

DRAFT Minutes

Joint NWWAC/NSAC Focus Group Skates & Rays

Virtual meeting via Teams

02 March 2023

09:00 – 11:00 IE | 10:00 – 12:00 CET

Participants

Pauline Delalain	CNPMEM
John Lynch (Chair)	IS&EFPO
Mo Mathies	NWWAC
Sander Meyns	Rederscentrale
Amerik Schuitemaker	Nederlandse Vissersbond
Tamara Talevska	NSAC
Johnny Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed all participants. Apologies were received from Paddy Walker (Dutch Elasmobranch Society) Michael Andersen (Danmarks Fiskeriforening), Geert Meun (VisNed), Solène Prevalet (FROM Nord) in advance of the meeting. The agenda was adopted, and the minutes were approved.

Action points from the last meeting

1	Secretariat to contact Hermans to see if presentation can be shared. Presentation was circulated on 16 December and is also available on NWWAC website
2	Secretariat to investigate availability of STECF EWG 22-08 report, circulate once available. Circulated on 08 December and added to workshop preparation documents
3	Secretariat to adjust agenda timings based on results from STECF, update ToR purpose according to STECF conclusions. Done
4	Secretariat to follow-up on rooms with MARE C5 Done
5	Secretariat to contact speakers Done
6	Secretariat to circulate “save the date” notice to all members Done

2. Update on EU-UK co-management discussions

Mo Mathies provided an update following last week's Inter-AC Brexit Forum meeting. The Forum was set up between the PelAC, NWWAC, NSAC, MAC and LDAC to deal with issues relating to the TCA, EU-UK negotiations and any other issues related to Brexit.

Erik Lindebo thanked the NWWAC and NSAC for organising the joint workshop in Brussels on 09 February which he felt went well and was very useful. He stated that the Commission's focus will be on agreeing a methodology for TAC setting with the UK as well as evaluate if certain species could be split into individual TACs. He advised that any advice from the ACs needs to be received in time for the Fishing Opportunities 2024. To be considered in any of the upcoming EU-UK meetings, it would need to be received at least 2 weeks before the meeting, but preferably 4 weeks. Upcoming dates are:

08/03	Working Group
18-20/04	Working Group
07/06	SCF
11-13/07	Working Group
28/09	SCF

This gives the Focus Group time to develop its advice, however, it would be best if any advice could be submitted latest by the end of June. This can go through written procedure in both ACs.

3. NWWAC/NSAC Workshop – Discussion of draft report and advice drafting

The Chair introduced the workshop report to the participants some parts of which are still under construction. However, it will serve as a good basis for today's discussions. He added that a lot of the conclusions were in line with the STECF's main points. In his opinion, the extension of the survivability exemption is top priority. He suggested that the extension of this could be included as a recommendation in the planned advice. Regarding survivability research he felt that some countries had prioritised vulnerable species while others had focussed on commercially important stocks. He added that more work is needed in this area.

Sander Meyns commented that there was a large amount of information on survivability and a lot of studies had been carried out. He wondered how that could be pulled together to make the information more accessible and comparable. He asked if research from other countries would need to be collected and collated as well as the whole topic is very complicated.

Mathies advised that this work is beyond the capacity of the Secretariat and that instead it could be included as a recommendation to the Commission. She added that during the workshop discussions also brought up the fact that research should be enabled for species included on the prohibited species list in order to increase knowledge specifically regarding these species.

Meyns added that following the workshop he felt that survivability research should probably focus on commercially important species to start, for example thornback ray, blonde ray and spotted ray.

Mathies commented that additional research has been initiated in MaREI, Cork, on electromagnetic fields and skates, and that Queen's University Belfast is also involved in a lot of research on the topic. She had reached out to MaREI and will follow up to invite additional experts to the next meetings of this Focus Group.

A discussion followed on the contents of the draft report with several items highlighted for recommendation:

- Management to focus on regional approaches in 4 distinct geographical areas (North Sea, Irish Sea, English Channel and Celtic Seas)
- Identify the target species and vulnerable species for each region – based on what data?
- Workshop between stock assessors and survivability experts
- STECF to make a list regarding what information is lacking in relation to the survivability exemptions
- Evaluation of socio-economic effects

Mejns asked if members could discuss the draft recommendations with their respective researched institutes. The Chair felt that this was possible within the timelines set for the development of the advice.

ACTION: Secretariat to draft advice paper based on draft workshop report and discussions in the FG today.

4. Prohibited Species List

Mathies recalled that this topic had originally been included in the ToR for the February workshop. However, after the EU-UK set TACs for spurdog, this was removed and to be addressed separately. The Chair agreed that it would be beneficial for the ACs to follow up on this topic especially since their previous enquiry on the same had been met with very little response.

Tamara Talevska asked if Irene Kingma, Dutch Elasmobranch Society, would be involved in this work. Mathies confirmed that both Kingma and Paddy Walker are expert observers to this Focus Group and therefore can participate in this work.

ACTION: Secretariat to draft letter to the Commission on the prohibited species list

5. AOB

Date of next meeting: 20 March 09:00 – 11:00 IE | 10:00 – 12:00 CET

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

1	Secretariat to draft advice paper based on draft workshop report and discussions in the FG today
2	Secretariat to draft letter to the Commission on the prohibited species list