



North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PARIS, 31 January 2013

09:30 - 12:30

Chairman: Bertie Armstrong

Rapporteur: Alexandre Rodríguez

1. Welcome

The Chairman of the NWWRAC, Bertie Armstrong, welcomed members, Commission representatives and observers to the meeting. The high rate of attendance was positively noted and a warm welcome extended to the new representative of the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD), Victoria Beaz. Ms. Beaz will be replacing Cécile Fouquet. The list of participants, and the organisations they represent, is detailed in Annex I.

The Chair asked the attendees to introduce themselves and indicate their status as members or observers along with their affiliation, as given the agenda, a quorum of members was required for the purposes of decision making.

The Secretariat noted that the required quorum of Executive Committee members were present.

- Apologies: Apologies were received from Dr. Conor Nolan, Executive Secretary of the NWWRAC, Alan Coghill (Scottish Fishermen's Federation) and Bruno Dachicourt (France Pêche Durable et Responsable).
- Adoption of the agenda: The agenda was adopted by the members with a comment from the Secretariat (Alexandre Rodríguez) to modify item 8 to incorporate the following changes:
 - The COMFISH project coordinator did not reply to the NWWRAC invitation.
 - The NWWRAC Secretariat was given the mandate to provide an update of the GEPETO Project and the work to be carried out by the NWWRAC in 2013.
 - The Secretariat will seek the opinion of members regarding requests received for the NWWRAC to contribute to, or participate as partners in, two consortiums (i.e. MareFrame and TEMPO) that will apply for FP7 funding under Project ref. Call KBBE.2013.1.2-08 "*Innovative insights and tools to integrate the ecosystem-based approach into fisheries advice*".

- Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting (Dublin Castle, 26 September 2012):
The minutes were considered to be a true record of the meeting and were formally adopted without comment or change.

2. Presentation of recommendations from the sub-regional Working Groups

The Executive Committee was requested to endorse the following recommendations from the sub-regional Working Groups:

WG 1 – WEST OF SCOTLAND and WESTERN APPROACHES

Chair: Jane Sandell
Rapporteur: Kara Brydson

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPA)

The Secretariat will:

- Encourage Member States, whenever possible, to coordinate and communicate their activities regarding the designation of a European network of MPAs;
- Liaise with the JNCC to inform the NWWRAC about forthcoming consultations on proposed sites for designation as soon as they are available;
- Assist national state agencies with responsibility for the designation of MPAs, to identify relevant, non-UK, fisheries stakeholders affected by consultations.

DEEPSEA FISHERIES

- The NWWRAC will submit a letter asking the Commission to forward a request to STECF to review the impact assessment in which the proposal of Regulation is substantiated and the impact of different fishing gears in deep-sea habitats (in particular the longline fishery);
- The NWWRAC Secretariat will follow the developments of the European Parliament and Council on the Proposal of Regulation tabled by the Commission in July 2012;
- The NWWRAC, unilaterally or along with other RACs, will develop a discussion paper on the views of RAC members on deep-sea fisheries; and will send it if agreed to EU institutions.

WEST OF SCOTLAND COD RECOVERY

- The Cod Focus Group will take place after this executive and will continue with work to produce a scoping paper for the implementation of an operational management plan. This would be circulated by the end of March with the view of being adopted in summer 2013;
- A steering group led by KFO (Sean O'Donoghue) will draft a letter to the Commission requesting a more flexible interpretation of 4 articles of the Cod Management Plan [EC Reg. 1342/2008].

- This letter will be put forward for the adoption of the Executive Committee using the NWWRAC's "fast track", email procedure. The Secretariat will contact the Secretariats of the North Sea and Baltic Sea RACs to see if they would like to support this letter.

FULLY DOCUMENTED FISHERIES

- Barrie Deas will make available the report of the NFFO-CEFAS Fisheries-Science Workshop held in York in January 2013 to investigate effective ways for achieving fully documented fisheries.

TECHNICAL CONSERVATION MEASURES

- The NWWRAC will request clarification from the Commission on the timetable for the review of Regulation 850/1998, based on the information provided by the Commission following the EU roadmap published on this topic in October 2012;
- The Commission will be requested to provide exact information about the date of reintroduction of catch composition rules in West of Scotland.

