

<b>Title:</b>  Fisheries management measures for Marine Protected Areas in the Northern Ireland inshore region	<b>Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)</b>			
	<b>Date: 15 August 2022</b>			
	<b>Type of measure:</b> Secondary Legislation			
<b>Lead department or agency:</b> DAERA	<b>Stage:</b> Final			
	<b>Source of intervention:</b> Domestic NI			
<b>Other departments or agencies:</b>	<b>Contact details:</b>			
	Marine and Fisheries Division			
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## Summary Intervention and Options

### What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary? (7 lines maximum)

DAERA has responsibility for managing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within the NI inshore region. Seabed (benthic) habitats in MPAs are vulnerable to damage from demersal (bottom-towed) fishing methods and some habitat are vulnerable to pot fishing methods. The latest assessments for both the Marine Strategy Regulations and Habitats Regulations identified that overall NI benthic habitats are not reaching the required status.

### What are the policy objectives and the intended effects? (7 lines maximum)

The introduction of fisheries management measures are intended to further the conservation objectives of the MPAs in the Northern Ireland inshore region and to support fishing at sustainable levels. The intended effects of the management measures are that the designated features will be returned to favourable condition where feature condition is deemed to be unfavourable and maintained in favourable condition where the feature condition is deemed favourable. This is to comply with DAERA's duties under the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010, Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995.

### What policy options have been considered, including any alternatives to regulation? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base) (10 lines maximum)

Do nothing - This Option was not viable as DAERA is bound by national policies and legislation and international commitments, to introduce management measures to preserve the protected features within MPAs and support their recovery, where necessary.

Option 1 - Minimum fisheries management measures required to protect features within MPAs. This option is a zoned approach which would prohibit certain fishing methods from specified areas of the site to remove significant risk to the conservation objectives from fishing activities.

Option 2 - Extended fisheries management measures. This was identified as the preferred option in the public consultation and would remove the most damaging fishing method, the use of towed demersal gear, from the whole site.

The agreed options are a combination of option 1 and option 2, taking into consideration views that were provided in the public consultation

**Will the policy be reviewed?** Yes

**If applicable, set review date:** 2027

### Cost of Preferred (or more likely) Option

Total outlay cost for business £	Total net cost to business per year £	Annual cost for implementation by Regulator £
Nil (100% EMFF/DAERA funding available)	£22,925	Nil (No additional cost - complements existing system)

<b>Does Implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?</b>	<b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Is this measure likely to impact on trade and investment?</b>	<b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Are any of these organisations in scope?</b>	<b>Micro</b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Small</b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Medium</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Large</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

**The final RIA supporting legislation must be attached to the Explanatory Memorandum and published with it.**

Approved by: Owen Lyttle

Date: 26 September 2022

## Summary: Analysis and Evidence

## Policy Option 1

Description: - Minimum fisheries management measures required to protect designated features within MPAs.

### ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT (Option 1)

Costs (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy) (constant price) Years	Average Annual (recurring) (excl. transitional) (constant price)	Total Annual Cost
<b>Best Estimate</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>£17,658</b>	<b>£17,658</b>
<b>Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'</b> Maximum 5 lines The main group affected is commercial fishers in the NI inshore region. The value of fish landings into NI in 2019 exceeded £31 million. Scallop fishing is the sector most affected by these measures and the annual average landings to NI are £3.3m but not all vessels have vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and therefore it is not possible to fully assess the monetary costs of these measures. 18% of scallop vessels under 12m have no VMS. Indicative values are outlined in table 4. Concerns were raised about the accuracy of these figures but it represents the best available evidence and the introduction of vessel monitoring systems for vessels <12m will provide evidence for future assessments and review. [monetised opportunity costs]			
<b>Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'</b> Maximum 5 lines			
Benefits (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy) (constant price) Years	Average Annual (recurring) (excl. transitional) (constant price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
<b>Low</b>	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Optional</b>
<b>High</b>	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Optional</b>
<b>Best Estimate</b>			
<b>Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'</b> Maximum 5 lines  The benefits are mostly intangible and cannot be monetised.			
<b>Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'</b> Maximum 5 lines Applying the Option 1 fisheries management measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- could provide benefits to inshore fish stocks, leading to security of future income for fishers</li> <li>- provide protection for important 'Blue Carbon' habitats such as seagrass beds, which are valuable in mitigating climate change</li> </ul>			
<b>Key Assumptions, Sensitivities, Risks</b> Maximum 5 lines The total annual cost of introduction of fisheries management measures does not include vessels under 12m. Concerns were raised about this during the consultation but no new evidence was provided that would enable a more accurate calculation of the costs. It is intended that enhanced monitoring to assess the effectiveness of the measures and to support industry-science partnership will be met from the MFF or any future domestic funding scheme.			

### BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 1)

Direct Impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m			
Costs: £0	Benefits:	Net: £0	

### Cross Border Issues (Option 1)

How does this option compare to other UK regions and to other EU Member States (particularly Republic of Ireland) Maximum 3 lines
Protection of priority marine habitats are a priority for UK regions and EU member states. Fisheries management measures have already been introduced in the inshore area in Scotland and England.

## Summary: Analysis and Evidence

## Policy Option 2

Description: - Extended fisheries management measures.

### ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT (Option 2)

Costs (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy) (constant price)	Years	Average Annual (recurring) (excl. transitional) (constant price)	Total Cost
Low	Optional		Optional	Optional
High	Optional		Optional	Optional
Best Estimate	Nil		£24,400	£24,400

#### Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

The main group affected is commercial fishers in the NI inshore region. The value of fish landings into NI in 2019 exceeded £31 million. Scallop fishing is the sector most affected by these measures and the annual average landings to NI are £3.3m but not all vessels have vessel monitoring systems and therefore it is not possible to fully assess the monetary costs of these measures. 18% of scallop vessels under 12m have no VMS. Indicative values are outlined in table 5. Concerns were raised about the accuracy of these figures but it represents the best available evidence and the introduction of vessel monitoring systems for vessels <12m will provide evidence for future assessments and review.

#### Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Benefits (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy) (constant price)	Years	Average Annual (recurring) (excl. transitional) (constant price)	Total Benefit
Low	Optional		Optional	Optional
High	Optional		Optional	Optional
Best Estimate				

#### Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

The benefits are mostly intangible and cannot be monetised.

#### Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Applying the Option 2 fisheries management measures:

- will increase the area protected from damage from demersal mobile gear fishing pressures
- could provide benefits to inshore fish stocks, leading to security of future income for fishers
- provide protection for important 'Blue Carbon' habitats such as seagrass beds, which are valuable in mitigating climate change

#### Key Assumptions, Sensitivities, Risks Maximum 5 lines

The total annual cost of introduction of fisheries management measures does not include vessels under 12m. Concerns were raised about this during the consultation but no new evidence was provided that would enable a more accurate calculation of the costs. It is intended that enhanced monitoring to assess the effectiveness of the measures and to support industry-science partnership will be met from the MFF or any future domestic funding scheme.

### BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 2)

Direct Impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m		
Costs: £0	Benefits:	Net: £0

### Cross Border Issues (Option 2)

#### How does this option compare to other UK regions and to other EU Member States (particularly Republic of Ireland) Maximum 3 lines

Protection of priority marine habitats are a priority for UK regions and EU member states. Fisheries management measures have already been introduced in the inshore area in Scotland and recommendations have been made through the 'Benyon review' to establish Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) in Secretary of State waters.

## Evidence Base

### 1. The policy issue and rationale for government intervention

#### Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

MPA networks are recognised internationally as one of the ways of protecting our marine environment and international commitments have been made accordingly. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are the blueprint to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all, and specifically, SDG 14 relates to life below water and how the world's oceans are managed. There are 10 agreed targets for SDG 14 and the following can directly be linked to MPAs:

- By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans; and
- By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 is an overarching framework on biodiversity for the entire United Nations system. One target of particular relevance is the Aichi Conservation Target 11 to conserve and protect 10% of coastal and marine areas through the establishment of a well-managed, ecologically representative and well-connected system of protected areas. The CBD Strategy is delivered regionally through conventions such as the Convention Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR convention). As an independent coastal state, the UK will now report directly to OSPAR whereas this was previously reported through the European Commission via European Directives such as the Habitats Directive, the Wild Birds Directive, and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

To meet this commitment, DAERA undertook a programme of designations between 2013 and 2018 to establish an ecologically coherent network and the MPA network now encompasses 48 MPAs that provide protection for 38% of the Northern Ireland inshore region. Further information can be found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/report-creation-network-conservation-sites-northern-ireland-inshore-region-progress-toward>

The latest assessments for both the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 have identified that overall our benthic habitats are not reaching the required status and these management measures are considered necessary to support their recovery.

