



## **REPORT**

### **NWWRAC Focus Group on Cod management West of Scotland and Irish Sea Demersal Fisheries Comité National des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages Marins**

**Thursday January 31st, 2013  
Paris, 2-4 pm**

**Chairman: Sean O'Donoghue  
Rapporteur: Caroline Gamblin**

#### **1. Welcome and opening declaration by the Chairman**

All participants to the meeting were welcomed by Sean O'Donoghue, Chairman of the Focus Group, who invited all of them to introduce themselves in a tour-de-table. The full list of participants and organisations that they represent is included in Annex 1 of this report.

##### **1.1. Agenda and terms of reference of meeting:**

The Chairman recalled that the primary aim of the meeting was to update the operational programme, in particular, regarding the West of Scotland area, and to appoint the people responsible for the different actions. The agenda and the terms of reference of the meeting were approved by the members present without any comment.

##### **1.2. Report of the last meeting:**

The report of the last meeting on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012 in Dublin, produced by Barrie Deas and Alexandre Rodriguez, was approved without any amendment.



## 2. Review of actions carried out during the second half of the year

### 2.1. July Working Group

The Chairman recalled that a list of actions to be carried out had been formed at the July 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Focus Group. These have not all been carried out, in particular actions that require participation from Scientists. The Chairman recalled the importance of scientific support, particularly in regard to the implementation of the operational plan. Their presence at the next meeting is essential.

### 2.2. Public Hearing on the revision of the Cod plan in September

The presentation made at the Public Hearing is available on the NWWRAC Website (Note: the version uploaded before the meeting was not the correct one). At that Hearing, the RAC identified 5 articles of interest that required modification:

Articles 9, 11, 12, Article 13 a, c, d and Article 17.

The members of the Focus Group welcomed the decision made that month at the Council of Ministers that allowed the introduction of a freeze of the fishing effort.

It has been proposed that a letter be written to the European Commission indicating the additional measures that we wish to put into place, in particular, proposing short term adjustments of the regulations while waiting for the co-decision process to happen.

The European Commission has not ruled out that several interpretation possibilities of the current regulations will be considered, in particular regarding Article 13c, if this can facilitate the application of the regulations and the removal of certain ambiguities. Regarding Article 17, it is not the wish of the Commission that transfers of effort result in an increase of Cod fishing mortality.

In addition, the members of the Focus Group judge that it is important to participate in the process that is currently in progress in the European Parliament and to send amendment proposals. It was underlined that the Rapporteur, Mrs Dodds, is interested in receiving any comments.

#### **Action**

*It is therefore proposed to draft a document for the European Parliament and Commission. This document will refer to the articles highlighted in the September presentation. People were appointed to draft each paragraph, with a section justifying the proposals accompanied by an amendment proposal. The information must be sent to the Secretariat before February 15<sup>th</sup>, in order to compile a final document before the end of the month.*



Sean O Donoghue is responsible for Article 12, particularly in relation to checking if the regulation emanating from the Council of Ministers is sufficient (EC Regulation N°1243/2012).

Sean O Donoghue, Barrie Deas and Eibhlín O’Sullivan are responsible for Article 13 a, c, d. In relation to Article 17, it has been proposed that proposals be made supporting the introduction of the possibility that transfers be made between areas (Person responsible: B. Armstrong) or between gear without any penalties (example: TR2 to TR1), in cases where it is justified, in particular, in terms of increased selectivity (People responsible: C. Gamblin and E. Brouckaert). Ratios used for transfers were also judged to be an issue.

### 2.3. Declaration of the RAC on Mixed Fisheries Management (December Council )

This position was established using the RAC document titled “*Breaking the circle for West of Scotland demersal fisheries*” and the elements discussed at the Focus Group in July. The European Commission indicated that a reply to this document is in the process of being drafted and that the letter received by the RAC in late December referred to the earlier RAC letter of June and not the one (declaration) submitted in early December.

## 3. Analysis of the Commission’s reply on mixed fisheries management

### - Fully Documented Fisheries

Regarding Fully Documented Fisheries, the members of the Focus Group had understood that the European Commission had asked the European Control Agency about the possibility of using reference fisheries rather than CCTV cameras. The members of the Commission who attended the RAC meeting were not aware of such a study within the Agency’s working plan. It is important to clarify this point and to check whether such a request was made.

