



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

## MINUTES

### FOCUS GROUP SKATES AND RAYS (FGRays)

**The Main Conference Centre – Dublin Castle**  
**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016**  
**09:00 – 09:45**

#### 1. Welcome

The Chairman, John Lynch, welcomed the members and the attendees to the meeting. The full list of participants is included as an annex to these minutes.

The agenda<sup>1</sup> was adopted as drafted. The following action points from the last meeting in Paris (3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016) had been completed:

- Richard Brouzes provided the Secretariat with information on the work conducted by France on alternative management scenarios for skates and rays. This document (available in French only) has been made available on the website ([link](#)).
- Due to the lack of suggestions provided by the members on alternative management strategies, the Secretariat could not pursue the consultation with the Commission for an STECF evaluation in July 2016.

The following action remained in progress:

- Secretariat to provide more information regarding previous management for skates and rays.

#### 2. State of play

The chair informed the meeting that due to the lack of written feedback from the members after the meeting in Paris (3<sup>rd</sup> February), he proposed to set up a small Focus Group meeting specifically designed to come up with proposals for scientific evaluation. This meeting would be organised after the last ICES advice release (early October 2017). The Focus Group should discuss a combination of measures that will be required to deal with skates and rays once these stocks are introduced into the Landing Obligation (LO).

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<sup>1</sup> All relevant documents to the meeting can be found on the NWWAC website: [link](#)

The French industry asked the Commission if they had more information regarding their intention to ask ICES to organise a focus group on skates and rays. The Commission clarified that they were unaware that this initiative would be pursued and they would inform the NWWAC if this would happen.

The Commission was asked if they could provide more clarity on how survivability exemptions should be developed, specifically on the requirements on the level of survivability, and the number of scientific trials (per métier). The Commission explained that STECF evaluates survivability exemption proposals on a case-by-case basis. More scientific information is helpful, but 100% scientific coverage cannot be demanded at the start of the request. If STECF concludes there is a level of survivability, they will advise the Member States (MS) to look into it. For example: STECF evaluated a 40kg by-catch level for undulate ray (*Raja undulata*) in area 7de based on scientific data and considered that through this by-catch allowance, further data could be collected (EU 2016/458 Annex 1A (f and g)).

With regards to alternative management strategies that the NWWAC could propose for evaluation, the Commission explained that STECF will not be able to evaluate all options, so the Commission recommends the NWWAC to put forward proposals that have a substantiated scientific basis.

The French industry indicated that skates and rays research in France has been strongly reduced due to a combination of reasons: fewer scientists at Ifremer, low TAC and a lack of species-specific data. A particular problem for France is catches of undulate ray. The industry has done a lot of work the past 7 years to collate data for the stock assessment, to resolve a discrepancy between the scientific and industry perception of stock status. Fishermen do not want to discard a valuable species for which they believe abundances are high.

The French Industry indicated its frustration on having collected data which they feel had not been used by scientists. Similar frustration was expressed by Irish industry; they had not seen any positive outcome of collecting data for scientific assessment. They agreed that the time it took to collect sufficient data for a time series that could be used in an assessment (currently at least 5 years) should be reduced. The NWWAC was asked to look into this point with ICES.

The Commission reminded the industry members that the ICES data collection program is very strict. Any data that is collected for scientific assessment should be provided by the national correspondents. The data quality is paramount to the quality of the stock assessment. The Commission was aware of the industry's frustration, but they could not change the procedure. They stressed that industry should provide their information through the national delegations to ICES now, they might be able to use them in next year's assessment. Additionally, they recommended the AC to bring these frustrations forward at the next MIACO meetings.

An OIG proposed to invite scientists to explain how data should be collected and what is happening with the data that is brought forward by the industry. An observer proposed to assemble data of the last 20 years for a longitudinal study on trend in abundance per area per species.

