



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

## MINUTES

### WORKING GROUP 3 - ENGLISH CHANNEL

**The Main Conference Centre – Dublin Castle**

**Thursday 05<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

**11:00 – 12:00**

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair, Pascal Coquet, opened the meeting and welcomed the members, observers and COM representative to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Barrie Deas, Delphine Roncin and Dimitri Rogoff in advance of the meeting. The agenda was adopted as drafted.

Action points from the minutes from the previous meeting in Ghent on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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

3. A Focus Group on Seabass to be organised to further discuss and recommend management options. Work in progress, 12 members have expressed their interest in participating in the FG. Terms of reference to be sent for discussion/approval at ExCom meeting in Dublin in September.

The Focus Group on Sea bass has been organised and met for the first time on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September in Dublin. The aim is to provide an advice to the Commission by the end of September.

4. Members are invited to send their comments and experience on scallop dredgers to the Secretariat. To be discussed in September at Dublin meeting.

This item is discussed under point 3 of the minutes.

## **2. Input on the draft advice “Addressing the Choke Risk in NWW after exemptions” for WG3 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.

- Sole in 7d: moderate choke risk

The COM asked why this is considered as a choke species, since this is a target stock. that when the advice is delivered, it explains for every species which are the fisheries that are going to choke.

A member explained that indeed sole is a target stock, but if the TAC of sole is exhausted that also means there is no opportunity in the mixed fishery to go for the other stocks. Therefore, also a target stock can be a choke.

The COM requested to clarify this point in the advice for every stock, pointing out which are the fisheries that are going to choke (if the target or the mixed fisheries).

- Sole in 7e: moderate choke risk

A member asked explanation on why the high survivability exemption was withdrawn from the Joint Recommendations. Other members also intervened supporting the exemption, stating that survivability rate is the same for sole in 7e and 7d.

The COM replied that no information on the 7e stock was provided to support the exemption. The request claimed that the 7e stock is the same as 7d stock thus the same exemption should apply. However, STECF evaluation clearly states that the two fisheries are very different in terms of catch composition, which in turn can influence the survival rate. Therefore, exemption in 7e cannot be accepted until evidence is provided. This information is clearly reported in the STECF EWG 19-08 final report, page 62.

- Cod 7d: low choke risk

It was pointed out by a member that this species is currently low risk because no cod has been found for quite some years in 7d area. However, cod could come back in the future, raising some choke issues. The AC advice should also indicate those species that may be low risk now but could potentially become problematic in the future.

The COM also agreed it is very useful to the AC opinion in terms of future exemptions and invited the AC to engage in discussions on this topic before the official consultations on the discard plans are opened. An AC advice in the spring indicating which exemptions would be needed would be very much appreciated by the COM. This could also be an occasion to present new evidence in support of exemptions that weren't approved the year before.

Members concurred that species compositions are changing and fluctuate with weather conditions and it is thus important to consider the possibility of needing new and different exemptions year by year. The AC should provide feedback to the COM on exemption every year and propose new ones when needed.

### 3. Update on recent Scallop Agreement

After the AC meeting in Ghent, UK and French delegations met and decided to draft an agreement on the scallop fishing activity. The proposed agreement applies to FR and UK vessels equal to or more than 15 meters in length and establishes a suspension of the fishing activity between August 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>. Moreover, it also includes: a suspension of the activity for UK vessels from August 1<sup>st</sup> til October 18<sup>th</sup> in the French waters south of the 24-nautical mile line in ICES 7d; a suspension of the activity for UK vessels between July 25<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> within the boundaries of the North Finistere agreement areas within ICES 7e.

It was very important for both sides to have this agreement and to progress on the preparation of a joint proposal for management of the scallop stocks in the Channel. This proposal should also involve fishermen from Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium. It's a precious opportunity, the stock is in a precarious condition and a harmonised management approach needs to be taken to ensure this resource is exploited sustainably. The proposal to establish a focus group in the AC aiming at developing a joint management plan for scallops was put forward.

There is a strong will to have proper management plan among MS administrations as well: the French government had already suggested to have a joint plan. The UK government is considering France proposal at the moment. It would be useful to have updates from the MS on the developments in this regard.

The Brexit issue was raised, as it could have considerable impact on the management of scallops as well as on many other fisheries resources.

The COM advised members not to prevent themselves to discuss and agreement because of Brexit. According to the COM, an agreement among fishermen which would then translate into a Joint Recommendation by MS is a good idea to pursue.

A representative of the UK industry pointed out that after Brexit UK stakeholders will want to continue to seat at the AC table, maybe as observers, to keep collaboration going on. He encouraged members not to waste time overthinking the future.

An agreement on scallop could be a starting point to discuss other species. The discussion could then be extended to other topics, such as the management of other marine resources, of windmill parks and of Natura 2000 areas.

According to some members, this is till premature: a hard Brexit would have implications to take into account, policies might have to be reviewed and different approaches might need to be implemented. They claimed it is hard to progress when there is no certainty about Brexit.

The COM will come back to the Secretariat with more clarity on what could be included in a Joint Recommendation on scallops management that would not prejudice any future fishing ground access agreement.

**ACTION:** Establish a Scallop Focus Group aiming at the preparation of a joint management plan for scallops in the Channel.

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

1	Establish a Scallop Focus Group aiming at the preparation of a joint management plan for scallops in the Channel.
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#### Annex 1 – List of participants

<b>Membres du Groupe de Travail 3 du CC EOS</b>	
Pascal Coquet (Chair)	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
John Lynch	Irish Fishermen's Organisation
Ciaran Whelan	Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation
Geert Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij
Paul Trebilcock	Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation Ltd.
Barrie Deas	National Federaton of Fishermen's Organisation (UK)
Jim Portus	South Western Fish Producers Organisation Ltd. (SWFPO)
Oscar Sagué	International Forum for Sustainable Underwater Activities (IFSUA)
David Vertegaal	European Anglers' Alliance
Irene Kingma	Dutch Elasmobranch Society
Julien Lamothe	Association Nationale des Organisations de Producteurs (ANOP)
Lionel Bottin	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Calvados (CDPMEM 14)
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Caroline Gamblin	Comité National des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins (CNPMEM)
Pedro Santos	EBCD
Stephane Pinto	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins (CRPMEM) Hauts de France
Delphine Roncin	FROM Nord (Fond Régional d'Organisation du Marché du poisson)
Dominique Thomas	CRPM Bretagne
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne (LPDB)
Franck Le Barzic	Coopérative Maritime Bretagne Nord (COBRENORD)
Dominique Thomas	Organisation de Producteur Coopérative Maritime Etaploise Manche Mer du Nord (OPCMEMMN)
Thierry Kerzerho	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Morbihan (CDPMEM 56)
<b>Observateurs du CC EOS</b>	
Patrick Murphy	Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Jenni Grossmann	ClientEarth
Debbie Crockard	Seas at Risk
Jean Christophe Vandevelde	The PEW Charitable Trusts
Fintan Kelly	BirdWatch Ireland
Lydia Chaparro	Fundació ENT
<b>Autres Observateurs</b>	
Elsa Tudal	Direction des pêches maritimes et de l'aquaculture
Ghislain Chouinard	ICES
Jonathan Shrives	European Commission
<b>Secrétariat</b>	
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