DATA LIMITED STOCKS

- Members will identify priority stocks within the NWWRAC region and provide these to the ICES ACOM;
- The designated NWWRAC data coordinator for Anglerfish VI (Mike Park) will attend the WKFLAT Benchmark and revert to WG1 and the Executive Committee on any actions arising which may be of interest to the NWWRAC.

WG 2 - WEST OF IRELAND and CELTIC SEA

Chair: Jesús Lourido
Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock

GEAR MARKING (Regulation Replacing EC Reg. No 356/2005)

- The NWWRAC will write to the Commission requesting a reconsideration of the Commission's interpretation of the governing rules on gear marking made in response to the communication from the NWWRAC on this topic. The letter will include specific comment on the practical reality of these regulations in fishing situations contributed by representatives of the Spanish and French gillnetting fleets.

TECHNICAL MEASURES – MESH SIZE AND NET COMPOSITION

- The NWWRAC (Hugo González, Jesús Lourido and Juan Carlos Corrás) will prepare a letter questioning the Commission's interpretation of relevant provisions contained in EC Regulations 494/2002 (in relation to net composition and the percentage of catches of hake retained on board) and 517/2008 (mesh size measurements). The letter will illustrate with examples the practical difficulties encountered in the implementation of these regulations.

CELTIC SEA MANAGEMENT

- Fishing Opportunities: The NWWRAC will write to the Commission asking for an in-year review to increase the TAC for Celtic Sea haddock for 2013, on the basis that a 15% reduction of effort given the present stock size and abundance indices for the species in the Celtic Sea will lead to high discards and will affect all fleets operating in the Celtic Sea;
- Technical measures: The Technical measures steering group will meet with gear technologists and will review the results of previous gear trials and will examine options to improve the selectivity of gears and reduce discards of whitefish (i.e. cod, haddock and whiting);
- Management Plan for Mixed Demersal Fisheries: The Secretariat will continue to work to secure additional sources of funding for the development of a Celtic Sea MAMP for VIIIfg. The Secretariat will ask the Commission to keep the NWWRAC informed, in a timely manner, on the decision regarding the award of the LOT1 study (launched by DG MARE; maximum duration: 24 months) to develop a decision-support tool to assess management options. The NWWRAC will then ask the coordinators of the LOT1 project to include intermediate deliverables in their work and findings that can be reported to stakeholders;
- Focus Group: The Focus Group will resume work and will hold a meeting to discuss fishing opportunities, technical measures, MAMP, collaboration with EU projects and other topics of relevance when progress has been made on these key issues.

NEPHROPS MANAGEMENT ON THE PORCUPINE BANK (FU16)

- Scientific advice: The NWWRAC will request the Commission to ask ICES to move the timing of scientific advice from June to September in order to allow sufficient time for ICES to integrate the results of the summer surveys for nephrops, carried out by the Marine Institute (Ireland) in June and July, into the advice.
- Fishing opportunities for 2013: The NWWRAC data coordinator for this stock (Eibhlín O'Sullivan) and experts in this fishery will look at forthcoming STECF advice on the management regime and will examine the outcomes of the forthcoming ICES benchmark workshop on the FU16 Nephrops fishery (WKNEPH). If underpinned by scientific evidence, the NWWRAC will request the removal of the "of which" restriction that is present in the Regulation on Fishing Opportunities along with an in-year revision of the TAC in 2013.

HAKE, ANGLERFISH AND MEGRIM IN ICES AREAS VI AND VII

- The NWWRAC will adopt a multi-species approach in 2013 for northern hake, anglerfish and megrim stocks and will address this issue in a Focus Group meeting that will be held in the first half of 2013. Relevant scientific and economic experts will be invited to this meeting and the agenda will include, among others:
 - Northern Hake: Biology and state of the stock; results of new assessment methods;
 - Anglerfish: Report on WKROUND 2013 and proposals to mitigate data deficiencies;
 - Megrim: Presentation on a project led by AZTI to improve the knowledge of megrim stocks and an update on the recommendation made at WKFLAT 2012 for the fishing industry to gather relevant commercial data.

DATA LIMITED STOCKS

- The Secretariat will ask ICES for permission to circulate documents presented at MIRAC 2013 regarding: the context of advice, MSY values, the mixed fisheries/multispecies approach and the review of the frequency of assessments.

