

# **North Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee**

# Working Group 3 (Channel – ICES VIIde)

# Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 09:00 - 11:00 h

# **DUBLIN CASTLE**

Chairman: Daniel Lefèvre Rapporteur: Jim Portus

# 1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members, observers and invited guests to Dublin for the NWWRAC Working Group 3. The full list of participants is appended (Annex I).

- Apologies: Noted and listed (Annex I).
  Noted from WG3 members Iwan Ball (WWF UK is represented by Lyndsey Dodds); Anton Dekker (Dutch Fisheries Organisation); Luc Corbisier (SDVO Belgium); Jacques Pichon (ANOP France, represented today by Julien Lamothe); André Gueguen (OPOB); and Réné-Pierre Chever (CNPMEM Finistère is represented by Jean-Jacques Tanguy).
- Introductions: round around the table.
- Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was adopted without changes.
- Adoption of Report from last meeting (Bilbao 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2013): the meeting report was circulated beforehand among all WG3 members and approved without changes.

## 2. REVIEW OF THE COD RECOVERY PLAN

#### 2.1. Implementation of the cod management plan – EC Reg. 1342/2008

The Chairman introduced this topic and gave the floor to Alex Rodriguez (Secretariat) to summarise the work of the NWWRAC carried out during the first quarter of 2013. He reported good progress.



Discussions are being held now at the EP and the Council to consider incorporating certain amendments to the Cod Management Plan (EC Reg. 1342/2008) in response to industry concerns voiced through both NSRAC and NWWRAC.

It was noted that, according to ICES advice and insofar as this WG3 is concerned, the VIId part of the Cod stock in Eastern Channel seems to be recovering and evidently the plan might be starting to bear fruits.

ACTION: WG3 will follow developments on legislative process aiming for a review of the current cod management plan with an insight and specific focus in the approach to be adopted for the Eastern Channel area

#### 2.2. Discussion on a management framework for the Channel from a mixed fisheries perspective

The WG3 Chairman set the scene and invited members to consider proposing a management plan covering several species in the Channel. He suggested there are problems in the area with quotas and technical regulations to be implemented that might better be resolved with a MAMP.

It was noted that already management in the Channel is driven by the Cod Plan in east (7d) and the Sole Plan In west (7e). Fishing effort management is also used for scallops, with closed seasons and limits on days at sea.

French commentators suggested their support for a global management plan for the Channel involving TAC and non-TAC fisheries and including scallops and crustaceans. It was noted that the Western Waters regime will be reviewed after the CFP reform process is completed (2014).

The Chairman agreed with his French compatriots about the need to think of a wider management plan for the Channel. This area is considered sometimes as a transition between the Celtic Seas and the North Sea. Its abundance of species with majority non-TAC makes it attractive for displacement from the restrictions of other areas. Some Member State fleets have started novel activities e.g. Danish seiners active under non-regulated framework. There are ongoing issues of cohabitation leading on occasions to conflicts at sea or at ports.

In response for the UK, Barrie Deas expressed concerns about the scale of ambition. An integrated approach for the Channel fisheries sounds a desirable outcome but when looking at component parts we should be careful. TAC and non-TAC fisheries in the context of the landing obligation may advance new problems for so-called choke species. Introducing new TAC species is counter-intuitive. Removing species from TAC obligations would be more helpful and acceptable. The solutions to the issues of cohabitation and gear conflict are dialogue and communication rather than a new top-down management regime.



Jim Portus, in support of Barrie Deas, suggested the NWWRAC should lead the review process of the Western Waters Effort regime. The TAC and quotas regime had caused displacement. The open nature of access to fisheries in the Channel had caused friction. We should welcome serious consideration of the problems caused by displacement and review quickly the WW regime, but not simply establish new TAC and quotas.

The meeting was informed of initiatives involving French and Dutch advocates to resolve cohabitation problems in Nord-Pas-de-Calais. There is willingness to arrive at concordat.

ACTION: The WG3 will continue discussions on a framework plan for the Channel. The WG3 will follow and be informed of the outcomes of dialogue between Dutch and French to resolve problems of cohabitation. The review of WW regime and regionalisation will be also included in the agenda.

