

**DRAFT REPORT**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**CNPMEM Paris**  
**8<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

**Chairman:** Sam Lambourn  
**Rapporteur:** Alexandre Rodríguez

## **1. Welcome**

### **Introductions and Apologies**

The Chairman Sam Lambourn welcomed all attendees to the meeting and introduced Bruno Dachicourt, substitute for Jacques Bigot on behalf of ETF, and Iwan Ball, who is representative of WWF substituting Helen McLachlan while on maternity leave. Apologies were received by the Commission that Fuensanta Candela would not be available to meet the members but that Ken Patterson would attend in her absence later in the day.

### Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted with one change to include Cod VIII in the deliberations of item 2 in relation to the review of the recent responses from the Commission to NWWRAC advice.

### Adoption of Minutes of the last meeting (Amsterdam, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2008)

The meeting report was adopted in full.

## **2. Review of recent responses from the Commission to NWWRAC Advice and outstanding actions**

### Cod in Celtic Sea

It was noted that the proposed recovery plan for Cod was due to be signed off imminently by the Council of Ministers, it would be important for the NWWRAC to take swift action to remind Member States of the NWWRAC opinion on this stock.

The Chairman asked the Vice-chair Jacques Pichon to remind the members on the current status of the NWWRAC advice. Jacques summarized the NWWRAC response to the Commission document on the Recovery of Cod stocks, COM (2008) 162 final, which was sent on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. He stressed that the majority of the members does not support the inclusion of the Celtic Sea within the Cod Recovery Plan. The Chairman asked for further comments from the floor. The following comments were made:

- There have been positive trends in reduction of global effort and fishing mortality is at relatively low levels so the rationale to include Celtic Sea in the Cod Recover Programme is not supported and as an alternative, it is proposed to set MSY targets for Celtic Sea Cod.
- There is general support for measures other than effort regimes such as the Trevoise closures,
- There is a need to close the existing gap of anecdotal information between fishermen and scientists. There is a lot of information produced by fishermen in voluntary basis, so the problem is not lack of data but more the inclusion and integration of these data in the stock assessment.
- There is a need to consider fleet reduction, as result of fuel prices crisis and decommissioning schemes, and how these will be taken into account in the rebuilding of this stock.

**Action:** It was agreed that Jacques Pichon would draft a brief note to be submitted to the Commission updating and reporting on what has been recommended to date and including the points raised by the members at this meeting.

Cod in Western Channel (VIIe): The members do not support the inclusion of the Channel Cod in the recovery plan, as this is perceived as a draconian regime that will lead to discarding of a good marketable resource.

**Action:** It is agreed that a request for reassessment of this stock should be sent to the Commission. It was agreed that clarification on status of area VIIe, would be sought later in the meeting from Kenneth Patterson.

#### Long-term Management Plan for Hake

The Chairman asked Hugo González, Chairman of WG2 to give a brief summary of the current status of the Long-term management plan for Northern Hake. Hugo updated members on the outcome of the Focus Group meetings in February in Bilbao; the joint Focus Group meeting in May in Madrid and the submission of joint opinion with the SWWRAC on Non-Paper on LTM Plan for Hake, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June. He informed members that the NWWRAC now awaits the formal proposal for the regulation from the Commission.

**Action:** It was agreed that there is a need for clarification of timing of this paper and this should be discussed later in the meeting with Kenneth Patterson, it was also agreed that future necessary responses should be dealt with either in a forthcoming Focus Group or by electronic means. Finally it was agreed that third country imports of Hake and the subsequent socio-economic consequences for the EU fleets should also be discussed in a focus group.

#### Spurdog management

The Chairman of Working Group 4, Lorcan O’Cinnéide, was invited by the Chairman to up date the meeting on this topic. Lorcan informed the meeting on the work done to set out alternative protection measures for this stock and the efforts made to ensure that the divergence of views between NGOs and fishing sector representatives were properly reflected on its final Opinion sent to the Commission the 28<sup>th</sup> of May last.

In summary, the main concern lies in the application of the 5% rule which in its current form is causing discarding of the species and in the fishing industries opinion, is adding to rather than alleviating the problems with this stock.

**Action:** It was agreed that Lorcan should draft a brief note summing up the relevant information provided to the Commission asking them to set this 5% percentage on a longer period, rather than roll over the current requirement for 2009.

#### Discards & Nephrops for Area VII

The work done by the NWWRAC over the summer months in response to the Commissions non-paper on Discarding was reviewed by the Executive Committee members and in particular the implications it may have for Nephrops fisheries in area VII.