ELECTRONIC LOGBOOK

- In order to reduce the economic burden associated with the implementation and use of the electronic logbook, Juan Carlos Corrás will draft a letter asking the Commission to implement a fixed price policy for all elements of this reporting process, including the possibility of a maximum price for satellite traffic communications across Europe, to ensure that the costs of implementation across national fleets are equal.

WORKING GROUP 3 – The CHANNEL (VIId)

Chair: Daniel Lefèvre

Rapporteur: Jim Portus

EASTERN CHANNEL COD MANAGEMENT

- The NWWRAC will request the Commission to separate the North Sea and the Eastern Channel for management purposes;
- A management framework for the Channel will be developed within WG3 from a mixed fisheries perspective;
- WG3 members and the Secretariat will follow developments on:
 - STECF advice on the management of VIId and VIle Cod in mixed fisheries plan;
 - Legal amendments to EC Regulation 1342/2008.

SCALLOP MANAGEMENT

- Relevant French and UK Fishing industry representatives will meet shortly, outside the NWWRAC, to resume bilateral discussions and negotiations on the exchange of kilowatt-days between the UK and France in 2013 and beyond. French representatives are expected to table a new proposal and arrange a possible meeting to discuss the issue in order to reach an agreement on a coordinated plan between the UK, France and Belgium before the start of the season (i.e. 15 May 2013). The WG3 Chair and/or the Vice-Chair will report the outcomes of these meetings to the next WG3 and/or Ex.Com.
- Jim Portus will draft a letter to the Commission asking for an amendment of article 10 of Regulation 850/1998 to remove the word “*bivalve*” from “*bivalve molluscs*”.

SPECIES NOT SUBJECT TO TACs

- The NWWRAC will issue a formal statement encouraging Dutch and French fishing representatives to resume dialogue to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the eastern part of the Channel, which has resulted in Dutch purse seiners being blocked from landing in French harbours;
- The NWWRAC will follow developments and future proposals from the Commission, Member States and ICES regarding the adoption of management measures for a number of non-TAC species, such as sea bass, sea bream, pollock, red mullet and John Dory.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAs)

- The Secretariat will inform members on progress in relation to the public consultation of new designated sites by DEFRA/JNCC in December 2012 on Marine Conservation Zones in UK waters that might have implications in terms of displacement of fishing effort;
- JNCC representatives will be invited to provide regular updates on the MPA designation process at future NWWRAC meetings.

DATA LIMITED STOCKS

WG3 members will identify priority stocks within the context of the geographical sub-region of the channel and report these to the Secretariat in order that they can be included in the list of priority species provided to ICES.

WORKING GROUP 4 – IRISH SEA (VIIa)

Chair: Alan McCulla
Rapporteur: John Crudden

PARTICIPATION OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS AT WG4 MEETINGS

- The NWWRAC Secretariat will ensure that relevant scientists are given the maximum possible notice when invited to attend working group meetings.

IRISH SEA STOCKS

- Cod: The NWWRAC will submit a letter to the Commission requesting that a full audit of Irish Sea cod and sole stocks takes place, taking into account the specificities of the Irish Sea and re-emphasizing the progress that has been made in relation to work of the NWWRAC on Cod Recovery on one hand and in relation to the Belgian sole fishery assessment in the other;
- Sole: The ILVO (Hilde van Haecke), on behalf of a Belgian science-industry partnership, will submit a proposal for collaborative work with the NWWRAC in improving data quality and knowledge for key stocks in the Irish Sea (namely cod, nephrops and sole).

The long-term objective is to implement an integrated ecosystem approach to fisheries management in the area;

- Nephrops: The NWWRAC will follow the implementation and effectiveness of new selectivity devices and gears (e.g. alternative to “Swedish” grid) by the Northern Irish TR2 fleet to reduce by-catches of whitefish.

MIXED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

- The WG4 Chair and the NWWRAC Secretariat will draft a declaration for the development of a mixed fisheries management plan for the Irish Sea. This document will take into account the discussions held at the Irish Sea Focus Group meeting in September 2012 and will be extensively circulated among WG4 members before being sent to the Commission.

COD MANAGEMENT PLAN

- The NWWRAC Focus Group will draft a letter asking for a revision of 5 articles of the management plan (EC Reg. 1342/2008) in force. This will be done on behalf of the West of Scotland and Irish Sea Working Groups.

