



REPORT

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council Focus Group on Celtic Sea Demersal Fisheries

Thursday 7 July 2011

14:00-17:00

Main Conference Centre –Dublin Castle

Chairman: Jacques Pichon
Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed participants. The list of attendees is included in Annex I.

Apologies

There were no apologies received.

Adoption of an Agenda

As there was no formal agenda for this meeting the Chairman proposed the following order of business:

- Presentation from Colm Lordan (Marine Institute, Ireland) on Work to Date and an Update of Progress on Biological Considerations to meet transitional and long term objectives of the management plan.
- Proposal from the Irish fishing industry on Technical Conservation Measures to improve gear selectivity for haddock and whiting fisheries in the Celtic Sea
- Next Steps on the development of a Long Term Management Plan for mixed demersal fisheries in the Celtic Sea

The members of the Celtic Sea Focus Group (FG) present at the meeting agreed and adopted this order of business.

The Chair also stated that no progress has been made since last meeting in relation to social and economic aspects of the management plan. This has proven to be a difficult task due to the lack of resources and expertise on this field and needs to be addressed immediately.

Action: The Focus Group members to nominate a person or steering group to coordinate this process within the NWWRAC and be able to report on the work progress to meet the agreed objectives.

2. Presentation on Work to Date and an Update of Progress on the definition of objectives for the development of a LTMP - biological considerations

Colm Lordan from the Marine Institute Ireland gave a detailed presentation on progress and updated information on the development of a Celtic Sea long term management plan with the view of hold a discussion on the actions to be put forward for achieving each one of the transitional and long term biological objectives of the plan. The full presentation of Dr. Lordan is available on the NWW RAC website for information¹.

A number of important points were raised:

- Fishing industry support and ‘buy in’ was essential;
- In light of the latest ICES advice it was noted that without a significant increase in the Cod Vile-k TAC support and ‘buy in’ would be impossible;
- Improved selectivity and discard reduction measures would be key elements in any management plan (Irish industry proposals described later);
- Optimum Yield rather than MSY might be a more appropriate approach especially in the ecosystem based approach to fisheries management;
- Colm Lordan indicated that an EU funded project looking “beyond MSY” was an interesting one involving partners from Ireland, UK and France that could possibly contribute to development of this type of approach;

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http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/Definition_Objectives_Biological_Considerations_CL_070711_EN.pdf

- A pragmatic approach based on assessment trends rather than absolute figures was desirable;
- The MEFEPO management strategy matrix was seen as a useful starting point to develop a suite of indicators and risk assessment framework for species of lesser importance in the ultra-mixed fisheries;
- There remained a lack of progress on social and economic objectives – this needed to be addressed urgently if the plan was to be credible;
- The EU Commission had great expectations of the work being carried out by the NWWRAC and offered to make available resources (not just financial) to assist where possible.

3. Irish proposal on Technical Conservation Measures to Improve Gear Selectivity

Sean O'Donoghue summarized the Federation of Irish Fishermen's proposal on improvements in Celtic Sea selectivity measures. The full proposal and scientific background paper from the Marine Institute are available on the NWW RAC website for information.

The basis for the proposals was the introduction of square mesh panels in trawl fisheries operating in all ICES area VII except the Channel. These were presented as simple and cost-effective measures that would give immediate results and contribute to a substantial reduction (about 30%) in discards of haddock and whiting.

It was noted that other members of the FG, as well as several Member State administrations, had not seen the detailed proposals and therefore were unable to support or endorse this approach at this stage.

However a number of initial issues were raised:

- It was felt that area of application should be restricted to ICES VII_{fg} in the first instance;
- There was no assessment of losses of important species such as squid, cuttlefish, red mullet, etc. These were of vital importance to some fleets and this would have to be addressed;
- It was clearly stated that these proposals would apply to trawlers and not to beam trawlers or targeted squid fisheries;

Action: It was agreed that the Irish industry proposal would be circulated by the NWW RAC secretariat along with scientific papers for comments to members; and that the Irish Administration must contact their fellow Member State administrations and let them know of this proposal. As this was a matter of urgency for the NWW RAC, responses would be required before July 26. A revised version would then be undertaken by Sean O'Donoghue incorporating responses where possible.

It was anticipated that an amended draft proposal would be presented to the NWW RAC Executive Committee in September for adoption.

4. Next Steps on the Development of a Long Term Management Plan for mixed demersal fisheries in the Celtic Sea

A small coordination group consisting of Jacques Pichon, Sean O'Donoghue, Emiel Brouckaert, Hugo González, Colm Lordan and Paul Trebilcock would carry out preparatory work ahead of the next Focus Group meeting, and inform periodically the Secretariat on their progresses.

The guiding principles for this work were to:

- Identify specific work packages and appropriate experts to carry out the work;
- Agree on the priority stocks to start working with in VIIIfg;
- Achieve progress with socio-economic objectives as well as biological ones;
- Describe realistic timeframe for delivery of credible proposals;
- Where possible carry out the necessary drafting or liaison with appropriate experts;
- Investigate resources available from Commission;
- Draft proposals to be presented to the next Focus Group meeting.

It was agreed that Sean O'Donoghue would lead on this and that this could be done electronically via email.



Action: A coordination group composed by the above mentioned participants will be entrusted with progressing with work by e-mail and articulate a proposal to be presented at the next Focus Group meeting on this subject.

Meeting was adjourned at 17 hours

Annex I. List of attendees

MEMBERS		
1	Jacques Pichon (Chairman)	FROM Bretagne-PMA – France
2	Paul Trebilcock (Rapporteur)	Cornish FPO – United Kingdom
3	Bertie Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen’s Federation – UK
4	Jacques Bigot	CTFC – ETF - France
5	Arianna Broggiato	EBCD – EU
6	Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale – Belgium
7	John Crudden	European Anglers’ Alliance – EU
8	Bruno Dachicourt	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
9	Barrie Deas	NFFO - UK
10	Caroline Gamblin	CNPMEM - France
11	Antón González	Wales and West Coast FPO – UK
12	Hugo González	ANASOL-ARVI - Spain
13	André Gueguen	OPOB – France
14	Sam Lambourn	Skipper / NWWRAC Chairman – UK
15	Eduardo Míguez López	EAFPA – EU
16	Lorcan O’Cinnéide	Irish Fish Producer’s Organisation – Ireland
17	Sean O’Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen’s Association – Ireland
18	Eibhlin O’Sullivan	Irish South & West FPO - Ireland
19	Jim Portus	SWFPO - UK
EXPERTS AND OBSERVERS		
20	María Fuensanta Candela	DG MARE – European Commission
21	Alvaro Fernández	MARM (Scientific Advisor) – Spain
22	Bernhard Friess	DG MARE – European Commission
23	Jan Lindemann	DG MARE - European Commission
24	Colm Lordan	Marine Institute (Scientific Expert) - Ireland
25	Eamon Mangan	DPMA France (Member State)
26	Pieter-Jan Schon	ICES (Scientific Expert) – N. Ireland
27	Héctor Villa	SEGEMAR – MARM (Member State) - Spain
NWWRAC SECRETARIAT		
28	Conor Nolan	Executive Secretary
29	Alexandre Rodríguez	Executive Assistant - Fisheries Policy Issues
30	Joanna McGrath	Executive Assistant-Administration / Finances