

REPORT

**North Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee
Working Group 3 (Channel)
8 July 2009 - 9-13 h
CNPMEM - Paris**

**Chairman: Daniel Lefèvre
Rapporteur: Jim Portus**

1. Welcome

- The Chairman welcomed members and guests to Paris for this series of NWWRAC Working Groups.
- Adoption of Agenda: approved.
- Adoption of Report from last meeting (Madrid, 18th of February 2009): approved.

2. Review of ICES Advice for VIId&e (Channel Sea)

– ICES Presentation by Manuela Azevedo (see NWWRAC Website for the PPT)

1. LTMP/ MAMP are effective and considered compliant with Precautionary Approach (PA) only if implemented adequately.
2. COD IV and VIId: Problems related with discards and high grading. ICES assumes approx 50% of all caught are not landed. Uncertain, but apparent recovery of SSB towards precautionary level. Very low recruitment indices; harvested unsustainably and overfished. ICES now considers the LTMP “precautionary”. Advising tonnage for IV TAC for 2010. VIId TAC for first time 2009. SQ for 2010?
3. PLAICE VIId: ICES concerned about high discards rate. Assumed 100% dead. Recent B slight increase, but still close to historical low; 2006-2007 year classes above average recruitment; might help the SSB but will depend on discards. SQ TAC 2010 under new rule?
4. PLAICE VIIe: Substantial reduction required in catch. Unreliable forecast so not possible to quantify that reduction. Persistently B has been overestimated and F underestimated in previous advices; stock harvested unsustainably and overfished. Effort limits and LTMP Sole 7e may benefit Plaice 7e.
5. SOLE VIId: Classified as overfished; 2007 year class weakest in time-series, but B still above Bpa; B revised downward this year; also F underestimated. PA requires 40% cut of TAC.

6. SOLE VIIe: Stock assessment abandoned. Only advice is effort and catches to be reduced. Not quantified. Low stock size and high F, but uncertainty of reference points. MAMP effectively suspended. Commission must provide TAC advice based on Type 6 stock.

- Questions and answers from the floor

The Chairman thanked Manuela. After commenting that fishers are discarding dead mature Cod for which the quota should be adjusted, he invited questions.

There followed a number of interventions for Manuela to address. ICES were congratulated for opening their proceedings to observers to aid stock analysis.

Bigot: French Cod fishers agree that F should be reduced but opined that the TAC should include the allowance made for discards, especially of mature fish.

Portus: disappointed VIIe Sole assessment has been abandoned. Grave implications for LTMP. Technical innovations being tried in many fisheries help stocks in the long-term, but asked whether survival rates of better selectivity for flatfish might be included quickly in assessments to boost the biomass, as had been done in Nephrops.

Manuela: ICES includes 20% discards in cod simulation, but are concerned about high-grading for quota saving. Assume 100% mortality of all species discarded, not just Cod.

Deas: Expressed concern. MoU Commission-ICES set 2015 for achievement of MSY, yet ICES now using 2011. Viability of economic activities jeopardized; why the change? EU-Norway agreement and EU Cod recovery plans differ (the latter includes an effort regulation); stepwise graduated approach to F would be more acceptable. 25% cut in F is harsh in one year, especially in the face of evidence of mature Cod discards and voluntary Cod avoidance arrangements.

Manuela: ICES-STCEF Workshop: discussed important issues in relation to evaluation of LTMP: biological criteria (Suggested circulate report to members?) It was agreed not to follow 2015 as the target date for MSY if earlier date (2011) allowed the LTMP to be considered precautionary and if risk of B to be below Blim is less than 5%

Deas: Implication of MSY 2011 for Cod is the 24,000 tonnes anticipated discards in 2010, yet Cod avoidance plans save that fish. If the fish is avoided and not discarded then the TAC should be higher for industry benefit.

General further discussion about discarding data and the role of such figures in ICES assessments. They need reliable discards data from all Member States.

3. Management proposals for Scallops fishery in VIId: revision and proposed way forward

Daniel Lefèvre tabled papers further to earlier discussions. The French scallop industry is adamant that 11cms minimum must be maintained in ICES VIId. (This size is also regulated in ICES VIIa north of 52 30')

Since 2002, the Commission has been considering replacement of 850/98, the Tech Con Reg. The proposed TCM text would allow only one size, 10cms throughout Regions 1 and 2. This is for simplification only and for no evident scientific purpose. The IFREMER study indicates faster growth in ICES VIId than elsewhere, with corresponding larger size for maturity.

There was brief discussion with interventions from Corbisier, Bryan-Brown and Portus. The meeting concluded that there are sound biological reasons for the regional differences and once again the NWWRAC must send a strong message to the Commission that one-size does not fit all. Regulations must reflect the regional seas as well as market conditions and industry practice.

