

Razor Clam update for WMFAG – May 2018

Background

The sustainability of razor clam hand gathering in Wales has been questioned following recent concerns about over-fishing and high-profile cases of mass harvesting on intertidal beds. Following a successful tender process NAFC Marine Centre were appointed to complete a review of razor clam in Wales. The purpose of the report was to provide details of the biology and ecology of razor clams in Wales and review razor clam stock assessment methods for the intertidal and the sub-tidal, providing recommendations for the most cost effective approaches to use in Wales.

Recommendations from NAFC report

- Additional research into razor clam biology and ecology e.g. timing of recruitment, distribution of age classes and survivability, would be beneficial to support stock assessment survey design.
- Further research is required to determine appropriate Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) for *Ensis* spp.
- The most cost effective sampling method for intertidal areas is a combination of sieving/digging, however this method does have limitations particularly due to the deep burrowing nature of *Ensis* spp.
- For sub-tidal areas a combination of hydraulic dredging, using a specifically designed survey dredge, and camera linked electrofishing has been suggested as the most effective mechanism. However, the capture of marine organisms using methods incorporating electric current is presently prohibited in European waters (Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98).

Next steps

Welsh Government are currently considering the recommendations from the report.

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