### 3. NON-QUOTA SPECIES

#### 3.1. Update on ACRUNET Project on Brown Crab Management

Norah Parke (KFO – Project coordinator)

ACRUNET seeks to achieve a sustainable and economically viable European brown crab industry. It is composed of three pillars all interlinked, not dealt with in isolation: 1. Management; 2. Quality; and 3. Market; 7 actions to achieve progress.

Ms. Parke reported that there was a partners' meeting at France AgriMer HQ in Paris 29-30 May 2013. The presentation can be summarised as follows:

Activities 2 and 8 – promotion and dissemination of information

- There were translation issues – No budget to do deliverables in different languages of member partners

Decision to translate into all languages deliverables

- Factsheet
- Website
- Newsletter

Activity 3 – Science-industry interface

- No input in Paris as ICES Crab WG was taking place that same week.
- Marine Scotland will become a full partner;
- Stakeholder meetings held around the coast in UK, France and Ireland



- No way to come up with management structures from ACRUNET, but bring coordination and coherence to national options; objectives will be the same but means different.
- Possibility of using MSC framework as basis for Ireland could be adapted to provide HCR for individual stocks; not looking for MSC certification but see merit in using the framework.

#### Activity 4 – Quality

- Standards for quality
- UK, France and Ireland all have a seafood standard.
- Huge market pressure in all countries for ISO 65 (Ireland has it already)
- European Crab Standard now written
- Next step bring it down under ACRUNET umbrella
- 20 vessels will be brought to ISO 65 standards Ireland 5, France 5, UK 10

# Activity 5 - Brown Crab system

- Seafish in UK is the lead partner
- Have a complete overview of the system
- After this work is done, will give a good idea of where the industry is

Activity 6 – Improving the business (transport, handling, interaction between catching and processing sector, etc.) - Hull University is a full partner now

- Questionnaires prepared to be completed by end August
- Waste options being explored

Activity 7 - Market and consumer education - lead partner: Agrimer

- Questionnaire developed to respond the needs of industry in promoting brown crab
- Markets to be targeted France, UK, south Europe; China and Hong Kong;
- Topics how to cook, prepare, process crab; sustainable fishing practices; health benefits and nutritional qualities.

Way forward: Next partner meeting planned in Vigo for late October

# Q&A – Comments from the floor

Jean-Jacques Tanguy – Former President of the Commission of National Crustaceans in France: Congratulates Norah Parke for the work of the project; we are near to start a new era in the crab management. ISO 65 is the norm – French very favourable to achieve this quality certification.

Norah Parke (KFO): since January 2013, project has progressed steadily and gained momentum; ISO 65 is not a step too far, everyone who has already a good practice in the fishery will obtain the standard; will help fishermen in the market place.



Alan Coghill (SFF): SFF is full partner in ACRUNET. Problem of accreditation would be the cost; small vessels with limited budget; whole project is well supported; if groups go together they can cut costs to manageable.

Conor Nolan (Leader of team in seafood quality area in BIM): EMFF used in national scheme to bring onboard prime movers from sectors that have ISO 65;

#### 3.2. Sea bass management

The Chairman introduced the topic. Sea bass is an important species of high value for French fishermen; need to have in place a concerted global management framework; Colleagues from UK, Scotland and Ireland could participate;

Jim Portus (SWFPO) reminded the meeting that the EC proposed a TAC for sea bass in a non-paper in 2012. His organisation, SWFPO is against setting a TAC, but proposed EU-wide seasonal closures of the fishery, adding to UK nursery closures and a UK ban on pair-trawling inside 12 miles. The Republic of Ireland has had a complete closure for bass for many years. In light of its evident importance, restrictive management measures must be implemented very strongly through the Channel bass fishery. One of the reasons of concern is perhaps the unrestricted and high level of exploitation by French vessels.

The Chairman responded that although this is a free access non-TAC fishery, there is a will from France to regulate, manage and encourage reconversion of fleets targeting this species. He recommended a toolbox of management measures including greater MLS, access licenses and seasonal closures.

Richard Brouzes (COPEPORT) suggested that sea bream should be considered for management restriction in the same context.

Caitlin Kelly (ISEFPO) confirmed that sea bass cannot be targeted, caught or landed in Ireland and must be discarded even as by catch. Welcomed start to discussions to find alternative solutions.