**ACTION:** Can the AC look into options how the time frame for data collection for scientific purposes can be reduced from 5 year to e.g. 3 years

**ACTION:** The AC to discuss the issues with data collection at the next MIACO meeting (January 2017)

**ACTION:** Invite scientists to explain how data should be collected by industry fit for purpose in the assessments and how the data is used

**ACTION:** In preparation of the next FG meeting, assess the abundance trend of each species in the different areas of the NWW

### 3. Further planning of the advisory process

- Terms of Reference for Skate and Ray management in the Channel and Celtic Sea
  - What – main output needed from this process:  
Irish Industry proposed to add the Irish Sea area.  
Further, the group concluded to Focus Group meeting should look into possible options for survivability exemptions, real-time closures and/or temporarily closed seasons, monthly quota management per area. The Marine Institute in Ireland has done a lot of work on this. The different scientific institutes can be contacted to collect information on survivability trials.
  - Who – Chair: John Lynch, Rapporteur: Secretariat,  
AC Members who want to take part in the Focus Group can put forward their name. The Secretariat will send around a reminder email. Names that were brought forward during the meeting are:
    - John Lynch (Chair, Irish Fishermen Organisation, IE)
    - John Ward (IFPO, IE)
    - Emiel Brouckaert (Rederscentrale, BE)
    - Caroline Gamblin (CNPMM, FR)
    - Francois Hennuyer (From Nord, FR)
    - John Richardson (The Shark Trust, UK, non-AC member)
  - When – planning of work:  
Meeting will take place in the week of 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of November and BIM, Dun Laoghaire
  - Working language for the Focus Group: English, but all members would be asked to indicate whether they request interpretation for the face-to-face meeting,  
Written language for the Focus Group: English

**ACTION:** The AC Secretariat to contact the different scientific institutes to collate data on survivability trials on skates and rays

**ACTION:** The AC Secretariat to send a reminder email for people to express their interest to join the FG

### 5. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair

Action	
1	Can the AC look into options how the time frame for data collection for scientific purposes can be reduced from 5year to e.g. 3years

2	The AC to discuss the issues with data collection at the next MIACO meeting (January 2017)
3	Invite scientists to explain how data should be collected by industry fit for purpose in the assessments and how the data is used
4	In preparation of the next FG meeting, assess the abundance trend of each species in the different areas of the NWW
5	The AC Secretariat to contact the different scientific institutes to collate data on survivability trials on skates and rays
6	The AC Secretariat to send a reminder email for people to express their interest to join the FG

NWWAC Document  
Chair: John Lynch  
Rapporteur: Sara Vandamme  
Review and editing: Barbara Schoute

## Annex 1 – List of Participants

NWWAC members	
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Louis Vantorre	Rederscentrale vzw
Marina Le Gurun	Blue Fish
Dimitri Rogoff	CDPMEM 14
Romain Le Bleis	CDPMEM du Finistère
Emmanuel Kelberine	CDPMEM des Côtes d’Armor
Caroline Gamblin	CNPMEM
Daniel Lefèvre	CRPMEM de Basse Normandie
Olivier Leprêtre	CDPMEM du Nord / Pas de Calais / Picardie
Pascal Coquet	CRPMEM de Haute-Normandie
Mathieu Vimard	OPN
Francois Hennuyer	FROM Nord
Franck Le Barzic	OP COBRENORD
Marc Ghiglia	Union des armateurs de la pêche en France
Julien Lamothe	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne SA
Sinéad Cummins	Birdwatch Ireland
John Lynch	Irish Fishermen's Organisation
Francis O'Donnell	Irish Fish Producers Organisation
Hugo Boyle	Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation
Patrick Murphy	Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation
Enda Conneely	IIMRO
Geert Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij / Dutch Fisheries Organisation (2)
Purificacion Fernandez	Asociación Nacional de Armadores de Pesca de Gran Sol
Severino Ares Lago	Fundación Rendemento Económico Mínimo Sostible e Social
Stephan Beaucher	Fundació ENT
José Luis Otero Gonzalez	Lonja de La Coruña S.A.
Luis Francisco Marín	Organización de Productores de pesca de Ondarroa
Mercedes Rodriguez Moreda	Organización de Productores de Lugo (OPP-7)
Juan Carlos Corrás Arias	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco
Thomas Bryan-Brown	Mallaig and North West Fishermen's Association
Bertie Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Paul Fletcher	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Jim Portus	South West FPO
Observers	
Richard Brouzes	OPN
Vincent Lamidelle	CRPMEM de Haute-Normandie
Robert Griffin	European Commission
Jonathan Shrives	European Commission
John Richardson	The Shark Trust
NWWAC Secretariat	
Conor Nolan	Executive Secretary
Barbara Schoute	Deputy Executive Secretary
Sara Vandamme	Project Development and Communications Manager
Aoibhín O'Malley	Financial Administrator and Event Manager