

SWFPA

The Scottish White Fish
Producers Association Ltd



NWWAC – WG1 – West of Scotland

Management measures for cod
Madrid, 12 March 2019

Management measures for the cod stock 6.a

After 16 Years of zero TAC advice for cod in WoS there was recognition of potential for serious damage to the viability of vessels operating in these waters following full implementation of the Landing Obligation in 2019.

Clearly there are two strands of work identified and supported by NWWAC which offered some longer term encouragement;

- Benchmark in 2019
- Stock Boundaries and connectivity

Approach taken at December Council provided a solution which eases immediate concerns but questions still remain regarding the assessment. SWFPA welcomed that approach and endeavours to work with our members to achieve workable solutions to deliver transparent outcomes in 2019.

With the advent of the December Council outcome, our attentions turn towards the Benchmark in 2019 as this has potential to deliver an assessment which is more in line with industries perception of stock state.

SWFPA and SAFPO liaised closely with Marine Alliance for Science and Technology in Scotland in production of a Policy Brief to Marine Scotland which highlighted;

- Although a cod by- catch limit has been agreed it may not be sufficient to prevent an early closure of the mixed fishery in 2019
- A new independent peer-reviewed assessment of West of Scotland cod estimates that the stock is healthier than the current ICES advice suggests
- Contrary to ICES advice, the new assessment indicates that effort controls have in fact been successful in reducing fishing pressure to a low level and are already promoting stock recovery.
- A re-evaluation of the bycatch limit should be carried out as soon as possible to reduce the risk of cod becoming a choke species.

Current management plans are under development and subject to ongoing review based on experience and evidence.

This is covered to some extent in the next presentation on proposals for selectivity or avoidance.

