



North Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee

Working Group 3 (Channel)

Tuesday 28th February 2012

14:00-16:00 h

CNPMEM – Paris

Chairman: Daniel Lefèvre

Rapporteur: Jim Portus

1. Welcome

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

- Apologies were recorded for Paul Trebilcock, Caroline Gamblin and Béatrice Harmel.
- Adoption of Agenda: The Agenda was approved as drafted.
- Adoption of Report from last meeting (Dublin 28th October 2011): the meeting report was circulated beforehand among all WG3 members and approved without changes.

2. Review of the Cod Recovery Plan (CRP) as it affects ICES Area VIId:

2.1. Outcomes of STECF Meeting:

A round-table discussion took place about the scientific basis for a multi-annual / multi-species fisheries plan in which Cod 7d is only a small constituent part. The STECF impact assessment will be produced by mid-June. A scoping study had identified differences between what we know and what we need to know. Options include leave as it is now, adopt a multispecies approach or develop a new plan. There is little scope for a new plan. The part played by 7d in the CRZ is still to be defined. Advice is going to be provided around November by STECF for all the constituent areas: so will probably delay any potential amendments to the cod recovery plan.

2.2 Comments from the floor – development of a NWWRAC position:

Barrie Deas voiced that there are deep concerns caused by pre-programmed effort reductions that are part of the provisions of the Cod plan. The Council of Ministers had authority to update the plan, but failed to do so. The automatic 25% effort reductions for 2 years will have unpredictable but probably damaging consequences. Although industry is committed to work in the long term with STECF, it is essential to hear something about interim regime and measures to avoid fleet economic collapse.

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The Commission's representative replied that important changes in effort regimes happened at December Council, and the Commission's proposal of an automatic 25% reduction for data poor stocks was modified during the Council discussions. There will be changes within interim measures but cannot provide more details as it under ongoing debate.

Jim Portus said that we need to be very careful and made some comments with regard to experience of sole 7e. There might be unintended consequences of clumsy wording / translation / interpretation. A multiannual multispecies management plan should incorporate clauses to allow in-plan amendments in case there are unforeseen changes in the fishery or different Member States interpretations.

Alan McCulla asked the Commission how can they propose amendments if the benchmark exercise is still pending.

The Commission's representative replied that they are only agreeing the process to follow, not the content yet.

3. Update on LTMP for Western Channel Sole

3.1. Overview – work progress report

Jim Portus provided an extensive report of the situation in relation to 7e Sole that can be summarised as follows:

- The NWWRAC has been involved in 7e sole MP developed already since its inception.
- A WKFLAT Benchmark Workshop, where available information on 7e Sole will be analysed, will take place in Bilbao next week.
- ICES 2009 Advice said that it was not possible to have an analytical assessment, which brought difficulty when setting TAC 2010.
- TAC 2011 rules were applied: an F value of 0.27 was indicated to be already achieved.
- Sole 7e has become one of the stocks fished already at MSY levels.
- Camera trials by beam trawlers (3 last year; 6 this year) have helped to assess discard rates in the fishery.
- More FSP trials on technical innovation are being carried out: the aim is to secure a 9% increase in TACs for 2012, while keeping effort limits at the same level.

Mr. Portus concluded that this is a report of good management that brings an optimistic message for the future. He also pointed that what happens in the ICES Benchmark Workshop remains to be seen. Regarding data deficiencies, FSP trials have contributed to increase the amount of data available.

3.2. Comments from the floor:

Bertie Armstrong made a general comment regarding the introduction of cameras on board fishing vessels. He feared for the future that use of cameras might lead to a source of data production for all fisheries. The sequential introduction of cameras should consider proportionality in light of the forthcoming discards ban.

Jim Portus clarified that there were assurances from MMO in UK about the use of this information. The aim here was to acquire extra quota for 7e sole: if you run out of quota you either stop fishing or lease more quota. You have to count discards in all catch quotas. He admitted that these devices may come back to “bite the industry”. He warned to the Commission that stock recovery may cause too much fish with not enough catch quotas, and that this would cause problems in terms of catch efficiency and profitability.

Daniel Lefèvre asked how camera trials work in practice and how catches are counted. He agreed with Bertie and Jim that this should not be a control device.

Jim Portus explained that the sampling process is quite hungry in human resources for data collection and analysis. The carriage of cameras on board the vessels would be an incentive against illegal activity, as well as be useful for stopping discarding of over quota fish.

Emiel Brouckaert reminded that some fleets are seeking MSC assessment, and wondered if the camera trials are part of this assessment.

Jim Portus replied that there is an ongoing MSC assessment for beam trawlers in the southwest of UK, but camera trials are not a requirement. The client group of MSC is the entire Channel UK beam trawl fleet. Camera trials are only being implemented in a few sample vessels.

