

DRAFT MINUTES

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (NWWRAC)

Working Group 2 Western Approaches and Celtic Sea (ICES VII except a,d&e)

Tuesday 12 June 2007

**0930hrs to 1300hrs
Belfast**

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus.

Adoption of Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes were adopted by consensus.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Jacques Pichon, André Gueguen and Víctor Badiola.

Cod Recovery

*** Report from focus group meeting in February**

The outcome of the focus meeting was summarized and WG2 noted the two main actions to emerge from it:

- To write to the ICES to request that they do an assessment on the impact that the Celtic Sea closure has had on the cod stocks as well as other stocks in the Celtic Sea. It was noted that this action had been completed by the NWWRAC and that we were awaiting a formal response.
- To accumulate data on the status of the fleets in the Celtic Sea to update information originally collected to develop the Celtic Sea Closures. This information will then be used to assess the current situation and to develop further management measures. WG2 Members were urged to supply relevant data from their fleets. Data on fleet activity was felt essential to develop a credible and coherent position.

*** Possibility of developing area based proposals for Celtic Sea**

WG2 heard that there was to be a conference in Ispra from 3 to 7 September 2007 looking at closed areas. It was agreed that a representative from the WG2 Cod focus group should attend.

WG2 recognised the urgency and importance of this issue as the Commission had made their intentions of extending the days at sea regime clear through their non-paper on cod recovery.

It was felt that the Commissions paper had not taken in to account the impacts of the Celtic Sea closure. Despite positive anecdotal feedback from fishermen the Commission appeared to have made its mind up without a proper scientific evaluation of the closure and it was felt that this approach would have profound implications for industry buy-in and the credibility of the process.

WG2 felt that with no thorough evaluation of the closure comments on displacement and overall benefits or otherwise were largely subjective and that until such an evaluation had taken place the Celtic Sea closure should remain in place as in its current form.

Following further discussion it was agreed that WG 2 should adopt the overarching NWW RAC paper on cod recovery that had been prepared by Barrie Deas. Any further observations on the paper were to be made to the NWWRAC secretariat before Monday 18 June 2007. The amended report will then be passed through the Executive Committee for endorsement by electronic means.

It was further agreed that the Celtic Sea Cod Focus Group should meet as soon as possible to develop a credible evidence based position as soon as possible. Jacques Pichon would chair the meeting and that the NWW RAC secretariat would arrange a venue and time.

Update on Focus Group for Deepwater Gillnet fisheries

WG2 heard that the first meeting of this focus group would take place in Paris on 27 June 2007. It was noted that a maximum of 10 industry participants would attend, two from each member state plus an NGO representative and that Jacques Pichon would chair the meeting. Documents and agenda items were requested from members of WG2.

Spanish representatives had problems with the number of representatives and requested that Spain should have three because of their interest in the fishery. They also felt that the chair was French and this gave France three seats, however this was clarified that the chair was independent and did not constitute an additional seat. Spanish interests suggested that two representatives from Spain could be funded by the NWWRAC and the others should fund themselves.

It was resolved that this issue would be considered by the secretariat and that the secretariat would get back to the Spanish delegation on a way forward.

IMAGE Project

The secretariat informed WG2 that a request had been submitted for representatives from the fishing industry to participate in the project meetings. It was noted that the project would go ahead with or without participation from WG2 members.

It was agreed that information such as minutes and documents should be requested and circulated. It was further agreed that members would reflect on the request and contact the NWW RAC secretariat if they wished to attend future meetings of the IMAGE project.

Presentation From ICES Update on Working Group on the Assessment of Stocks of Hake, Monk and Megrin Meeting,

Manuela Azevedo from ICES gave a detailed presentation from the ICES working group on Hake, Monk and Megrin. It was noted that the presentation had not been through the ICES peer review process and as such was still provisional, although Manuela was not expecting significant changes.

The presentation is attached for information.

WG2 acknowledge the quality and depth of the presentation. Following extensive discussion on the presentation there was agreement that there were some areas of weakness and uncertainty in the assessment of these stocks. It was agreed that these areas needed to be addressed.

Furthermore, it was suggested to consider the possibility of setting up a focus group on hake, bearing in mind that it will be possibly the first species to be managed to meet the goals of MSY.

Fishermen's questionnaires, Fisheries/Science partnerships and other collaborative initiatives were suggested as ways forward. It was agreed that the NWW RAC should co-ordinate with ICES on how best to improve collaborative initiatives that will improve assessments.

This would be an agenda item for the next working group meeting.

HORIZONTAL ISSUES

8% Margin of Tolerance for Log-Books and Landing Declarations

A draft letter by Barrie Deas was summarised and is attached for information. WG2 agreed that this was a significant issue for all fleets. The draft was approved in principle, subject some minor amendments regarding paragraph 3 of the draft and further comments were to be submitted to the NWW RAC secretariat by 18 June 2007. The amended letter would then be passed through the Executive Committee for consultation and endorsement.

It was also agreed that the new control agency should be involved.

WG 2 recommended that the letter be approved by written procedures.

Outcome of Economic Workshop and Possibility of Funding to Collect Economic Data

Barrie Deas summarised his paper on LTM framework contract with the Commission as idea arising from the Economic workshop (attached for information). WG2 agreed with the paper in principle and it was noted that this issue would be discussed further at the next inter-RAC meeting in June 2007. The secretariat would report back following this meeting with a view to drafting proposal on how to take this issue forward.

Update on Long-Term Management Project – Report of Meeting Held in London on May 30 2007

The secretariat summarised the outcomes of the meeting.

It was noted that scientific bodies from UK, France, Ireland, Spain and Belgium were continuing work on defining fisheries. The draft report would be available by September 2007 for comment and analysis by WG 2.

It was noted that the minutes and presentations from the meeting were available on the NWW RAC website.

A further update would be available the next meeting.

Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Paul Trebilcock (Rapporteur)
June 2007