

Ministry of Agriculture,
Nature and Food Quality

> P.O. Box 20401 2500 EK The Hague The Netherlands

Mr. E. Brouckaert
North Western Waters Advisory Council
c/o Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Crofton Road
Dun Laoghaire
Ireland

Date 10/10/2018
Re Skates en rays roadmap

Dear Mr. Brouckaert,

On behalf of the Northwestern Waters regional group I would like to inform the NWW advisory council on the progress that has been made in drafting a skate and ray road map that is a condition for the exemption of skates and rays from the landing obligation from 2019 onwards.

Also, I would like to seek confirmation from the NWWAC that the NWWAC commits to play its part in fulfilling the conditions on which the temporary exemption of skates and rays from the landing obligation is based.

Background

The regional groups for the North Sea and Northwestern waters have submitted a joint recommendation on 31st of May requesting a high survival exemption for skates and rays from the landing obligation.

This request was analysed by STECF and the Commission and was generally accepted. For cuckoo ray the exemption was limited to one year (until 31 December 2019), for other species the exemption is for three years.

As part of the exemption the European Commission has requested a roadmap (to be submitted by 31st October) which includes concrete steps to:

- enhance knowledge and fill data gaps of skate & ray stocks;
- ensure that a program of measures, that industry will take to implement best practices, will be drafted;
- report on progress and advancement of the roadmap to the European Commission.

Directorate-General Agro and Nature

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The aim is to submit the roadmap by 31 October to the European Commission. In the attachment a draft roadmap is included, which describes the process, background and concrete steps that need to be taken. This roadmap has already been shared with the advisory councils in September.

Program of measures for best practices

One of the elements of the draft road map is a program of measures that would need to be drafted in which measures are described through which best practices will be implemented at fleet level. This program of measures would need to be submitted to the regional group by 1 May 2019. In the Joint recommendation, the coordination of drafting such a program of measures has been put under the responsibility of the NWWAC, although it would be a co-production with member states and scientific experts.

A draft of the roadmap has been presented at several meetings in the spring of this year as well as during September technical meetings. The NWWAC have participated at several of those meetings.

To finalize the roadmap and all elements in it, we seek to receive confirmation and the commitment of the NWWAC to coordinate the drafting process of the program of measures for implementing best practices. It is an essential element of the exemption conditions of skates and rays from the landing obligation.

Taking into account the deadlines for submitting the road map and the remaining work that needs to be done, we kindly request a response of the NWWAC by Tuesday, October 23.

Sincerely,

Maarten Wegen
Chair of the NWW technical group