Fisheries Regulations have already been introduced for Rathlin and Strangford Lough Special Areas of Conservation and recent surveys are showing evidence that the benthic habitats are recovering. The most recent Rathlin Dive survey in 2019 helped demonstrate that the prohibition of towed demersal gear has led to recovery of sensitive taxa including sponges, bryzoans and anemones. In Strangford Lough, the status of *Modiolus* beds has improved from 'Unfavourable declining to Unfavourable recovering'.

There are important fisheries that occur within MPAs and the management options considered all of the Department's duties and obligations that relate to this activity.

Fisheries management measures were proposed for the following MPAs:

- Skerries and Causeway Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Rathlin Island SAC/Special Protected Area (SPA) and Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)
- Red Bay SAC
- Waterfoot MCZ
- Maidens SAC
- Outer Belfast Lough MCZ
- Strangford Lough MCZ (Outer area located outside the SAC)
- Murlough SAC
- Carlingford Lough MCZ

## 2. Policy objectives

The inshore area around Northern Ireland supports diverse fishing opportunities, and local communities will continue to depend on these. The introduction of fisheries management measures are intended to further the conservation objectives of the MPAs in the Northern Ireland inshore region and to support fishing at sustainable levels. The intended effects of the management measures are that the designated features will be returned to favourable condition where feature condition is deemed to be unfavourable and maintained in favourable condition where the feature condition is deemed favourable.

The level of commercial fishing activities known to occur within MPAs in the Northern Ireland inshore region was assessed for demersal mobile gear (trawling and dredging) and static gear (pots and traps) fishing using information from the following sources:

- Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) data;
- Physical abrasion layer provided by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC);
- Fleet observer programme;
- Fisheries landing data;
- Local information provided by users through the Inshore Fisheries partnership group; and
- Expert opinion and knowledge

Sensitivity assessments were completed for each MPA. These are assessments of the damage risk that human activities pose to vulnerable features. This approach is known as the Marine Evidence based Sensitivity Assessment (MarESA) (JNCC, 2015; Tillin & Waters, 2015). Following the sensitivity assessments, management options tailored to each individual MPA, were developed for demersal mobile fishing and static gear fishing.

## 3. Policy options considered, including alternatives to regulation

The management options proposed are specifically tailored to each MPA. Three options have been considered:

- The do nothing option
- Option 1 – minimum option based on the minimum requirements to protect the features; and
- Option 2 – the extended option that could deliver wider ecosystem benefits, including benefits to fish stocks.

For all options, the voluntary approach has been discounted as it is not deemed sufficient to effectively manage MPAs to protect designated features and aid the recovery of habitats.

### Do nothing option

This option has not been considered as DAERA is bound by national policies and legislation and international commitments, to introduce management measures to preserve the protected features within MPAs and support their recovery, where necessary. As the latest assessments have identified that overall our benthic habitats are not reaching the required status, the introduction of management measures is required.

For the majority of the Northern Ireland MPAs where the introduction of fisheries management is proposed, the Conservation objectives are to 'maintain' the most recent condition status of 'favourable'. However, for Outer Belfast Lough MCZ and the Reef and Black Guillemot habitats in Rathlin, the conservation objectives are to 'recover' as the current condition assessments are evaluated as 'unfavourable'.

### Option 1 – Minimum fisheries management measures

Option 1 - Minimum fisheries management measures required to protect features within MPAs. This option is a zoned approach which would prohibit certain fishing methods from specified areas of the site to remove significant risk to the conservation objectives from fishing activities.

