

## MINUTES

### FOCUS GROUP

#### Sole VIId - Eastern Channel

#### Printworks – Dublin Castle

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015, 12:00 – 13:00

Chairman: Emiel Brouckaert

Rapporteur: Jim Portus

#### 1. Welcome and introductions:

Emiel Brouckaert welcomed members, Commission and Member State representatives, and observers to the meeting. The full list of participants is appended (Annex I).

The agenda<sup>1</sup> was adopted as drafted.

#### 2. STECF response to AC advice.

The chairman introduced the information that was received after the NWWAC released advice on sole in VIId in June 2015. Members were informed that STECF had evaluated possible management measures and concluded that with a stable TAC at 3000t as advised, this would result in a 30% probability that F would remain above FMSY in 2020. Another evaluation presented by CEFAS used a similar method to STECF but concluded the advice would result in a 5% probability that F would be above FMSY in 2020. CNPMEM commented that IFREMER concurred with the CEFAS conclusions.

In June 2015, ICES published TAC advice for 2016. This showed an improved recruitment in 2014 from the low levels in 2012 and 2013. The meeting was informed that F is tending towards Flim and B now appears close to MSYBtrigger. The advice based on  $F_{MSY}$  implies a TAC cut of 32%.

The Commission (Mr Markovic) indicated that, since STECF did not find the NWWAC advice to be precautionary the TAC proposal would likely be based on the ICES advice. He encouraged the group to improve the advice to ensure it would be precautionary so that it might be taken into account by Member States in the December Council. One item stressed was the need to include a biomass safeguard in the plan. The NWWAC was asked to consider the various advice documents from ICES, STECF and CEFAS and inform the Commission about the implications for the advice in time for STECF evaluation in November.

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<sup>1</sup> All relevant documents to the meeting can be found at the NWWAC website: [link](#)  
NWWAC Focus Group on Sole VIId management strategies  
Dublin, 16 September 2015

### 3. Discussion

Members of the fishing industry were very surprised by the STECF evaluation of the plan, since measures already in place had not been taken into account. Several members argued that a stable TAC below 3000t, with the additional measures in place, would be difficult. For example, in France the TAC flexibility (i.e. carrying over 10% of unfished quota to the next year) was used annually, but due to the restrictive TAC the quota for 2015 would be completely utilised. This implied that there would be no carry over of 10% of the 2015 quota to 2016 as no unfished quota would be available for this purpose. The proposed 15% reduction in TAC would therefore result in a perceived 25% reduction (15% + 10% carryover) in fishing opportunities in 2016 compared to 2015.

After discussion it was agreed to reconfirm the June advice from the AC while adding some alternative options for evaluation. The evaluation should encompass the advice (i.e. the stable TAC with additional measures), the CEFAS evaluation and the possibility of adding a biomass safeguard similar to the one used for sole in the Bay of Biscay, as the Commission had indicated.

The NWWAC would then decide if there was a need to update the proposed management strategy in order for it to be precautionary and, therefore, an option for managers to implement.

### 4. Next Steps:

The Chairman, rapporteur and the NWWAC secretariat agreed to draft supplementary advice with the objectives to:

- Provide a re-evaluation of the initial NWWAC advice by STECF based on CEFAS input;
- By evaluating additional rules serving as biomass safeguards, obtain a basis for further NWWAC advice to possibly add these rules to the management strategy;
- Develop a precautionary management strategy as a basis for the future sustainable management for the stock of sole in the Eastern Channel.

The draft would be submitted to the ExCom for consideration and, if agreed be submitted to the Commission and to STECF for evaluation before the middle of October.

The meeting closed at 13:05.

## Annex 1: Participants list

<b>Members</b>		
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale	
Bertie Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	
Bruno Dachicourt	European Transport Federation	
Debbie Crockard	Seas at Risk Organisation	
Dimitri Rogoff	Comité Départemental des Pêches et des Élevages Marine: CDPMEM 14	
Kevin Charlot	Comité National des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins	
Daniel Lefèvre	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins de Basse Normandie	
Delphine Roncin	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Nord / Pas de Calais / Picardie	
Dominique Thomas	Coopératives Maritimes Etaploises & Armement Cooperatif Artisanal du Nord	
Richard Brouzes	Copeport Maree OPBN	
Thierry Leprêtre	France Pêche Durable et Responsable	
Siobhán Egan	BirdWatch Ireland	
Irene Kingma	Dutch Elasmobranch Society	
Geert Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij / Dutch Fisheries Organisation	
Lydia Chaparro	Fundació ENT	
Liane Veitch	ClientEarth	
Paul Trebilcock	Cornish Fish Producers Organisation	
Barrie Deas	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	
Kara Brydson	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, representing Birdlife International	
Ross Dougal	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (2)	
<b>Observers</b>		
Stéphan Gonzague	Beaucher de Moncuit	Consultant Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable et de l'énergie
Iain	Glasgow	DEFRA
Robert	Griffin	European Commission
Laurent	Markovic	European Commission
Dominic	Rihan	European Commission
Sara	Vandame	ILVO
<b>Secretariat</b>		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Barbara	Schoute	Deputy Executive Secretary
Joanna	McGrath	Executive Assistant - Finance and Administration