



REPORT

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council Working Group 2 (WG2) West of Ireland and Celtic Sea

**Friday 28 October 2011
The Coach House –Dublin Castle**

Outgoing Chairman: Hugo González
Incoming Chairman: Jesús Lourido
Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed participants and opened the meeting at 11:00 h.

Apologies

There were apologies received from Víctor Badiola (OPPAO), Sean O'Donogue (KFO), Jim Portus (SWFPO) and Marina Santurtún (AZTI-Tecnalia). The full list of attendees is included as an annex to these minutes.

Adoption of Agenda

An item on Technical Conservation Measures was added and with this amendment the agenda was adopted by consensus.

Adoption of Report of the Last Meeting

The report of WG2 held on 6 July 2011 was adopted by consensus.

2. Election of Working Group Officers

The Chairman informed WG2 that he would not be standing as Chairman again.

The Secretariat informed the members that the following nominations had been received:

- Chairman: Jesús Lourido
- Vice Chairman: André Gueguen
- Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock

NWWRAC Working Group 2 meeting
West of Ireland and Celtic Sea
Dublin Castle, 28 October 2011



The WG2 unanimously agreed the nominations and Hugo González handed the Chairmanship to Jesús Lourido. Mr. González thanked WG2 members for their efforts and expressed his thanks in particular to the WG2 rapporteur and the NWWRAC Secretariat for all their support. He provided a brief introduction of both the academic background and the professional career of Mr. Lourido and wished him all the best in his new role. Mr. Lourido continued chairing for the rest of the meeting.

3. Technical Conservation Measures

The Commission representative presented a draft report from STECF. The Report provides a number of options to address concerns over selectivity in the West of Scotland, Irish and Celtic Seas. In respect of cod catches in the Celtic sea the report considers a number of recommendations to the level of discarding. The use of emergency measures to introduce any needed technical changes in the three areas was being considered.

The full report is available on the NWWRAC website for information. The report focused on Cod, Haddock, Whiting and Plaice discards in towed gears. For the Celtic Sea increased mesh size and square mesh panels (SMPs) were provided as they key means of reducing cod discards.

WG2 members strongly stated that they felt it was not appropriate or necessary for the Commission to use such powers invoking Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 to force these measures on the fishing industry. They did not perceive that there was any emergency situation with the stocks concerned.

Jacques Pichon, in his capacity as Chairman of the NWW RAC Celtic Sea Focus Group, asked if the Commission had read the proposals on improving selectivity to reduce cod, haddock and whiting discards, focused on mesh size and SMPs, in part of the Celtic Sea (sub-areas VIIIfg and part of j) that was submitted by the NWWRAC in early October. He underlined that these proposals had been developed with fishermen and represented significant pain and sacrifice for fleets involved. The NWWRAC position paper is available on the publications section of the NWWRAC website for information¹.

¹ Direct link:

http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/NWWRAC_Proposal_Selectivity_Measures_SMP_Celtic_Sea_13102011_EN.pdf

Mr. Pichon clearly stated that if these proposals were ignored and not taken into account by the Commission there would be serious implications for the ongoing work on a long term management plan for mixed demersal fisheries in the Celtic Sea. The fishing industry support and 'buy-in' would be jeopardized by the Commissions high handed approach to this issue.

In addition, the following concerns and questions were raised by WG2 members:

- Effect of mesh size increases for Sole fisheries → increases of the scale proposed for reducing Plaice discards would render the beam trawl fleet economically unviable;
- Effects on other fisheries such as Megrim fisheries;
- Had any social or economic analysis or impact assessment been made on effects of these reports findings;
- Had any account been taken of survival rates, particularly flat fish;
- Historically it was noted that when mesh size had been increased against the will of industry it has not worked or delivered the desired objectives;
- The Commission did not appear to take account or be aware of the fisheries response;
- High-handed *dictat* will lessen the effect of any regulation;
- Twine thickness did not appear to have been considered in any way.