For most of the MPAs there is only one management option recommended for demersal mobile gear fishing and one option recommended for static gear fishing. This applies to MPAs where the designated boundary encompasses the qualifying feature(s) only and where no non-feature habitat is present. The Option 1 MPA management measures were identified through Habitats Regulations Assessments and Marine Conservation Zone assessments as the minimum requirements necessary to provide protection for designated features.

A summary is provided in Table 1 of the Option 1 management measures for MPAs.

**Table 1 – Option 1 management measures for MPAs**

<b>MPA</b>	<b>Demersal mobile gear fishing</b>	<b>Static gear fishing</b>
Skerries and Causeway SAC	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear use on reef and sandbank features	Prohibition of static gear use on seagrass, and managed pot fishery throughout rest of the SAC
Rathlin Island SAC/SPA and Rathlin MCZ	Extend existing prohibition of demersal mobile gear use in the SAC to include Deep-sea bed and habitat associated with black guillemot habitat (entire MPA).	Prohibition of static gear use on fragile sponge and anthozoan communities on rocky outcrops feature and managed pot fishery throughout the entire MPA
Red Bay SAC	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear use throughout entire SAC	Prohibition of static gear use throughout entire SAC
Waterfoot MCZ	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear use throughout entire site	Prohibition of static gear use throughout entire site
Maidens SAC	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear use on reef and Maerl features	Prohibition of static gear use on the Maerl feature; and managed pot fishery throughout the rest of the SAC
Outer Belfast Lough MCZ	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear throughout entire site	Managed pot fishery throughout MCZ
Strangford Lough MCZ	Extend existing prohibition of demersal mobile gear use in the SAC to include full extent of the MCZ and associated habitats and PMFs in that area (outside the SAC).	Managed pot fishery throughout the rest of the MPA (MCZ outside SAC)
Murlough SAC	Maintain existing Dundrum Bay Prohibition Regulations and extend demersal mobile gear prohibition to the SAC boundary to protect features	Managed pot fishery throughout SAC
Carlingford Lough MCZ	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear use throughout entire site	Managed pot fishery throughout MCZ

## Option 2 – the extended option

An extended option is presented for consideration in two of the MPAs, Skerries and Causeway SAC and The Maidens SAC. For all the other MPAs, the designated boundary encompasses the qualifying feature(s) only, so non-feature habitat is not present.

Option 2 expands the protection provided by the minimum option by extending the introduction of fisheries management measures for demersal mobile gear fishing throughout Skerries and Causeway SAC and The Maidens SAC, so would include areas where protected features are present and non-feature habitats.

A summary of the Option 2 management measures for MPAs is provided in Table .2

**Table 2 – Option 2 management measures for MPAs**

<b>MPA</b>	<b>Demersal mobile gear fishing</b>
Skerries and Causeway SAC	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear use throughout entire SAC
The Maidens SAC	Prohibition of demersal mobile gear use throughout entire SAC

## Managed pot fishing

For Option 1 and Option 2 the Department's preferred mechanisms for managing pot fishing will apply to all types of pot fishing and include the following proposals:

- Following best practice guidance on biosecurity to prevent the spread of disease and accidental introduction of invasive species from the transfer of static gear fishing from other areas;
- Mandatory vessel position monitoring for all vessels operating in the MPA;
- Introduction of a pot tagging scheme to enable quantification of effort, with different colours for commercial and recreational pots. The number of tags issued to each recreational fisherman will reflect the current 5 pot limit, as described in Regulation 4 of The Unlicensed Fishing for Crabs and Lobster Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008;
- Mandatory recording of protected species that are accidentally caught and any entanglement issues; and
- The Department will continue to encourage and support the development and trialling of fishing gear that reduces unintended catch.

## 4. Expected level of impact on business and government

This section identifies both monetised and non-monetised impacts with the aim of understanding what the overall impact to government and businesses might be from implementing these options. Where possible the estimated costs and benefits have been monetised.

