

Thornback Ray FIP in the Eastern English Channel – Update

Joint NWWAC/NSAC FG Skates & Rays – 14/09/2023

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Objectives and Context : A brief recap

2019-2020

- ◆ Thornback ray fishery **pre-assessment** : 7 conditions (score 60-79) : Can't meet the requirements of the **MSC standards**
- ◆ **7 conditions to solve** : **7 actions** to carry out in a **5 years timeframe** to reach the **MSC label standards**
- ◆ Recruitment of fisheries consultants (**Poseidon**) to develop an **action plan** and to ensure the FIP follow-up

2021

- ◆ Publication of the detailed Action Plan
- ◆ June 2021 : Launch of the FIP operational phase
- ◆ Monitoring of FIP activities online on FisheryProgress website

Steering committee : OPN, FROM Nord, WWF + Stakeholders :

- **Food companies** : Carrefour/ Labeyrie, Sysco
- **Fishing professional sector** : CNPM, CRPM HdF & Normandie, FFP, NWWAC & NSAC
- **NGOs** : MSC, APECS, DRDH, Ethic ocean
- **Scientists** : MNHN, Agrocampus Ouest
- **Administration**: DPMA, DIRM channel & North Sea , DIRM HdF



Objectives and Context : A brief recap

2022-2023

- ◆ Last FIP Update to the Joint NWWAC/NSAC FG Skates & Rays was in **September 2022**
- ◆ **Latest FIP steering committee was in June 2023**
 - ➔ Fifth SC
 - ➔ Recap of past and future actions

What I will go through now!

Cross-cutting 2024 action

- ➔ 23rd of May 2023 WG => to identify need for further studies but first agreed to...
- ➔ Update of the 2019/2020 MSC preassessment of RJC fishery against the MSC standard **v. 3**



Action plan : Progress on the actions & next steps

Action 1: To improve knowledge about the Thornback ray stock in 7d

- ➔ **Benchmark 2023** => from a survey based trends assessment (ICES cat. 3) to an analytical assessment (**ICES cat. 2**) / SPiCT model
 - ➔ Stock well below F_{MSY} and a biomass just above B_{MSY}
- ➔ **4th October : New ICES RJC Advice** based on the updated benchmark model

◆ Follow up of the IPREM project

- Comparative study
- Trawling impact on seabed
- BACI and gradient experiments
- 4 years project

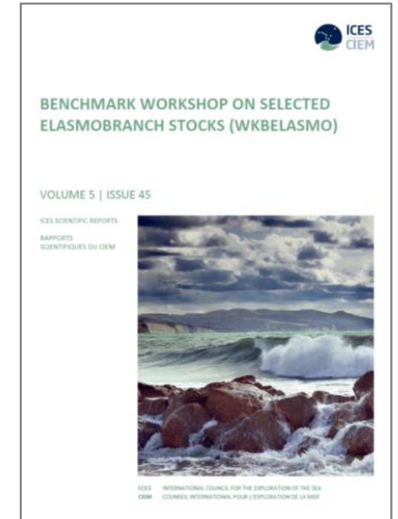
i Executive summary

A Benchmark Workshop for selected elasmobranch stocks (WKBELASMO) was convened to evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to assess and provide short-term forecast for three rays stocks in the greater North Sea: thornback ray in the North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat, and eastern English Channel (rjc.27.3a47d), spotted ray in the North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat, and eastern English Channel (rjm.27.3a47d), and blonde ray in the southern North Sea and eastern English Channel (rjh.27.4c7d).

For thornback ray in the North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat, and eastern English Channel, a SPiCT assessment using removals since 1999 and two series of biomass indices (NS-IBTS-Q1 and FR-CGFS-Q4 combined, and NS-IBTS-Q3, BTS-ENG-Q3, BTS-BEL-Q3 combined) since 1989 was accepted. The workshop also agreed on the settings for the short-term forecast, allowing the stock to be assessed as category 2. This stock is estimated to be harvested well below F_{msy} with a biomass just above B_{MSY} . The 15th percentile of the removals at F_{msy} is slightly below MSY and corresponds to landings higher (~3 times) than the previous landings advice.

