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REPORT

Meeting between the NWWAC and the NWW Technical Group Meeting

Dublin
30th January 2018

Introduction

Emiel Brouckaert (EB, Chairman of the NWWAC Executive Committee) and Heather Hamilton (HH, NWWAC Vice-chair of the NWWAC Executive Committee member) attended the NWW Member States Technical Group as invited NWWAC representatives, in Dublin on 30th January 2018.

Summary of the meeting

The AC provided updates on NWWAC meetings that were held on the 10th and 29th of January to develop advice on the landing obligation, aiming for completion in mid-March following approval by the Executive Committee. These meetings were held as a pre-emptive response¹ to the NWW MS group's letter requesting advice on *de minimis*, High Survival, Choke and Technical Measures.

EB informed the meeting that the advice would focus on measures for high risk choke species (category 3) and discuss what existing measures could be used such as *de minimis*, high survival as well as technical measures to mitigate the choke risk as well as other options outside the toolbox as defined in Art. 15 of the CFP. The advice may discuss category 2 choke stocks, and refer back to other issues described in the Choke Mitigation Tool (CMT) such as deep sea species, pelagic bycatch and zero national quota.

HH provided updates on meetings of WG4 Irish Sea and WG2 Celtic Sea:

- WG4 Irish Sea: A meeting on 28th November produced advice on a potential mesh size increase for *Nephrops* in the Irish Sea². The trials mentioned were in process. Any advice on technical measures would be provided separately from advice on the landing obligation.
- WG2 Celtic Sea: At the December Council, the EC and NWW MS Group made a commitment to develop further improvements in selectivity to reduce unwanted

¹ Letter from the NWW Member States Group to the NWWAC (10th January 2018) [link](#)

² NWWAC letter to the EC requesting to postpone the proposed increase of the mesh size in Irish Sea Nephrops fishery [Link](#) Lien Enlace

catches of cod, haddock and whiting in partnership with NWWAC. This WG was to be the focus at the next NWWAC meetings in Madrid (7th March).

The NWWAC representatives affirmed that skates and rays were a topic in its workplan and understood that the Commission was working on alternative management for skates and rays. The NWWAC would not be able to provide any further advice on alternative management strategies before May 2018 (deadline Joint Recommendation), but would continue to work on this topic. The EC had hoped that alternative management measures would be addressed at December Council however, in the end a group TAC was used. The STECF indicated that skates and rays needed a regional approach to management, even when covered under a Multi Annual Plan (MAP). The Commission was hoping that the AC and MS Group would provide advice on this and that it would be subsumed into the work on choke species, including through the Joint Recommendations, advising the regional preference of management principles. Therefore, the Commission required recommendations regarding advice for skates and rays, for example if a TAC is removed. The Commission itself would take no further action.

At the NWWAC meetings in July last year a presentation on scallop management in the Bay of Seine was presented, with the next stage being a presentation for the MS group. A scientific assessment was carried out by Cefas and Ifremer but no further information has been received by NWWAC since the presentation. The NWWAC requested information on this, and was informed by the Marine Institute that a meeting regarding scallops was scheduled for the following week but currently there were no concrete updates on the scallop issue.

Member States, Commission Updates

The MS Group informed the AC that a work programme for the NWW Technical Group has been drafted, but was yet to be authorised. During the morning session the MSG agreed that the focus would be:

- 1) Joint recommendation – consideration of possible *de minimis* and high survivability exemptions and possible technical measures
- 2) Focus on residual choke issues – solutions that do not fit into the joint recommendations, may be covered, for example, under the TAC and quota regulation.

The Chair of the Member States Group expressed their appreciation for the efforts of NWWAC to find solutions and asked where the AC was in terms of providing concrete recommendations, and what the feeling was in the AC. EB reiterated that discussions are ongoing, taking into account the CFP objectives. The NWWAC was reviewing existing measures and how effective they were, as well as other possible options to mitigate the most serious choke risks.

A suggestion was made regarding dialogue with other Advisory Councils in order not to duplicate work. EB confirmed that this has been considered and suggested that the secretariat would contact other ACs. The Member State Group would also consider how to coordinate with the other Member State groups.

EB confirmed that an update of the CMT was completed. The TG welcomed this. It was stated that the discard data for 2016 was of poorer quality than in 2015. However, the perception of the different stocks did not change a huge amount. A review of those stocks where changes in

categorisation had happened followed this update. The updated CMT summary table was to be recirculated to the group.

The Scottish representative praised the NWWAC for the work done and stipulated that the annual revision of the CMT showed the need to be alert to changes and make sure there are solutions for all or that the solutions can be adapted. A reference was made to a comment at the AC meeting regarding displacement of the fleet as a possible unforeseen consequence of the Landing Obligation.

The Commission expressed their thanks to the NWWAC for the work and inquired how the MS group foresaw addressing data gaps, with methods such as CCTV etc. or if this was the remit of the Control Expert Group? The Chair responded that they can only work on specific Terms of Reference instructed by the HLG, and currently the use of CCTV has been focussed on Pelagic fisheries. The TG could advise the HLG.

Conclusions and Actions

In conclusion the Chair thanked the Member States group for their co-operation with the AC and the Commission communicated its own thanks for the work that was being done. Further discussion would take place at the Technical Group meeting on 27th of February and it was expected that the NWWAC would be invited to the HLG on 13th of February.

1. The Secretariat to contact the Pelagic AC to coordinate work on providing advice on solutions for pelagic bycatches in demersal fisheries and demersal bycatches in pelagic fisheries