop an overall vision, then a clear set of objectives in support of the vision, then strategies to implement the objectives, and finally action plans to implement the strategies. The scope of this study goes down to the level of the action plans themselves, but it is acknowledged that further work needs to be done to specify these action plans in more detail by those that will be involved in their actual implementation. Of course, what is most important is that such strategies and actions are actually implemented.

### 7.1 Overall Vision

196. The overall vision for the fisheries sector in the NW should be:

*“An economically and environmentally sustainable catching and processing sector, creating employment and adding value in the NW region, based on production of quality products, and supporting economic development in the region as a whole.”*

### 7.2 Objectives in Support of the Vision

197. Six key objectives are identified in support of this vision, all of which are mutually supportive. They are:

- g) To encourage or sustain investment in the sector*
- h) To increase the economic benefit for those engaged in catching and processing fish in the region*
- i) To increase the status of the sector, the availability of qualified labour and crew, and the morale in the sector*
- j) To rebuild over-fished stocks so that effort levels are at sustainable levels*
- k) To improve the quality of products from both the catching and processing sector*
- l) To ensure that port facilities are sufficient to support the industry and its needs*

### 7.3 Strategies in Support of the Objectives

198. In turn, each of the Objectives a) - f) can be fulfilled through the implementation of a number of strategies.

### ***Objective a) Investment Environment***

#### **Summary of strategic issues**

199. The scoping assessment found that the sector is associated with a growth in investment and productivity for the processors in Fleetwood, but a decline in investment for the catchers at all ports. There is therefore an urgent need for the catching sector to refocus on investment opportunities. Two issues are pertinent in this respect. Firstly, is the fact that whitefish and nephrops quota availability in the ports, at Fleetwood and Whitehaven respectively, has declined significantly through the loss of traditional quota rights. Secondly is the fact that processors claim to need a sustainable catching sector in the long term, largely as a caveat to accessing markets that encourage traceability to vessels, and because of the good quality of fish that can be landed and processed in the same location.

200. The key problem is that it is unrealistic for the catching sector to rely solely on whitefish quota, unless significant increases in whitefish quota can be obtained (which is unlikely given its availability and cost). The scenario facing Fleetwood's catching sector may therefore be 'diversify or die' Whilst diversification into non whitefish species may not meet with the objectives of a land-based processing sector almost entirely dependent on whitefish, the processors have demonstrated their versatility in sourcing from elsewhere to the extent that local supplies are important but not essential to their business operations. Diversification will therefore allow for the traditional supply base to be retained along with a connection with local supplies that allows for promotion of a Fleetwood or NW product, while also allowing for the emergence of other products. The scenario facing Whitehaven is one of little investment from within the port and an increasing reliance on small inshore vessels and visitors from Northern Ireland.

201. Faced with the decline in whitefish stocks, the alternative supply products are nephrops and scallops. There is capacity within the port of Fleetwood to process scallop supplies, but considerable reluctance of fishers to invest despite the offer of support from one processor (A&M Seafoods) to diversify. The constraints appear to be a) fishermen are reluctant to change to new fishing methods, b) that the method requires more intensive activity and harder working conditions than is associated with trawling, and c) the need to acquire quota and scallop licenses.

202. In respect to nephrops, some vessels have already diversified into this fishery, but the main constraints to development of the sector are a) large scale national oversupply onto the market at a time when local catching opportunities are greatest, and b) the inability of existing processors to identify strong value-added niches in the UK (catering) and foreign markets (whole and live prawns). Fleetwood has some capacity to process the product (A&M Seafoods) but is constrained by the fact that peak production for nephrops corresponds with the peak supply period for scallops.

203. Some other processors could conceivably develop trade links as an adjunct to their existing operations where they deal exclusively with caterers and supermarkets. However, most of the existing processors are engaged in the prime whitefish wholesale and/or the fish and chip trade, both of which are not suitable markets for these products.

#### **Strategies**

204. So the strategies that need to be addressed are as follows:

- Support for sufficient entrepreneurial activity in the two ports to expand catching into new fisheries?
- Processors to identify a market niche for these products as an adjunct to their existing trade

- Collective response by the sector to an investment plan which embraces a dual purpose approach to whitefish (winter months) and shellfish (summer months), and which takes in the need for quota / license purchase and vessel conversion?

205. If the vessel owners and processors can identify a willingness to work together to produce a vertically integrated production orientated system, then the approach will be novel in UK terms (although some fisher/processor partnerships have worked from time to time in the North East). Further analysis of such a development scenario is required, and the sector has to address whether:

- fisher / processor partnerships are sustainable,
- whether investment capital can be raised for conversion of vessels and purchase of quota and licenses, and
- whether market niches exist for such products, particularly in the NW and the continent. For the former distribution costs will be low, while for the latter prices will be high – both of which therefore offer potential for good margins

206. Smaller vessels could also expand further into crab and lobster fishing, although crabs are variable in quantity and need expertise in storage and landing, and lobster pots are expensive and can be lost through tides and strong winds. Other smaller-scale fisheries that offer potential from a regional perspective include cockles and mussels. Opportunities also exist for both large and small vessels to expand the plaice fishery (with the purchase of quota), and other species such as flounders, if marketing initiatives can be identified which will increase prices.