CONSULTATION ON SIX, MARINE, SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SACs) IN IRISH WATERS

- The NWWRAC Secretariat will circulate the information received from the Irish National Park and Wildlife Services (NPWS) in December 2012 among all NWWRAC members as the proposed (inshore and offshore) sites are widespread within the Irish EEZ (e.g. Hatton Bank, Rockall, Porcupine). The Secretariat will encourage members to submit their individual contributions before the deadline of Tuesday 5th of March 2013.

DECISION: The Executive Committee of the North Western Waters RAC unanimously adopted the recommendations of the four Working Groups.

3. Decisions regarding procedures

3.1. Adoption of revised NWWRAC rules of procedure

The Secretariat (Alexandre Rodriguez) updated the Executive Committee on the process followed since the decision taken at the Annual General Assembly in October 2011 to amend the rules of procedure to align the terms of office for elected NWWRAC positions to three years and conduct a thorough review of the rules of procedure to make the necessary changes to reflect current practices.

The Secretariat made a comprehensive presentation of the work carried out to incorporate the amendments proposed at the Annual General Assembly held on the 26 September 2012 (this presentation is available on the NWWRAC website¹). In October 2012, a draft of the amended rules of procedure was circulated in the three working languages of the NWWRAC (EN-FR-ES) among all NWWRAC members allowing a 6 week period for comment. Following this deadline, the Secretariat submitted a final draft of the revised rules of procedure to the Commission and Member States requesting their input and seeking their consent. Two minor modifications were made to incorporate Commission comments regarding the participation of observers and media in public meetings of the NWWRAC and consultation requirements in relation to emergency procedures in accordance with article 45 of (EC) Regulation no 850/1998.

Having completed the consultation process, the final version of the amended rules was presented for the formal approval of the Executive Committee by qualified majority, in compliance with the procedure established in article 53 (now 52) of the NWWRAC statutes.

DECISION: The Executive Committee unanimously adopted the revised rules of procedure for the North Western Waters RAC with no objections.

¹ Direct link:

www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/4_FINAL_Presentation_Review_NWWRAC_Rules_Procedure_Sept2012_EN.pdf

3.2. Rules regarding the functioning of the sub-regional working groups of the NWWRAC

A revision of article 13 of the rules regarding the functioning of the sub-regional working groups of the NWWRAC, to specifically state that the NWWRAC Working Group Chairpersons will be appointed “for a (renewable) term of mandate of 3 years” in line with all NWWRAC officers was proposed by the General Assembly.

DECISION: The Executive Committee unanimously adopted the revised rules of procedure for the Sub-regional Working Groups of the NWWRAC.

3.3. Renewal of the NWWRAC Communications Strategy

The NWWRAC Communications Strategy was approved for the first time in November 2007, and entered into force on the 1st of January 2008 to be renewed on an annual basis by decision of the Executive Committee. Following a review of this document to ensure that clear guidelines in the field of Public Relations and Communications with media and other third parties were available to NWWRAC members, the Secretariat presented a final version of this document for the endorsement of the Executive Committee.

DECISION: The Executive Committee made no comments on the text and the Communications Strategy was deemed as renewed and applicable for one calendar year (January-December 2013).

Following the decisions of the Executive Committee, the revised versions of the rules and procedures of the NWWRAC are available for consultation on the NWWRAC website at:
www.nwwrac.org/About_NWWRAC/About_Us_ENG/Rules_and_Procedures.html

4. Update on the Commission's work programme and consultations

4.1. EC work priorities in relation to North Western Waters

The DG MARE representative (Roy Griffin) summarised the Commission's calendar of legislative proposals and non-legislative acts that might be of interest to the NWWRAC for the first half of 2013. A link to the Commission's full programme is available for consultation on the NWWRAC website².

The CFP reform process was highlighted by the Commission representative and three related topics:

1. Technical conservation measures

A defined decision-making architecture and structure to put in place an effective regional approach to fisheries management will be instrumental for the effective development and application of new technical measures tailored at fisheries and/or sea basin level. This topic will be discussed internally by the Commission in February and a preliminary exchange of views will be held with the RACs in a coordination meeting scheduled for the 1st of March;

2. Implementation of the obligation on landings ("*discards ban*")

Member States have been asked by the Commission to develop discard plans by fisheries as well as studies on discard rates by commercial fleets;

3. Role, composition and functioning of future Advisory Councils (ACs)

This will be an item for discussion at the forthcoming coordination meeting between the RACs and the Commission on 1 March. At this meeting the Commission will present its conclusions to the consultation process and a summary of the responses received from the RACs last November.