Corbisier expressed concern that, just as 10cms is not the right size for all areas, so also it would not be right to change to 11cms throughout. Portus offered to assist Lefèvre in drafting a suitable response for the Exec Committee to send to the Commission.

4. Review of Long-Term Management Plan for 7e Sole

Jim Portus presented a paper for consideration and approval. He asked Manuela for her thoughts about the LTMP and the target Fishing Mortality, F0.27. She commented that the advice is now given and the stock assessment, with its biological reference points is rejected. The Commission must now use the new rule for stocks not evaluated and must effectively suspend the LTMP.

Deas proposed that the NWWRAC requests the Commission to seek STECF advice on an ad-hoc arrangement for 2010, taking into account all the valid points from earlier assessments. This position was agreed. Portus would redraft the opinion taking full note of Deas' suggestion. It would then be dealt with by the NWWRAC under emergency procedures to ensure the Commission has maximum time to seek STECF advice and have it available to use for 2010 TAC decisions.

5. Consideration of Commission's responses to NWWRAC letters of request on

*** Clarification on recovery measures set for VIId Cod:**

The Commission response explained the motives for increased TAC in 2008 and the associated Cod avoidance measures and quarterly uptake limits. The Commission also explained that exempted gears should not be affected by the quarterly limits.

Members again expressed concern about Relative Stability shares being destabilised by the new VIId Cod TAC. More and better science is needed.

* Rationale of fishing ban for some species of Rays:

The Commission defended its decision to ban landings of Undulate and Common Skate. Members complained about the lack of science. ICES did not seek a ban, but asked for management measures suitable to account for local abundance. In a mixed-fishery, where selectivity is impossible, the result is 100% discards with uncertain survival rates. There are no economic benefits and uncertain biological benefits. More and better science is needed.

6. Presentation on UK Round 3 offshore wind farms proposals

Hannah Cherry's, Crown Estates, presentation is on NWWRAC website. She pointed out that UK renewable energy commitment cannot wait for the Marine Bill to become law. Marine planning and developments for renewable energy must make progress.

Deas expressed grave concerns that fishing knowledge and spatial data is constrained to >15m vessels with VMS. Areas for wind farms likely to be sited in shallower seas where most vessels are of <15m!

7. Summary of action points & agreed proposals to put forward to the Exec. Committee

1. VIId scallops size to keep at 11cms, but avoid increase from 10cms in other areas. Present sound scientific reasons (IFREMER).
2. VIIe sole: request Commission to seek STECF guidance on how to interpret the known data in the face of abandoned assessment.
3. VIId Cod and VII Skates/Rays: request better science on stock status and on discard survival rates.
4. WG3 further notes to guide the Exec:
 - Wherever discards are considered a worrying feature of a fishery there should be an accurate assessment of survival rates. Wherever mature fish are discarded simply to keep within quota, the TAC should be adjusted to allow that part of the catch to be retained and landed. This is especially important in the Cod stock where voluntary avoidance steps are taken that have no associated incentives.
 - In the Plaice fishery, discards can be a factor. Tagging indicates survival rates can be high. This should be built into the TAC.
 - Disappointment that VIIe sole assessment abandoned. Plea for STECF to help arrive at justifiable and equitable TAC for 2010.

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Kristel	Adriaenssens	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Manuela	Azevedo	ICES Advisory Committee	Scientific Expert
Iwan	Ball	WWF	Member
Jacques	Bigot	CTFC - ETF	Member
Tom	Bryan-Brown	Ile of Manx FPO	Observer
Hannah	Cherry	The Crown State - UK	Observer
Luc	Corbisier	SDVO	Member
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Member
Barrie	Deas	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	Member
Jean Paul	Delpech	IFREMER	Scientific Expert
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM	Member
Ian	Gatt	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	Member
Sam	Lambourn		NWWRAC Chairman
Daniel	Lefèvre	CNPMEM Basse Normandie	Chairman WG3
Colm	Lordan	ICES WG on Northern & Southern Shelf Demersal Fisheries	Scientific Expert
Joe	Maddock	Irish Fishermen Organisation	Member
Alan	McCulla	ANIFPO	Observer
Mathieu	Nimard	OPBN – COPEPORT	Member (<i>replacing R. Brouzes</i>)
Jim	Portus	South West Fish Producers Organisation Ltd	Member - Rapporteur
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Delphine	Roncin	CRPMEM Pas de Calais/Picardie	Member
Pieter-Jan	Schon	ICES WG on Northern & Southern Shelf Demersal Fisheries	ICES Scientific Expert

Hélène	Syndique	Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche de France	National Administration
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish Fish Producers Organisation	Member
David	Tudor	The Crown State - UK	Observer
Youenn	Vermard	IFREMER Boulogne	Scientific Expert