207. Continued buying of quota as resources allow is therefore essential, as is the retention of quota within the community when vessel owners retire. Given that the value of quota is likely to continue to rise as blackfish landings are controlled, quota purchase can be considered a good investment, especially for Irish Sea nephrops before the market develops further. It is acknowledged that where blackfish landings are a problem, there is little incentive to purchase quota with associated costs and cash-flow implications, or to legitimize business operations. However, the industry must think to the long term, when greater legitimization is inevitable. In this respect other approaches to PO quota acquisition should be explored. The Cornish FPO has established a quota bank allowing members of the public to invest in quota. Dividends for such an investment are low at present because the buying and selling of quotas is low as a result of continued dependence on black fish.

***Objective b) Improving the Economic Benefit from Catching and Processing***

**NW strategies relevant to both Fleetwood and Whitehaven**

208. Contrary to expectations, operating costs in both the catching and processing sectors appear to be relatively competitive relative to other competing areas. However, this does not negate the need to increase margins and reduce costs as and when it can be done. The experience in Whitehaven is testimony to the fact that reductions in charges can realize significant benefits by attracting stranger vessels, which in turn can mean that charges for local vessels are kept competitive. It is this benefit to the local users that needs to be examined more carefully to allow for strategic advantages to be established, particularly if the above development scenarios come to fruition. Whitehaven has taken a strategic view with respect to harbour charges and ice supplies that ABP Fleetwood and Flyde Ice could well follow, if these companies identify that such strategic development plans will lead to longer-term gains for the port. If however, the industry shows no sign of change, then it is unlikely that changes to cost structures will achieve very much. Most processors in Fleetwood (with one or two exceptions) have historically not been

good at supplying the SFIA with appropriate information to enable detailed analysis of costs and earnings. The provision of good costs and earnings data would have enabled greater level of analysis in this study, and should be encouraged in future for both catching and processing sectors in the region so that areas of weakness can be easily identified and subsequently rectified.

209. Improved quality of product (Objective e) initiatives can be forthcoming both as a result of investment on board: chill rooms and weighing machines. Uptake of grants within Fleetwood and Whitehaven has been poor, but the benefits resulting from improvements in quality are likely to be significant.

210. One processing firm in Fleetwood is reported as looking at recruitment of eastern European workers. With forthcoming EU enlargement, if there are distinct business advantages to such an approach such recruitment in the region as a whole may be inevitable, and of benefit to the cost structure of both processing and catching operations. Such recruitment may be acceptable when taken as part of a general strategic approach to improve local recruitment as discussed in Objective c).

211. Possible branding of local product (perhaps, but not necessarily, through MSC certification) should be further considered. Questions remain about which stocks would pass the certification process and the financial benefits of any local branding. It may therefore be equally important to look at new products and non-traditional species, and at new marketing routes for direct sale to local consumers (see below). However, discussion needs to take place with relevant agencies to consider accessing funds for initiatives that would assist both the fishing and tourism sectors e.g. the use of certificates, flyers and/or leaflets about fishing in the area, to accompany fish boxes and dishes, which would promote the sale of local products and increase awareness of the regional source of fish. Schools could usefully be involved in such a programme to devise a “NW branding logo” for fish products. The increasing interest of supermarkets in selling local products also offers opportunities for the NW. There are a number of existing food schemes from which any fish branding initiative could learn, and perhaps which fish products could be related to. These include: NW Fine Foods, NW Food Alliance, and Made in Lancashire.

212. Vessels in the NW already display a high level of non-fishing earnings due to offshore pipeline and survey work. Increased revenue from recreational and angling trips is likely to be limited, but some potential may exist and should be further explored.

213. Processors must of course continue to focus on a steady source of supply. Efforts should be directed at more remote electronic buying by local merchants/processers, continued efforts to attract stranger vessels, and a full feasibility study to assess the benefits of electronic linkages between Fleetwood market and other European markets, and conceivably between Fleetwood and Whitehaven, and whether this would encourage stranger vessels to land fish at both ports. Such a study should also consider in more detail than has been possible in this study, the opportunities and impacts of electronic marketing in Whitehaven. There should also be greater communication by local buyers and processers with the catching sector, as the presence of the catching sector is clearly important for buyers/processers. Too much downward pressure on prices seriously threatens the survival of the catching sector in the long term, and relationships between catchers and buyers are already strained in some cases. The industry in Fleetwood also need to agree on a strategy regarding Fleetwood as a Designated Auction System.

214. Given proposed levels of wind farm developments in the eastern Irish Sea, it is important for the catching sector to continue to actively engage in the ongoing process of discussion between the industry and the British Wind Energy Association (BWEA). Fisheries Liaison

meetings have already been held between the BWEA and the NFFO to consider issues of best practice, possible exclusion zones etc. Representatives of fishermen in the NW should therefore continue to actively liaise with the NFFO and the BWEA about issues of concern.

215. Given the level of fixed costs associated with fishing, every effort should be made to increase sea-time. While this might seem to be stating the obvious, many vessels do not appear to be going about the business of fishing as aggressively as they might be. While this is easy for a consultant to write sitting in an office not having to brave the elements(!), it nevertheless appears to remain true. Certainly, modernization of fishing vessels and improved working conditions would help to make the prospect of going to sea in marginal conditions seem a little less unappealing.