Barrie Deas noted that we can have a quite interesting discussion on cameras and its use in fisheries management, but we must bear in mind that they are only one instrument: there are also observer schemes, reference fleets within a risk-based focus. We need to put this discussion in a broader context of fully documented fisheries - including collaboration with ICES and effort control in fleets.

Daniel Lefèvre affirmed that reflection on the use of cameras and reference fleets looks like a good idea that would help to deliver better information on catches and discards. It would be interesting also to reflect on its engagement with management plans. This might be a cross-cutting issue that would need coordination with other RACs (such as the North Sea RAC).

The co-chair of WGCSE, Joel Vigneau, said that ICES is aware of the potential amount of information that can be provided, but advised that it is better to give small information on a continuous timing than provide a big volume of data with no continuity.

Action:

The NWWRAC will consider the opportunity to put together a position paper that would broaden the debate and point of the direction of what would be understood as a fully documented fishery. The NWWRAC will coordinate views with NSRAC in order to develop a common position that could be presented to ICES next coordination meeting between ICES-NSRAC-NWWRAC on data deficiencies in relation to stock assessments (WKDDRAC3).

4. Scallops: Effort regime in Western Waters

4.1. Proposal from the fishing industry - Jim Portus:

Jim Portus introduced this topic and reminded the audience that it was proposed at previous WG3 meetings, under the general discussions on non-TAC species such as scallops, sea bass or brown crab. The NWWRAC had also separately discussed from time to time management options for scallops. A conference organized by the fishing industry on this topic also took place in London in 2011.

The regime of annual fishing effort applies to vessels more than 15 meters. The review of the western waters effort regime is expected for 2013-2014. The effort regime is regulated in UK by quarterly number of days at sea. Member States are not allowed to exceed limits, but may swap effort with another Member States. There are a range of other measures available to MS to stay within limits (an example would be decommissioning schemes in Ireland). UK has arrangements with France on quota swaps.

Mr. Portus proposed to set up a bilateral meeting between UK and France to consider options of a summer closure to be applied the same in both MS to aid swap ratio.

A briefing note with the UK proposal has been included as working document in the NWWRAC website¹.

4.2. Comments from the floor – proposed way forward:

Richard Brouzes welcomed this discussion on scallop. The effort regime was introduced to prevent the exploitation of non-TAC species by external fleets without historical fishing rights and to avoid the decommissioning of fleets. He wondered if this wide area is most relevant for management or should we talk about smaller ICES subdivisions such as VIId for example. Many different size vessels use the fishery inshore. Mr. Brouzes was concerned about giving the French effort to bring much larger vessels to the fishery. He affirmed that, in 2008 and 2009, the French lost a lot of static gear to large nomadic vessels.

¹ Direct link:

http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/Briefing_note_WG3_NWWRAC_Western_Waters_Effort_Scallops_JP_17022012_EN.pdf



Tom Bryan-Brown mentioned that in the Isle of Man (and for extension in the Irish Sea) there are various closures and curfews linked to western waters regime. He thinks that the NWWRAC would be a good forum to consider options to review the effort regime.

Barrie Deas reinforced Jim's observation that effort regime only applies to vessels above 15 meters. We need to be careful about this dimension when talking about closed areas. If bilateral meetings are going to take place, we need to ensure that adequate representatives that are impacted by any measures should be present.

Daniel Lefèvre reminded that French fleet in the Channel is mainly composed of small vessels under 15 meters (around 85% of the total), of which there are very few vessels above 15 meters that fish scallops. He agreed with Barrie that all relevant parties must be adequately represented in the table.

Luc Corbisier stated that over the years, there have been several days-at-sea restrictions for marketing reasons. He asked if there was a clear biological status for scallops in VIII and VIIe.

Daniel Lefèvre noted that since early 1970s, the French started with the implementation of marketing measures. These are the origin of the present management measures. If French fleet had fished all-year round they might have same problem as UK.

John Hermse said that we need to discuss the immediate problem regarding effort. There are no reasons not to discuss wider management issues in an industry seminar. ICES areas VI and VII are a big area to cover. The introduction of closures provoked displacement of efforts. He has been told that scallops are in good biological state. There is also an MSC process ongoing, with many measures in force (dredge numbers and sizes, 110 mm MMS). New UK measures are also expected soon.

Joel Vigneau announced that IFREMER has just started a French study on recruitment of scallops. It is relatively easy to determine the age of scallops. It is also a fact that in the Eastern part of the Channel the scallop is bigger than in the Western.

