

DRAFT AGREED PROPOSALS FROM WORKING GROUP 2

Cod VII e-k

The ICES advice for a zero catch was felt unacceptable due to assumptions and uncertainties surrounding recruitment, discards and growth rates. (Paper attached by French systematically and logically describes concerns in scientific terms.)

There must be a full scientifically credible evaluation of the existing Trevoise closure that has been in place for the last two years.

The industry/ICES/ Commission should develop proposals to improve data collection using all means possible (i.e. fishing vessels and fishermen as well as conventional sources) to ensure that there is an improvement in the assessment of this stock.

Therefore Working Group 2 (WG2) proposes that there should be a status quo both in terms of management and TAC until a thorough evaluation of the closure has taken place for this stock for the following reasons:

- The closure must be evaluated before any changes are considered.
- Extension of Annex II (NS cod recovery scheme) seems totally illogical as it is going to be reviewed early 2007 as it has been unsuccessful in many ways.
- A reduction in TAC could comprise a proper evaluation of the closure and furthermore it was felt that any reduction in TAC could comprise the scientific data that will be required for a robust assessment.
- The closure was proposed by the fishing industry itself following a full scientific validation process and therefore should be given the credibility it deserves.
- The reputation of the NWWRAC, Commission and the collaborative working relationship of fishermen would be jeopardised if points raised above are not taken fully into account.

Megrim, Sole VII hjk, Plaice hjk and Pollock VII

The ICES advice for these stocks (there are other stocks where this principle is also valid) is that although there is limited scientific data and the stocks do not appear to be in decline there should be no increase in effort. Their proposal is to cut the TACs to average recent catch levels. WG2 felt this approach was not suitable for the following reasons:

- Unintended effects on relative stability:
- Potential increase in discards within individual member states.
- Potential increase in the practice high grading within individual member states.
- Prejudice fishery dependent scientific data due to the above.

WG2 noted that TAC represents Total Allowable Catch and not Total Catch therefore it is proposed that TACs should remain the same for stocks covered by this type of advice.

Northern Hake

WG2 agreed that the Commission should follow the advice in line with the hake recovery plan. This would equate to an increase in the 2007 TAC of 15%. It was also proposed that the hake recovery plan should be transitioned to a long term management plan during 2007.