The Agri-Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI) were commissioned by DAERA to provide information on the impact of introducing fisheries management measures in MPAs and the scallop enhancement sites. Please see <https://www.afbini.gov.uk/publications/fisheries-management-proposals-mpas> for further information. The AFBI report assessed fishing activity between 2012 and 2016. This was criticised during the public consultation because the most recent data was not used. The annual average value of fishing in each MPA has been recalculated to included data from 2012-2020. These values are in Table 3 and 4, and represent monetised opportunity costs.

The value of fish landings into NI in 2019 exceeded £31 million. Scallop fishing is the sector most affected by these measures and the annual average scallop landings to NI are £3.3m.

## Option 1 – Minimum fisheries management measures

### Cost of implementation to industry

The estimated annual value of the loss of fishing opportunity from Option 1 has been provided in Table 3. It must be noted that these costs are estimates and that not all vessels have vessel monitoring systems (VMS).

It is intended the cost of introducing a pot tagging scheme and installing inshore vessel position monitoring systems will be met from the Maritime and Fisheries Fund (MFF) or its subsequent replacement.

**Table 3 – Value of the loss of fishing opportunity per annum from Option 1**

<b>MPA or scallop enhancement site</b>	<b>Demersal value of loss (£)</b>	<b>Static value of loss (£)</b>	<b>Total value of loss (£)</b>
Skerries and Causeway SAC	6,513	372	6,885
Rathlin Island SAC/SPA and Rathlin MCZ	3,041	1,083	4,124
Red Bay SAC	No data	No data	No data
Waterfoot MCZ	No data	No data	No data
Maidens SAC	1,845	No data	1,845
Outer Belfast Lough MCZ	3,671	No data	3,671
Strangford Lough MCZ	208	No data	208
Murlough SAC	925	0	925
Carlingford Lough MCZ	No data	No data	No data
		Total	17,658

The total annual cost for implementing these measures would be £17,658.

This cost is considered to be a short-term impact because research suggests there will be long term benefits that should outweigh the losses. Evidence suggests the protections afforded to habitats and species within managed MPAs and closed areas, provide significant biological benefits. One of the spill over benefits to areas located beside MPAs is the sustainable supply of larger fish.

### **Cost of implementation to DAERA**

There is no expected additional direct cost to DAERA as inspections and enforcement activities required to support Option 1 will be met from within existing resource allocations for managing sustainable fisheries and protecting the marine environment. In relation to the introduction of a pot tagging scheme and the requirement for commercial fishers to install inshore vessel position monitoring systems, funding will be sought through the existing EMFF or its subsequent replacement funding scheme. Funding of an expanded science partnership will also be explored through EMFF to support to fishers for participating in activities to protect and restore marine biodiversity, and to support partnerships between scientists and fishers.

### **Benefits to industry**

The following benefits have been identified for Option 1:

- Could provide benefits to inshore fish stocks, leading to security of future income for fishers
- Will ensure recreational fishers adhere to potting limits
- Science partnership could provide an alternative income for fishers in the inshore region until the long term spill over benefits from the closed areas are realised

### **Benefits to DAERA**

The following benefits have been identified for Option 1:

- Provide the necessary protection to designated features from fishing pressures



- Provide protection for important 'Blue Carbon' habitats such as seagrass beds, which are valuable in mitigating climate change
- The science partnership co-management approach provides benefits for both the Department and the fishing industry. The scheme would be designed to ensure that data collection by fishers was supporting their own interests and augmenting observations at-sea.

## Option 2 – the extended option

### Cost of implementation to industry

The estimated annual value of the loss of fishing opportunity from Option 2 has been provided in Table 4.

It is intended the cost of introducing a pot tagging scheme and installing inshore vessel position monitoring systems will be met from the Maritime and Fisheries Fund (MFF) or its subsequent replacement., from the introduction of Option 2, the extended option to protect designated features within MPAs, and provide protection to scallop enhancement areas, as alternative fishing grounds are widely available. It is also intended that the cost of introducing a pot tagging scheme and installing inshore vessel monitoring systems will be met from the EMFF or its subsequent replacement.