Furthermore, the development of a Marine Spatial Planning implementation strategy for the Atlantic region was highlighted as one of the main work priorities for the Commission in 2013. In this sense, a coordination meeting has been agreed between several Member State administrations and their MPA regulatory bodies to exchange information on MSP strategies and coordinate future action plans.

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http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/Commission_Initiatives_2013_Legislative_Non_Legislative_Proposals_Jan2013.pdf

4.2. Exchange of views from the floor

The **Executive Committee members** made the following comments:

The NFFO (Barrie Deas) voiced concern that the substantial work of the STECF to improve knowledge on discards might be undermined or overwhelmed by new requirements on discards (e.g. the closing of a mixed fishery due to the catch or by catch of a single stock, which is considered to require aggressive management to ensure its sustainability or recovery i.e. a “choke species”). A transitional period would be recommended in order to incorporate such a measure in a more gradual manner.

ANASOL-ARVI (Hugo González) and Rederscentrale (Emiel Brouckaert) asked where non-quota (or over quota) fish that fishermen were obliged to land would go, and pointed out that there is no indication as to how this is going to be applied in practice. Rederscentrale also expressed the opinion that a large volume of work existed on discard survival rates and gear selectivity and further work was required in these areas.

OPPAO (Victor Badiola) agreed with NFFO and ANASOL-ARVI and warned on the perverse effects that a discard ban might have on altering relative stability allocation keys and collateral socio-economic effects for affected fleets (e.g. If fishing activity was stopped without having a clear solution on how to achieve proper discard reduction). OPPAO also objected to the current EC proposal to modify the current access regime for deep-sea species based on the lack of scientific foundation to find a suitable definition of deep-sea species (e.g. distribution in the water column, bathymetry) and also rejected the phasing out of deepwater trawling and bottom gillnetting.

The Chairman (Bertie Armstrong) reiterated that the ongoing process of CFP reform and regionalisation is going to be crucial for reaching solutions, particularly in relation to topics such as discards and technical measures.

KFO (Sean O’ Donoghue) reminded the meeting of the ongoing task of the Irish Presidency to progress with CFP reform and achieve a Council position by the summer of 2013. The possibility of further RAC engagement in the process was questioned at this stage and an update on the Commission’s views on the functioning and funding of the ACs was requested. KFO voiced concern on the continuation of the institutional deadlock between EP and Council on MPs.

The Secretariat (Alexandre Rodríguez) asked the Commission about the timetable for the publication of a preliminary consultation, from the Commission, on the general approach and principles of a new Technical Conservation Measures Regulation with the Member States, the European Parliament and the RACs, as indicated in the EU Roadmap in October 2012.

The **Commission representative** (Roy Griffin) replied to the main questions posed by the members and the Secretariat as follows:

Landings' obligation/prohibition of discards: The exact detail and extent of a discard ban/landing obligation has yet to be resolved. However the intention remains. STECF have been asked to prioritise advice in support of a landing obligation in November however intermediate/stock specific advice will be sought before this. This has resulted in a re prioritization of other STECF work, including the planned action on mixed fisheries / multi-species plans.

Deep-sea species: The Commission has already tabled its proposal of Regulation, which is being discussed and is pending the decision of the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission will participate in the "*trilogue*" process and assist the parties as required.

Technical measures - Review of Reg. 850/1998: A decision on the long-term approach for replacing the TCM Regulation can only be made in light of the eventual outcome of the Reform process. Initial discussion on management options will be put forward by the Commission to the RACs in the first quarter of 2013, with the intention of having a reformed TCM Regulation completed by 2014.

Management Plans: The Irish Presidency has resolved to address the current impasse between the Council and the Parliament, the Commission remains keen to assist were possible but previous attempts to move this issue forward have not been successful. All proposed management plans continue to be on hold at the moment but this does not stop the Commission developing or seeking scientific input on specific plans.