The Commission representatives responded that:

- They had received NWWRAC proposals and were assessing them – The options provided by STECF exceed the RAC proposals. The Commission had previously identified to the RAC that such advice was being sought and had asked the RAC to be aware of it in making their proposal.
- They recognized and were aware of the implications (i.e. losses in catches) for Sole fisheries and were considering how to deal with this;
- The STECF report is a response to the TOR provided, specifically providing a number of technical options to address the level of discarding that had been identified in the three areas. As such not all other fisheries have been fully described.
- The full social and economic impacts of these various options still have to be considered. The aim of introducing the report to the RAC was to make them aware of the scientific advice;
- The report does not consider discard survival rates but is focused on addressing the selectivity of the various fishing gears;
- The STECF have provided a number of options for consideration and as yet there are no firm Commission proposals. The draft report still has to be finalized and approved during the STECF November Plenary.



- They understood the possible implications of ignoring the NWWRAC proposals, however in the face of the scientific advice there needs to be a clear explanation of why any specific solutions are not followed.

After this frank exchange of views it was agreed that it was necessary to establish a genuine dialogue between the Commission and NWWRAC if this issue is to be resolved.

Action: To establish a genuine dialogue between the Commission and NWWRAC on this issue as soon as possible.

4. Work Priorities for working Group 2 for Year 7

WG2 was content with the NWWRAC proposals for work priorities as reflected in the NWWRAC Work Programme for Year 7 presented by the secretariat (available on the NWWRAC website for information).

5. Data Deficiency Issues for Stock Assessments

WG2 noted that there had been some data sharing issues encountered by some NWWRAC data coordinators. Work in general on this issue had not progressed significantly, although most data coordinators had made contact with relevant ICES personnel and initial discussions had taken place to identify data problems and see what was needed from stakeholders.

The WG2 chairman requested that data coordinators progress on their assigned work and inform the group of their progress at the next meeting.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial for members and in particular data coordinators to attend and participate in the upcoming ICES WKPOOR and WKFRAME meetings as well as ICES Benchmark Workshops in early 2012.

Action: NWWRAC Secretariat to keep members up to date with times, dates and venues of the ICES WKPOOR, WKFRAME, WKLIFE, WKROUND and WKFLAT meetings.

6. Current Position on Northern Hake and Nephrops VII

6.1. Northern Hake

Concern was expressed at the Commission's proposal to reduce the 2012 TAC by 11% against the background of a historical maximum peak in abundance of Hake on the fishing grounds and the relatively healthy trends as indicated in the recent scientific assessments. It was noted that ICES advice was for a 6% reduction. The Commission responded that it was in line with a choice made to one of the management scenarios provided by ICES to guarantee transition to reach MSY ($F=0.24$) by 2015.

6.2. Nephrops management in Area VII

Due to unforeseen circumstances the draft paper prepared by Lorcán O'Cinnéide was withdrawn. Mr. O'Cinnéide agreed to revise its draft and circulated promptly a draft proposal of NWWRAC position paper encompassing the latest information and views. This would be circulated electronically by the NWWRAC secretariat for comment and finalization.

Action: Lorcan to draft a position paper on Nephrops VII and the NWWRAC Secretariat would circulate electronically for comment and endorsement.

7. Report on the Outcomes of Focus Group on Skates, Rays and Sharks

Eibhlín O'Sullivan, chairwoman of the Skates and Rays focus group, gave a brief summary of the meeting held on 16 September in Madrid. A full meeting report is available on the NWWRAC website for information².

The following points were highlighted:

- Positive meeting with many participants;
- A lot of information, data and knowledge on these stocks were shared at the meeting;
- It was apparent that regionally tailored measures should be investigated in detail;

² Meeting site:

http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=512&language=English



- The Irish fishing industry representatives would redraft their paper on a future management plan for Skates and Rays;
- The NWWRAC Secretariat would circulate the re-drafted paper for comments;
- The focus group meeting was a good start but there was a lot of work to do before coherent management measures could be proposed;

Action: NWWRAC secretariat to circulate the re-drafted Irish paper on a proposal of management plan for Skates and Rays.

8. Report on Steering Group on the Development of a LTMP for the Celtic Sea

WG2 noted the ongoing work of this steering group and heard that a meeting was planned for 4 November 2011 in Paris to further advance in this important strand of work.

Meeting reports of the Celtic Sea Focus Group are available on the NWWRAC website for background information.

9. Gear Marking Regulation: Comparison between EC Regulations 356/2005 & 180/2005 and EU Regulation 404/2011

Daragh Browne, gear technologist from BIM, gave a detailed presentation on EU gear marking and consolidation of control and enforcement regulations.