Roy Griffin (DG Mare) commented that the Commission proposed a TAC in line with data and information available; one expert group met in May 2013; MS have been asked to produce positions by 7 July and to come forward with alternative management measures that can be considered in lieu of a TAC.

Alex Rodriguez (NWWRAC Secretariat) confirmed the RACs have been contacted by the Commission. Some MS have been asking for feedback or input to the debate. It would be worthwhile to be informed of the current national positions from the different MS concerned.



NWWRAC members are encouraged to submit their views with the aim of producing a scoping paper for discussion in a dedicated Focus Group looking at a suite of possible management measures.

The Chairman, in summary agrees with the Secretariat proposal on compiling all measures in place in the Member States and to put forward responses to improve management of the fishery and rebuild bass stocks — A Horizontal Focus Group could be the ideal forum as this fishery is not restricted to ICES 7d and 7e.

ACTION: Secretariat will ask MS to provide their positions to the current proposal made by the Commission and will invite members to submit comments on the possible suite of management rules for bass.

If relevant information is provided by MS and members, the Secretariat will prepare a scoping paper for discussion providing a range of management options that will be discussed in future WG3, with the possibility of setting a dedicated Horizontal Focus Group for all NWW areas. The aim of this group would be to agree those measures that might be included in a future NWWRAC advice on this topic.

## 4. SCALLOPS MANAGEMENT – Report from Jim Portus

#### 4.1. Report on outcomes of UK-FRANCE Industry Meeting on Effort

The Chairman reminded members of the history of this item: for many years we have discussed this topic within and outside the RAC to have an effort management in the Channel; interested parties finally reached a first agreement between UK and France with participation of Belgian and Ireland representatives.

The Chairman gave the floor to Jim Portus in his capacity as Chairman of this Multilateral Industry Scallop Group that met in London the 19th of July.

Jim Portus – Very proud to chair the meeting; it is a breakthrough; UK requested to get more fishing effort. French were not giving effort away without UK seasonal closure agreement in return. We took the suggestion of the RAC and had invited colleagues from Ireland and Belgium; it might appear there is nothing for these countries, but establishing this arrangement should lead to better management not only for areas of scallop beds but also arrive at conflict resolution; static gear fisherman need protection from mobile gear; French are innovators at creating zones for cohabitation (mid-Channel potting boxes arrangements). It is good to achieve conservation of scallop stocks and cohabitation agreements. The UK scallop industry is becoming more mature. He congratulated the Chairman, Daniel for his tenacity over more than a decade seeking protection of Bay of Seine.



John Hermse for the Scallop Association thanked the Chairman for his part in this historic agreement. There are other TCM to agree for scallop fisheries in the future. He thanked UK MMO and the French administration and associations for the willingness of all concerned to reach an agreement.

The Chairman thanked the French Delegation. He commented that through dialogue and with compromises it is possible to reach an agreement. He congratulated the NWWRAC for tenacity and for pursuing the goal. A clear example that regionalisation can work. There will be an official document containing the terms of the agreement clearly stated and this will be distributed among all concerned parties; it will contain a map and the areas; to be signed by the parties.

Roy Griffin for the European Commission asked if this is a voluntary agreement between fishing industry professionals or if it will be enacted in national legislation.

Jim Portus confirmed the agreement has to be enacted in UK through licenses. There is a variation on existing arrangements. This is a one-off agreement for 2013. French and UK directly interested parties will invite Belgian and Irish to Paris in November to prepare an agreement for 2014. The deal involved transfer of effort in exchange for closure of area VIId for UK vessels and incorporated a cohabitation agreement in VIIe. This achieved protection of the stocks, protection of the French fishermen until the open season and protection for static gear.

#### 4.2. EC Reply on amendment of Regulation 850/1998 – TCM for Scallops

Jim Portus expressed his disappointment on reading the EC reply to the NWWRAC on by-catches for scallop dredges on Reg. 850/1998 received in June. Although EC recognized an error in drafting in 1998 referring to catches of "bivalve molluscs" that resulted in other molluscs (particularly cuttlefish in winter time) caught unintentionally by dredges as by-catch. This species has low survival rate yet is part of the 5% and has to be discarded when in excess of that level. The EC response requests MS to collect more data on by-catch. This delays amendment for yet another year. There is in UK ongoing work assessing not only scallop stocks but also discards, so that information will be provided but this simple amendment could have brought an improvement in the English Channel.