Some concerns were expressed regarding the reliability of the data used for this non-paper, as well as the differences between the Nephrops fleets within the area, which were not taken into account

In general the members agreed that as a first step it is crucial to identify the following key issues:

- Definition;
- General objectives;
- Specific objectives related to by-catches;
- Types of measures to be adopted;
- Proposal for 15% general reduction of all catches for 2009 in relation to that area
- How stakeholders will be engaged in the process of setting targets and objectives.

**Action:** It was agreed that Stéphanie Tachaires will work with the secretariat to prepare a summary paper including the main points raised at this meeting.

It was also agreed that the Secretariat will make the general response of the European Commission available in French and Spanish in the following days. Finally it was agreed that the NWWRAC will consider the possibility of working with the North Sea RAC in this issue, in particular on the case study for the beam trawling/flatfish fleet in the North Sea.

#### Gillnets

Jacques Pichon updated the meeting on this issue and reminded the members that the STECF report identified specific concern of the potential impact on by-catch species in a mixed-fishery if mesh sizes for Hake were to be harmonized to 100mm in Western Waters. He also informed members of an ongoing study from CEFAS on this issue. The members discussed next actions. It was noted that there was no clear indication of the potential impacts on fishing effort if this harmonization was adopted. It was also clearly noted that the Irish and the Spanish members of the Executive Committee will not accept this movement to 100 mm.

**Action:** It is agreed that this issue should be referred back to the Focus Group and is not a matter of debate at this meeting. It is foreseen that another Focus Group meeting could be set to consider this response, submitting later on its conclusions to the Executive Committee for endorsement.

### **3. Review of the stocks and comments on proposed TAC for 2009 based on ICES advice and recommendations from the working groups for the relevant areas in North Western Waters**

It was agreed that the main recommendations made by the Working Groups held in Madrid the 3rd and 4th of July will be fully endorsed by the Executive Committee and that the Secretariat will draft and circulate for comments and approval a draft Opinion reflecting its advice. For more information, see Annex I: NWWRAC Opinion on Stocks subject to TAC and Quotas for 2009.

Other Pending actions remaining from the Working Group meetings in Madrid

Working Group 2: The necessity to develop measures other than decommissioning under Regulation 744/2008 was put forward for endorsement by the Executive Committee. It was agreed that the Chairman of WG2 write a draft letter, to be endorsed by the Executive Committee by electronic means, addressed to the Council of Ministers and the European Commission outlining these recommendations.

Working Group 3: The outcome of the discussion on MPAs in Working Group 3 and the potential future work was raised as a point which needed clarification by the Executive Committee. It was agreed that the relevant authorities from Ireland, UK and France should be invited to the next set of working groups to brief the NWWRAC on status of development of relevant MPAs in the NWWRAC waters.

There were no pending actions for Working Group 1&4.

### **4. Procedures to put forward for the IV General Assembly**

The Chairman proposed to change the order of the topics presented under this item and move the budget update from AOB to this item. The new order was agreed as follows:

- 4.1. Budget update and meeting timetable
- 4.2. Proposal for the implementation of a new Executive Committee
- 4.3. Proposal for the appointment of the Secretariat
- 4.4. Review of Working Groups
- 4.5. Proposal for the appointment of a Chairman of the NWWRAC
- 4.6. Proposal for the appointment of the Honorary President of the NWWRAC

4.1. Budget update: The secretariat reported on the negotiations undertaken with the Commission for adopting and approving the accounts for the second and third financial year. It was acknowledged that there has been a problem with membership fees (less income than predicted) and interpretation of EU grant rules by the Commission, affecting the overall funding given from the Commission. Currently the Secretariat is awaiting a decision from the EC regarding the final grant amount of year 2 and related to the determination of the grant amount of year 3.

Some members asked about the problems with the membership and asked the secretariat to provide an update on membership status at the General Assembly meeting.

The secretariat also took the opportunity to brief members on the outstanding action from the last Executive Committee meeting to consider one location for meetings. The secretariat carried out an assessment on two categories:

- Travel costs for members to certain meeting places
- Cost of room, interpretation and equipment hire.

