



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/C1/UK/ds/Ares (2021)

Emiel Brouckaert
Chairperson
NWW AC Executive Committee
North Western Waters Advisory
Council
c/o Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Crofton Road
Dun Laoghaire, Ireland
info@nwwac.ie

Subject: NWWAC advice on incidental by-catch of cetaceans in the North Western waters

Dear Mr Brouckaert,

Thank you for your advice dated 8 December 2020 in which you submit to the Commission the recommendations of the North Western Waters Advisory Council.

We welcome the numerous recommendations put forward, which will help to address the serious issue of incidental by-catches of small cetaceans in the North Western Waters.

You suggest better monitoring, which is essential to ensure compliance with the relevant fisheries and environmental legislation¹. You specifically mention the recording of by-catches by fishermen, the use of a mobile app for this purpose and you mention research on technical solutions (including the use of pingers). We welcome all those measures, which will contribute to better knowledge of the effects of by-catch on the populations of these strictly protected animals. We understand that you favour spatio-temporal closures of fisheries only if scientific evidence requires them. As you can read in the ICES advice concerning the emergency measures for the common dolphin in the Bay of Biscay², area closures can be a significant and very effective measure to mitigate their by-catches.

The Commission favours a regional approach and encourages the close cooperation between the Member States and their fisheries with environmental authorities, as well

¹ In particular Regulation 2019/1241 and the data collection framework under the common fisheries policy and the Habitats and Marine Strategy Framework Directives in the area of environmental policy

² https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2020/Special_Requests/eu.2020.04.pdf

with the South Western Waters Advisory Council and the respective high level Member States' groups. The priority is to reduce drastically the incidental by-catches of cetaceans in the North East Atlantic in accordance with EU legislation and our commitments in the EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030³, but at the same time to ensure that the fishery stays profitable.

The Commission is still in the process of examining technical and other aspects of this issue and I would like to thank the NWWAC for the contribution to this process.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation and invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson (Pascale.Colson@ec.europa.eu; + 32 2 29 56273) should you have any further question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0380&qid=1610353815609>