



Working Group 2
NWWRAC

West of Ireland and Celtic Sea
Madrid, 17 of February 2009

REPORT
North Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee
Working Group 2
17 February 2009
14:00-17:30
Madrid (Spain)

Chairman: Hugo C. González García
Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock

Adoption of Agenda

The Chairman suggested taking the issue of Cod under agenda item 3 rather than under agenda item 2. This amendment was agreed and the agenda was adopted by consensus.

Adoption of Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of WG 2 meeting held on 3 July 2008 were adopted by consensus.

Assessment of TAC and Quotas 2009 Adopted at December Council

Hake

There was great surprise and disappointment that the Western Hake TAC had been reduced by 5% despite indications that the stock had reached its biomass targets. It was noted that there remained some uncertainties in this assessment.

However it was strongly stated that the fishing fleets and in particular the Spanish fleets were experiencing historically high abundances of all sizes of hake through-out the management area. It was strongly felt that the reduction did not reflect the true state of this stock or fishing industry observations.

It was agreed that this issue should be raised with the Commission as an area of urgent work to resolve these differences, with particular regard to the speed of recovery, growth rates, discard levels and overall state of this stock in terms of behaviour and trends, biological cycles or dynamics of the fishery, etc

Rays

There was disappointment at the process of implementation and introduction of the Ray TAC and associated requirements. There had been no proper consultation or participation from the fishing industry. There were concerns that identification of 11 different species of Ray would have practical implications for skippers and crew that had not been taken into account.

It was agreed to request the Commission additional information to make easier to the skippers the task of identifying the 11 different species of Ray above stated.

The general conclusion was that the introduction of this TAC and associated recording requirements was an example of poor Commission communication and not an example of the collaborative working relationship with the fishing industry that Commission rhetoric suggests.

Other Stocks (Including Monk, Megrim, Haddock, Whiting, Plaice and Sole)

It was noted that for many of the ICES Area VII stocks there were no catch tables, no CPUE data and in general the scientific data was not of a high enough standard to give meaningful advice. The resulting TAC proposals subsequently related to recent catch levels and invariably a default reduction in TAC by 15%. This was deemed to be totally unacceptable.

Norman Graham from Marine Institute suggested that there was indeed no basis for analytical scientific advice on many of these stocks and the current approach was not ideal. He informed WG 2 that in response ICES were developing advice mechanisms based on alternative methodologies including industry data, new scientific data and reviewing CPUE data to give indicators on trends. Interpretation of these indicators would be key to the success of this approach but it should be noted that this would be a very complex process. Norman announced to the members that a workshop on monkfish and megrim would be held in Aberdeen the last week of February to deal with data collection and interpretation in relation to these stocks. Ian Gatt will be attending this workshop and offered to brief all the NWWRAC members on its main outcomes.

It was agreed that the Commission should be informed that stock assessment data and management advice on stocks falling into this category needs to be reviewed and updated as a matter of urgency. It is wholly unacceptable that year on year the Commission proposals are based on inappropriate and incomplete data leading to recent catch levels being the primary driver for advice. This approach is neither scientific nor justifiable and must be addressed as a high priority.

Spur-dog and Porbeagle Shark

In response to a question on the introduction of maximum landing sizes for these species it was clarified that the justification was an attempt to protect mature females.

TAC and Quota Regulation

Given the ever-growing complexity and increasing layers of unnecessary bureaucracy contained in the regulation (e.g. Annex III concerning technical conservation measures), it has become unwieldy and impossible to understand by those who need to understand it. It was reported that it was easy to miss important parts of the regulation.

It was agreed that the Commission should be requested to make the regulation more user friendly to enable understanding by the fishing industry and others. It was suggested a table of contents/index would be a good starting point. The timely publication of the regulation should be a priority if the Commission wanted timely implementation and compliance.

Ongoing Actions and Papers for Discussion

Discards and Incentives for Nephrops Fishing Fleet in Area VII

Stéphanie Tachoures summarised the paper that she had drafted which is attached for information.

It was agreed that this was an excellent draft covering the salient points on this issue. It was agreed that this paper would be re-circulated among all members for further comments and it should be then used as a basis for an Opinion to be sent the Commission on this subject, after it has been agreed by consensus by the Executive Committee.

It was agreed that members of WG 2 should have the opportunity to assess the STECF evaluation report on discards in area VII nephrops fisheries. Norman Graham agreed to forward this report to the secretariat for wider dissemination.

It was agreed that the Commission approach was fundamentally flawed and the approach suggested in the discussion paper (i.e. a more 'guild' / "métier" specific approach) would be more appropriate.

It was further agreed that the Commission should be requested to organise a meeting involving the Commission, RACs and Scientists to look strategically at how this issue can be progressed in a practicable and effective manner.

Finally it was agreed that the Commission should be requested to clarify the timeline in terms of formulating a proposed regulation on discards.

EU Market Policy and Competition among Fishing Products in the EU

Hugo Gonzalez summarised a draft letter drafted as a result of the action agreed at last Executive Committee meeting in October 2008. . The key points covered were the following:

- Competition from cheaper imports
- That the Commission should consult on marketing regulations
- The urgent need for assistance for fishing companies so they can trade their fishing products
- Allocation of funds to promote and develop marketing initiatives for the commercialization and valorization of fishing products
- Commission should organise a workshop to analyse the current market situation
- Current regulations do not address real situation

It was acknowledged that protectionism was not possible. However it was also stated that genuine competition can only occur in an equitable market situation. It was suggested that non-EU imports were not subject to all of the controls that EU fish production was and therefore could be produced at an economic advantage.

It was agreed that there should be equal effort on market place equality as on enforcement and other policy areas.

It was suggested that this issue was a horizontal issue that affected not only other Working Groups in the NWW RAC but other RACs and ACFA.

