



Interim Spatial Separation Agreement between Dutch Pulse Trawlers and English East Coast Inshore Fishermen

Background

1. Strong concerns have been expressed in recent years by English East Coast inshore fishermen over the impact on their fisheries of Dutch vessels using the pulse method, as an alternative to conventional beam trawling. These concerns relate to:
 - Ecosystem impacts
 - The increased number of large vessels using this method in UK waters
 - Decreased catches in the inshore zones that have coincided with the rise of pulse trawling.
2. It is noted that number of scientific projects in the UK, and on an international basis, are currently underway, with the aim of providing a solid evidence base that will inform future fisheries policy in this area.
3. In the meantime, following an information meeting held by VisNed on 16th November in London, it was agreed between the UK (NFFO) and Dutch (Visned) fishing organisations, that it might be possible to reach a *voluntary spatial separation agreement* that could serve to reduce frictions and pave the way for more harmonious co-existence in the short term.
4. To that end, a meeting, convened by NFFO and Visned, was held, in London, on 21st December, to sketch out the basis of a possible agreement. On the UK side, the attendees were specifically invited because of their direct involvement in, and knowledge of the fisheries concerned. The Dutch delegation was comprised of the relevant representative organisations. A list of attendees is appended to this note.
5. The meeting observed that pulse fishing had been associated with a significant distributional shift in fishing effort from the wider North Sea basin into the south west areas of the North Sea, where competition with local UK fleets had intensified. Pulse fishing allowed Dutch vessels to fish softer ground than conventional beam gears. This had resulted in

a significant redirection of fishing effort from the wider North Sea into the Greater Thames Area. It is therefore a moot point whether the changes in the stock abundance in local fisheries are:

- The consequences of using electricity to stimulate flatfish into the net (which awaits definitive scientific advice)
- The impact of a greater concentration of fishing effort into areas fished by or adjacent to those fished by English inshore fishermen (which might be mitigated by voluntary spatial agreement)
- Derived from other factors within the dynamic marine environment

Proposal

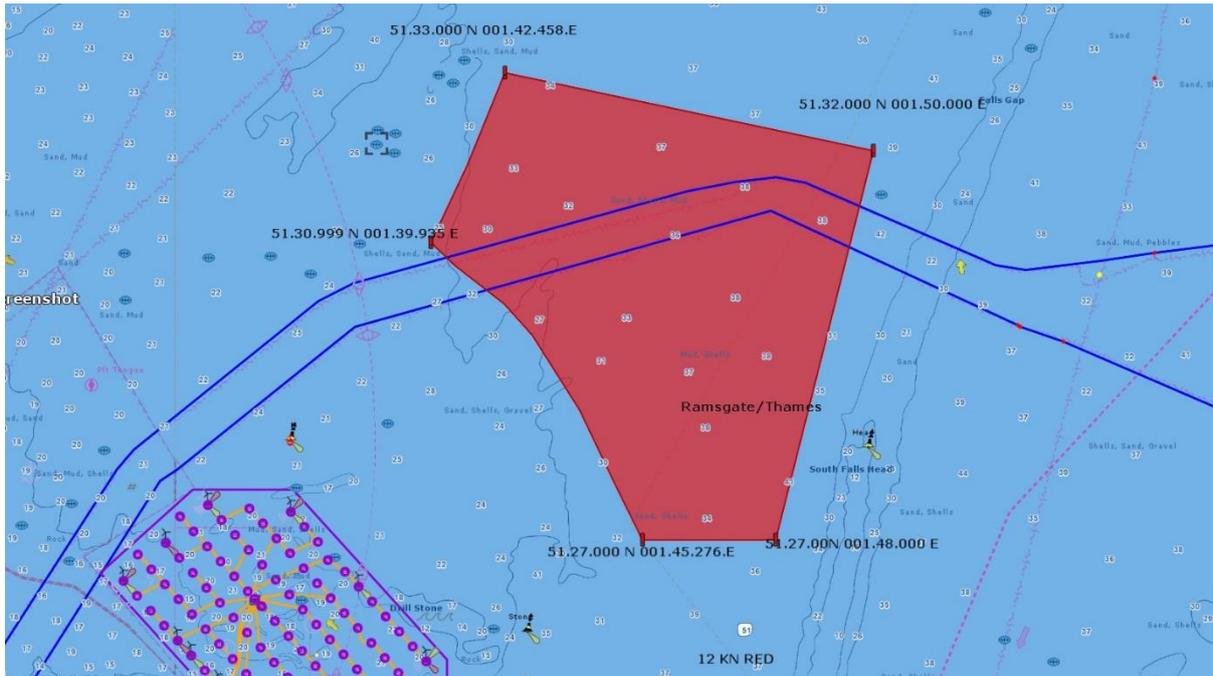
After discussion, it was agreed that the NFFO would make a proposal for a voluntary agreement that Dutch fishermen would avoid using the pulse method in three designated areas. The fishermen present were of the view that these closed areas could be of assistance in reducing tensions, whilst the collection of definitive evidence on the wider questions surrounding pulse fishing is completed.

The three areas offered for consideration are detailed below:

Area 1

Ramsgate/Thames

Starting on the 12mile line, run due east along the 51' 27.00N, out to the 001'48.00E. Then a line up to the 51'32.00N/ 001'50.00E and then back to the 12mile line where it crosses the 51'33.00N.



