

# NEXT STEPS FOR BATMAP

An industry workshop in Peterhead explored plans to extend the use of the BATmap bycatch avoidance tool in Scottish fisheries

ONCE PARTICIPATING skippers had two years' experience using the BATmap bycatch avoidance tool, it was time to canvass users for feedback and identify priorities for future development. In May 2022, a workshop was held in Peterhead bringing together skippers and representatives from the four producer organisations that participated in the development and deployment of real-time reporting (RTR) in Scottish waters.

Dan Martin, an Alaskan skipper with 38 years' experience catching pollock, cod, rockfish and king crab, attended the workshop to speak about using RTR to reduce salmon bycatch in the fishery (*Fishing News*, 13 April, 'Bycatch lessons from Alaska').

He told participants: "I've found that regardless of the advancements we were able to achieve with our gear, the single most effective tool for managing salmon bycatch is the sharing of information. Whether it's SeaState that I use in Alaska or BATmap that has been introduced in Scotland, the real-time, boots-on-deck information that we're able to access is invaluable."

With his wealth of experience, Dan was able to



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suggest feasible directions for growth and compare the Scottish and Alaskan experiences.

Workshop participants agreed that BATmap was able to meet two key objectives: helping to avoid unwanted catches, and producing data to inform scientific discussions affecting the demersal fisheries on the west of Scotland – for example spurdog.

It was also recognised that the real-time sharing of catch information across a trusted group represents a significant advance towards results-based fisheries management and demonstrates how technology



can contribute to sustainable fishing.

Discussions focused on making specific recommendations to guide the next phase of development. Several technical changes to improve both the capabilities and the uptake of BATmap were identified.

Skippers requested greater assurance that data would not be used or shared without first consulting with them. To allay their concerns, a data governance policy is now in place to ensure that data is not shared with third parties without the consent of all participants.

Validation of the contributed catch data was also discussed. This is an important aspect of the process, particularly if data is to be utilised for scientific purposes. In Alaska, industry-funded observers enter catch data, but there is growing industry support for options that use remote electronic monitoring.

As skippers become more experienced in using BATmap, they will generate more suggestions for improvement. Several workshop attendees are planning to visit their counterparts in Alaska next year. Dan Martin will play host, arranging discussions with Alaskan skippers to see first-hand how RTR is being used at sea. The 'seeing is believing' approach will spur the next phase of BATmap's development and implementation.

Funding for the next phase of BATmap's development has already been secured from



▲ Last May's industry workshop in Peterhead brought together skippers and representatives of the four POs that had pioneered real-time reporting in Scottish waters.



▲ Alaskan skipper Dan Martin told the workshop: "Real-time, boots-on-deck information is invaluable."

participating POs and Seafish. The next phase of the project is underway, and will include continued refinement of the catch app and associated databases, while also developing analytical tools for the general reporting and dissemination of information, such as catch reports, catch maps and seasonality effects.

Efforts to increase the number of west of Scotland vessels using BATmap will continue, so as to maximise the

information being captured.

The BATmap team is currently considering new opportunities to adapt BATmap for use in other fisheries. The project team is also happy to share ideas about best practice based on its experience of rolling out BATmap on the west of Scotland.

**FIND OUT MORE**  
[info.batmap.co.uk](http://info.batmap.co.uk)  
 Contact the team at: [batmap@scottishfishermen.co.uk](mailto:batmap@scottishfishermen.co.uk)

# SAGB conference dates confirmed

Flagship shellfish event taking place on Tuesday 6 and Wednesday 7 June

THE SHELLFISH Association of Great Britain has confirmed the line-up and dates for its annual conference – its 53rd.

The conference is taking a one-year break from the hallowed

surroundings of Fishmongers' Hall, and will instead be held this year at the Crown Estate Offices in London – though the famous conference gala dinner will be held in the hall itself, on the evening of day one of the



Shellfish Association of Great Britain

conference, Tuesday, 6 June.

A regular feature of the conference is its ability to attract top politicians to the event, and 2023 is no different. Defra minister Mark Spencer is

scheduled to open the conference as the keynote speaker.

He will be followed by Barrow and Furness MP Simon Fell, chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Shellfish Aquaculture.

Welsh fisheries minister Lesley Griffiths will make a return appearance speaking at the conference, and the black-tie dinner will see West Country MP Anthony Mangnall as the after-dinner speaker.

Full details of the conference programme and timetable will be featured in a forthcoming issue of *FN*. In the meantime, SAGB suggests that tickets are likely to sell out ahead of the application deadline. Those wishing to book early can do so now, with full details available at: [shellfish.org.uk](http://shellfish.org.uk)



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