

Report of the ACOM subgroup on the popular version of the advice (ASGPOP)

ASGPOP was created to outline a procedure for developing a popular version of the ICES advice, either as requested by the EU Commission or as an additional product for ICES-ACOM.

1 Terms of reference

The **ACOM subgroup on a popular version of the ICES advice (ASGPOP)**, chair: Christopher Zimmermann, Germany) will meet by correspondence and at the fringe of the December 2012 ACOM meeting to develop a structure for a popular version of the advice, i.e.

- a. define a primary (and maybe a secondary, tertiary,...) target audience for this advice;
- b. develop and define elements needed to address this/these audience/s (text blocks, standard texts, graphs, maps), specifically considering workload issues for EGs, ACOM and the ICES secretariat, and the future integration into the RA-CMS (Reporting and Advisory Content Management System currently developed by ICES), and including a task sharing outline;
- c. provide examples for popular advice for further consideration by ACOM and the ICES network, and an estimation of effort for the production of these sheets.

Members of ASGPOP are recruited from ACOM, PubCom, one lecturer of the ICES communication training course and the ICES Secretariat. It is planned to discuss the proposals with a hired communication professional before presenting it to ACOM.

ASGPOP will report to ACOM and PubCom in December 2012.

2 Meetings and participants

ASGPOP met at the fringe of the annual science conference in Bergen in September 2012 and again during the annual ACOM meeting in Copenhagen in December 2012 with the following participants: Tammo Bult, The Netherlands/ACOM; Anne Cooper, ICES Sec.; Gilles Doignon, EC; Martin Pastoors, Netherlands/communication training course instructor; Floor Quirins, The Netherlands/PubCom contact; Jörn Schmidt, Germany/SCICOM and PubCom contact; Garry Shepherd, USA/ACOM; Bill Turrell, UK/ACOM; Christopher Zimmermann, Germany/ ACOM (chair).

3 Discussion on problems with the 2012 version of the popular advice

The group agreed that the problem with the present version of the popular advice was caused by an unclear definition of target audience and by non-defined responsibilities in the production process. Apparently, the client asking for the production of the sheets aimed at solving too many problems at once, which required partly conflicting information to be provided on the sheets. These should have been understandable by the general public while at the same time should provide all the information the Com requires to develop their communication of stock status to the council.

Also, the project started as secretarial service to the commission and ACOM was not informed until very late in the process, which generated a lot of discussion as it appeared quite likely that the popular version could be misunderstood as ICES advice. Finally, in a number of instances input from

the expert groups would have been useful (e.g. for the distribution maps) but there was no chance to ask them for input prior to release of the reports.

It is important to highlight these difficulties to ensure that any new process would avoid similar ones. The group discussed the ownership of the popular version of the advice and agreed that it should be formally seen as an ACOM product, but freedom to edit the wording is necessary to make sure that the advice is readily understood by the public. So ultimately it would be best to describe it as an ICES product rather than an ACOM product. ACOM would be expected to provide input specifically at the beginning of the process (during the first year) but once the structure is settled, there would only be marginal input required. The group also agreed that there would be a certain limit to popularisation, as ICES must ensure that even the popular advice is scientifically correct.

4 Proposal for the future development of the popular advice

After lengthy discussion, the group came up with a **pyramid model of the ICES advice in relation to publication**, reflecting four different target audiences. The foundation (**Level 1**) would be the full technical advice as produced and agreed by ACOM, addressing the primary clients. Embedded in this foundation is the “2-pager” (**Level 2**) which provides also a brief, but still highly technical summary, addressing the technically interested readers such as RAC members. In a later stage (and once the content management system is fully operational (see below)) elements of this 2-pager could be used to produce different versions of a popular or semi-popular advice, including **regional ecosystem overviews** facilitating the production of status reports. **Level 3** would then be the popular advice (see below), addressing a wider public with just the key facts on stock biology, status and advice, and **level 4** the communication addressing media outlets such as television news programmes. The latter are certainly not interested in single stock advice, consequently such a communication would probably come as press releases on different science, process or stock status related issues. These press releases would clearly be outside the remit of ACOM (although input would certainly be welcome) and needs an agreement of the Council and the help of professional journalists. They would also clearly fall within an ICES Communication Strategy.

The **group’s proposal for a popular version** of the advice consists of the following elements (see also attached examples for 3 stocks):

- 1) **Static** (no frequent updating required):
 - a) Illustration of the species (provided by secretariat)
 - b) Distribution map (provided by secretariat but borders set by EG)
 - c) (maybe species specific highlights of the biology (provided by EG/SCICOM/ secretariat, should then be similar for all stocks of the same species, not more than 3 items))
 - d) Stock specific highlights of the biology and ecology (provided by the EG; not more than 5 items)
 - e) Description of the fishery (i.e. predominant gear and any seasonal component to fishery; provided by EG, not more than two lines – wish of the client to add nations involved in the fishery).
 - f) a link to the full version of the advice and maybe to the corresponding ecosystem overview (provided by the secretariat)
- 2) **Dynamic** (needs updating every year)
 - a) stock status (provided by EG, not more than two lines reflecting on the present status of stock size and fishing pressure in relation to MSY or limits, but without mentioning the management approach explicitly. It might need to be put into a longer term context relative to multispecies or ecosystem management).

