

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee

Working Group 3 (Channel) 3rd March 2010 09:30-13:00 h Madrid

Chairman: Daniel Lefèvre
Rapporteur: Jim Portus

1. Welcome

- The Chairman welcomed members, observers and invited guests to Madrid for NWWRAC Working Group 3. He also thanked the Commission's representative, Mr. Patterson, for his attendance.
- Adoption of Agenda: approved with thanks to the Secretariat.
- Apologies noted from Andre Le Berre and Jacques Bigot.
- Adoption of Report from last meeting (Paris 8th July 2009): approved.
- Deputy Rapporteur in case of absence: proposed and approved Stephanie Tachaires.

2. Review of Commission responses to NWWRAC opinions

- Plaice VIId and VIIe:

The Commission proposed towards end 2009 that Plaice VIId and Plaice VIIe should be managed from 2011 as separate stocks instead of the present arrangement. These stocks are assessed separately, but are combined for management. The rapporteur had attended the ICES workshop about Channel Plaice for the NWWRAC in Copenhagen in February. The rapporteur reminded the WG3 that the Commission had previously proposed such a change in 1997. The Member States and the industry had successfully defended the status quo and would endeavour to ensure common sense prevails again.

The Commission noted the negative reactions to the proposal, but believed it to be of benefit to the two stocks to manage them separately. He invited the NWWRAC to rethink and reconsider its position. He argued it is appropriate to separate the management of the stocks and it would be easier for future assessments.

The Commission confirmed publication soon of a non-paper explaining the reasons behind the proposal, inviting comment and consulting stakeholders.

Action point:

The Rapporteur would submit a summary of the ICES workshop to the NWWRAC. For the Executive Committee to consider, he would also submit a summary of the 1997 arguments about joint-management of these stocks.

- Undulate Rays:

The chairman and others expressed concerns about the total ban on landing Undulate Rays. The stock cannot be avoided by technical measures because of its shape and size. The amount of fish found in local fisheries suggests the assessment of stock depletion is flawed and that the ban applying in all areas is not appropriate. The WG3 argued for TAC revisions mid-year.

The Commission agreed to discuss this matter with colleagues and scientists and to report back to the NWWRAC in due course. The Commission would seek an update on the state of Undulate Rays populations in specific ICES areas and consider TAC advice accordingly.

- Cod VIIId:

French delegates expressed concerns that separation of Cod VIIId from the rest of the VIIbk had caused great difficulties with large quantities discarded, even with the benefit of increased TAC.

- Sole VIIe:

The rapporteur had submitted a written report of the STECF workshop in 2009 that had considered the LTMAMP and the ICES advice. The December Council decided to cut TAC by 5% not 15%. He reminded the WG3 of the Council decision in April 2007 that changed the Article 3 process for setting the TAC. This requires F to be reviewed each year rather than to be settled for three years.

The Commission accepted the need in 2010 to review fully the LTMAMP. He confirmed the Council decision in 2009 was political not scientific. He regretted the uncertainty in reference points, but expected STECF advice to provide a reliable TAC in 2011.

The rapporteur reported about changes in management for this stock in the UK. The fleet has been modifying its fishing equipment and patterns (e.g. single-area licensing and larger-mesh in nets); ICES confidence in catch reports is improved; STECF advice does not yet amount to re-established analytical assessment of the stock, so more difficulties are foreseen due to uncertain scientific advice. However, in the UK the trawler sector has started process towards MSC accreditation for anglerfish and megrim in Area VII and sole in east and west channel (VIIId and e). The outlook is optimistic for the future of the stocks and the industry. The chairman concluded the industry seems to be moving in the right direction, but this is not yet reflected in the TAC. It is necessary to remember the social and economic consequences of all Council decisions.

The Commission agreed that all possible steps must be taken to re-establish the analytical assessment of VIIe sole.

Action point:

The Commission to provide the NWWRAC with summary of Member States catch and landings data for all TAC stocks that is used in the ICES and STECF assessment processes.

3. Scallops

The chairman reminded the WG3 that French colleagues have no wish to change the present minimum sizes for Scallops (*Pecten Maximus*). The 110mm in Area VIId and 100mm in VIIe are justified biologically. A difference was established in 1982. The NWWRAC seeks only to reinforce its position and clarify that the difference exists based on scientific and biological studies. Harmonisation would not please anyone (neither to 100mm nor to 110mm), whether industry or scientist.

The rapporteur commented that the proposed new Technical Regulation had been withdrawn for later consideration under co-decision processes. A new document would be tabled in 2010 for consideration by EP and EC. The NWWRAC has presented its opinion to the Commission and must hope for common sense to prevail and to keep status quo with different sizes where appropriate. The scallops do not agree with uniformity!