#### **Strategies relevant to Whitehaven**

216. While much direct marketing already occurs from the Fleetwood-based van trade, other ports such as Whitehaven could certainly expand direct sales into the Lake District tourism trade. Such a strategy could help to make fishing and marketing of hitherto less well known and less popular species such as plaice (one of the few species that is not heavily over-fished) more viable. It would also reduce the distribution/supply chain and related transport costs, which by definition should result in higher prices being able to be paid to the catching sector while still generating high margins for merchants. It is fortunate that the peak nephrops landings coincide with the peak tourism trade in the area, and direct sales would greatly help to solve the problem of low nephrops prices paid to the catching sector in the summer, due to the large landings of nephrops in Scotland. The wet fish outlet at Maryport has been successful for the Maryport Co-operative Society, and could be replicated in Whitehaven, with an associated van trade (although it is acknowledged that such a business would also need to buy in supplies given the unpredictable supply from landings at the harbour). Small-scale primary processing could take place in one of the box stores in the market hall, with one-third of the current chill storage space converted into cold storage for fish needing to be bought in to maintain supplies in periods of poor landings. A sales window could be placed in the side of new market hall to sell direct to consumers. Of course such an initiative requires further assessment and a full feasibility study (to include issues of ownership, management etc.) NIFPO have stated that they would be unlikely to get involved in such a venture, and there is no local fishermen's co-operative in Whitehaven. This is likely to mean that either one of the three existing agents would have to be interested, or some other business not necessarily involved with fish at present, but ideally with existing contacts and trade links into the Lake District e.g. game sales and distribution.

#### **Strategies relevant to Fleetwood**

217. Caution should be noted over primary processors moving into secondary processing given the increased costs, not just of processing itself, but also of marketing and advertising spend that is often necessary to break into new markets, especially the supermarket trade (sometimes with unsatisfactory results in terms of increased benefits). However, some further value-added secondary processing could take place for sale into the local food service sector and for direct sale from the van trade. And, group efforts and initiatives by the FMA, especially in relation to local branding of product, would greatly reduce marketing costs for individual companies.

218. Processors and merchants would greatly benefit from training in two main areas, IT, and marketing. Many smaller processors do not use computer-based programmes for accounts and management, instead relying on hard copy, long-hand ledgers. This prevents immediate analysis of profitability and performance. Some larger companies are also known to have developed new

innovative products, but are struggling to access markets in both the food service and the retail sectors, due to a lack of marketing expertise

219. Given the degree of specialization of many processors in Fleetwood, some smaller firms would also be well advised to amalgamate to reduce overheads, thereby increasing profits. Many companies are small in size with turnovers of under £2 million per annum, and most with less than 25 employees. From a purely business perspective, many should merge, but appear to be run as much for life-style reasons, so there has been little merging of businesses in recent years, just closure of those unable to compete. We shy short of recommending that this strategy be implemented through an action plan, as it is unlikely to be acceptable to many of those small business concerned, but feel that it is important to note that from a purely business perspective, implementation of such a strategy would seem to make great sense.

***Objective c) Increasing the Status of the Fisheries Sector, Recruitment and Morale***

220. Increasing morale, and generating a greater degree of enthusiasm is vital if vessel owners are to be able to attract young people into the industry, and investment is to be forthcoming, thereby guaranteeing its survival. While such issues might be considered rather nebulous, particularly with the associated low wage rates in the catching sector, promotion of the sector should not be under-estimated. Many of the problems in the NW stem from a general attitude of despair about declining earnings, the lack of effectiveness of the CFP, and the poor working conditions which many fishermen are forced to operate in given the age of vessels and their lack of modernization. Strategies in support of Objective c) should therefore include the following.

221. Noting the point made above about the possible future ability to recruit workers from other countries, it may still also be beneficial and necessary to work with schools to educate young people about the opportunities available in fish catching, and certainly in processing. Activities could include input into school's vocational training programmes, "intern" programmes with vessel owners, ancillary services and processors, school visits to vessels and processing plants, and talks by industry representatives in schools about the fishing heritage of ports in the NW and existing opportunities. Importantly, such reminiscence-type projects must focus on current and future opportunities rather than relying and focusing solely on the past, and must have something for the young to get excited about.

222. Plans have been discussed at Whitehaven to get the Harbour Youth Project involved with re-building two old, local fishing vessels as part of a tourist attraction. This initiative should be supported as a way of generating interest in fishing heritage, and as a way of providing relevant skills to the young who might then be interested in working in the fishing industry. The expansion of fishing heritage initiatives, perhaps with greater linkages between Fleetwood's Netting the Bay museum, and Whitehaven, would be beneficial. The proposal by the Netting the Bay for an extension based on fishing heritage should be supported.

223. It is noted that previous efforts by the SFIA to recruit young people into the sector have not proved especially effective. Whilst Fleetwood has a tradition in fishing, uptake of training programmes is very often associated with family ties, potential earnings and attraction to the life-style. Training programmes may not therefore be that cost effective, at least for the catching sector. Nevertheless, an increase in training opportunities should be further considered, such as the introduction of a modern apprenticeship scheme for fishermen (recommendation made in the MEP report on Fleetwood of 1998 not yet acted on). It is noted that training opportunities were in many cases better twenty years ago than they are today. Improved uptake of training could also be fostered through the Learning and Skills Council and other organisations and programmes that offer potential to provide training and support. These include Business Link, the Learning Skills

Programme, the Lancashire West Partnership, and the SFIA. SFIA should ensure that the North West Group Training Association supports the need for practical training (e.g. for crew, filletters etc) for the catching and processing sectors, as well the customary emphasis on firefighting, First Aid and sea survival courses to enable people to get to sea.

