

Summary Report
North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council

Working Group 4

The Irish Sea (ICES VIIa)

Friday, 3rd November 2006, Paris, France

A. Review of ICES Advice 2006 for the Irish Sea

- Cod
- Haddock
- Plaice
- Nephrops
- Sole
- Whiting

Disappointment was expressed at the depressing scientific outlook for most fish stocks in the Irish Sea. It was noted that the advice was full of “uncertainties. However, the positive science for plaice was noted, as was the advice for Nephrops, which confirmed that the stock was being fished sustainably. Group members expressed the hope that this would result in a re-alignment of the Area 7 Nephrop TAC in 2007.

B. Review of Proposal of Cod Recovery/Discard Project

The Group agreed that the review of the EU’s Cod Recovery programme was urgently required and looked forward to participating in the work during 2007. All issues needed to be discussed, including the removal or strengthening of the Irish Sea cod closure. The Group felt that an important aspect of this work in the Irish Sea would be the Discard Project, which had evolved for the earlier ANIFPO proposal and now had the support of Fisheries Administrations and scientific institutes in the UK and Ireland. The project was still the subject of fine tuning with the aim of tabling a final proposal, agreed by the Executive Committee, prior to the December Council. In brief the project would see greatly enhanced voluntary co-operation between fisheries scientists and the industry, in return for some payback of days at sea.

**C. Report for suggested formulation of Commission Policy on Atlantic Wild Salmon.
(Submitted by the Irish Seal Sanctuary in response to EU Commission paper on Mixed Stock Fisheries)**

The report was presented to the group. It was regarded as being highly sensitive given the previous week’s announcement in Ireland regarding salmon fishing. As such it was seen as an internal Irish issue, although the authors suggested there was a European dimension.

D. Review of Members Papers

- a. **Information document on irregular commercial fishing practices in Irish coastal areas (Irish Seal Sanctuary)**
- b. **Fishy Tails Alternative uses for the Resource (Irish Seal Sanctuary)**

The content of both papers were noted by the group. It was suggested to the authors that a distinction should be drawn between illegal activity and what some people felt was inappropriate activity. The authors were urged that if they had any specific information on illegal activities in the Irish Sea that this should be reported to the appropriate authorities.