5. Identification of NWWRAC work priorities for the first half of 2013 – Focus Groups

The Chairman clarified that the items under this point in the Executive Committee meeting agenda were non-exhaustive. He proposed to establish a Focus Group or Horizontal Working Group to deal with technical measures and discards. NFFO (Barrie Deas) added that this should be done in the context of multi-annual management plans together with the setting of TACs, grouping of species for TAC management, catch composition rules, fully documented fisheries, and incentives to industry.

ANOP (Jacques Pichon) suggested that Focus Groups should be categorized by Eco-Regions such as the Celtic Seas or the Irish Sea, as this work can not be presently done at Working Group level due to time and capacity constraints.

ANASOL-ARVI (Hugo González) reminded the meeting of the commitment reached in WG2 and ratified at the Ex.Com. to establish a Focus Group to address Hake, Anglerfish and Megrim stocks.

Action: *The Secretariat will propose a timetable for Focus Group meetings taking into consideration proposals received from members whilst allowing for margin for man oeuvre to have a swift reaction to dynamically changing work priorities. Where possible, The Secretariat will ensure that Focus Group meetings are held back-to-back with regular ordinary meetings of the NWWRAC to make the most possible efficient use of economic resources.*

6. The future role of the Advisory Councils within the CFP reform

6.1. Review of the functioning of the RACs – Current status of the consultation:

A coordination meeting between the Commission, the RACs and Member States will be held on the 1st of March to further reflect on this topic and discuss the outcomes of the consultation.

The DG MARE representative (Rodrigo Altaide) reminded the meeting that the RACs have been extensively consulted in relation to the Proposal for a CFP Basic Regulation and that their views were taken into consideration when preparing the Impact Assessment. The Commission's proposal was published in July 2012. The RACs will, however, have an important advisory role to play in relation to two elements: The development of management plans and technical conservation measures.

6.2. Commission's Reply to NWWRAC advice

The Secretariat (Alexandre Rodriguez) informed the meeting that the RACs are waiting for a response in writing from the Commission to the consultation launched in November 2012 in relation to the future role, composition, functioning and funding of the RACs. In terms of funding, it was announced at the MIRAC that the Commission had proposed an annual budget of 3 million euro to be allocated between the 9 RACs (i.e. the 7 existing RACs along with the newly established Black Sea RAC and the Aquaculture RAC). The amount allocated may vary as the final decision will be made by the Council and the European Parliament. The number of RACs is also likely to increase as Council had already proposed three new RACs; Small Scale Fisheries, Outermost Regions and Markets.

The NWWRAC has submitted a proposal to the EU institutions to have dedicated funding made available to the RACs under the EMFF budget heading of "fisheries science partnership", so that the RACs can use this support to develop projects with scientists that go beyond the annual work programme. This level of initiative and application will be of significant importance to the successful operation of a regionalised function within the constitution of the RACs.

6.3. InterRAC Group of NGOs:

The NWWRAC Chairman thanked the eNGO members of the NWWRAC for accepting the invitation made by the Chair and the Secretariat to inform NWWRAC members about recent papers produced in response to EC consultations on CFP reform, regionalisation and the role and composition of the Advisory Councils.

RSPB-Birdlife International (Kara Brydson) and Seas at Risk (Debbie Crockard) explained that this is not a permanent group and meetings are irregular and as required (so far the group has only met twice). It is a forum where all NGOs can share their experiences and views of the different RACs.

Although the group does not have a specific mandate its aim is to inform the Commission of the diversity of views existing within the NGOs that are members of the RACs. The NWWRAC NGOs (RSPB-Birdlife International and Seas at Risk) categorically stated that they were satisfied with their engagement and involvement with the NWWRAC and that this view was communicated both to their colleagues and to DG MARE.

Furthermore, they affirmed that were satisfied with the content of NWWRAC advice on the role and functioning of the RACs. They were content with the text in relation to the composition of the RACs and that they were supportive of maintaining the 2/3-1/3 ratio although the paper provides a wider range of options given the divergent views from other NGOs represented in other RACs (e.g. 50:50; 1/3 industrial fleet-1/3 SSF-1/3 other groups of interest).

The Chairman thanked RSPB-Birdlife International (Kara Brydson) and Seas at Risk (Debbie Crockard) for their report and valued the statements made regarding the work and transparency of the NWWRAC. He asked the present DG MARE representatives to note this point and pass this on to their colleagues.

