



REPORT

Working Group 2 West of Ireland and Celtic Sea

BEC – Bilbao

**Wednesday 13 April 2011
11:00-13:00**

**Chairman: Hugo González
Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock**

1. Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking the Basque Government and Victor Badiola (OPPAO) for hosting the meeting.

- Apologies

There were no apologies received.

- Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus.

- Adoption of Report of the Last Meeting

The report of Working Group 2 (WG2) held on 6 July 2010 was adopted by consensus.

Report of NWWWRAC Working Group 2 Meeting
Bilbao, 13th April 2011



2. Review of Recent Commission's Responses to NWW RAC Advice

Transit Rights through Porcupine Bank in TAC and Quota Regulation

The Chair highlighted that transit rights were guaranteed this year in Porcupine Bank for all fleets carrying fish on board during the seasonal fishing closure as a result of the political agreement reached at the December Council. The Chair thanked NWW RAC members for their input and work on this issue and sending a strong message to the Commission and Council representatives through the letter submitted on the 25th of November 2010¹.

Geographical Scope of High Grading Ban

The Chair made it clear that the regulations on high grading ban were applicable since 2010 in all ICES areas.

Action:

NWW RAC Executive Committee to note the satisfactory clarifications from the Commission on transit rights through the Porcupine Bank seasonally closed area and the geographical scope of implementation of the High Grading Ban.

3. Update on Northern Hake Management

State of play from ICES and Commission

WG2 heard that there was no new information since the last data deficiency meeting held by ICES. There remained uncertainty in the assessment process (mainly associated with length size and growth rates) but ICES were working on these uncertainties as a priority.

In terms of ICES advice in relation to Commission's policy, this stock would fall into category 8 (i.e. unknown stock status but increasing trend in SSB). ICES Working Group on Hake, Monkfish and Megrin will be meeting in May to prepare their advice. In that meeting they will evaluate the new data received from Member States and run and assess the model outputs.

¹ Letter available in the publications section of the NWWRAC website:
http://www.nwwrac.org/Publications/Publications_ENG/Navigation.php?cats=0&language=English&



The Commission's representative underlined that this stock was a priority for the Commission. In case they receive robust advice from ICES that overcome the present uncertainties, the Commission will do the necessary work to develop a proposal for a Long Term Management Plan (LTMP) for this stock. Otherwise it would be still very early to do a review and they will continue applying current policy until there is a clear perception of the stock. For that, it would be helpful for ICES that fishermen provide reliable and accurate data in appropriate format. The regional task forces recently created would be a good forum to coordinate initiatives and discuss what the data needs for the scientists are and work together in overcoming present data deficiencies.

WG2 underlined the need to address the uncertainties in this assessment and to develop and implement a LTMP for Hake. Members of WG2 agreed to offer any assistance required by ICES or Commission to meet this objective.

Action:

A NWW RAC Focus Group meeting on Northern Hake would be held following publication of new ICES assessment advice on Hake and Commission's response to that advice.

4. Report on Work Progress and Actions from the Celtic Sea Focus Group

Jacques Pichon summarised the outcomes of the last Focus Group meeting held in January in Paris as well as the accords reached on the framework and biological, economic and social objectives for establishing a management plan for mixed demersal fisheries in VIIfg. Both the meeting report and the NWWRAC position paper are available in the NWW RAC website for information².

WG2 felt that good progress had been made but there remained a significant amount of work to do. The evaluation matrix as developed and used by the MEFEPO project was suggested as a useful tool to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the emerging plan.

The next meeting of the focus group is planned to be held in July, however ahead of this meeting there would be a great deal of preparatory work that will be carried out by a steering group via e-mail.

² http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=446&language=English



Colm Lordan at the Marine Institute (Ireland) was coordinating the scientific input and his contribution was appreciated by WG2.