For spotted ray in the North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat, and eastern English Channel, a SPiCT assessment using removals since 1999 and two series of biomass indices (NS-IBTS-Q1 and FR-CGFS-Q4 combined, and NS-IBTS-Q3, BTS-ENG-Q3, BTS-BEL-Q3 and BTS-NL-Q3 combined) since 1989 was accepted. The workshop also agreed on the settings for the short-term forecast, allowing the stock to be assessed as category 2. This stock is estimated to be harvested well below F_{msy} with a biomass above B_{MSY} . The 15th percentile of the removals at F_{msy} is just above MSY and corresponds to landings higher (~5 times) than the previous landings advice.

For blonde ray in the North Sea and eastern English Channel, a synthesis of stock ID information (tagging, surveys) was presented, indicating that the stock unit for blonde ray should cover Division 4.b. Therefore, WKBELASMO has considered a new stock unit (rjh.27.4bc7d) for the assessment. A SPiCT assessment using removals since 1999 and one series of biomass indices (NS-IBTS-Q1, Q3 and FR-CGFS-Q4 combined) since 1997 was accepted. The workshop also agreed on the settings for the short-term forecast, allowing the stock to be assessed as category 2. This stock is estimated to be harvested well below F_{msy} with a biomass above B_{MSY} , both with a relatively wide confidence interval. The 15th percentile of the removals at F_{MSY} is above MSY and corresponds to landings largely higher (~6 times) than the previous advice.



Action plan : Progress on the actions & next steps

Action 1: To improve knowledge about the Thornback ray stock in 7d

- ◆ APECS study on RJC functional habitats => final report available (March 2023)

Main results

Adult areas

- ➔ Very widespread distribution in the more central area of 7d / no segregation male/female observed as is in the data. No preferred area identified.
- ➔ Mating could take place anywhere and at any time (Obsmer and survey data)

Egg-Laying areas

- ➔ Few capsule data collected on CGFS and few newborns recorded in the captures but appear to be mostly in eastern part of 7d
- ➔ Possibly on the coast as well as offshore. In 7d the shallow depth could lead to behavior specific to the area

Juvenile areas (=less than a year old)

- ➔ Concentrations in certain coastal areas / importance of bays and the exteriors of estuaries

Fishing impact ?

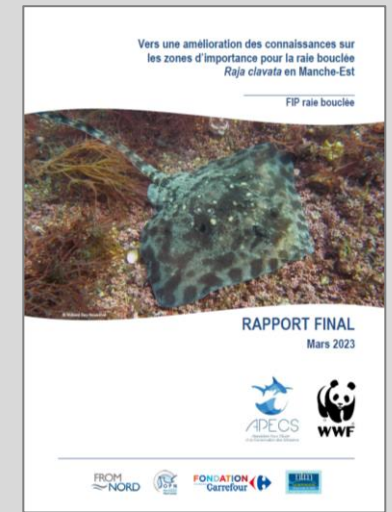
- ➔ Probably diffuse (species distribution and fishing effort)
- ➔ Could be interesting to investigate possible impact in areas where juveniles are concentrated along the coast

Natura 2000 area?

- ➔ Very little sampling in the area in the data campaigns, only on Obsmer, but few juveniles captured.
- ➔ The area does not appear to be important in its current state.

Management measure proposal ?

- ➔ Lack of current knowledge to respond or clarify questions about functional areas in 7d.
- ➔ Need to improve spatial coverage but above all time coverage in data acquisition to be able to discuss and formulate measures



Action plan : Progress on the actions & next steps

Action 2 : Management options for TACs , Monospecific TAC for Thornback rays ?

- ◆ OPN preliminary study “ the impact of monospecific TAC for Thornback rays”
- ◆ 11th of April 2023 : CNPMEM Rays and Sharks commission, OPN study presented but no position reached as further discussion/information is needed => await new advice based on benchmark model + EU/UK context



Main results

- ➔ Potential ↗ of fishing opportunity for 7d RJC with a monospecific TAC approach **but ...**
- ➔ Risk of flexibility loss **and,**
- ➔ Could lead to a renegotiation of the fishing opportunity on the basis of recent catches period which could lead to an ↗ in the RJC part but a ↘ of other species, hence a risk of ↗ discards

COPIL 3 FIP Raie bouclée



Action n°2 : Étude préliminaire de l'impact d'un TAC mono-spécifique de raie bouclée

Lundi 27 juin 2022

- ◆ If need be redirecting FIP objective to **alternative management mechanism** (to be explored in year 3)