The full presentation is available on the NWW RAC website for information³.

Key points and concerns raised were:

- Scope of 2005 regulation has been widened without consultation and now included trap and pot fisheries in EU waters outside 12 nm;
- Within the application of the new control regulation requirements there remained a lack of clarity, particularly regarding its interpretation and extend (e.g. use of radar reflector or lights);
- Issues of stability for smaller vessels;
- Marking of the east and west flags could be done in a more efficient and simple manner;

³ WG2 site: http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=525&language=English



- Some changes had been made to regulations but it is hard to know which elements had been changed and which had not or why changes had occurred or not;
- There had been no consultation with the NWWRAC on the inserted changes.

It was agreed that the NWW RAC should write to the Commission asking why it had not been consulted on changes to this regulation and clarification on the reasons for these changes.

Action: Some NWWRAC WG2 members and the Secretariat will draft a letter addressed to the Commission asking why the NWWRAC had not been consulted on changes to this regulation and clarification on any changes with the reasons for those changes.

10. Summary of Actions and Recommendations to be put forward to the Executive Committee

- Technical Conservation Measures

To establish a genuine dialogue between the Commission and a NWWRAC delegation on this issue as soon as possible.

- Data Deficiencies

NWWRAC Secretariat to keep members up to date with times, dates and venues of the ICES WKPOOR, WKFRAME, WKLIFE, WKROUND and WKFLAT meetings.

- Nephrops VII

Lorcán O’Cinnéide to draft a position paper or proposal for Nephrops management in Area VII and the NWWRAC Secretariat would circulate electronically for comment and endorsement.

- Skates and Rays:

NWWRAC secretariat to circulate the re-drafted Irish fishing industry paper on a proposal of management plan for Skates and Rays.



- Gear Marking:

Some NWWRAC WG2 members and the Secretariat will draft a letter addressed to the Commission asking why the NWWRAC had not been consulted on changes to this regulation and clarification on any changes with the reasons for those changes.

Closing remarks:

The new elected Chairwoman, Jesús Lourido, thanked all the members and observers for attending the meeting, and the translators for their excellent work.

The meeting was adjourned at 13:00 h

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>MEMBERS</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Hugo	González	ANASOL-ARVI - Outgoing Chairman
Jesús A.	Lourido García	Puerto de Celeiro S.A. - Incoming Chairman
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish FPO - Rapporteur
Réné Pierre	Chever	Comité Pêches Guilvinec
Luc	Corbisier	SDVO
Juan Carlos	Corrás Arias	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco
John	Crudden	European Anglers Alliance
Barrie	Deas	NFFO
José Manuel	Fernández Beltrán	OPP-07-LUGO
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM
Antón	González	Wales and West Coast FPA
André	LeBerre	CRPMEM Bretagne
Lorcan	O’Cinnéide	Irish Fish PO
Sean	O’Donoghue	Kyllibegs FO
Eibhlin	O’Sullivan	Irish South West FPO

<u>MEMBERS (cont.)</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>
José Luis	Otero	Lonja de la Coruña S.A.
Michael	Park	Scottish White Fish PA
Jacques	Pichon	ANOP-PMA

OBSERVERS		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Richard	Brouzes	OPBN
Daragh	Browne	BIM – Gear Technologist
Fuensanta	Candela	European Commission
Debbie	Crockard	MCS-Seas at Risk
Edward	Fahy	Free-lance journalist
Cécile	Fouquet	EBCD
Roy	Griffin	European Commission
Daniel	Lefèvre	CNPMEM Basse Normandie
Colm	Lordan	Marine Institute – Scientist

OBSERVERS (cont.)		
Eamon	Mangan	DPMEM France
Kevin	McDonnell	WSFPO Ltd.
Alan	McCulla	ANIFPO Ltd.
Sabela	Pérez Máiz	European Commission
Jane	Sandell	SFO Ltd.
Pieter-Jan	Schon	AFBINI – Scientist
William	Stewart	CFCA
Mireille	Thom	WWF
Héctor	Villa González	SEGEPESCA – MMARM Spain

NWWRAC SECRETARIAT		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Alexandre	Rodríguez	Executive Assistant, Policy Coordinator