Some members of WG2 had been approached by the PISCES project and suggested it might be useful. However it was strongly stated that this project had already presented itself to the NWW RAC in 2010. At that time it was felt to be a totally unsatisfactory project. It duplicated the work of other projects, had no real directions or clear objectives and was not suitable for the work which was being undertaken by the Celtic Sea Focus Group. The views of WG2 had not changed in this respect.

Actions:

- + NWW RAC Executive Committee should note the progress to date on the Celtic Sea Management Plan.
- + The next meeting of the Celtic Sea Focus Group would be held in July after preparatory work carried out by the steering group.
- + The emerging plan should be evaluated against the evaluation matrix developed by MEFPO.
- + PISCES project offered no perceivable benefits and it was agreed the NWW RAC would not participate at this stage nor abide by its conclusions.

5. Management and Technical Measures for Skates and Sharks

Paul Trebilcock summarised a draft position paper on management measures for Spurdogs, Skates and Porbeagle. The cited paper is available on the NWW RAC website for information.

The European Anglers' Association (EAA) representative stated that they could not agree with the draft position paper as it stands now. In particular any move away from a zero TAC which they believe would lead to encouragement to target these species.

It was strongly stated that this was not the purpose of the draft position paper, in reality it was an attempt to propose sensible coherent measures that do not lead to unnecessary discards. This draft position was reached based on evidence, knowledge and experience gathered from the different fisheries involved and not a mere perception or assumption.



The RSPB-Birdlife representative observed that they wanted to see sensible conservation measures proposed that offered credible protection for the stocks concerned whilst recognising practical realities. They felt able to support the draft position if this was guaranteed.

It was noted that the scientific advice on these stocks was not clear, although it did quite clearly state that there should be no targeted fisheries but did not advise zero TACs.

Some fishing representatives did suggest that in certain circumstances properly regulated targeted fisheries would be possible without compromising overall stock health.

Actions:

+ It was agreed that the position paper should be redrafted by Paul Trebilcock attempting to incorporate comments above. It was felt that there was scope for consensus if the right form of words regarding sustainability and consideration of socio-economic impacts of management measures were expressed. It was fully understood that the objective to conserve the stocks and improve scientific knowledge had to be achieved in the context of the real world situation.

6. Letter from Cornish Skipper on Technical Measures for Lobster in VII

Paul Trebilcock summarized a letter received from a Cornish skipper on minimum landing size of Lobster. The letter is available on the NWW RAC website for information.

There were a range of views expressed by members of WG2. However there was not significant support to the measures outlined in letter. There were a variety of alternative measures highlighted and it was not possible to come to any consensus in WG2.

It was suggested that the letter be forwarded to the UK & ROI Crab Committee as this might be a suitable forum with appropriate expertise to consider this issue further.

Actions:

+ NWW RAC secretariat to respond directly to the Cornish skipper informing of the outcome of his request; and to forward the letter to the UK & ROI Shellfish Committee



7. Management Options for Nephrops Stocks in Area VII

WG2 remained opposed to a management by functional units for this stock and were disappointed with the 2011 TAC & Quota regulation introducing a separate TAC for the Porcupine Bank (FU16).

The Porcupine Bank seasonal closure was seen as an example of the ability of the fishing industry to respond to a specific issue within this stock without the need to resort to FU management.

The Commission appears to be obsessed with effort control as the only solution to fisheries management issues and the move to FU management was viewed as its preferred way of imposing this desire in this instance.

The Commission representative made it clear they were willing to consider alternatives but made no commitment that an alternative approach proposed would make up a formal Commission proposal.

Actions:

- + Recommend that the NWW RAC Executive Committee reaffirm its opposition to FU management of this stock.
- + Recommend that the NWW RAC Executive Committee reaffirm its disappointment at the introduction of a separate TAC for Porcupine Bank FU and that this was seen as a cynical attempt to impose the Commission's desire in a piece meal fashion.

8. Marine Spatial Planning: Enlargement of Natura 2000 Network in EU Waters

This agenda item was postponed for discussion at the Horizontal Working Group in Marine Spatial Planning scheduled for the 14th of April in the afternoon.