224. In relation to processing skills, a previous scheme run at Lowestoft used regional government monies to buy fish, which was then used for training filletters. Filleted product was then sold to merchants at reduced prices to re-coup some of the training costs. Such a scheme, using school leavers or the Government's new Job Centre Plus scheme, should be investigated for the processing sector in Fleetwood. Processors are currently facing great difficulties in retaining staff due to the working conditions and hours involved. This is largely because the lack of available skilled staff prevents the use of shorter shifts, but also due to some aspects of working conditions. Greater availability of labour and some improvements in working conditions would enable processors to alter shift patterns to increase labour retention. Trainees under such a scheme could be on a public payroll for say 9 months, do their essential training and then have a placement within fish units or boats. After 9 months the industry should commit to employing them on a regular basis. If this is a properly structured and marketed scheme there could be expected to be a positive response from young unemployed/school leavers

***Objective d) The Re-building of Fish Stocks***

225. The catching sector should actively engage in, and support, the proposed greater emphasis on regional fisheries management being proposed in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) review as a strategy to support stock recovery. Such initiatives have already begun.

226. The catching sector must also operate within the fisheries regulations and technical controls (resulting in greater conservation and higher market prices), and where this may not always be the case, maintain an open/confidential line of communication with scientists so that stock assessment work is based on actual landings, rather than recorded landings which may generate a false picture of stock status.

227. Additional support for stock recovery should be provided by continued efforts to improve gear selectivity.

***Objective e) Improving the Quality of Products***

228. Improving the quality of products being produced by the catching and processing sector can be enhanced through the following strategies.

229. Ice use by some vessels at Fleetwood, and sometimes in the market, is currently insufficient and should be further encouraged. Ice use in Whitehaven is good following the construction of the new ice plant.

230. However, the quality of whitefish landed at Whitehaven is often poor, as it is taken as bycatch and treated as such with associated poor handling. Such handling practices should be improved where possible.

231. There is sometimes insufficient communication and trust between the processing and catching sector with regards to quality requirements and reward for top quality product in the form of appreciably higher prices. The processing sector should work more closely with the catching sector to convey quality requirements. Of all the processing clusters in England, the sort of trade Fleetwood processors are into is one where good margins are available at the high value

end of the market. This needs developing to guide development strategies for processors, and persuade producers they can do more with less.

***Objective f) Ensuring that Port Facilities Meet the Needs of the Industry***

232. Ensuring that port facilities meet the needs of the industry can be achieved by the following strategies.

233. Continue attempts to attract more visitor landings. This will generate harbour revenues, which can be used for re-investment in harbour infrastructure in support of the industry, and through economies of scale can help to increase harbour profitability.

234. Minor upgrading of necessary facilities identified by fishermen at key landing sites. In general, infrastructure facilities are good, but some improvements could nevertheless be made. These include washroom facilities in Fleetwood. At Whitehaven, ladders, bollards and a pontoon for small vessels on Bulwark Quay, toilets (for fishermen and the public), and the removal of cranes on Bulwark Quay are all required. It is suggested that each port should define its exact requirements, the most appropriate location for facilities required, their costs etc, before submitting applications to appropriate funding sources e.g. the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), FIGG funding under Measure 3 – Improvement of fishing port facilities (rates of grant up to £100,000 are available for capital investments which are of collective interest to fishermen, and which will bring about lasting improvement in conditions for landing fish and contribute to lasting economic benefits or improved safety conditions).

235. Investigate the prospects for an electronic marketing link as a component of an existing network in the UK or on the Continent. Finance is available through FIGG for feasibility studies such as these, along with visits to markets.

236. Improved harbour management. Harbour management needs to recognise the importance of fishing both as a local industry and job creator, and as a draw for tourists, and should therefore a) closely involve the fisheries sector in all proposed developments, and b) keep charges imposed on the fishing sector down to a minimum. In the case of Fleetwood, where infrastructure is now more than adequate to support the existing industry, careful redevelopment and alternative usage should not be seen as a threat to the industry, but rather as a way for the port to generate additional revenue. This revenue could then be used to further support the fishing and processing sectors. Both Fleetwood and Whitehaven would benefit from improved waste management (as recommended by SFIA for Fleetwood).

237. At Whitehaven, harbour management staff should be provided with training in financial and business management.

238. Improvements to road connections. The A585 to Fleetwood remains within the trunk road system, and efforts should therefore be made to lobby the GONW for funds for major improvements.

## 7.4 Actions to Implement Strategies

### 7.4.1 Objective a) Investment Environment

Strategy	Action	Responsibility / Funding
Joint approach to development	Identify the likelihood of a joint whitefish / shellfish sector development approach throughout the NW region (Fleetwood processors / Fleetwood & Whitehaven catchers)	FFF, W3M, Service providers (ABP / Fylde Ice)
Purchase of additional quota / licenses	Enhance ongoing efforts to acquire quota	POs / Quota Bank / private investment initiatives