It was therefore agreed that the Executive committee should note the paper drafted by Hugo González and that in the first instance this issue should be raised with ACFA and other RACs before approaching the Commission in order that a coherent approach is taken.

Cod Strategy: Current Status and Proposed Way Forward

WG 2 acknowledged that Celtic Sea Cod had been recognised by the Council as having different fishery and stock characteristics than other cod fisheries and therefore had not been included in the Commission's Cod Recovery Plan. However the Council declaration in the 2009 TAC and Quota Regulation was very explicit in its expectation that specific management measures were to be developed for this stock.

This recognition was welcomed however it was clearly understood that the fishing industry must develop a credible and robust alternative that meets the stock objectives whilst ensuring fleet viability. The alternative would be a Commission imposed management plan.

An industry working group under the auspices of EAPO would be meeting to develop a detailed alternative and therefore there was not a need to hold a Cod focus group. The outcomes of this group are expected to be delivered within 2-3 weeks and become made available to the NWW RAC to note and use (if appropriate) as the basis for a RAC response.

It was noted that there was no eNGO representatives at the WG 2 meeting (not for the first time) and this was proving to be a problem when trying to develop consensual positions on a range of subjects not just Cod. It was agreed that this issue should be raised at the Executive Committee of the NWW RAC

Presentations on Projects Related to Gillnets

→ Preliminary Outcomes of DEEPCLEAN Project, Future Meetings Plan and Proposed Way Forward with the Industry

The project leader, Norman Graham gave an excellent presentation on this project that is available on the NWW RAC website for information.

It was noted that retrieval levels were low, although it was not clear on the precise reasons for this at this stage.

It was suggested that primarily lost gear was an issue created by IUU fleets operating in EU waters and that this area should be further investigated.

It was agreed that the NWW RAC should participate in a proposed workshop on this subject to be celebrated in summer. WG 2 requested that it was kept informed of future progress and outcomes.

→ Study Sponsored by the Commission for Review of Gear Marking Regulation
Dominic Rihan and Myles Mulligan from BIM, Ireland gave an excellent presentation on this project that is available on the NWW RAC website for information.

It was noted that the findings presented were still provisional and as such were the views of BIM. The draft report was under review by the Commission.

WG 2 stated clearly that if there were to be some new or modified proposals as a result of this or any other new information that it must consult the fishing industry and stakeholders to avoid the practical problems that have been encountered with this regulation.

It was clearly stated that the main problem with the current regulation is crew safety, the height of the dhan buoys (flagpoles...) is key to these handling difficulties.

WG 2 showed interest about the technologic signal transmitter presented to report the presence and position of the nets and requested that it was kept informed of future progress and outcomes.

Improvement of Quality of Data and Interactions with ICES

Main Conclusions and Actions of MIRAC Meeting

Stéphanie Tachaires summarised the report from this meeting which is available on the NWW RAC website for information.

Main Conclusions and Outcomes of the ICES Workshops on Data Benchmarking

Paul Trebilcock summarised the report from this meeting which is available on the NWW RAC website for information.

Organisation of Workshop on Data for Deep-Sea Species Stocks

It was noted that this meeting was aimed at identifying better sources of data in relation to deep-sea species. It was important to extract as much as possible out of existing and alternative data sources.

It was also noted that deepwater stocks were assessed every two years; the next formal advice would be given in 2010. There is a benchmarking workshop planned for early 2010 and a data compilation workshop will be held immediately before that.

WG 2 was informed that ICES WGDEEP had a meeting from 9-16 March 2009. WGDEEP Chairman, Tom Blasdale, announced that during the first day in the afternoon a meeting between the Chairmen of the different Working Groups related to Deep sea and RAC representatives would take place to discuss together how to improve data quality and accuracy and ways of integrating fishermen data into stock assessments. This would be an opportunity to improve and assess stock assessment techniques in advance of the benchmark meeting.

As WGDEEP was limited in respect of time it would be useful for industry to indicate what type and format of data would be available for the meeting as soon as possible.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Bertie	Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	Member
Armando	Astudillo	DG MARE	European Commission
Tom	Blasdale	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	Presentor
Luc	Corbisier	Stichting voor Duurzame Visserij	Member
Juan Carlos	Corrás Arrias	Pescagalicia Arpega	Member
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Member
Francisco	Correa Rey	OPP-13	Observer
Thomas	Diaz	CAPSUD	Member
Jesús	Etchevers	ARPESCO	Member
Alvaro	Fernández	IEO	Observer
Antonio	Flórez Lage	Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Medio Rural y Marino (MARM)	Observer
Ian	Gatt	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	Member
Marc	Ghiglia	UAPF	Member
Hugo	González	ANASOL	WG2 Chairman
Norman	Graham	MARINE INSTITUTE	Scientist
André	Gueguen	OPOB	Member
Jaime	Guillot	AdActiv	Observer
Davy	Hill	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	Member
Sam	Lambourn	NWWRAC Chairman	NWWRAC Chairman

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Status
Phillip	Large	CEFAS	Scientist
Joe	Maddock	Irish Fishermen Organisation	Member
David	Milly	CAPSUD	Member
Myles	Mulligan	BIM	Observer
Conor	Nolan	BIM	Observer
Gerard	O Flynn	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation	Member
Sean	O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermans Organisation	Member
José Luis	Otero	Lonja de la Coruña S.A.	Member
Jacques	Pichon	ANOP	Member
Dominic	Rihan	BIM	Scientist
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Delphine	Roncin	CRPM Nord-Pas de Calais	Observer
Peigi	Ryder	Mna Na Mara	Observer
Stéphanie	Tachaires	CNPMEM	Member
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish Fish Producers Organisation	Member / Rapporteur
Michael	Walsh	Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation	Member