



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

FACTSHEET: Focus Group on Brown Crab

Background

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) is one of nine Advisory Councils (ACs) in Europe. The ACs are stakeholder-led organisations that provide the European Commission and EU countries with recommendations on fisheries management matters.

The members of the NWWAC identify topics and issues they deem of enough importance to warrant a specific focus in the ACs work programme. They propose these to the Executive Committee which in turn can approve the establishment of a Focus Group (FG) to explore the topic in depth and develop recommendations and advice.

Members

This FG consists of members both from industry and other stakeholders from the three crab fishing countries in the North Western Waters: France, Ireland and the UK.

Objective

The objective of the Focus Group is the development of a crab fishing management strategy which takes account of new drivers of effort in European brown crab fisheries (FGCrab) and the development of recommendations for an EU management plan for brown crab.

The main driving force currently is the market, which has seen demand and price rising over the past years leading to increased effort by existing operators and attracting new entrants into the fishery. Brown crab is a non-quota species which in practice means management is dependent on a number of EU technical measures – MnCRS, KW Days at Sea – and individual national regulatory measures such as licencing restrictions, permits, local higher MnCRS, etc., which are largely confined to inshore crab fisheries and vary from country to country.

The EU funded ACRUNET project could not reconcile these different management systems amongst the participating countries (<http://www.acrunet.eu/>) which was why the NWWAC FGCrab was established in 2016 and has been giving renewed impetus in 2019.

Actions

Members of the FG agreed that current drivers of effort in brown crab fisheries (price & demand, increased effort, the Landing Obligation) have changed in recent years. It is important to be aware of such changes, inform stakeholders and assess:

1. Their effects on existing brown crab management measures.
2. The effects of new measures such as certification and Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs).
3. New data collection techniques and their effect on traditional scientific assessments.
4. Scientific advice regarding management strategies for brown crab which can be applied in all jurisdictions.

The FG also agreed to liaise with both the Irish and UK Brown Crab FIPs, to better engage with the stakeholders on the ground in all jurisdictions and to work together with the respective national research institutes regarding an evaluation of the current stock status as well as the impact of the market drivers.