### 7.4.2 Objective b) Improving the Economic Benefits

Strategy	Action	Responsibility / Funding
<i>NW Strategies</i>		
Better analysis of costs and earnings to assist with subsequent analysis and benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Processors and catchers to supply costs and earnings data to SFIA</li> <li>- Harbour authorities to acknowledge long terms benefits of keeping charges to the fishing sector competitive</li> </ul>	Catchers and processors  Whitehaven harbour commissioners, ABP
Improve quality of product	See Objective e)	See Objective e)
Possible branding of local products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Request information and research on resulting financial benefits from SFIA and the MSC before any local branding is attempted</li> <li>- Discussions to be held with tourism agencies to consider appropriate schemes to increase direct sales, based on regional heritage theme (e.g. flyers, product naming etc)</li> <li>- Investigate supermarket requirements for locally branded products</li> </ul>	FFF, FMA, Representatives of all fishing organisations and POs, W3M  Funds and liaison from/with rural recovery programme, tourism agencies, NWDA, NW Fine Food, NW Food Alliance, Made in Lancashire
Increase of non-fishing income	Investigation into demand for recreational angling and pleasure trips, the decline of such activities in recent times, and strategies to revive it. This will require liaison with tourism organisations and angling magazines to obtain relevant tourism data and trends, and customer requirements	Representatives of all fishing organisations and POs, Tourism agencies (e.g. Tourism group for Whitehaven, West Cumbria Tourism partnership, regional Cumbria Tourist Board), NWDA, Angling publications
Seeking a steady product supply for processors and harbours	-More active discussion between local catching and merchanting/processing sectors about	FFF, FMA, Whitehaven merchants, POs, ABP, W3M, NWDA

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
<i>NW Strategies</i>		
	ways to support the local fleet - Continued efforts to attract stranger vessels - Locate funds for, and conduct full feasibility of electronic marketing - Engage in more remote electronic buying - Discussions about Designated Auction for Fleetwood	
Minimize impacts of wind farm developments	Continue to actively engage in BWEA/NFFO Fisheries Liaison discussions	Representatives of all fishing organisations and Pos, Wind farm developers
<i>Whitehaven strategies</i>		
More direct sales, and Whitehaven wetfish outlet	Apply for funding to conduct feasibility study	W3M, Whitehaven merchants, and Whitehaven fishermen, NWDA
<i>Fleetwood strategies</i>		
More secondary processing,	- Marketing strategy to consider new niche markets for secondary processed products, probably to regional food service sector and local van trade - Group initiatives to break into to the supermarket trade	FMA, NWDA, NW Food Alliance
Training for processors in IT and marketing	Training grants/funds to be accessed for IT and specialist UK marketing expertise	FFF, FMA, NWGTA, NWDA, Learning and Skills Council

#### 7.4.3 Objective c) Increasing the Status of the Fisheries Sector, Recruitment and Morale

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
Working with schools	Approach schools to establish vocational training, talks by industry representatives, visits to vessels/processing plants, and creation and publicity of intern programmes	Fleetwood Fish Merchant's Association, Cumbria Seafoods, Representatives of all fishing organisations and Pos, NWGTA
Expand heritage attractions	Apply for lottery funding and other appropriate sources for museum development, Whitehaven fishing vessel reconstruction, and regional linkage of attractions	W3M, Harbour Youth Project, Open World Yachts, Netting the Bay, Lottery, Lancashire County Council
Introduction of training schemes	- Appropriate liaise with organization and other schemes. - Investigation into Lowestoft scheme to train filleters, and catching sector to itemize training requirements and submit proposals	Learning and Skills Council, SFIA, Councils, the new Job Centre Plus initiative FFF, W3M, FMA, Representatives of all fishing organisations and POs

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
	- Improvements in shift patterns and working conditions to increase labour retention	

#### 7.4.4 Objective d) The Re-building of Fish Stocks

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
Engage in regional fisheries management	- Continue to participate in Regional Sea Management - Ensure that local vessels benefit from any recovery programmes - Discussion about possibility of roker becoming a pressure stock	Representatives of all fishing organisations and Pos in Irish Sea, NFFO, CEFAS, Regional management groups, NWCF, SFCs
A more open dialogue with fisheries scientists about true catch levels	Regular working groups between fishermen's representatives, scientists and enforcement personnel	All fishing organisations and POs, CEFAS, SFCs, DEFRA
Improve gear selectivity	Discussions with SFIA about contributing to gear trials	Representatives of all fishing organisations and Pos, SFIA

#### 7.4.5 Objective e) Improving the Quality of Products

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
Better ice usage in Fleetwood	Training/information on importance of ice usage	FFF, FFPO, SFIA/GTA
Better handling of whitefish bycatch in nephrops fishery	Training/information for local and visiting vessels to be provided on importance of handling procedures	Whitehaven Fishermen's Association, SFIA/GTA
Processors to convey quality requirements to catching sector	Better communication and relationship between the two sectors to be fostered through an open debate to air views and concerns, and develop solutions	Buyers, processors, and fishermen

#### 7.4.6 Objective f) Ensuring that Port Facilities Meet the Needs of the Industry

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
Increased visitor landings	Discussion between Whitehaven buyers and Fleetwood processors on ways and benefits of increasing visitor landings, electronic marketing feasibility study (see Objective b and below)	Whitehaven agents, Fleetwood processors, FFF, NWDA, ABP, W3M
Minor upgrading of facilities	Ports to develop detailed list of requirements, costs, etc, and action plan, before submitting applications for funding	W3M, FFF, Local Authorities, ABP
Electronic marketing	Feasibility study of the potential	FFF, NWDA, Grimsby, W3M,

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility / Funding</b>
	costs and benefits resulting from electronic marketing for Fleetwood (and possibly Whitehaven), together with an investigation of appropriate systems	ABP
Integrated harbour management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ABP and W3M to include fishing sector in development planning, and to use harbour revenues to ensure fishing charges are kept competitive</li> <li>- Funds sought for training in financial and business management practices to be provided to Whitehaven harbour management staff</li> <li>- Development of waste management programmes, to include dry and wet waste, and consolidation of standards and control procedures into Quality Management Programmes</li> </ul>	ABP, W3M and Harbour Commissioners, FMA, FFF, NWDA
Improvements to road connections	Lobby GONW	FFF, GONW

