



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

The Main Conference Centre – Dublin Castle

Thursday 05th September 2019

14:00 – 15:00

1. Welcome and introductions

The *ad-hoc* Chair, Irene Kingma, opened the meeting and welcomed the members, observers and COM representative to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mike Park in advance of the meeting. A point was added to the agenda concerning the presentation of the Windsack Agreement (see point 3 in these minutes). The agenda was then adopted.

Action points from the minutes from the previous meeting in Ghent on 2nd July 2019 were discussed:

1. Update of the Choke Identification Tool by the Secretariat. The update should consider both new information on stocks situation and a toolbox of measures that can be used to avoid the choke effect.

This item is discussed under point 2 of the minutes.

2. Advice Drafting Group to collect input/comments from members on the presented ICES advice to develop an advice on the fishing opportunities for 2020. (Members are invited to send their questions on the ICES advice to the Secretariat, who will forward to ICES).

The ADG met on Wednesday 4th September and their proposal will be discussed in the Horizontal Working Group.

3. Letter to COM by Secretariat to push for genetic studies to be included in the Data Collection Framework. Industry to send a proposal for the cod genetic study to the Secretariat to be discussed in next ExCom. The Secretariat to circulate among members an expression of interest in participating in the Cod DNA project group.

Work in progress by the Secretariat.

2. Input on the draft advice 'Addressing Choke Risk in NWW after exemptions' for WG1 stocks

The Secretariat presented the preliminary version of the Choke Identification Tool for 2020. The Secretariat had done an initial assessment of the choke risk and invited the members to provide their input to identify possible measures to implement to reduce the risk.

- Cod and whiting in 6a: high choke risk

A Bycatch reduction plan was produced by MS for these 2 zero TAC stocks. STECF noted that it was not proposing any additional bycatch reduction measure. The COM has now informed the MS that they need to deliver an improved version by the end of October. The Chair opened the floor for discussion on possible actions to propose for these two stocks.

Members enquired the COM on the reason for the *de minimis* withdrawal for both stocks. According to them, little that can be done to solve the choke issue for these species. The BCRéP already includes the use of the 300 mm square mesh panel, there is not much more that can be done in terms of selectivity.

The COM replied that, as STECF pointed out, it is difficult to control discards when a *de minimis* is in place. The exemption can be requested again next year with more supporting information. A way to improve the BCRéP could be for example to propose new and more effective control measures, as in the current version of the BCRéP there is none beyond what already exists.

The COM then pointed out that, being bycatch TACs in place for these two stocks, looking at the feedback from the logbooks so far, the uptake has been relatively low for cod for example. A member explained the uptake is expected to increase towards the end of the year, it depends on the stock seasonality.

A member suggested to include Spain in the impacted MS also for those stocks for which the fleet doesn't have a quota, such as cod in 6a. He also recommended to add a column showing the inter-species flexibility, as it could be a partial solution to the choke issue.

Another member pointed out that according to last year's TAC and quotas regulation, Article 8, those MS who had a choke problem with a species, but had no quota for it, could obtain it with quotas exchanges with the other MS. For Spanish vessels cod is a bycatch and a quota is needed, otherwise the fishery would have to be closed. This is a collateral effect of the landing obligation implementation that should be solved. It is not possible to keep on increasing the mesh size, as this would mean a loss in valuable catches. Quotas exchange could be a solution, but a certain degree of flexibility is lacking. He concluded expressing his hope for the content of Article 8 to be improved in the next TACs and quotas regulation.

The COM replied that AC members' expertise on the topic is very valuable to them: if increasing the mesh size or other technical measures are not suitable, what else could be according to the AC? This is what the COM is looking for in the AC advice.

Concerning the quota exchange, last year it was based on the goodwill of the other MS to provide that system to Spain. Part of problem is poor recording of Spain's needs in these fisheries, there is no data on cod discards and it is thus difficult to persuade people about the necessity of this quota. Moreover, this year the uptake of the quota was very small, for a total of 90 tonnes only 30% were used.

It was pointed out that Spanish vessels have been embarking observers for the last 31 years and that the Spanish Oceanographic Institute has this data. If Spain doesn't get a quota, their vessels will have difficulties with complying with the landing obligation. Belgium and the Netherlands also have

problems with cod in the North Sea and don't have quota. A possible solution to this problem could be considering the approach in the NAFO area: in case of bycatch when there are prohibited species or there are no quotas, NAFO allows for 5%-10% of bycatches.

Another member noted that the COM is saying that the proposition coming from the MS is not ambitious enough regarding the reduction of bycatch. Should we maintain the reduction of bycatch, in the context of the 0 TAC advice, because if we don't those species will eventually disappear, or is the objective to reduce as much as possible the level of catch until we face unavoidable catches? According to him and the fishermen he is representing, the latter is the right approach and the best solution is to apply common sense and have good communication: that is why they had argued in favour of a first level of the move-on rules that applied as part of the reduction of bycatch (when there are hauls from trawlers showing there is a lot of cod in area 6, the information is shared and vessels are notified to move away from that area). Fishermen are aware of the challenges and have thought long and hard about the importance of reducing as much as possible catches of those 0 TAC species. Therefore, it is not so surprising to see that this year the level of uptake and production are lower on those species.