**Table 4 – Value of the loss of fishing opportunity from Option 2 per annum**

MPA or scallop enhancement site	Demersal value of loss (£)	Static value of loss (£)	Total value of loss (£)
Skerries and Causeway SAC	7,988	372	8,360
Rathlin Island SAC/SPA and Rathlin MCZ	3,041	1,083	4,124
Red Bay SAC	No data	No data	No data
Waterfoot MCZ	No data	No data	No data
Maidens SAC	7,112	No data	7,112
Outer Belfast Lough MCZ	3,671	No data	3,671
Strangford Lough MCZ	208	No data	208
Murlough SAC	925	0	925
Carlingford Lough MCZ	No data	No data	No data
		Total	24,400

The total annual cost for implementing these measures would be £24,400.

This is considered to be a short-term impact because research suggests there will be long term benefits that should outweigh the losses. Evidence suggests the protections afforded to habitats and species within managed MPAs and closed areas, provide significant biological benefits. One of the spill over benefits to areas located beside MPAs is the sustainable supply of larger fish.

### Cost of implementation to DAERA

There is no expected additional direct cost to DAERA as inspections and enforcement activities required to support Option 2 will be met from within existing resource allocations for managing sustainable fisheries and protecting the marine environment. In relation to the introduction of a pot tagging scheme and the requirement for commercial fishers to install inshore vessel position monitoring systems, funding will be sought through the existing EMFF or its subsequent replacement funding scheme. Funding of an expanded science partnership will also be explored through EMFF to support to fishers for participating in activities to protect and restore marine biodiversity, and to support partnerships between scientists and fishers.

### Benefits to industry

The following benefits have been identified for Option 2:

- could provide benefits to inshore fish stocks, leading to security of future income for fishers
- will ensure recreational fishers adhere to potting limits
- Science partnership could provide an alternative income for fishers in the inshore region until the long term spill over benefits from the closed areas are realised

### **Benefits to DAERA**

The following benefits have been identified for Option 2:

- Provide the extended protection to designated features in MPAs from demersal mobile gear fishing pressures.
- Provide protection for important 'Blue Carbon' habitats such as seagrass beds, which are valuable in mitigating climate change
- The science partnership co-management approach provides benefits for both the Department and the fishing industry. The scheme would be designed to ensure that data collection by fishers was supporting their own interests and augmenting observations at-sea.

### **Risks**

For both options the following risks have been identified:

- The total annual cost of introduction of fisheries management measures does not include vessels under 12m. The figure could be higher because 18% of vessels <12m have no vessel monitoring system.
- It is intended that the cost to commercial fishers, of introducing a pot tagging scheme and installing inshore vessel position monitoring systems will be met from EMFF or its subsequent replacement fund. There is a low risk that the replacement fund will not provide funding for these measures. However, if DAERA funding is required, these costs are not expected to be excessive and can be met within existing baselines.

## **5. Summary and preferred option**

The preferred option is a combination of Options 1 and 2. Option 2, the Department's preferred option in the public consultation stage, will be taken forward except for Skerries and Causeway SAC. The use of demersal mobile gear will be permitted within two specified areas in Skerries and Causeway SAC that do not contain the designated features of the SAC. The annual monetised opportunity cost of the closed areas in Skerries and Causeway SAC is £6,513. The total annual monetised opportunity cost of implementing the measures across all MPAs will be £22,925.

## **6. Other Impact Assessments**

The proposed Fisheries management measures have also been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment, an Equality and Human Rights Impact Screening exercise, and a Rural Needs Impact Assessment. The accompanying assessments are available to download from the Department's website.

During stakeholder engagement sessions, stakeholders mentioned it would be useful to see figures for the loss of fishing opportunity for areas already closed to fishing activities included in this Regulatory Impact Assessment. Therefore, information from Rathlin and Strangford Lough SACs have been provided in Table 5 below.

**Table 5 – Value of the loss of fishing opportunity from areas already closed to fishing activities.**

<b>MPA where fisheries management has already been introduced</b>	<b>Value of loss of fishing opportunity per annum (£)</b>
Strangford Lough SAC	No figure available, however the

	extended zones represent approximately 14% of the available fishing ground within the lough and about 30-40% of available potting ground.
Rathlin Island SAC	12,856
Total	12,856