The Chairman confirmed the same issue affects French scallop fishermen.

Dominic Rihan (DG Mare) advised that the technical measures regulation is agreed under co-decision procedure and therefore is hard to change. It would take a minimum of 6 months for an amendment to be agreed. He also recalled that last year the Commission brought forward a proposal to incorporate existing so-called "transitional" technical measures into the overarching technical measures regulation (Reg. 850/1998) and this was never raised or introduced by any MS, including UK, so an opportunity was clearly missed.



The 'omnibus regulation' expected to be adopted soon by the Commission, perhaps provides a future opportunity for MS to raise this issue during negotiation of this proposal, but ultimately they would need the support of Parliament before it could be included.

#### 5. DATA LIMITED STOCKS - BARRIE DEAS

Data deficiencies have significant implications for TACs that are set every year; some RACs have reacted to that and started to work to mitigate data deficiencies and appointed stock data coordinators; this initiative has been praised by the Commission in several forums and recognises the work of the RACs.

The data coordinators hold a key role as a firm link with ICES WGs scientists on a species by species base. Their role is to identify problems and remedial measures where this is possible; a new format and table has been prepared by the Secretariat so data coordinators can report periodically in a systematic and standard fashion; Last MIRAC meeting (January 2013) underlined the importance of RAC active involvement and participation in data compilation workshops which precede the benchmarks.

REPORT FROM RICHARD BROUZES – DATA COORDINATOR FOR PLAICE VIIde and POLLACK Contact has been made with IFREMER. Economic cut-backs of scientists are noted. As well as Plaice and Pollack, data work is needed for Skates and Rays.

ACTION: Data coordinators continue with work on data limited stocks and fill the table provided by the Secretariat;

## 6. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TO BE PUT FORWARD TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE / CLOSING

The list of actions agreed is indicated on each item above.

The Chairman thanked the Irish Government for providing the venue, Dublin Castle staff and technicians for their professional work, interpreters for the quality of the services provided and Secretariat for organising this meeting efficiently.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11am.



# **ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### **MEMBERS Surname Name Organisation** Daniel Lefèvre CNPMEM Basse Normandie – WG3 Chairman South West Fish Producers' Organisation -Jim **Portus** WG3 Vice Chair and Rapporteur Bertie Armstrong Scottish Fishermen's Federation European Bureau for Conservation and Victoria Beaz Development (EBCD) Richard **Brouzes** Copeport Marée OPBN Crudden European Anglers Alliance (EAA) John Dachicourt France Pêche Durable et Responsable Bruno National Federation of Fishermen's Barrie Deas Organisations (NFFO) World Wildlife Fund (WWF UK) Lyndsey Dodds Comité National des Pêches Maritimes Caroline Gamblin (CNMEM) John Hermse **Scallop Association** Julien Lamothe Pêcheurs de la Manche et d'Atlantique John Lynch Irish Fishermen's Organisation Scottish White Fish Producers' Association Jennifer Mouat (SWFPA) Delphine Roncin CRPMEM Nord / Pas de Calais / Picardie Sylvie Roux **CRPMEM Bretagne** CDPMEM du Finistère Jean-Jacques Tanguy



MEMBERS (cont.)			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation	
Caitlín	Uí Aodha	Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation	

<u>OBSERVERS</u>				
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Organisation</u>		
Stephen	Cederrand	European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)		
Alan	Coghill	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)		
Debbie	Crockard	Seas at Risk		
Ramón	De la Figuera	MAGRAMA - Spain		
Robert	Griffin	DG MARE – European Commission		
Rory	Keatinge	Coastwatch Ireland		
Laurent	Markovic	DG MARE – European Commission		
Rémi	Méjecaze	Direction des Pêches – Administration Française		
Norah	Parke	KFO / ACRUNET Project - <b>Presentor</b>		
Dominic	Rihan	DG MARE – European Commission		
Sam	Stone	Marine Conservation Society		
Hilde	Vanhaecke	ILVO		
Liane	Veitch	Client Earth		
Johnny	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary		



NWWRAC SECRETARIAT				
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Organisation</u>		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary		
Alexandre	Rodríguez	Executive Assistant – Policy and Information		
Joanna	McGrath	Executive Assistant – Administration Finances		