It was found that Paris was the only place that scored within the top 3 cheapest venues from both categories. Therefore the CNPMEM was approached to request use of their facilities for the meeting and they kindly offered the use of the room for 3 meetings for the period. The following is the provisional meeting date calendar for September 2008- September 2009:

- 19<sup>th</sup> of November: General Assembly in Dublin
- 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> February: Working Groups in Spain
- 28<sup>th</sup> of April: Executive Committee in Paris (Date to be reviewed due to clash with Seafood Expo)
- 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of July: Working Groups in Paris
- 16<sup>th</sup> of Sept: Executive Committee (Venue to be decided)

There will also be funding available for a maximum of six Focus Group meetings during this financial year.

#### 4.2. Secretariat:

As the 3 year term of the secretariat was up for review, the secretariat proposed a procedure to send an open call to all members of the GA and the Member States to allow other interested parties to tender for the position (see Annex 2). However this was overruled by the Executive Committee. The Chairman and the Executive Committee members announced that they felt that BIM as secretariat had done an excellent job and would like to would seek that the secretariat be maintained in BIM. There was consensual agreement that the Executive Committee would seek endorsement of this proposal from the General Assembly Members in November.

#### 4.3. Executive Committee:

The Secretariat explained the suggested procedure (see annex 2) and asked the current Executive Committee member organizations to register their interest in maintaining their seats before the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, so that their nominations could be considered for re-election at the forthcoming General Assembly. The secretariat also noted that they would send out the call for general interest for the Executive Committee membership in the coming weeks.

#### 4.4. Review of Working Groups

A discussion arose among the members regarding the current structure of the working groups. Some members expressed a preference for a move away from the current regionally focused groups to more topic based groups on issues such as, stock assessment and better data collection/input, long-term management, conservation measures and discarding, spatial management and MPAs. It was felt that this would reduce the amount of time spent on overlapping issues and would contribute to producing more influential and weighted advice for the European Commission, Member States, European Parliament and other institutions.

However other members felt that the regional structure of the working groups was very important, it allowed regional based issues to be addressed appropriately and underpinned the reason for having RACs in the first place.

**Action:** It was agreed that a more detailed discussion should be at the General Assembly. To support this discussion the secretariat would produce a discussion document outlining the various options and potential costs.

#### 4.5. Proposal for the appointment of Chairperson of the NWWRAC

The Chairman asked Patricia Comiskey from the Secretariat to chair the meeting for this discussion. Patricia opened the session by clarifying the situation regarding the selection process outlined for the chairman. Currently under revised budget rules a chairman cannot be paid more than €5000 per contract period, unless he is a member of staff or an open tender procedure is put in place. The possibility of hiring the chairman as a staff member was considered and deemed not suitable therefore a tender procedure was opted for. Details of the tender procedure will be sent to all members of the General Assembly in the coming days. The floor was opened for comments.

The Executive Committee members unanimously thanked Sam for the valuable work, time and effort dedicated to the NWWRAC over the past three years. The Executive Committee subsequently endorsed the procedure to launch an open and transparent call for candidates for the position of Chairperson of the NWWRAC, as suggested by the Secretariat, in order to provide equal treatment for all interested candidates.

The results of the tender will be made known at the General Assembly on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November.

#### 4.6. Proposal for the appointment of an Honorary President of the NWWRAC

The Chairman invited the current President, Mr. André LeBerre, to take the floor and let the members know his intentions for the next mandate period. Despite other professional commitments, André confirmed his availability to present his candidacy for reelection of Honorary President for further three years.

An open call for further candidates will be launched by the secretariat following the meeting. The results of this will be made known at the General Assembly meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November.

### **5. Outcomes and actions from Seminar on Long term Management Nantes: proposed way forward**

Barrie Deas, NWWRAC representative present at this meeting, described the main conclusions reached in Nantes and recommended that members read the report drafted by Ian Napier which is available in the NWWRAC website.

Barrie also informed members of a general framework document of common guidelines for RACs involvement in LTM Plans drafted by SWWRAC and suggested that the NWWRAC move to support this document. The document is currently being translated into Spanish and French but will be circulated among the members in the coming weeks.

Barrie also spoke about the need for the NWWRAC to consider means of funding from different Community sources (calls of tender of the Commission, FP7, INTERREG) and/or the possibility of joining to ongoing projects (such as JAKFISH) to help the NWWRAC progress on this issue.

Finally it was highlighted that, that LTM Plans seem to have worked well for some stocks. It would therefore be interesting to start work within the relevant Working Groups to review these successes and where possible to develop LTM plans for other stocks.

**Action:** It was agreed that there was a real need for the NWWRAC to concentrate its efforts on this issue. A focus group should be established which contains the Chairman of each working group, to come up with an agreed plan and way forward. It was also agreed that the NWWRAC secretariat would circulate the SWWRAC draft guidelines.