Action plan : Progress on the actions & next steps



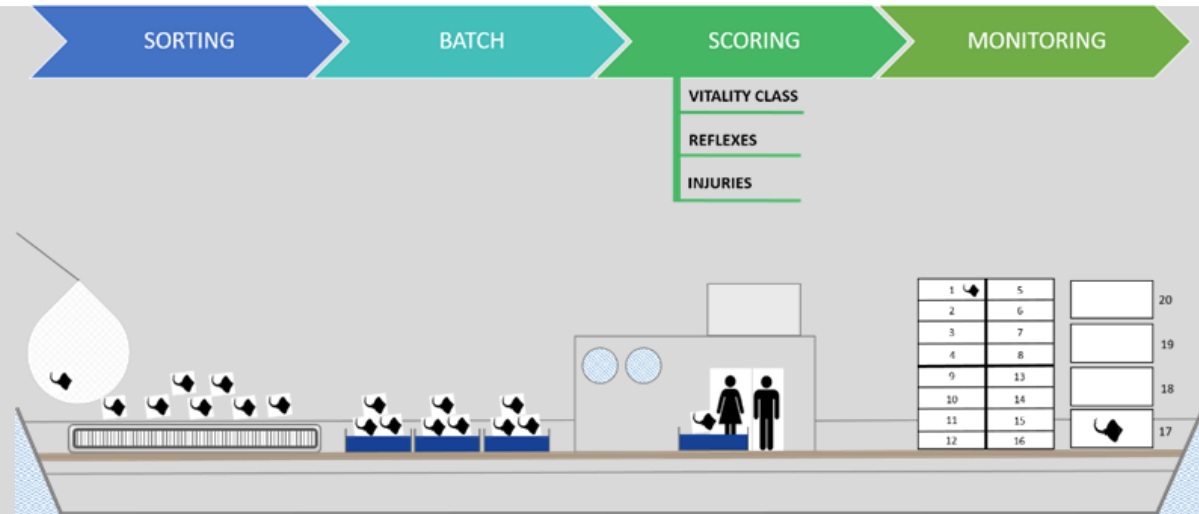
Action 3 : Improved data on fishing activities to support the management strategy

◆ 25th of May 2023 : WG on discard and ways to improve them. Next steps:

- Sociological survey to identify ways of improving the reporting of elasmobranch discards by fishers (spring-summer 2024) (to be confirmed in the coming months)
- Updating and strengthening current guides and explanatory notes on the obligation to report discard will be undertaken following this survey.

◆ Survival study on Thornback rays post-capture with flyshoot

- Sumaris protocol
- Data for the benchmark



Action plan : Progress on the actions & next steps

Action 3 : Improved data on fishing activities to support the management strategy

Main results

- ➔ **RJC immediate survival (95,43%)** : RJC survival rate for flyshoot \approx to those estimated with other fishing gears.
- ➔ **RJC delayed survival (73,06 %)**: RJC survival rate for flyshoot is similar to the one estimated for **otter trawl (76,5%)**.
- ➔ **Total RJC survival rate (69,73 %)** for flyshoot is close to the one estimated for **otter trawl (71,56%)**
- ➔ The estimated RJC survival rate for flyshoot in this study therefore tends **to confirm the exemption** from the discard ban for this fishing gear.
- ➔ **A significant correlation** was also identified between **the delayed survival** and the **injury scores** => potential viable proxy to extrapolate/predict delayed discard survival estimates without long-term monitoring.



Action plan : Progress on the actions & next steps



Action 4: Flyshoot fishery and red striped mullet

- ➔ **Benchmark in 2023** : Moved from category 5 to 3 / SPICT not appropriate /Catches : mainly age 0 and age 1

The stock size indicator is above the I_{trigger} and F is above the F_{MSY} proxy.

- ➔ **WG CNPMEM** : management options for red striped mullet in the Channel: minimum landing size and increasing mesh size (will be discussed again next week)

Action 5: VMEs in the Eastern Channel

- ➔ Impact of the new MSC standard
- ➔ Ridens of Boulogne – management update:
 - OFB proposal (January 2023): to ban all gear (except pot) in the Boulogne Ridens area:
 - For the core area : no trawling activity there (rocky area avoided by fishers), CRPMEM agreed to the proposal
 - For the “Pointe des Ridens” (further North): no agreement reached = an important area for squid fishing (state arbitration is expected).