DG MARE (Rodrigo Ataide), welcomed such positive feedback from NGOs in the NWWRAC and informed that this is not always the case in other RAC's where NGOs do not always endorse the RAC advice and as a result no overall consensus is reached. He also pointed out the possibility that some non-engaged eNGO's may consider the current composition as a barrier for joining the RACs. Issues of RACs composition are to be addressed in the context of the CFP reform.

RSPB-Birdlife International (Kara Brydson) stated that it had been actively working in the past with the NWWRAC Secretariat in trying to engage more NGOs to join the NWWRAC without success. According to the experience of RSPB-Birdlife International, the main reason preventing other NGOs being present at the NWWRAC is the lack of (human and economic) resources.

7. Cooperation with ICES on data deficiencies for stocks assessments

NFFO (Barrie Deas) informed the meeting on the exchange of views held between the RACs and ICES in Copenhagen (MIRAC and WKDDRAC) in January 2013 and highlighted the importance of maintaining momentum and identifying priority stocks for ICES to work on during the course of the year. It was of particular importance to ensure that adequate data is provided in a timely fashion to the data compilation workshops in advance of each Benchmarking Workshop of relevance to the RAC (e.g. WKROUND, WKNEP, WKFLAT).

8. Presentations of EU projects relevant for the NWWRAC

The NWWRAC Secretariat (Alexandre Rodríguez) informed the members on two items:

8.1. GEPETO Project

A general overview of the GEPETO Project (duration: June 2012-May 2014) was provided as well as a reminder of the status of the NWWRAC as an associated partner with no direct funding. The work plan of the NWWRAC in 2013 was outlined in the case study of the Celtic Sea (WP3) contained in GEPETO. The NWWRAC aims to resume this work at Focus Group level and to work in close co-operation with the lead scientific partner, the Marine Institute.

The presentation provided is available for consultation on the NWWRAC website³.

Action: *The Executive Committee members agreed that the NWWRAC Secretariat will liaise with GEPETO Project coordinators and Celtic Sea WP3 Leader (Colm Lordan from the Marine Institute) to progress with work and set up a Celtic Sea Focus Group within the first half of 2013.*

8.2. Participation of the NWWRAC in FP7 Projects

The NWWRAC has received two requests to collaborate with FP7 projects. The NWWRAC has been asked to be included as a partner in both project applications in the call for funding entitled “*Innovative insights and tools to integrate the ecosystem-based approach into fisheries advice*” – Ref. EU FP7 Call KBBE.2013.1.2-08. This call has an overall budget of €7,800,000 (with a maximum EC contribution of €6,000,000) and a period of duration of 48 months (i.e. 4 years).

³ http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/GEPETO_Presentation_NWWRAC_31Jan2013.pdf

The two candidate consortia that have contacted with the NWWRAC Secretariat are:

1. TEMPO “Tools enabling Ecosystem Based Management Plans and Operations”.
Coordinators: Martin Pastoors (IMARES-NE) and Dave Reid (Marine Institute-Ireland);
2. MAREFRAME “Co-creating Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management Solutions”
Coordinators: Marta Ballesteros (CETMAR-Spain) and Anna Kristín (Matis-Iceland)

Summary sheets of each project are available for consultation on the NWWRAC website⁴. The summaries contain relevant information about the project objectives, approach and composition of the consortium as well as a description of the work expected from the NWWRAC.

Given the tight deadline for submission of the project proposal (5 February 2013), a formal proposal was placed before the Executive Committee requesting a decision regarding the participation of the NWWRAC in one/both/none of these projects.

DECISION **The Executive Committee unanimously agreed that the NWWRAC will support the two FP7 projects and will become a partner in each of these projects.**

Comment: The NWWRAC will assist project work in the development of long-term management plans that will take into account mixed fisheries and the broader ecosystem impacts of fishing in ICES sub-areas (EC) Vb, VI and VII.

9. AOB

9.1. EFCA Advisory Board (Vigo, 21st of February 2013)

The NWWRAC Representative to the EFCA advisory board, Hugo González announced that it would not be able to attend the next EFCA Advisory Board scheduled for Thursday 21st of February in the EFCA Head Quarters in Vigo.