- b) ICES advice (provided by ADG/ACOM, not more than two lines reflecting the relative development of the outtake and the basis of the advice, e.g. ICES advises to increase the catch from this stock by 15% on the basis of the management plan – no one in that target audience is interested in absolute figures unless this is a new record as for cod_nearct)

For the dynamic sections, it is proposed that Expert Groups are provided with **clear guidance** such as a dictionary which will enable them to translate the full range of possible technical advice phrases into language understood by a reasonably intelligent non-specialist audience.

The final text should be reviewed by the ADGs, with the help of a communication expert of the secretariat, and ACOM should at least initially endorse the final text. Once the procedures and structure are established, the input of ACOM can be reduced.

The most obvious way of **producing these popular advice sheets** would be to create 6 new entries in the content management system (CMS), which is currently under development for the production of the ICES advice. EGs and ADGs could then populate the various fields at the same time (e.g. a “technical” stock status description and a “popular” version of the same information below. Once the database is populated and the text agreed, the popular sheets would be produced by simply pressing a button to populate a predefined layout. This layout would still be web-based but can be printed into a pdf. Any changes to the format or structure would be done on the template and become effective immediately for all sheets. The advantage of such a web-based system would be that clients could choose what information they would like to have displayed on their sheets, e.g. a retailer might want to look at the “popular” description of the stock status and general biology but at the same time require information on the distribution of catch on the different fishing methods, as provided in the 2-pager (Level 2). He/she could just add this specific information to his/her individual layout.

It is expected that with such a reduced set of additional information required for the popular version of the advice, and by using the CMS, the **additional workload** for EGs, ADGs and ACOM as well as for the secretariat would be bearable. The involvement of the producers of the advice ensures that the information is factually correct. Such a system is expected to be operational by 2014.

For the **interim period** (2013), the group discussed 3 different approaches:

- 1) popular advice in 2013 is only delivered for those stocks which are handled by the two EGs testing the CMS in that year. That would limit the number of stocks to maybe 20 or 30, depending of the choice of EGs;
- 2) in addition to the stocks listed under 1), the client requests a popular version of the advice for a limited (e.g. 30) number of stocks which would then have to be produced manually, but using the same process (i.e. involvement of EGs);
- 3) the client insists on a full set of popular advice sheets which would have to be produced manually and made available shortly following release of ICES spring Advice. This option requires a lot of additional work, specifically in the secretariat.

It is up to ICES to negotiate these options with the client. A decision on the structure and the interim solution should be made by end of January 2013, in time to present the requirements to AGCHAIRS.

5 Annex

Examples of the popular versions of the advice for 3 stocks: North Sea sole, North Sea herring (autumn spawners), Spiny dogfish in the Northeast Atlantic.



ECOREGION

NORTH SEA**STOCK****Sole - North Sea**

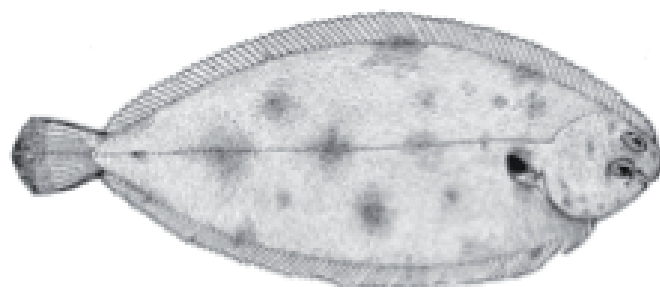
MANAGEMENT AREA

North Sea

LATIN NAME

Solea solea

BIOLOGY – SPECIES Bottom dwelling flatfish that feeds at night on small animals like worms. Commonly found burried in sandy and muddy seafloors, where they are well camouflaged and hard to spot.



BIOLOGY – STOCK This stock moves mainly at night and is therefore usually caught at this time. The production of offspring is very variable.

THE FISHERY North Sea sole is harvested by many different fleets, the vast majority is caught by beam trawlers in the southern part of the area.

ADULT STOCK SIZE 46'700 Tonnes (January 2012)

LANDINGS 11'485 Tonnes (2011)

STOCK STATUS The stock size is above the point where there is a risk for reduced production of offspring, and is large enough to provide the long term sustainable yield. Fishing pressure is too high to ensure the long-term sustainable use of the stock.



The advice applies to the area in blue. The species distribution and management areas may be different.



ADVICE FOR 2013 ICES advises on the basis of an EU long-term management plan that **landings should be reduced by 15%.**

FURTHER INFORMATION The full technical advice of ICES for this stock can be found here:
<http://www.ices.dk/committe/acom/comwork/report/2012/2012/sol-nsea.pdf>

The present sheet is an attempt to make the technical document understandable to a wider public, but it does not override or supersede the original advice.