The WG3 Chairman proposed that discussions would be held after the meeting between concerned fishing industry representatives to arrange a bilateral meeting between UK and France. The outcomes of that meeting would be reported back to the Working Group and to the Executive Committee of the NWWRAC. There might be also a possibility to put forward a NWWRAC Focus Group on this matter, should action at European level would be required.

Emiel Brouckaert requested to expand the meeting beyond UK and France and invite all concerned parties involved in the western waters regime to discuss within the framework of the RAC.

The Chairman and the Group agreed to invite Belgian and Irish representatives and coordinate work with the NWWRAC Secretariat.



Action:

The concerned fishing industry representatives from UK, France, Ireland and Belgium will arrange a multilateral meeting to discuss management measures for scallops in the Channel.

The outcomes of this meeting will be reported back to the Working Group and to the Executive Committee of the NWWRAC. There might be also a possibility to put forward a NWWRAC Focus Group on this matter, should a concerted action would be required.

5. Data deficiencies for stock assessments

5.1. General background and overview of collaboration between ICES and the NWWRAC

Barrie Deas provided an overview of the main outcomes of the Meeting between ICES and the RACs (MIRAC) that was held in The Hague on the 23rd and 24th of January 2012. He stressed that the NWWRAC has led this initiative from the RACs and it is important to maintain momentum.

ICES is working now on alternative approaches to data deficiencies aiming to establish a formula to give quantitative base for TAC recommendations (seminars WKPOOR and WKLIFE).

5.2. Individual reports from appointed NWWRAC data coordinators

Barrie reminded that a pro forma questionnaire has been made available to the NWWRAC coordinators prior to the meeting. The replies received are available for consultation in the NWWRAC meeting site.

Stock: Western Channel Sole - Data coordinator: Jim Portus

Mr. Portus referred to aspects of the long term management plan in force and the participation of the NWWRAC in ICES WKFLAT. The industry data has been provided to improve the stock assessment.

Stock: Plaice – Data coordinator: Luc Corbisier

Mr. Corbisier committed to submit an update by written in the following weeks.

Stock: Pollock VII – Data coordinator: Richard Brouzes

Mr. Brouzes talked to Joel Vigneau (IFREMER / ICES) to find out what types of data were needed. The question now is what the NWWRAC can do to improve the data available to have relevant advice. Daniel Lefèvre added that it would be important also to contact UK scientific colleagues to coordinate actions.

Joel Vigneau clarified that there is a clear and straightforward approach that could be explored, i.e. an internationally coordinated approach to collect data for sole and plaice. This approach is supported by the fact that, in the last 4 years, the data for Sole 7d has no longer been collected by MS but by area approach. This is the first time for an international approach and ICES is trying to do the same for Irish Sea plaice.

However, the model used did not work well, despite hard work established between scientific institutes from Belgium, France and UK. Mr. Vigneau is hopeful that we can improve our *modus operandi* as this is a very interesting and challenging area of cooperation. It is necessary to retrace steps in data deficiencies, particularly for discards. The scientists are finding very difficult to get reliable historical data. Trying to set up indicators to know the obstacles or weaknesses on each stock would be a step forward, as this would allow feed this information into the benchmarks.

The Commission's representative welcomed and supported this initiative as it would help to reduce data uncertainties for these stocks.

6. Non-quota species: proposals for management measures

The Chairman highlighted the need to reflect on « spearhead » species and debate some proposals on management. He advised to work on providing for the next meeting any proposal coming from the industry that might be workable and discuss it within WG3.

Joel Vigneau announced that ICES wants to evaluate some of these “new” species in a workshop called WKNEW. Many of these species are not subjected to TACs and are important for the Channel in economic terms. ICES has also a working group dealing already with Pollock, sea bream and sea bass.

7. Update on the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) process in UK waters: Channel

7.1. Presentation of Regional MCZs Project – Dr. Tom Blasdale (JNCC)

MPAs in UK have been regarded as a single coherent network under the Marine and Coastal Access Act. The process has been overseen by JNCC and Natural England, and designed sites with scientific evidence in order to submit site recommendations. After that, DEFRA will launch a public consultation addressed to all stakeholders (including the North Western Waters RAC). 119 areas were identified and now JNCC is finalising the evaluation.

JNCC and Natural England have also the mandate to carry out an impact assessment (IA) of the costs associated to designated sites to governments and businesses (e.g. value of landings). A public consultation on IA will run in parallel to consultation on the sites designated itself.

Dr. Blasdale reminded that MPAs are not only about fisheries, but they also affect other marine users. There are high constraints and high intensity of other activities such as extractive industries. He also acknowledged the risk or potential effects of designated sites such as concentration of fishing effort in smaller areas or competition increased over a resource.

7.2. Comments from the floor:

Luc Corbisier asked if the MCZ proposed were beyond the 6 nm or beyond the 12 nm.

