



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

MINUTES

WORKING GROUP 1 (WEST OF SCOTLAND)

Nuevos Ministerios – Paseo de la Castellana, 63. Madrid
Thursday 7th of March 2018
11:00 – 13:00

1. Welcome and introductions

Participants were welcomed to Working Group 1 by the Chair Mike Park. The agenda¹ was adopted, with no new items included.

2. Action Points from the Last Meeting

The meeting was informed about the status of the action points from the previous meeting in Edinburgh (5th July 2017):

1. Update on the genetic study to determine the population structure of cod and whiting

ICES provided information regarding potential changes in the distribution of cod in the North Sea². The analysis, described the change in abundance of cod derived from the IBTS survey by dividing the stock area in four large sub-regions. The conclusion was that the stock has been recovering in all of the areas except for the southern sub-region. In 2017, ICES also provided advice on the change in distribution for several stocks based on an analysis of the change in the centre of gravity of the cod distribution according to the IBTS survey. This analysis showed that the centre of gravity for the North Sea cod stock has moved to the north. While movements between the edges of stock units of West of Scotland and North Sea cannot be excluded, the most recent full benchmarks for the two stocks conducted in 2012 (West of Scotland) and 2015 (North Sea) concluded that the current stock units remained appropriate.

Mr Park and Mr O'Donoghue informed the meeting that they have been in contact with scientists that can conduct the genetic study.

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

² ICES North Sea cod advice: see [link](#) and the EU request on distributional shifts in fish stocks [link](#) in English only

At the MIACO meeting (19th January 2018, Copenhagen) ICES welcomed the proposed work on genetic identification of stocks and recommended that the AC should engage with the ICES working group on stock identification methods (SIMWG). The point of contact is Lisa Kerr (USA).

The Secretariat has been contacted by the ICES WG on the Application of Genetics in Fisheries and Aquaculture to ask their involvement in setting the Terms of References of the WG for the coming three years, more specifically on the application of genetics in the implementation of the landing obligation. This was discussed further at the Executive Committee meeting (8th March).

2. ICES to update the AC on the potential effect of seal and hake predation on gadoids.

At the MIACO meeting the ACs presented new scientific information, which illustrates that seal predation on cod and whiting in area 6 may have a detrimental effect on the rebuilding capacity of the stock. The relevant scientific papers are; Trijoulet et al. 2017, 2018³.

3. Revisit the Cod Management Plan

This was discussed at item 4 on the agenda.

2. Feedback from previous advice and meetings

- Choke Mitigation Tool, CMT (14th September 2017)

The Secretariat gave an overview of the updated CMT (STECF data for 2016 included). All information was made available on the NWWAC website ([link](#)).

The Advice Drafting Group on the Landing Obligation⁴ met twice in Dublin (10th and 29th Dublin) to discuss solutions for high risk choke species.

3. Discussion on potential solutions to the choke problem for cod 6.a

Mr Park informed the meeting that the NS Regional Group has decided not to include solutions in the joint recommendation that deal with unresolvable choke issues. However, Mr Park stressed the severity of the problem and highlighted the importance of the AC putting forward possible solutions. He emphasized that, if the AC does not make any proposals the Commission will come forward with their own solutions which might not be desirable or workable.

The EC confirmed that case-by-case solutions are required and they hope that some solutions are proposed in the joint recommendation. Once the full landing obligation comes into force and

³ Trijoulet et al. 2017 Grey seal predation mortality on three depleted stocks in the West of Scotland: What are the implications for stock assessments? *Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* and Trijoulet *et al.* 2018 Bioeconomic modelling of gray seal predation impacts on the West of Scotland demersal fisheries. *ICES J. of Mar. Sci.* (both articles available in English only, full publication available on request)

⁴ The Advice Drafting Group on the Landing Obligation met in Dublin on the 10th and 29th January 2018. All information can be found on the NWWAC website under meeting.

discussions will be needed on solutions to resolve residual chokes, it will be important to illustrate that all possible solutions to reduce choke problems have been implemented.

A representative of the Spanish administration gave an update on work in the NWW Regional Group. The NWW MS Group aims to focus on *De Minimis* exemptions and selectivity options.

Mr Boyle attended the STECF meeting where selectivity options for West of Scotland stocks were discussed. Mr Park commented that Mr Coull attended on behalf of the Scottish industry however; further improving selectivity is unlikely for cod, because discards mainly compose of large cod. The problem for West of Scotland cod is largely due to a mismatch between the number of cod observed at sea and scientific observations and this meeting aims to discuss other solutions besides selectivity options to resolve the issue and highlight the problem of the mismatch between observed abundance of cod.

Ms Hamilton and Mr Brouckaert commented that the ADG LO discussed solutions for high risk choke stocks, but it has proven difficult to reach consensus. They plan to present a draft advice at the next Member States Group meeting (13th March 2018). The ExCom was to receive the draft version for approval and finalisation by correspondence.

Mr Lovie on invitation from the chair gave an overview of the problem cod in Area 6 causes to the industry and how the fishery has changed over his 30 year career. Currently, when they catch cod they move out of that particular area (displacement). He implied a requirement to further decrease discards and improve the science.

Mr Lovie clarified that the data they provide the administration composes of the VMS data, daily logbook data and notifications when they steam to another area.

The chair highlighted the lack of scientific data in area 6, in comparison to the North Sea where six scientific surveys are conducted annually; only one is carried out in area 6.