## 8 Challenges for Successful Implementation

239. A number of challenges to the successful implementation of the above recommendations are noted.

240. There is currently a lack of adequate, explicit recognition and support for the fisheries sector in most of the key policy documents, as discussed in Section 3.6. Fishing plays an important part in preventing economic and social exclusion in the region, as well as providing a major tourism draw on which much of the region's future prosperity is likely to be based. There is still time as part of the consultation process to make recommendations on changes to a number of key policy documents, and it is hoped that this study can be used to support a greater recognition of the need for assistance to be provided to the sector, and to demonstrate the opportunities for the sector in the coming years. The FFF and W3M, along with the NWCF and relevant staff in local councils, GONW, and the NWDA who have been involved with this project, are therefore urged to lobby to affect changes to policy documents to make more specific reference to the fisheries sector. The FFF and W3M should be fully consulted on any proposed changes to policy and planning documents.

241. There may be a lack of application/access to available funding to implement the recommendations made in this report. The GONW, SFIA, the NWCF, the NWDA, and local councils are all urged to liaise closely with the relevant stakeholders in the fishing industry identified in the action plans above to assist with identification of appropriate funding sources. Appropriate parties are urged to arrange meetings as soon as possible to agree on timescales and more detailed actions as may be required. Some actions specified in the previous section clearly just require attention from specific organisations, e.g. FFF. Most however require involvement of a large number of stakeholders. A first step in the process could therefore be the creation of a co-ordination team, perhaps in the form of a sub-group of the NWCF, to initiate action and move things forward, and to promote necessary co-ordination between Fleetwood and Whitehaven where appropriate.

242. Wages being earned and associated working conditions in the fisheries sector, compared to other sectors, pose a risk to the effectiveness of training programmes for the catching sector, and ultimate recruitment and retention in the industry. Initiation of such programmes should therefore be carefully considered for their cost effectiveness, but it is believed that the strategies and actions proposed could be successful if implemented.

243. It is acknowledged that some threats to the sector's continued survival may be extremely difficult to tackle within any regional approach. Examples include the effects of sea temperature change on fish stocks, the weather conditions in the Eastern Irish Sea and prevailing winds that severely hamper fishing activities, employment and wages in other sectors in the region, and strategies to support the sector in other regions that may cause displacement and competition for the sector in the NW. However, development opportunities have been suggested which, it is hoped, will mitigate against such factors.

244. There may be a lack of willingness of those in the industry to adopt recommended changes. It should not be forgotten that many stakeholders in the industry may be happy to see certain practices remain in place, either for reasons of life-style, or for the perceived financial benefits of current arrangements. We have attempted to present the long-term benefits of the catching and processing sectors making various changes, and of working more closely together to ensure their continued survival. While the Fleetwood Fish Forum has certainly become more

effective in promoting discussion between the catching and processing sectors in Fleetwood over the last couple of years, there is still more that could be done. We have attempted within the budgetary constraints of this study, to be as participatory as possible so ensure that stakeholders feel a sense of ownership of the study's output in the form of this report. The FFF and W3M must be fully involved in any future implementation of the recommendations made in this report.

245. A key challenge for the successful implementation of the strategies and actions recommended is for these strategies and actions to be sustainable. A scoping exercise has already been completed based on the "Integrated Appraisal Toolkit" to assess the sustainability of the recommendations (for more details see Section 11 Appendix C - Sustainability Appraisal: Action for Sustainability Scoping Exercise). This exercise demonstrates that the links between the economic, social and environmental impacts of proposals made are well considered in the report, and that the strategies and actions are sustainable.

246. Finally, there is currently little co-ordination between Fleetwood and Whitehaven. Some merit may be had in greater collaboration and co-operation between the two main ports in the region to share experiences, attract visitor vessels to the region, and manage landings so as to maximize prices and reduce any competition between the two ports. Such co-operation would be useful for many of the proposed actions: regional action on proposed wind farms, involvement in stock recovering programmes, sharing of skills within the catching, processing and ancillary support services.

## 9 Appendix A – Persons Consulted/Met during The Study

### 9.1 Whitehaven individual interviews

Name	Organisation	Contact Details
Gordon Thompson	Chairman Harbour Commissioners	01946 693708 07899 785734
Bill Madine	Whitehaven Fishermen's Association, Vice Chairman Harbour Commissioners	01946 64983
Neil Foskett	Harbour Master, Engineer	01946 692435
Jenny Benson and Bernard Hellier	Economic Development and Local Plans, Copeland Borough Council	01946 852994
Jonathan Parr	CEFAS, Scientific Officer	01946 692654
Dave Dobson	Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee	01946 693047
Terry Ponting	Chief Executive, Whitehaven Development Company	01946 592933
Gordon Pickwell and Madeline Coat	Cumbria Cold Storage	01946 63131
Ernie Bennett	Skipper/owner	01946 822230 07850 401117
Mike Mills	Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project	
Geoff Parker	Vessel owner, Kinloch, 12m	07715 709998
Keith Harrison	Ex-Skipper	-
Bob Gillespie	Ex-Sea Fisheries Committee	-
Simon Patterson	Open World Yachts Ltd	01946 599522
?	Skipper TN 31	-
Rick Donnon	R Donnon, fish salesman	01946 693771
Gordon Campbell	Visitor (NI) nephrops vessel to Whitehaven	028 417 62921
John Cassidy	Visitor (NI) nephrops vessel to Whitehaven	0780 1638803
Jack Southam	Vessel owner/skipper, under 10m	01946 822679
Kevin Christian	Agent, fish sales	01946 66391 07860 702507
Ralph Calvin	Agent, fish sales	01946 696828

