



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
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NORTH WESTERN  
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ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

## MINUTES

### **FIRST MEETING of the FOCUS GROUP ON BROWN CRAB (FGCrab)**

**The Main Conference Centre – Dublin Castle  
Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016  
11:00 – 12:30**

#### **1. Welcome and introductions**

The ad hoc Chair, Norah Parke, welcomed the attendees to this first meeting of the Focus Group on brown crab. The full list of participants is included as an annex to these minutes. A short round of introductions took place, which showed that the main interested parties around the table were French and Irish. The agenda<sup>1</sup> was adopted as drafted.

The Chair introduced the meeting by referring to the ACRUNET project (2012-2015), which resulted in important developments in international cooperation on brown crab management. There was a general recognition of the need for a fisheries management plan based on practical management on a national scale, without being too prescriptive. This management plan had not been finalised however, and the NWWAC had been asked to further promote the cooperation to develop this strategy. The Chair welcomed the decision of the ExCom to host an NWWAC Focus Group.

#### **2. Election of chair and rapporteur**

The meeting was invited to put forward nominations for the Chair of the Focus Group. Johnny Woodlock suggested that the ad hoc Chair would be a good candidate considering her experience in the ACRUNET project, and nominated Norah Parke. The Chair accepted the nomination, and the meeting agreed with the nomination by acclamation.

#### **3. Terms of Reference**

The Chair thanked the French industry for providing the group with a draft terms of reference. She invited comments on the main objective of the Focus Group, to improve management of the brown crab fishery, including:

- fishing effort;
- defining the fishing periods;
- licensing and monitoring system;
- solving the problem of latent fishing effort (harmonising the effort management measures across the region).

Next to fisheries management options the Focus Group should also consider the impact of measures on the crab market, aiming to ensure optimal use of catches.

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

The French industry informed the meeting that during the ACRUNET project, the French industry put forward several measures, some of which were already in force in France, like the maximising the number of licences. French fishermen would like to continue developing management, and he was interested to hear the opinion of other members and would discuss the results of the meeting at a Crustacean meeting in the next week in France. The main problems for the French fisheries were a lack of data collection, and sufficient control was needed to enforce some of the rules. The management system used in France was set up 30 years ago, and the meeting agreed that it was working well, but unfortunately it cannot be copied one-on-one to the UK and Ireland.

The Chair asked if UK members could update the group on the latest management measures, specifically concerning the UK GAP analysis done for the pre-assessment for MSC certification in the south-west, similar to the Irish process during the ACRUNET project. In the Irish case, although the Irish crab stocks were quite well known, lack of harvest control rules had meant that MSC certification could not be achieved. The Chair indicated that the aim was to use fishery improvement plans in order to create a management system that would allow for certification in future.

The meeting participants agreed the Focus Group overarching aim should be well managed productive stocks that can sustain fisheries, and it should produce a management plan for brown crab fisheries. The following points were considered important:

- A management plan should be built from the ground up to ensure it is carried by all stakeholders.
- It should contain clear links with market situations and MSC certification might be an objective.
- In-built flexibility and simplicity were considered essential to be able to implement management in different countries in the whole region.
- It was deemed important that all stakeholders should be represented in the Focus Group
- The Focus Group could also serve an educational role, and sharing of knowledge and information would be important parts of the process.

The Chair asked the group what further items should be considered.

The Irish industry stressed that the way 'effort management' would be defined was important, because measures such as pot limits, and temporal or zonal restrictions will have a different effect on small-scale fisheries than on larger vessels. Not all options were considered effective, such as a days at sea scheme for potters. A note was also made to check if a licencing system such as the one for potting in Ireland, would be considered under 'quota management', thus including this fisheries under the landing obligation<sup>2</sup>. The Commission indicated that there was no request to include brown crab under TAC management.

The effects of starting up a new management system, such as a licencing scheme, were discussed. For countries that did not yet have such a system in place, like Ireland, the risk of setting off Olympic fisheries in the near future and/or excluding fishermen in the longer run

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<sup>2</sup> NB: in the CFP ([1380/2013](#)) Article 15.1 refers to application of the landing obligation for 'All catches of species which are subject to catch limits'.

were considered problematic. The French experience showed that exclusion is part of management, and that it was the open fisheries practices that might cause problems in the longer run.