Tom Bryan Brown asked if they would consider waters beyond 6nm as if it was EU waters;

Barrie Deas showed his concern about how authorities are going to deal with displacement of effort. The MPAs it is not a matter only of designating areas but also establishing management measures in those designated areas. It will be difficult to predict the fishermen's behaviour as decisions will have an impact for hundreds if not thousands of vessels.

Daniel Lefèvre said that the French fishermen are already having problems of cohabitation between fishing professionals from different areas and MS (gears, métiers, areas, etc.) and this would only increase fishing intensity in areas such as the Channel.

Bertie Armstrong warned about the cumulative effect in the context of renewable energy installations in Scottish areas. He asked what the options are for small vessels that are effectively thrown out from the fishery. He stressed that every coastal Member State has MPA areas proposed so we must look at the cumulative effects.

John Hermse agreed with Bertie and warned about the cumulative impact on displacement of fleets (such as nephrops). The developers have been asked how they are going to deal with effort displacement, but no one has given a clear response so far.

Tom Bryan Brown noted that wind industry has been heavily involved in the MCZ project in UK. This is not helpful in wanting to allow the protected areas to be put in the same areas as the wind parks as they fear restrictions on turbine building activity. He wondered why not to consider MPAs there if these areas are already closed to fisheries by windmills.

8. Chair's summary of actions and proposals to be put forward to the Executive Committee:

- Review of Cod Management Plan for Eastern Channel: Follow the STECF process and set a Focus Group if required. Wait and see what happens in July and November meetings.
- Western Channel Sole: Jim Portus to continue representing the NWWRAC and report outcomes of ICES WKFLAT in Bilbao.
- Effort regime for Scallops: NWWRAC to hold detailed discussions on the review of western waters effort regime (kw/day).

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- Scallops management: The concerned fishing industry representatives from UK, France, Ireland and Belgium to arrange a multilateral meeting to discuss management measures for scallops in the Channel (29th of March in London was indicated). Inform the NWWRAC of the outcomes of this meeting and any transnational and/or regional proposals that the members would like to discuss within next WG3.
- Data deficiencies: The appointed NWWRAC data coordinators will continue to work with scientific correspondents, fishing industry professionals and MS and make progress in this field. The NWWRAC will coordinate views with NSRAC in order to develop a common position that could be presented to ICES next coordination meeting between ICES-NSRAC-NWWRAC on data deficiencies in relation to stock assessments (WKDDRAC3).
- Fully documented fisheries: Bertie and Barrie will draft a first version of a position paper on how to achieve a fully documented fishery.
- MPAs in UK waters: NWWRAC to remain vigilant and monitor the development of MPA sites putting emphasis on displacement of effort.
- Non-quota species: NWWRAC to reflect about its role and keep informed on outcomes of ICES WKNEW at future WG3 meetings.

Concluding remarks

The WG3 Chairman, Daniel Lefèvre, thanked all the members and observers for attending the meeting, and the translators for their excellent work.

The meeting was adjourned at 16:15 h (slightly overtime)

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>MEMBERS</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Daniel	Lefèvre	CNPMEM Basse Normandie - Chairman
Jim	Portus	South West Fish Producers' Organisation – Vice Chair and Rapporteur
Bertie	Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Iwan	Ball	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Jacques	Bigot	CTFC - ETF
Richard	Brouzes	Copeport Marée OPBN
Luc	Corbisier	SDVO
John	Crudden	European Anglers Alliance
Bruno	Dachicourt	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Barrie	Deas	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO)
Anton	Dekker	Dutch Fisheries Organisation
Paul	Francoise	Fédération Française des Syndicats Professionnels Maritimes (FFSPM)
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM
André	Gueguen	OPOB
John	Hermse	Scallop Association
John	Lynch	Irish Fishermen's Organisation
Jacques	Pichon	FROM Bretagne

<u>OBSERVERS</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Alain	Biseau	IFREMER - France
Tom	Blasdale	Joint Nature Conservation Committee - UK
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Thomas	Bryan-Brown	Manx Fish Producers' Organisation - UK
Alan	Coghill	SFF-Orkney Fisheries Association
Therese	Cope	Joint Nature Conservation Committee – UK
John	Daly	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Roy	Griffin	DG MARE – European Commission
Luke	Jessop	DEFRA – UK Government
Eamon	Mangan	Ministère Agriculture et Pêche de France
Alan	McCulla	ANIFPO Ltd – Northern Ireland
Laurent	Markovic	DG MARE – European Commission
Sean	O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation - Eire
Lucille	Toulhoat	CNPMEM - France
Joel	Vigneau	ICES / IFREMER
John	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary



<u>NWWRAC SECRETARIAT</u>		
<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