## **6. Report on EC Policy Statement and main issues and Commission consultations for 2008 & 2009**

### Policy Statement for 2009

The EC representative, Ken Patterson presented the principles of the EC Policy Statement for 2009. Mr. Patterson identified the general trend of decrease in landings both in the North Sea and in the Atlantic area as a general area of concern. The overall advice from the Commission is to reduce almost all of the TACs for the Atlantic waters. It was also noted that for the most part, stocks deemed as “healthy” are under Long Term Management Plans. Mr. Patterson then explained the rules for setting TACs in accordance Annex 2 of EC Policy Statement in detail.

Mr. Patterson also answered some specific queries addressed by the members from the floor:

VIIId Management Area for TAC: EC is going to submit a proposal that VIIId sub-area is managed separately from Celtic Sea, setting the TAC in line with the North Sea. Quota allocation will be based on relative stability proportions for the Celtic Sea.

Northern Hake: The Long-Term Management Plan will be presented before the December Council. The Commission does not expect any further input or comments from the RACs at this stage.

Deep sea species: The EU supports the ICES advice. The issue of blue ling protection measures will be discussed within AOB.

Cod recovery: The Commission confirmed its intention to include a proposal for inclusion of VIIe and Celtic Sea Cod in the Cod Recovery Plans for 2009.

Cod, haddock and whiting in VIa: EC will propose measures to reduce whitefish catches in VIa as much as possible, with intended severe restrictions on fishing activities below 200 meters in that area. He also noted that despite a reduction of fishing effort last year, results have not been positive.

Rockall haddock: Reduction in TACs must be in line with MSY criteria and take into consideration the Russian fleet fishing activities in the adjacent NEAFC waters.

Quality of data: Catch data provided for scientists has been reliable in general terms, the problem is that scientists had a shorter timeframe to examine the data and as a result could not provide complete and/or accurate information for the assessments for this period. It was also noted that workshops will be held by ICES to look at ways of improving data sets based on data available from the industry

EC Package of Emergency measures as a result of fuel crisis: It was noted by the members that the emergency package lacks a socio-economic impact assessment. However, the Commission noted that maintaining employment cannot overrule the removal of activities which are not profitable. The goal is to move towards a smaller and more efficient industry.

LTM Plan for Sole in VIIe: The EU adopted the plan in force with the intention of decreasing fishing mortality but this has not happened. Current level of TAC does not constrain fishing mortality, which has even increased; therefore, the Commission propose a review of this plan. The Commission recognizes that they have a legal obligation to apply the provisions of the LTM Plan however, will undertake a thorough review as soon as possible.

## EC Working Programme for 2009

The Commission representative, Isabelle Viallon, briefly presented the Commission Work Programme for the last quarter of 2008 and first quarter of 2009:

Topics for the last quarter of 2008:

- EC Proposal of Regulation on Reform of the Control System of the CFP.
- Action Plan on Deepwater Sharks
- Proposal for TAC and Quotas
- Communication on Spatial Planning
- LTM Plan for Northern Hake
- Proposal of Regulation on Discards

Topics to be dealt with in 2009:

- Green Paper on Reform of CFP
- Role of the RACs & ACFA within the new CFP (to be approved in 2012)
- Reform of Common Organization Markets (COM)
- General and Specific Technical Conservation Measures

## **7. AOB**

### Communication issues

This topic is postponed for discussion at the Annual General Assembly to be held the 19/11 in Dublin.

### Blue Ling management

The Executive Committee members agreed that there was not sufficient information available to them to allow them to analyse and choose one of the two options presented by the Commission on management measures for the protection of the spawning aggregations of blue ling in area VI. These options were developed following a meeting between the Commission and stakeholders in Brussels on 2<sup>nd</sup> of October.

**Action:** The NWWRAC will send a formal response to the consultation paper submitted by the Commission within the agreed deadline (10<sup>th</sup> of October) stating the above mentioned arguments and confirming the NWWRAC Opinion on Guidelines for protection of blue ling stocks, previously sent to the Commission services on 22<sup>nd</sup> of September (available in the website).

### Data collection meeting between fishermen-scientists

The NWWRAC Secretariat announced that ICES has not given any terms of reference nor confirmation of the dates for the Data Collection Workshops. The Secretariat will keep the members updated on this issue via email.

### **Conclusion of the meeting**

The meeting closed at 17:30 h