Mr Lynch agreed with Mr Lovie that misperception between scientists and industry on the abundance of fish stocks was a problem and this was not unique to the West of Scotland. Selectivity helps to reduce unwanted bycatch, but it was not going to solve all choke problems when the LO comes into force.

Mr Robert added that the French fleet which was composed of large vessels using 120mm mesh size has been fishing in area 6 for many years. Although cod was no longer the target, since 2010 the number of species in the catch increased and changes in distribution have been observed. These changes should be reflected in the scientific assessments.

Mr Lepretre agreed with the points raised at the meeting. Some catches cannot be avoided and whereas Mr Lovie can steam 100 miles to move to another area, this was not an option in the Channel.

Mr Lovie confirmed increased catches of monkfish, haddock, saithe, hake and even squid (a non- quota species).

Mr Corrás Arias found the discussions interesting, as similar observations have been made in changes of distribution and the associated problems with scientific advice in area 8 and 9.

On seal predation, Mr Macdonald commented that this was a long standing problem which has to be taken into account. Mr Murphy added that the ecosystem has changed and science has to keep up, it was up to the AC to highlight. The problem was that no model currently exists that takes this into account. Mr Woodlock concluded that the discussion today indicated there was a time lag between scientific and at-sea observation on the abundance of fish stocks. Food dynamics have subsequently changed and it was not just the effect of increased seal predation.

Ms Kingma highlighted that there are issues with the assessment, displacement, and food web dynamics.

Ms Fernandez asked how the EU could be ready to implement and resolve the problems of the choke species by 1st January 2019. Mr Lourido Garcia added that the Spanish fleet has adapted to the LO as their fleet has moved from trawling to long lining for hake, which is a highly selective fishery. This is not applicable to all fisheries.

The chair referred to the deep-sea regulation which might create a similar problem. Further he summarised that cod in area 6.a highlighted different problems: lack of (credible) data, no clear stock structure and a complex mixed fishery. However, solutions were needed to reduce cod catches and it is important for the AC to provide proposals. He suggested that members of the Working Group were welcome to join, Ms Kingma, Mr Lovie, Mr Macdonald and himself to start work on the Cod management plan. A summary was presented at the ExCom meeting the following day. Later in the year, a meeting was to be organised with experts to finalise the draft management plan.

ACTION: Working Group members are invited to inform the Secretariat if they wish to join a Focus Group to further develop the draft cod management plan

ACTION: A workshop will be organised later in the year to develop a Regional Management Plan for cod

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

1	Working Group members are invited to inform the Secretariat if they wish to join a Focus Group to further develop the draft cod management plan.
2	A workshop will be organised later in the year to develop a Regional Management Plan for cod

Annex 1 – List of Participants

NWWAC members		
Mike	Park	SWFPA
Irene	Kingma	Dutch Elasmobranch Society
Alex	Kinninmonth	Stichting BirdLife Europe, represented by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Anna	Szczodrowska	European Anglers Alliance
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM
Enda	Conneely	IIMRO
Francis	O'Donnell	Irish Fish Producers Organisation
Javier	López	Oceana
Jean-Marie	Robert	Association Nationale des Organisations de Producteurs
Jesús Angel	Lourido García	Puerto de Celeiro S.A. OPP-77
Jim	Portus	SWFPO
John	Lynch	Irish Fishermen's Organisation
José Luis	Otero Gonzalez	Lonja de La Coruña S.A.
José Manuel	Beltrán	OPP-LUGO
Juan Carlos	Corrás Arias	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco
Julien	Lamothe	Association Nationale des Organisations de Producteurs
Lionel	Bottin	CDPMEM du Calvados, Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins 14
Luís Francisco	Marin	OPPAO Ondarroa
Pascal	Coquet	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Patrick	Murphy	Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation
Paul	Trebilcock	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
Paul	MacDonald	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Purificación	Fernández Alvarez	Asociación Nacional de Armadores de Buques de Pesca de Gran Sol
Sean	O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Stéphane	Pinto	CRPMWM Hauts-de-France
Vera	Coelho	PEW
Observers		
Jonathan	Shrives	European Commission
Marta	Garcia	Spanish administration
Juana	Posa Posa	Spanish administration
Glenn	Quelch	EFCA
Andrew	Lawler	CEFAS
Bruno	Dachicourt	European Transport Federation
Debbie	Crockard	Seas at Risk
Dominique	Thomas	CMEOP
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Emmanuel	Kelberine	CRPMEM de Bretagne
Fintan	Kelly	Birdwatch Ireland
Geert	Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij / Dutch Fisheries Organisation (2)
Gerald	Hussenot Desenonges	Bluefish
Guy	Le Moigne	CDPMEM du Finistère, Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et

		des Élevages Marins 29
Heather	Hamilton	ClientEarth
Hugo	Boyle	Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation
Jean Christophe	Vandavelde	PEW
John	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Lydia	Chaparro	Fundació ENT
Manon	Joguet	FROM Nord
Mathieu	Vimard	OPN
Maué	Air	European Bureau for Conservation and Development
Nicolas	LeBlanc	CRPMEM de Normandie
Oliver	Lepretre	Fundació ENT
Oscar	Sagué	IFSUA
Peter	Lovie	SWFPA
Victor	Bouvard	Fédération des Organisations de Producteurs de la Pêche Artisanale
NWWAC Secretariat		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Sara	Vandamme	Deputy Executive Secretary
Deirdre	Hoare	Executive Assistant
Rachel	Maher	Finance and administration Executive Assistant