9. Chairman's Summary of Actions and Agreed Recommendations to put forward to Executive Committee

Review of Commission's responses to NWWRAC Letters and Advice:

NWW RAC Executive Committee to note the satisfactory clarifications from the Commission on transit rights through the Porcupine Bank seasonally closed area and the geographical scope of implementation of the High Grading Ban.

Update on Northern Hake Management:

A NWW RAC Focus Group meeting on Northern Hake would be held following publication of new ICES assessment advice on Hake and Commission's response to that advice.

Celtic Sea Focus Group:

- + NWW RAC Executive Committee should note the progress to date on the Celtic Sea Management Plan.
- + The next meeting of the Celtic Sea Focus Group would be held in July after preparatory work carried out by the steering group.
- + The emerging plan should be evaluated against the evaluation matrix developed by MEFEP0.
- + PISCES project offered no perceivable benefits and it was agreed the NWW RAC would not participate at this stage nor abide by its conclusions.

Management and Technical Measures on Skates and Sharks:

+ It was agreed that the position paper should be redrafted by Paul Trebilcock attempting to incorporate comments above. It was felt that there was scope for consensus if the right form of words regarding sustainability and consideration of socio-economic impacts of management measures were expressed. It was fully understood that the objective to conserve the stocks and improve scientific knowledge had to be achieved in the context of the real world situation.



Letter from Cornish Skipper on Technical Measures for Lobster in VII

+ NWW RAC secretariat to respond directly to the Cornish skipper informing of the outcome of his request; and to forward the letter to the UK & ROI Shellfish Committee

Management Options for Nephrops Stocks in Area VII

- + Recommend that the NWW RAC Executive Committee reaffirm its opposition to FU management of this stock.
- + Recommend that the NWW RAC Executive Committee reaffirm its disappointment at the introduction of a separate TAC for Porcupine Bank FU and that this was seen as a cynical attempt to impose the Commission's desire in a piece meal fashion.

The meeting was adjourned at 14:15.



ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>MEMBERS</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Hugo	González	ANASOL-ARVI
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish FPO
Bertie	Armstrong	SFF
Víctor	Badiola	OPPAO-CEPESCA
Juan Carlos	Corrás Arias	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association
Barrie	Deas	NFFO
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM
Marc	Ghiglia	UAPF
Antón	González	Wales and West Coast FPA
André	Gueguen	OPOB
Jesús A.	Lourido García	Puerto de Celeiro S.A.
Joe	Maddock	Irish Fishermen Organisation
Lorcan	O’Cinnéide	Irish Fish PO
Sean	O’Donoghue	Kyllibegs FO



<u>MEMBERS (cont.)</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Eibhlin	O'Sullivan	Irish South West FPO
José Luis	Otero	Lonja de la Coruña S.A.
Jacques	Pichon	ANOP-PMA
Mercedes	Rguez. Moreda	OPP-07-LUGO

OBSERVERS		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Iwan	Ball	World Wildlife Fund
Alain	Biseau	IFREMER
Kara	Brydson	RSPB – Birdlife International
Alan	Coghill	SFF / Orkney FPO
Louise	Cunningham	Marine Scotland
John	Daly	Irish Seal Sanctuary
José Manuel	Fernández Beltrán	OPP-07-LUGO
Eric	Foucher	IFREMER
Sam	Lambourn	NWWWRAC Chairman

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OBSERVERS (cont.)		
Daniel	Lefèvre	CRPMEM Basse-Normandie
Jan	Lindemann	European Commission
Eamon	Mangan	DPMAM - France
Marina	Santurtun	AZTI-Tecnalia
Héctor	Villa	SEGEPESCA – MMARM Spain
John	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary

NWWRAC SECRETARIAT		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Alexandre	Rodríguez	Executive Assistant, Policy Coordinator
Joanna	McGrath	Executive Assistant, Administration - Finances