This stock is part of the North Sea Ecosystem. Ecosystem overviews can be found here:
[link to ecosystem overviews](#)



ECOREGION

NORTH SEA**STOCK****Herring - North Sea Autumn Spawners**

MANAGEMENT AREA

North Sea, Eastern Channel, Skagerrak and Kattegat

LATIN NAME

Clupea harengus

BIOLOGY – SPECIES A schooling species at the basis of the food web, herring is considered to have a major impact on other fish stocks as prey and predator, and is itself prey for seabirds and marine mammals.



BIOLOGY – STOCK This specific stock has produced less offspring than usual in the last 10 years. It mixes with the neighbouring Baltic Stock in the Skagerrak and Kattegat.

THE FISHERY North Sea herring is harvested by many different fleets, most for human consumption, some for industrial purposes (production of fish meal and oil). Most of the catch is taken by trawlers and purse seiners.



ADULT STOCK SIZE 2'300'000 Tonnes (Autumn 2011)

CATCH 225'000 Tonnes (2011)

STOCK STATUS The stock size is above the point where there is a risk for reduced production of offspring, and is large enough to provide the long term sustainable yield. Fishing pressure is sufficiently low.

The advice applies to the area in blue. The species distribution and management areas may be different.

ADVICE FOR 2013 ICES advises on the basis of a long-term management plan agreed between all nations involved in the fishery that **catch could be increased by 15%.**



FURTHER INFORMATION The full technical advice of ICES for this stock can be found here:
<http://www.ices.dk/committe/acom/comwork/report/2012/2012/her-47d3.pdf>

The present sheet is an attempt to make the technical document understandable to a wider public, but it does not override or supersede the original advice.

This stock is part of the North Sea and Baltic Ecosystems. Ecosystem overviews can be found here:
[link to ecosystem overviews](#)



ECOREGION

WIDELY DISTRIBUTED

STOCK**Spurdog - North-East Atlantic**

MANAGEMENT AREA

North-East Atlantic

LATIN NAME

Squalus acanthias

BIOLOGY – SPECIES The spurdog is a small bottom-living shark of temperate continental shelf seas worldwide. Most stocks are highly migratory. It is a common species, but can easily be overfished because it grows slowly, is relatively old when it first matures and produces a small number of offspring.



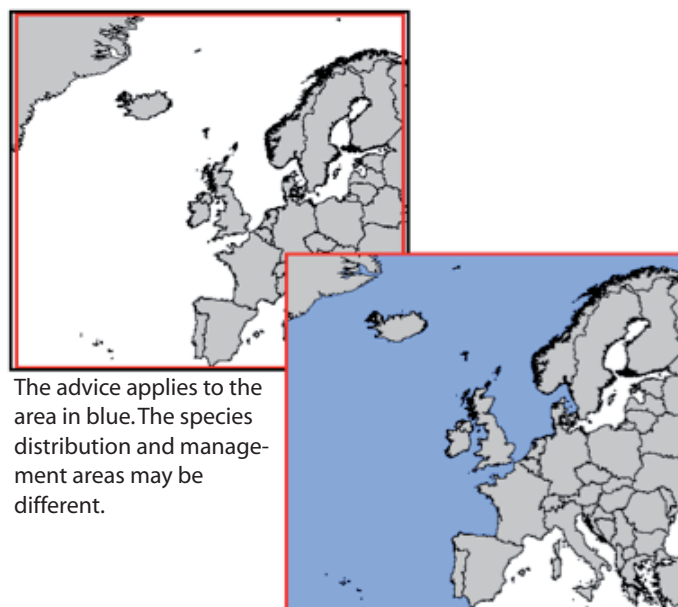
BIOLOGY – STOCK This specific stock is overfished, and its recovery will likely take many years.

THE FISHERY The fishery is closed in EU and Norwegian waters since 2011. In earlier years, the stock was caught in a mixed bottom fishery with other species. Some unwanted bycatch may still occur.

TOTAL STOCK SIZE not known (January 2012)

LANDINGS 578 Tonnes (2011)

STOCK STATUS The stock size is probably very low but stable. Fishing pressure is sufficiently low to ensure the stock is not reduced further.



The advice applies to the area in blue. The species distribution and management areas may be different.

ADVICE FOR 2013 ICES advises on the basis of precautionary consideration that **there should be no directed fishery on spurdog**. This is the same advice as in last year.

FURTHER INFORMATION The full technical advice of ICES for this stock can be found here: <http://www.ices.dk/committe/acom/comwork/report/2012/2012/Spurdog%20NEA.pdf>
The present sheet is an attempt to make the technical document understandable to a wider public, but it does not override or supersede the original advice.
This stock is part of many North-East Atlantic Ecosystems. Ecosystem overviews can be found here: [link to ecosystem overviewss](#)