The alternate representative, Jacques Pichon, was also unavailable for that date.

In view of this, Mr. González nominated Víctor Badiola to replace him and represent the NWWRAC, in addition to the SWWRAC, at the EFCA meeting.

⁴ TEMPO: http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/TEMPO_Project_Description_20130129.pdf
MAREFRAME: www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/MareFrame_Project_Summary_Jan2013.pdf

DECISION The Executive Committee agreed that in the absence of Hugo González, Víctor Badiola will act as the NWWRAC representative to the EFCA Advisory Board on the 21st of February 2013, with a mandate limited to this meeting.

9.2. EC Consultation on Mackerel Dispute

KFO (Sean O'Donoghue) informed the meeting about a Commission consultation document regarding the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 in the context of the mackerel dispute between the EU and Norway, Iceland and Faroe Islands. This consultation was addressed to several RACs, including the Pelagic and the North Western Waters RAC, in the form of a questionnaire in January 2013, asking for their feedback.

KFO (Mr. O'Donoghue) proposed that the NWWRAC send a reply to the Commission stating that the NWWRAC is not in a position to answer this consultation as it deals solely with economic questions and that it should be addressed by relevant industry stakeholders at an individual level.

DECISION The Executive Committee unanimously agreed with the KFO's request that the NWWRAC send a letter to the Commission stating that the NWWRAC is not in a position to answer this consultation as it deals solely with economic questions and that it should be addressed by relevant industry stakeholders at an individual level.

10. Close of the meeting

The Chairman, Bertie Armstrong, thanked all participants for their attendance, CNP MEM for hosting the NWWRAC meetings and the team of interpreters for their excellent work.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 13:00

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

| EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| FIRST NAME | LAST NAME | ORGANISATION |
| Bertie | Armstrong | NWWRAC Chairman |
| Víctor | Badiola | OPPAO – CEPESCA |
| Victoria | Beaz | EBCD |
| Jacques | Bigot | CFTC-ETF |
| Emiel | Brouckaert | Rederscentrale |
| Kara | Brydson | RSPB-Birdlife International |
| Luc | Corbisier | Stichting voor Duurzame Visserij Ontwikkeling |
| Debbie | Crockard | Seas at Risk |
| John | Crudden | European Anglers' Alliance |
| Barrie | Deas | National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation |
| Hugo | González | ANASOL-ARVI |
| André | Gueguen | Comité National de Pêches Maritimes |
| Anne-Marie | Kats | AIPCE-CEP |
| Eduardo | Míguez | European Association of Ports and Auctions |
| Sean | O'Donoghue | Kyllibegs Fishermen's Organisation |
| Eibhlin | O'Sullivan | Irish South & West Fish PO |
| Jacques | Pichon | Association Nationale Organisations Producteurs |
| John | Woodlock | Irish Seal Sanctuary |

| OBSERVERS | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Rodrigo | Ataide Días | DG MARE – European Commission |
| Richard | Brouzes | Copeport Marée OPBN |
| René-Pierre | Chever | CDPMEM Finistère |
| Romain | Courtis | Pêcheurs de Bretagne |
| John | Daly | Irish Seal Sanctuary |
| Ramón | De la Figuera Morales | Ministerio Agricultura - Gobierno de España |
| Caroline | Gamblin | CNPMEM |
| Marc | Ghiglia | UAPF - NWWRAC GA President |
| Robert | Griffin | DG MARE – European Commission |
| Michael | Keatinge | BIM/NWWRAC Director |
| Daniel | Lefèvre | CRPMEM Basse Normandie – WG3 Chair |
| Jesús | Lourido | Puerto de Celeiro – WG2 Chair |
| John | Lynch | Irish Fishermen’s Organisation |
| Alan | McCulla | ANIFPO – WG4 Chair |
| Rémi | Méjécaze | DPMEM – Administration Française |
| Francis | O’Donnell | Irish Fish Producers’ Organisation |
| Jane | Sandell | Scottish Fishermen’s Organisation – WG1 Chair |
| Paul | Trebilcock | Cornish Fish PO |

| SECRETARIAT | | |
|--------------------|-----------|--|
| Alexandre | Rodríguez | Executive Assistant - Policy and Communications Rapporteur |
| Joanna | McGrath | Executive Assistant - Administration and Finances |