

# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan



XUNTA DE GALICIA  
CONSELLERÍA DO MAR



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF  
RÉGIONAL POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

**NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS**  
REGIONAL ADVISORY  
COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO  
REGIONAL PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

Santiago de Compostela, 17 June 2009

# Agenda: morning

- 09:45-10:00h: Adoption of the Meeting Agenda
- Summary of steps taken by NWWRAC in 2008 in relation to northern hake stocks
- Adoption of minutes of the last meeting (Madrid, 22 May 2008)
- 10:00-10:45 h: Biological assessment of northern hake stocks for 2009
- 10:45-11:15 h: Presentation of the Draft Commission Regulation of 17 March 2009 [COM(2009) 122 Final]
- 11:15 h - 11:45 h: Questions and open floor for all participants
- Coffee break (11:45-12:00 h)
- 12:00-13:30 h: Evaluation of the contents of the Draft Regulation on the Management Plan: preparation of NWWRAC's response

# Agenda: afternoon

- 15:00-15:20 h: Presentation of INTERREG long-term management plans (SWWRAC)
- 15:20–15:50 h: Final conclusions
- Framing of recommendations:
  - Summary of key ideas
  - Procedure
    - Identification of priority actions
    - Work timetable
    - Task assignment
- 15:45 – 16:00 h      Other business

# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan: NWWRAC procedure and actions



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# NWWRAC procedure and actions

The ICES report released in autumn 2007 stipulates that: *“The northern hake stock has met the SSB target in the recovery plan of 140 000 t for two years (2006 and 2007). Article 3 of the recovery plan indicated a management plan, which should now be implemented”*.

Against the background, the then DG FISH asked the STECF to evaluate the biological and socio-economic impact of various management scenarios for this stock.

The Working Group (STECF/SGBRE-07-03) met in June 2007 to make an assessment of the biological consequences of the future plan. That assessment was later reviewed and evaluated (5-9 November 2007, STECF/PLEN-07-03)

In December 2007, a second Expert Group (STECF/SGBRE-07-05) met in Brussels. Its work was commented on and validated in January 2008.

# NWWRAC procedure and actions

In November 2008, in view of the imminent process of transition to a long-term management plan, the Executive Committee created a special focus group to deal with this subject.

In February 2009, the first focus group held a meeting, at which the European Commission tabled its draft consultation.

On 31 March 2008, the Commission sent to stakeholders a non-paper on a long-term management plan for northern hake {REF MARE REG/F2(2008)D/3440}, and set 31 May 2008 as the deadline for response.

On 22 May 2008, the focus group held a second meeting as a joint effort of NWWRAC and SWWRAC. The outcome was a joint statement of opinion of the two bodies. By prior agreement with the Commission, the joint opinion was submitted on 13 June 2008. The Commission issued its reply to this submission in July.

# NWWRAC procedure and actions

On 17 March 2009, the Commission adopted and presented a draft Regulation for a long-term plan to continue to improve the state of hake stocks in northern Community waters.

The plan is set to replace the recovery plan in place since 2004, which has successfully helped hake stocks to overcome the state of exhaustion to which it had come close, and to reach the size recommended by scientists as a safety level.

Pending the publication of the ICES evaluation, the Focus Group has met today to assess the Draft Council Regulation on the basis of the best available information and the industry's experience in the field.

# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan: Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 22 May



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# Adoption of the focus group minutes (Madrid, 22 May)

## Main recommendations

Fishing industry participants are concerned that the proposed management plan will exacerbate the measures now in place under the earlier recovery plan. They believe such measures are not in accord with the present decline in mortality, the rise in the breeding biomass of the stock and the sharp rise in fuel prices.

While they are aware of the objective of reaching the MSY within the term ending in 2015, they propose to the Commission that that objective be attained by the following:

- ✓ The management measures now in force (TACs and technical conservation measures) should be considered, given their proven effectiveness, as a ceiling of stringency before adopting any other more rigorous measures under the new management plan.
- ✓ The MSY should be reached "naturally", in accordance with the intrinsic dynamics of fleets' decreasing economic returns, owing mainly to rising fuel prices and operating costs.



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# Adoption of the focus group minutes (Madrid, 22 May)

## Main recommendations

- ✓ The control measures now in force have garnered pleasing results, and hence the industry sees no need to modify them, except as follows:
  - ✓ improved control of by-catches (some participants point to the possibility of scientific studies with on-board observers or self-sampling projects);
  - ✓ improved traceability of landings;
  - ✓ removal of the requirement of prior notice once the so-called electronic fishing logbook has come into force;
  - ✓ the forthcoming requirement to use electronic logs should enhance data quality and help improve the control of fishing activities at sea;
  - ✓ removal of the requirement to land at designated ports, which only creates added difficulties and costs for the fleet.

# Adoption of the focus group minutes (Madrid, 22 May)

## Main recommendations

- ✓ The need to set down fair ground rules on the framing, enforcement and application of control measures.

All participants called for an increase in the tolerance margin, now 8%, in line with that for species not subject to recovery plans. The argument advanced is that these measures have proved hard both to implement and to control and enforce, and have been ineffective from the standpoint of stock conservation.

# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan: State of the stock and STECF recommendations



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# Laws and regulations in force

The minimum mesh size for trawls in the Bay of Biscay was increased from 55 mm (“Nephrops fishery”) / 65 mm (“otter trawlers”) to 70 mm in 2000. The minimum landing size is 27 cm.

In June 2001 an Emergency Plan was implemented for the northern hake stock (Council Regulations Nos. 1162/2001, 2602/2001. and 494/2002). Firstly, a 100 mm minimum mesh size has been implemented for otter-trawlers when hake comprises more than 20% of the total amount of marine organisms retained onboard. This measure did not apply to vessels less than 12 m in length and which return to port within 24 hours of their most recent departure. Secondly, two areas have been defined, one in Subarea VII (SW of Ireland) and the other in Subarea VIII (Bay of Biscay), where a 100 mm minimum mesh size is required for all otter-trawlers, regardless of the amount of hake caught. The fishing mortality of juvenile hake (in the landings) is estimated to have decreased between 1997 and 2001 and has remained low since.



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# Laws and regulations in force

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1954/2003 established measures for the management of fishing effort in a 'biologically sensitive area' in Subareas VIIb, VIIj, VIIg, and VIIh. Effort exerted within the 'biologically sensitive area' by the vessels of each EU Member State may not exceed their average annual effort (calculated over the period 1998–2002).

The hake recovery plan (EC Reg. No. 811/2004) came into operation in 2004 and replaced the emergency plan.

Since 2006 in Subarea VIII, otter-trawlers using a squared mesh panel are allowed to use a 70 mm mesh size in the area defined in Council Regulations Nos. 1162/2001, 2602/2001, and 494/2002, while a 100 mm minimum mesh size is required for all otter-trawlers (EC Reg. No. 51/2006; EC Reg. No. 41/2007). Furthermore, a ban on gillnets was implemented in Subareas VIab and VIIbcjk for fishing at depths of more than 200 m (EC Reg. No. 51/2006) during the first semester of 2006.

All of these regulations, which were expected to reduce fishing mortality and discarding, may have contributed to the recovery of the stock, although the extent of the effect of the measures cannot be precisely quantified.

# ICES REPORT, OCTOBER 2008 (ICES CM 2008/ACOM:07)

## State of the stock

Spawning biomass in relation to precautionary limits	Fishing mortality in relation to precautionary limits	Fishing mortality in relation to highest yield	Fishing mortality in relation to agreed target	Comment
Full reproductive capacity	Harvested sustainably	Overfished	NA	F is at about the level agreed in the recovery plan

Based on the most recent estimates of SSB and fishing mortality ICES classifies the stock as being at full reproductive capacity and being harvested sustainably. SSB is estimated to be about  $B_{pa}$  in 2008, and F has been around  $F_{pa}$  since 2001. Recruitment has been relatively stable over the last decade.



# STECF Comments and Conclusions on the Report on North Hake Long-Term Management Plans, Lisbon, 4-8 June 2007

“STECF notes that a 5% decrease in F would lead to F<sub>max</sub> before 2015 without significant loss in yields at short term” (pag 4).

“In addition to a smaller required reduction in F, fishing at F<sub>max</sub> with improved exploitation pattern leads to much higher long term yield” (pag 69).

“STECF recommends that in any management plan involving a move towards an F<sub>max</sub> target, measures which improve the selection pattern should be included” (pag 5).



# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan: Presentation of the Draft Commission Regulation



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# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan: Questions and open floor debate



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# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan:

## Evaluation of the Commission's proposal: preparation of RAC response



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# PROVISIONS

## CHAPTER I SUBJECT MATTER, SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

Article 1 Subject matter

Article 2 Scope

Article 3 Definitions

## CHAPTER II OBJECTIVE FOR LONG TERM MANAGEMENT

Article 4 Objective of the plan

## CHAPTER III HARVESTING RULES

Article 5 Procedure for setting TACs

Article 6 Total forecast removal

Article 7 Calculation of TACs

Article 8 Procedure for setting TACs in data poor conditions

Article 9 Adaptation of measures

# PROVISIONS

## CHAPTER IV MONITORING, INSPECTION AND SURVEILLANCE

Article 10 Relationship with Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93

Article 11 Logbook checks

Article 12 Weighing of hake first landed

Article 13 Prohibition of transshipping

Article 14 Prior notification

Article 15 Designated ports



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# PROVISIONS

## CHAPTER IV MONITORING, INSPECTION AND SURVEILLANCE

Article 16 Margin of tolerance in the estimation of quantities reported in the logbook

Article 17 Separate stowage of hake

Article 18 Transport of hake

Article 19 National control action programmes

Article 20 Inspection benchmarks

Article 21 Specific control and inspection programmes



# PROVISIONS

## CHAPTER V FOLLOW UP

Article 22 Evaluation of the plan

## CHAPTER VI FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 23 Assistance under the European Fisheries Fund

Article 24 Repeal

Article 25 Entry into force



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# Technical Focus Group on the Northern Hake Management Plan: Conclusions, actions and timetable



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