

## Northern Ireland Gear Trials Project 2017-2020

### October 2019 Bulletin

The Northern Ireland Gear Trials project is now approaching the end of its third year of work with its primary aim being to provide industry with the support to develop more selective fishing gears and to help reduce and eliminate the capture of juvenile fish and non-quota species.

In 2019 we have run 3 gear trials using chartered Northern Ireland registered fishing vessels during June, August and October. These trials were accompanied by AFBI observers who recorded catch data. In addition to these trials the project also managed the first unobserved gear trial. This trial lasted for two weeks and the fishing vessel was permitted to fish under derogation. The aim of this secondary approach to our work was to encourage skippers to test things out on their own initially and then report back to the project manager. Reports are then reviewed, and a decision is made on progressing the idea to a full gear trial or otherwise.

Gear trials carried out in 2019 have included a further modified inclined net grid, luminous netting in the bottom panel of a SELTRA box section and further work with lights and cameras.

The next phase of gear trialling will take place during March and April 2020 and information about this work and invitations to tender will be issued soon via the PO network. Links for the project FB page and contact details for the project manager can be found at the bottom of this bulletin should you want to find out more about our work or wish to get involved.

Applications for gear trials are open to **ALL** Northern Ireland nephrops trawlers. We advise on a trial by trial basis what size of vessel we require to work with and over the last three years the project has chartered under 10, under 12 and over 12 meter trawlers. If you haven't been involved with the project yet we encourage you to consider applying for future gear trials. Applicants are assessed on a range of criteria and these can change depending on what is to be looked at during a specific trip.

Your PO will soon be circulating information and application forms for the charter of vessels for three gear trials commencing March 2020.

For further information contact [ni-geartrials@outlook.com](mailto:ni-geartrials@outlook.com) and keep an eye on the project FB page <https://www.facebook.com/nigeartrials/>