### 9.2 Fleetwood individual interviews

Name	Organisation/Position	Contact Details
Terry Houghton	Wyre Fish Dock Management	01253 778226
Callum Cooper	Associated British Ports	01253 872323
Harrold Wilkinson	A&M Agency, fish agency	01253 777144
Peter Merrick and Dave Appleby	A&M Seafoods	01253 772444
Chris Neve	C&G Neve	01253 777811
John Wilson	Jack Wright Ltd	01253 779531
Alan Green	M&J Seafoods	01253 874442
Rick Horabin	Primary processor	01253 876175
Alan Welsh	Oban Fish	01253 873544

Ken Hayton	Primary processor and Wards Agency	01253 778121
Geoff Anderson	Fleetwood Fish Merchants Association	01253 873358
Steve Wheelan	Vessel owner (large)	07850 615636
John Pratt	Vessel owner (large)	07860 307590
Keith McGuire	Vessel owner (under 10m)	-
Phil Del	Skipper of Kerone (20m)	-
Ken Moran	Fleetwood Producer Organisation	01253 772508
Tom Watson	Fleetwood Producer Organisation and ex-fisherman, Fleetwood Fish Forum	01253 772508
Willie Devaney	Visiting beamer (Irish) (32m)	0771 4429163
Lee Sheard	Ex-Vessel owner (13m)	-
Gary Mitchinson	Vessel owner (under 10m)	-
Fred Riding	Vessel owner (under 10m)	-

### 9.3 Other individual interviews

Name	Organisation/Position	Contact Details
Noel Butters	Chief Executive Maryport Development Ltd	-
Alan Ford	Skipper/Owner, Maryport	-
John MacElvoy	Skipper/Owner, Maryport & Treasurer Maryport and Solway Fishermen's Co-operative	-
Mark Vollers	Lake District Coastal Aquarium, Maryport	01900 817760
Karen Couldridge	West Cumbria Tourism Partnership	
David Gilthorpe and Chris Baird	Cumbria Seafoods, Maryport	01900 819700
Phil Ready	Cumbria Tourist Board, Windermere	01539 44444

### 9.4 Whitehaven Development Strategy Workshop

Name	Organisation	Contact Details
Gordon Thompson	Chairman Harbour Commissioners	01946 693708 07899 785734
Bill Madine	Whitehaven Fishermen's Association, Vice Chairman Harbour Commissioners	01946 64983
Jenny Benson	Economic Development and Local Plans, Copeland Borough Council	01946 852994
Dave Dobson	Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee	01946 693047
Terry Ponting	Chief Executive, Whitehaven Development Company	01946 592933
Ernie Bennett	Skipper/owner	01946 822230 07850 401117
Geoff Parker	Vessel owner, Kinloch, 12m	07715 709998
Stephen Wren	Skipper	-
Ron Graham	Fishermen's Representative	01946 694390
Kevin Christian	Agent, fish sales	01946 66391 07860 702507
Ralph Calvin	Agent, fish sales	01946 696828

**9.5 Fleetwood Development Strategy Workshop**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation/Position</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Terry Ponting	W3M	01946 592933
Callum Cooper	Associated British Ports	01253 872323
Peter Merrick	A&M Seafoods	01253 772444
G. Wilson	C&G Neve	01253 774100
Joan Humble	M.P. Blackpool North & Fleetwood	01253 877346
John Tower	SFIA	01302 855020
Mark Pearson	Wyre Borough Council	01253 887617
John Wilson	Jack Wright Ltd	01253 779531
Rick Horabin	FFMA, FFF, GTA, Primary processor	01253 876175
Ken Moran	Fleetwood Producer Organisation	01253 772508
Roger Unsworth	DEFRA, Fleetwood	01253 873515
Ms. S. Rawlinson	Wyre Borough Council	01253 887550
Tom Watson	Fleetwood Producer Organisation and ex-fisherman, Fleetwood Fish Forum	01253 772508