The COM replied that these questions are being asked to the sector as fishermen are the experts in the field, and the lack of information could bring to the drawing of the wrong conclusions, i.e. the bycatch TAC is not needed.

3. Presentation of the Windsock Agreement

The Windsock closure was removed with the new Technical Measures entered into force on the 14th of August 2019. Both the mobile and static gear vessels were active in that area before the closure happened, so the two representations met to agree upon a joint approach on shared use of the area. This is an interim solution before the Scottish government sets up the fisheries management rules for the West Shetland Shelf MPA (which overlaps with the Windsock fishing ground).

A member intervened saying that workshops and consultation took place in 2016 and 2017 where Marine Scotland and the Scottish Government were working to develop proposals for managing fishing activities within the MPA. These proposals were published. It would be worthwhile in time if these proposals and the agreement would come together, as the purpose of managing fishing activities to protect the site is the aim.

Mr Coull replied that indeed next year or sometime in the future fisheries management measures will be discussed. The agreement will be useful to inform that discussion: mobile gear fishermen haven't been in the area for many years, so by the time discussions on fisheries management happen, there will be a clearer idea of what suits the fishermen operating in that area.

Mr Coull then answered to a series of questions from the floor, specifying that:

- Gillnets were not involved in the discussion on the agreement.
- The maximum depth of the agreement area is 200-250 meters.
- The MPA is a site designated under UK and Scottish legislation a nature conservation marine protected area for subtidal sands and gravels.
- There are no permits or other schemes to control the access to the area at the moment; the agreement is voluntary but was endorsed by all the Scottish vessels fishing in the area.

ACTION: Secretariat to forward the agreement for managing fisheries in the Windsock MPA to members. Members interested in supporting this agreement should then follow this up with Kenny Coull.

4. Review of progress, summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted (Chair)

1	Secretariat to forward the agreement for managing fisheries in the Windsock MPA to members. Members interested in supporting this agreement should then follow this up with Kenny Coull.
2	Letter to COM by Secretariat to push for genetic studies to be included in the Data Collection Framework. Industry to send a proposal for the cod genetic study to the Secretariat to be discussed in next ExCom. The Secretariat to circulate among members an expression of interest in participating in the Cod DNA project group.

Annex 1 – List of Participants

NWWAC WG 1 members	
Irene Kingma (Chair)	Dutch Elasmobranch Society
Alex Kinnimonth	Royal Society for Protection of Birds
Caroline Gamblin	Comité Départemental des Pêches et des Élevages Marins (CDPMEM)
David Curtis	European Anglers' Alliance
Enda Conneely	Irish Islands Marine Resources Organisation
Gerard Hussenot	Blue Fish
Hugo Gonzalez	Asociacion Nacional de Armadores de Pesca de Gran Sol (ANASOL)
Jean Christophe Vandevelde	The PEW Charitable Trusts
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne (LPDB)
José Luis Otero Gonzalez	Lonja de La Coruña S.A.
José Manuel Fernández Beltran	Organización de Productores Pesqueros de Lugo (OP-LUGO)
Juan Carlos Corrás Arias	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco
Julien Lamothe	Association Nationale des Organisations de Producteurs (ANOP)
Kenny Coull	The Scottish White Fish Producers Association (2)
Kevin McDonnell	West of Scotland Fish Producers Organisation
Luis Francisco Marín	Organización de Productores de Pesca (OPPAO) Pesqueros de Lugo (OP-LUGO)
Marc Ghiglia	Union des armateurs de la pêche en France
Paul Macdonald	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Paul Trebilcock	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Suso Angel Lourido Garcia	Puerto de Celeiro S.A. OPP-77
Thierry Kerzerho	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des élevages Marins du Morbihan (CDPMEM 56)
NWWAC Observers	
Debbie Crockard	Seas at Risk
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Erwan Quemeneur	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des élevages Marins des Cotes d'Armor (CDPMEM 22)

Fintan Kelly	BirdWatch Ireland
Franck Lebarzic	Cobrenord
Geert Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij (Dutch Fisheries Organisation)
Jenny Grossmann	Client Earth
Lionel Bottin	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Calvados(CDPMEM 14)
Pascal Coquet	France Peche Durable et Responsable
Other observers	
Anthony Brogan	Press/media
Jonathan Shrives	European Commission
Secretariat	
Michael Keatinge	Executive Secretary NWWAC
Mo Mathies	Deputy Executive Secretary NWWAC
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary NWWAC
Monica Negoita	Executive Assistant (Finance and Administration) NWWAC