Action plan : Progress on the actions & next steps

Action 6: Management plan for Thornback ray fishing activities in 7d

- ➔ Actions to anticipate the preparation of the management plan (structure, UK examples)

Action 7: Identification – traceability of ray species, in particular RJC

- ➔ **TRACE project (2023/2024) - Led by CNPMEM and implemented by MNHN**

To be carried out nationally and on all elasmobranch, aim to identify sources of error throughout the supply chain, from the identification of species to the recording of declaratory and commercial data.

- ➔ **Joint initiative to support modifications of the national legislation to ensure a compulsory labelling of sharks and rays-skates by their species name**

FIP members agreed to support this initiative by **preparing a letter**, with the support of the CNPMEM to the relevant national authorities in France (DGCCRF, administration), co-signed by various interested organisations, including FIP key implementers and partners

- ➔ **OPN / NFM / Ethic Ocean partnership :**

Update of the 2022 guide to rays and sharks in the Channel planned by the end of 2023;

Implementing a communication project intended to French distributors and catering groups and to the public in general.

Nom Scientifique	Nom ASFIS	Dénomination	Code FAO
<i>Atlantoraja cydophora</i>		raie	JRY
<i>Bathyraja eastonii</i>		raie d'Eston, raie	BEA
<i>Bathyraja irrasa</i>		raie rugueuse, Raie	BYR
<i>Dasyatis americana</i>		pastenague américaine, pastenague, raie	RDA
<i>Dasyatis geijskesi</i>		pastenague becune, pastenague, raie	RDJ
<i>Dasyatis guttata</i>		pastenague long nez, pastenague, raie	RDU
<i>Dasyatis pastinaca</i>		pastenague commune, pastenague, raie	JDP
<i>Dipturus chilensis</i>	<i>Zearaja chilensis</i>	raie	DPV
<i>Dipturus laevis</i>		grande raie, raie	RUL
<i>Gymnura micrura</i>		raie-papillon glabre, raie-papillon, raie	RGI
<i>Himantura bleekeri</i>		raie pastenague, pastenague, raie	DHB
<i>Leucoraja ocellata</i>		raie tachetée, raie	RJT
<i>Malacoraja senta</i>		Raie américaine, raie	RJS
<i>Pseudobatis normani</i>		raie	-
<i>Raja alba</i>	<i>Rostronaja alba</i>	raie blanche, pocheteau	RJA
<i>Raja asterias</i>		raie étoilée, raie	JRS
<i>Raja bathyphila</i>		raie bathyale, raie	JRH
<i>Raja brachyura</i>		raie lisse, raie	RJH
<i>Raja castelnaui</i>	<i>Atlantoraja castelnaui</i>	raie	JRT
<i>Raja circularis</i>	<i>Leucoraja circularis</i>	raie circulaire, raie	RJI
<i>Raja clavata</i>		raie bouclée, raie	RJC
<i>Raja erinacea</i>	<i>Leucoraja erinacea</i>	raie, raie hérisson	RJD
<i>Raja fullonica</i>	<i>Leucoraja fullonica</i>	raie chardon, raie	RJF
<i>Raja fyllae</i>	<i>Rajella fyllae</i>	raie ronde, raie	RJY
<i>Raja hyperborea</i>		raie arctique, raie	RJG
<i>Raja innominata</i>	<i>Dipturus innominatus</i>	raie souple ou raie	JFN
<i>Raja lintea</i>	<i>Rahella lintea</i>	raie voile, raie	RKK
<i>Raja microcellata</i>		raie mêlée, raie	RJE
<i>Raja miraletus</i>		raie miroir, raie	JAI
<i>Raja montagui</i>		raie douce, raie	RJM
<i>Raja naevus</i>	<i>Leucoraja naevus</i>	raie fleurie, raie	RJN
<i>Raja polystigma</i>		raie tachetée, raie	JAY
<i>Raja radiata</i>	<i>Amblyraja radiata</i>	raie radiée, raie	RJR
<i>Raja radula</i>		raie râpe, raie	JAR
<i>Raja scaphiops</i>	<i>Bathyraja scaphiops</i>	raie	-
<i>Raja spinacidermis</i>	<i>Malacoraja spinacidermis</i>	raie profonde, raie	RJP
<i>Raja undulata</i>		raie brunette, raie	RJU
<i>Sympterygia bonapartei</i>		raie	YBQ
<i>Zearaja nasuta</i>		raie de Nouvelle Zélande, raie	ZRN



Thank you for your attention

Any questions?

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