#### **Actions:**

- ✓ *The Secretariat shall ask the European Commission to confirm whether the Control Agency was contacted about the issue regarding the use of a reference fleet within the implementation of Fully Documented Fisheries.*
- ✓ *Victor Badiola, who will be representing the NWWWRAC at the next meeting with the Agency on February 20<sup>th</sup>, will ask the question directly.*

The members of the group stated that the ICES carried out a lot of work last year to identify the various métiers operating in the West of Scotland. The data required to determine a reference fleet is therefore available.



- Reduction of fishing mortality

The members of the Working Group realised that the Commission's reply referred to the position of the RAC as of June 2012 and not to the declaration made in December. This explains why the Commission considered that the position was unclear, in particular the resources put into place to reduce fishing mortality. This was specified in the December 2012 position (proposal for a progressive decrease over three years). The European Commission stated that they are waiting for the operational plan. It was proposed to wait for the European Commission reply to the December declaration before considering a RAC reply to the letter.

#### 4. Timetable and distribution of tasks

##### 4.1. West of Scotland

The Chairman proposed that the operational plan be amended and that the people responsible for drafting each section be identified.

1. Context (Person responsible: Alexandre Rodríguez)

This section can be drafted based on the existing documents. This paragraph can also refer to the political context and, in particular, the implementation of regionalisation under CFP Reform (also relevant to §6). A reference to the success of the revision of the TAC for Sole in the Western Channel (currently at MSY) can also be included in this section.

2. Fishing activities in Area VIa:

The actions identified for the completion of this paragraph are as follows:  
(to be carried out before the end of the month):

- ✓ *Collecting data from the CIEM WGMIXFISH Working Group that met last September:*  
Alex Rodríguez will contact Norman Graham and Colm Lordan to obtain the data.
- ✓ *Collecting data resulting from the Cod symposium:* Bertie Armstrong
- ✓ *Collecting data about the activity of the various fleets in the Area:*
  - French: Caroline Gamblin / Jacques Pichon
  - Spanish: Hugo González
  - Irish: Sean O'Donoghue

The task essentially consists of collecting data that is already available.



### 3. Stock assessment in Area Via Discards data

It is essential to collect data, in particular data relating to Discards rates. It was pointed out that the United Kingdom and the Commission made a declaration on the fringes of the Council, in relation to the necessity of taking measures to reduce Discards West of Scotland. They committed to investing, along with other member states, in actions aimed at reducing Discards and by-catch West of Scotland.

Sean O'Donoghue and Bertie Armstrong are responsible for the collection of data from the Marine Institute and Marine Scotland.

### 4. Setting up an operational TAC for Cod in Area VIa

The scientists (Colm Lordan and Norman Graham) are responsible for setting up a table based on Discards rates that can be used to produce catch level proposals corresponding to a progressive reduction in mortality over three years to reach a target mortality of 0.4 in 2015. This action thus depends on the data collected in point 3.

### 5. Follow-up and monitoring

Bertie Armstrong, Barrie Deas and Sean O'Donoghue are responsible for drafting this paragraph. The NFFO indicated that a workshop recently took place with Cefas in York on the subject of reference fleets and fully documented fisheries. The conclusions of the CEFAS report, which will be available at the end of February, will be useful in drafting this section. The drafting of this paragraph requires that details of the operation of a fully documented fishery and its follow-up must be fully specified, which is not easy to do at this stage.

### 6. Benefits of the new approach

Francis O'Donnell and Eibhlín O'Sullivan are responsible for drafting this section.

### 7. Conclusions and summary

The Secretariat will draft this paragraph once all the other sections have been written.

The members of the Group agreed on the timetable below to carry out the various actions:

- In 2/3 weeks: the people responsible will inform the Secretariat of their progress;
- Friday March 15<sup>th</sup>: reception of drafted elements;
- End of March: collation of the document ;
- April [Bilbao or other]: presentation of a draft position ;
- Summer 2013: validation of position



## 4.2. Irish Sea

The European Commission considers that the letter from the RAC (at the request of an audit) lacks clarity in respect of the elements that the RAC wishes it to examine.

However, it appears that the requests are specific. The NWWRAC would like to discuss them with the ICES so that they become a work priority (included in the “Agreement Memorandum”).

To avoid unproductive exchanges of correspondence, Alan McCulla proposed that a note be drafted summarising the uncertainties and difficulties in relation to Cod in the Irish Sea and, in particular, stock assessment (structure of the stock in age and unaccounted mortality), and specifying the elements to be included for an audit of Irish Sea Cod.

The members also agreed to organise a meeting with the European Commission to discuss this file.