Thames Area Indicative Chart

Areas 2 and 3 Lowestoft

Welland Area

Closed Area/Season

Closed: February to end of May

Area: 53 00N 002 30 E to 53 00N 002 40 E

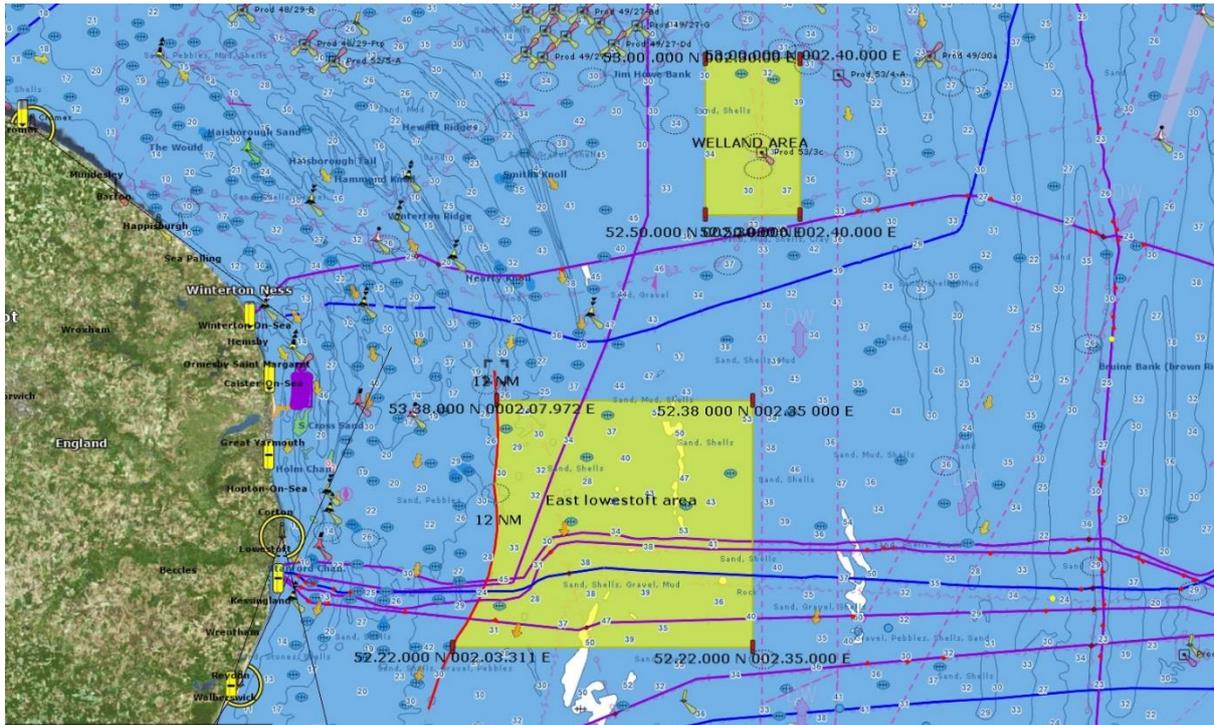
52 50 N 002 30E to 52 50N 002 40 E square box parameters

East Lowestoft area

Closed from October to end of May

52 38 00N 00 from 12 mile fishing limit to 52 38 00N 002 35 00 E

52 22 00 N from 12 mile limit to 52 22 00 N 002 35 00E square box parameters



Lowestoft Areas Indicative Chart

Orford

The view of local fishermen is that the arrival of pulse fishing coincided with a dramatic observed decline in the availability of commercial species locally. Although the marine environment is a dynamic system with a range of interacting factors in play, locally there is little doubt that the intensity of pulse fishing offshore has been a direct causal factor in the serious decline in the local fisheries. As the pulse fishery takes place offshore, outside the 12 mile limit, voluntary closed areas would not address the central issue facing inshore fishermen operating mainly within the 12mile limit. We have not therefore made a proposal for this area.

Interim Agreement to take effect from 15th February 2018

Against the background outlined above:

- 1. The parties agree that the pulse fishing method will not be used in the following proposed areas during the specified closed periods detailed above in:**
 - a) Area 1 Ramsgate Thames**
 - b) Area 2 Welland**

2. Discussions will continue on the boundaries/timing of Area 3 East Lowestoft
3. The interim agreement is without prejudice to whatever evidence driven policies towards pulse fishing that the authorities might adopt in the future, or further discussions on the form and scope of future voluntary agreements.

Parties to the Voluntary Agreement

VisNed

PO Delta Zuid

Dutch Fisheries Association

National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

Date

12th January 2018

VisNed (Coöperatie Kottervisserij Nederland U.A.)

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Appendix

**Meeting to Agree a Spatial Separation Scheme for Pulse Fishing
Thursday 21st December 2017 11.00 – 1400
Room 707, Nobel House Smith Square, London**

Attendees:

Netherlands

1. Cees van Beveren (Chair PO Delta Zuid)
2. Teun van Dam (Board PO Delta Zuid)
3. Anton Dekker (Vice chair Dutch Fisheries Association)
4. Maarten Drijver (VisNed chair)
5. Geert Meun (VisNed secretary)
6. Durk van Tuinen (Policy officer Dutch Fisheries Association)
7. Pim Visser (VisNed exec officer)
8. Andries de Boer (VisNed)

UK

1. Ed Temple Ramsgate
2. Chris Redmond Ramsgate
3. Stuart Gosman Ramsgate
4. Paul Gilson NFFO Southeast Vice Chair
5. Bill Pinney Orford
6. Steve Wightman NFFO East Anglia chair/Lowestoft
7. John Knights Lowestoft
8. Barrie Deas NFFO