## 10 Appendix B – Documents Referred To

- Draft Regional Planning Guidance for the North West – Proposed Changes. July 2002 (website document)
- New Vision for North West Coastal Resorts: Stage 1 Issues Report. February 2002. Northwest Development Agency
- The Wyre Profile – an urban and rural picture, November 2001. Draft. Wyre Borough Council
- Research into integrated Coastal Planning in the NW Region, 2000. DETR
- Fleetwood Fishing Industry Strategy. April 1998. MEP, For Fleetwood Fish Forum
- The Copeland Local Plan 2001, Copeland Borough Council
- Economic Baseline Report, NWDA
- England's North West, A Strategy Towards 2020: Sustainable Development Appraisal. Northwest Development Agency
- England's North West, A Strategy Towards 2020: Executive Summary. Northwest Development Agency
- Fish Prices and Electronic Auctions, Richard Banks Ltd, 2001
- England's North West, Now. Northwest Development Agency
- EC Ex Ante Evaluation, Richard Banks Ltd, MAFF, 2000
- 2001 Economic Survey of the UK Fishing Fleet, SFIA. 2002
- West Cumbria: Socio-economic Study. November 2001. ERM Economics
- An Outline History of Whitehaven. 1996. Harry Fancy / Copeland Borough Council
- An Economic Assessment of Cumbria (2002). DTZ Pieda Consulting
- The Renaissance of Whitehaven – extract from an application to the British Council for Shopping Centres
- A study of the Sales/Marketing of Demersal Landings at UK Ports and the Potential of Electronic Marketing Systems. 1998. M. Myers, Sea Fish Industry Authority. Seafish Report No SR511
- Whitehaven Harbour Business Plan. May 1999. Chapter 3: Fishing Industry. KPMG
- Irish Sea/West Coast Interests. May 1999. NFFO. Pre-ICES Working Group Meeting handout
- North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee Byelaws, April 2001
- Whitehaven: a Cost Benefit Analysis of Proposal to Develop Fish Landing Facilities. Draft June 1997. Sea Fish Industry Authority
- A New Tourism Strategy for Wyre, 1996. Wyre Borough Council
- Council Regulation (EC) No 2555/2001 of 18 December 2001
- ICES 2001. Report of the Working Group on Nephrops Stocks. Lisbon, Portugal, 3-11 April 2001. Advisory Committee on Fishery Management ICES CM 2001/ACFM: 16
- Pawson, M.G., G.D. Pickett And P. Walker (2001). The Coastal Fisheries of England and Wales, Part IV: A Review of their Status 1999-2001. CEFAS Science Series Technical Report Number 116
- CEFAS (2001). Fisheries information – Cod, Whiting, Plaice and Sole in the Irish Sea. SAMFISH EU Study Contract 99-009 Improving Sampling of Western and Southern European Atlantic Fisheries. April, 2001.

## 11 Appendix C - Sustainability Appraisal: Action for Sustainability Scoping Exercise

The first objective of the constitution of the North West Regional Assembly is the delivery of “economic, social and environmental progress in the region”

The approved Regional Sustainable Development Framework, Action for Sustainability (AfS) provides the delivery plan for this agenda in two ways. Firstly it provides a series of objectives and targets against which the sustainable development of the region can be assessed. Secondly, it sets out a vision for a more sustainable region against which the performance of other plans and strategies can be measured, through sustainability appraisal.

The appraisal function is being implemented through the development of an Integrated Appraisal Toolkit which has been designed to test a wide range of strategies, policies, plans and projects against criteria based upon the objectives and targets set out in Action for Sustainability.

The proposals within Section 7 of this Report “Development Opportunities” have been scoped against the Part One checklist of the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit, which aims to test the proposals for development against these broad sustainable development principles.

The following table summarizes the findings of the appraisal, which has been used to inform the Final Report.

Y: Yes            N: No

<b>Will the project:</b>	<b>Supporting Evidence</b>
Contribute to economic prosperity	Y: through stimulation of local industry, job creation and training
Help to regenerate communities through their participation and involvement	Y: In particular the development of training programmes with young people e.g. rebuilding of fishing vessel
Provide opportunity for local employment	Y: Proposals seek to encourage the development of skills in the local labour market and encourage the sale of local produce at local markets.
Help to improve the image of the region for the people who work, live and visit here	Y: Through physical environmental improvements at the ports and the modernisation of plant/factories.
Develop the individual by creating opportunities for education, training and life long learning	Y: Opportunities for training are specifically referred to e.g. through the Learning and Skills Council; youth training schemes.
Affect any underlying causes of ill health and premature death in the community	Y: By seeking to safeguard local employment that will assist in maintaining local income levels and local services. Improving working conditions at sea and in port will help to protect against accidents/ occupational injuries.
Reduce or increase inequalities among different groups in the community	Training and up-skilling of the local community will help to reduce local

	inequalities in terms of access to jobs.
Increase access to public services	N.
Cause any major accident or incident that will put the community at risk	N. Project will potentially lower accident/incident rates as a result of improvements to the port/equipment.
Are all stakeholders, especially the community involved in the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of the project	N.
Promote equal opportunities in the local community	Insufficient information.
Reduce the level and fear of crime	N
Improve housing and reduce homelessness	N
Alleviate local poverty levels	Y. Through the provision of local training and employment opportunities.
Reduce the potential for environmental nuisance	Increased activity at the ports and on adjacent roads may increase environmental nuisance.
Reduce the need to travel especially by road and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport	Improvements to the A585 need to be seen within a multi modal context.
Contribute to a reduction in energy use, increase efficient energy use and maximise the use of energy from renewable resources	N. Use of energy will increase with increased activity at the ports. However, modern machinery and equipment may reduce some environmental impacts.
Contribute to protecting good air quality	N.
Minimise wastewater and protect water quality	Y. Through the proposed development of waste management programmes for wet and dry waste.
Minimise the use of natural resources, promote minimisation of waste and increase recycling and recovery rates	Y. The establishment of quality management programmes may help to achieve improvements in resource use and efficiency.
Protect and enhance existing wildlife and provide new opportunities for habitat creation	Y. The project seeks to rebuild fish stocks and manage them in a sustainable way which will mean protecting habitats and species.
Contribute to the protection of and enhancement of land quality especially by encouraging the reclamation of derelict land, accelerating regeneration and optimising the use of brownfield sites.	Y. The project seeks to regenerate the ports and the associated modernisation will potentially improve the land quality and reuse currently vacant or underused land.
Promote local distinctiveness and conserve and enhance the historic environment	The project aims to retain a traditional industry and traditional skills.

For further information, the contact for sustainability appraisal at the NWRA is Amanda Richardson (Sustainable Development Policy Officer): Tel: 01942 737916 / Amanda.Richardson@nwra.gov.uk