### **Action:**

*Alan is responsible for putting together a small delegation of NWWRAC members and of interested scientists to meet the European Commission.*

## 5. Summary of action points

It was agreed that the rapporteur will rapidly send a summary of the actions and the people responsible with the help of the Secretariat (at the beginning of the week, Feb 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>). The summary table of these actions is available in Annex 2.

## 6. Conclusions

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked the participants for their input and the CNPMM for hosting the meeting.

**The meeting was adjourned at 16:00 as planned**



**Annex 1. List of participants  
of NWWRAC Focus Group on Cod management  
Mixed Fisheries of West of Scotland and the Irish Sea  
CNP MEM Paris, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012**

**Co-Chairs**

Sean O'Donoghue (West of Scotland)  
Alan McCulla (Irish Sea)

**Rapporteur**

Caroline Gamblin

**Members of Focus Group present**

Bertie Armstrong	Víctor Badiola
Emiel Brouckaert	Luc Corbisier
John Crudden	Barrie Deas
Hugo González	John Lynch
Francis O'Donnell	Eibhlin O'Sullivan
Jacques Pichon	Jane Sandell
Caitlín Uí Aodha	John Woodlock

**Observers**

Rodrigo Ataide Dias (DG MARE)  
Stephen Cederrand (EFCA)  
John Daly (Irish Seal Sanctuary)  
Ramón de la Figuera (MAGRAMA)  
Marc Ghiglia (NWWRAC President)  
Robert Griffin (DG MARE)  
Ian Humes (DARD – Northern Ireland)  
Anne-Marie Kats (AIPCE-CEP)  
Michael Keatinge (BIM-STEFCF)  
Eduardo Míguez (EAFPA)  
Kevin McDonnell (WSFPO)  
Joanna McGrath (RAC Secretariat)  
Alexandre Rodríguez (RAC Secretariat)

## Annex 2. List of actions

<b>SHORT TERM APPROACH:            AMENDMENTS TO IMPROVE IMPLEMENTATION OF            EC REG 1342/2008 (Commission &amp; European Parliament)</b>			
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE/S</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
Letter to Commission asking for a flexible interpretation of the current Reg. 1342/2008 in force	Sean O'Donoghue	15 February 2013	
1. Introduction / background	Alex Rodriguez		
2. Redraft art 12	Sean O'Donoghue		
2. Redraft art 13 (a,c,d)	Sean, Barrie Deas and Eibhlín O'Sullivan		Explain both rationale (justification) and alternative text proposed: extension 2-3 paragraphs per article
2. Redraft art 17	Exchange between areas / transfer of effort: Bertie Armstrong  Gear transfer and CPUE conversion: Caroline Gamblin and Emiel Brouckaert		



<b>MEDIUM/LONG TERM APPROACH: POSITION PAPER ON AN OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR VIA COD AND DEMERSAL FISHERIES</b>			
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE/S</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
1. Introduction / background	Alex Rodriguez	Friday 15 of March	
2. Information on fishing activities in Vla (geographical and VMS data)	ICES WGMIXFISH Report - Sept. 2012: Alex Rodriguez  Cod workshop  Fishing fleets: - Scotland: Bertie - France: Caroline G. / Jacques Pichon - Belgium: Emiel/Luc - Ireland : Sean/Eibhlín/Francis - Spain: Hugo González		All responsible persons of this action should inform the Secretariat about their work progress within 2-3 weeks following the Focus Group meeting
3. Scientific assessment – Discards data	Bertie- Marine Scotland Sean- Marine Institute		
4. Setting an operational TAC (F transition)	Sean O'Donoghue and Scientific Coordinators)		Scientific coordinators: Colm Lordan and Norman Graham
5. Monitoring and verification: develop RAC position on FDF	Barrie Deas / Sean O'Donoghue		

<b>MEDIUM/LONG TERM APPROACH: POSITION PAPER ON AN OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR VIA COD AND DEMERSAL FISHERIES</b>			
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE/S</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
6. Benefits of new approach to Management Cod	Francis O'Donnell / Eibhlín O'Sullivan		
7. Conclusions and summary	Alex Rodriguez		This part will be completed once the rest of the contributions have been received

### **IRISH SEA – Deadline: End of February**

Alan Mc Culla will draft a summary note on the uncertainties and issues surrounding Irish Sea Cod, mainly:

- Scientific Assessment problems with age structure and unaccounted mortality.
- Elements for inclusion in the request for an audit of VIIa Cod under the Memorandum of Understanding between ICES and the Commission for 2013.

Alan will coordinate a small delegation of NWWRAC members and scientists from concerned fisheries to meet the Commission in relation to this issue.

**END**