The French industry indicated that they were interested to share their good experience with their (effort) management system, and aimed to follow the discussion in the Focus Group.

An important lesson learnt from the ARUNET project was the sharing of information with fishermen from other countries, and it was considered important to continue this regional conversation. The original ACRUNET partners would be a good starting point for membership of the Focus Group. The Secretariat noted that it would only be possible to provide reimbursement for AC members, but observers could be added to the list of participants to the meeting.

The group was also asked to consider possible side effects of potting activities, such as management of lost gear, in order to avoid problems with micro-plastics. The fishing industry would of course try to avoid loss of gear, but it would be useful to know how much gear gets lost. The group also agreed to look into the use of escape panels and retrieval of lost gear.

The Chair further introduced the draft Terms of Reference for comments by the group, on the decisions on the process for 2016-2017. She suggested that for the near future the Focus Group should define the issues we need to tackle on the basis of solutions. A first meeting could look at the “state of affairs”, based on the conclusions by ACRUNET.

Members for this meeting should include:

- All relevant members states;
- Both larger and inshore vessels;
- ACRUNET members;
- The Irish national and regional inshore fisheries forums (NIFFS and RIFFS);
- Consider including whelk fisheries as well.

The meeting agreed on the following timing:

1. October 2016: circulate information
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October: proposal of Focus Group members, draft agenda, date
3. The meeting would be linked to the next larger AC meeting in February/March 2017.

The Commission supported the aims of the Focus Group and stressed the need to come to sustainable fisheries, even if that goal was reached by different means per country.

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

The Chair concluded that the meeting agreed on the way forward. A mailing list would be established and the Focus Group will suggest to the ExCom that the next meeting be attached to the next NWWAC meeting.

NWWAC Document  
Chair: Norah Parke  
Rapporteur: Barbara Schoute

## Annex 1 – List of Participants

<b>NWWAC members</b>	
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Louis Vantorre	Rederscentrale VZW
Marina Le Gurun	Blue Fish
John Crudden	European Anglers Alliance
Vera Coelho	The Pew Charitable Trusts
Julien Lamothe	Association Nationale des Organisations de Producteurs
Paul Françoise	Comité Départemental des Pêches et des Élevages Marine: CDPMEM 14
Manu Kelbérine	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Finistère
Alain Coudray	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins des Côtes d'Armor
Caroline Gamblin	Comité National des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins
Daniel Lefèvre	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins de Basse Normandie
Olivier Le Nezet	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins de Bretagne
Pascal Coquet	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins de Haute-Normandie
Olivier Leprêtre	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Nord / Pas de Calais / Picardie
Richard Brouzes	Copeport Maree OPBN
Francois Hennuyer	FROM Nord
Franck Le Barzic	OP COBRENORD
Marc Ghiglia	Union des armateurs de la pêche en France
Sinéad Cummins	BirdWatch Ireland
John Lynch	Irish Fishermen's Organisation
John Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Hugo Boyle	Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation
Patrick Murphy	Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation
Geert Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij / Dutch Fisheries Organisation (2)
Bertie Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (1)
Paul Fletcher	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Jim Portus	South Western Fish Producer Organisation
<b>Observers</b>	
Jonathan Shrives	European Commission
Robert Griffin	European Commission
Gonzague de Moncuit	Ministère d'environnement, énergie et mer
Juana Poza Poza	M <sup>o</sup> DE AGRICULTURA, ALIMENTACION Y MEDIO AMBIENTE
Maeve White	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Ian Lawler	BIM
Dominic Rihan	BIM
Aoife McDermott	Teagasc / UCD
Dana Miller	Oceana
Dimitri Rogoff	Comité Départemental des Pêches et des Élevages Marine: CDPMEM 14
Edward Fahy	Eatenfishsoonforgotten.com
Hugh McBride	McBride Fishing / KFO
Paul Duane	SFPA
Stephan Beaucher	Consultant
<b>NWWAC Secretariat</b>	
Conor Nolan	Executive Secretary
Barbara Schoute	Deputy Executive Secretary
Sara Vandamme	Project Development and Communications Manager
Aoibhín O Malley	Financial Administrator and Event Manager