The chairman commented on weakness in the market for shellfish arising from uneven competition from third country imports of similar products. The rapporteur confirmed that UK producers are equally concerned to protect the market and to protect the stocks. A national UK strategy for the wellbeing of scallop stocks is being developed and will be revealed when ready.

Mr. Patterson stated that the Commission will be working on the new Technical Regulations and will take NWWRAC opinion into consideration. Mr. Patterson expressed the view that there is a trend towards simplification of the rules of the CFP, but it is still possible to reflect the specificities of areas and fisheries.

The rapporteur mentioned that, in the present regulation it states “at least 95% by live weight... consist of marine bivalve molluscs...” This causes discards of, in particular, cuttlefish during the winter season. Such fish are unavoidable and should be part of the economic activity, but must be wasted. The Commission confirmed that the new draft will exclude the word “bivalve”.

4. Crustaceans

The chairman expressed his concerns that the market in this important fishery product is being threatened. Urgent meetings have been held involving producers from different parts of Europe (UK, Scotland, France, Ireland). He invited Stephanie Tachaires to brief the WG3.

Stéphanie reported about a meeting about Brown Crab marketing difficulties, held in Paris on 28th January. Producers proposed limiting landings, notably in May and June to encourage rising market prices. Producers agreed it is desirable to have a common strategy on EU markets. They discussed a minimum price to ensure the profitability. They agreed to organise joint actions of promotion, especially in the autumn. It was suggested to reduce 25% of production in May. A further meeting is called on 18th March. A venue is yet to be decided.

The chairman commented that, in some regions production has increased 150%, sometimes 200%. He questioned whether the market can tolerate such production levels in this economic climate. The meeting questioned whether this crisis is exacerbated by the third country imports, as is the case with Scallops.

The rapporteur confirmed the Mid-channel Potting Agreement Conference takes place in London on 15th and 16th April, with room booked and available for a further discussion about Brown Crab marketing on 16th in the afternoon, if required and subject to the meeting on 18th March.

5. Presentation of CHARM III (2009-2012) – A. Carpentier (Project Manager - IFREMER)

Mr. Carpentier gave a detailed presentation of the project which is available for consultation in the NWWRAC website¹:

The presenter highlighted the following aims of the project:

- To develop an atlas (downloadable for free at IFREMER website.)
- To integrate all known information of the trophic network.
- To work on devising a model on marine spatial planning.

The members were reported that project CHARM II was completed in September 2008.

Some NWWRAC members expressed concerns about over-simplification of data because of scale of known data from ICES rectangles, with a risk of extrapolating with assumptions of inter-connectivity of features and fisheries.

The Commission's representative welcomed the CHARM III project.

6. Presentation of PISCES Project – L. Dodds (Project Liaison Officer – WWF UK)

Miss Dodds briefed the members on the initial steps of this EU-funded project on an Ecosystem-based approach to Fisheries management for Celtic Sea (VII-f-k) and Western Channel (VII-e)

The presentation is available for consultation at the NWWRAC website².

The NWWRAC was invited to appoint one member to the Steering Group. Concerns were expressed about the purpose of the project and clarification was asked before committing to further engagement.

7. Dogfish, Sharks, Skates and Rays:

Barrie Deas noted that some sharks are target fisheries and others are by-catch. Now all are included on EC Regulation on TAC & Quotas.

Members agreed that the NWWRAC must explore the possibility to develop avoidance plans (as for Cod) through different options (selectivity, spatial areas, change of behaviour in patterns) and looking at best practices in international experience.

¹ Direct link:

http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/Presentation_Projet_CHARM_NWWRAC_March2010_Madrid.pdf

² Direct link:

http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/Presentation_PISCES_Project_NWWRAC_March2010_LD_EN.pdf

Furthermore, a request should be made to urge the EC to lift the ban on landings of sharks reflecting the differences in fisheries and adopting a more regional approach. “One size fits all” approach is not valid and there must be a regional approach to fisheries management.

The Commission agreed to consult with colleagues, acting on specific requests from the RACs. Obligation to report catches of rays species-by-species. On the basis of scientific advice, they will produce a proposal.

Action point: It was proposed that the NWWRAC develops ideas on how to manage individual stocks on a separate TAC basis. This might be a horizontal issue to be dealt with other Working Groups and even other RACs.

8. Agreed proposals to submit to Executive Committee

- The rapporteur will draft a report on progress for 7e sole. The report will ask the Commission /ICES to re-establish the baselines for the analytical assessment for sole VIIe that was abandoned in 2009. Commission commented that it is not helpful to have political decisions every end of the year. He anticipates fresh ICES advice this year.
- The rapporteur will draft a report on Plaice VIId and VIIe, asking the Commission to substantiate its reasons for the proposal for split management from 2011.

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Iwan	Ball	WWF	Member
Luc	Corbisier	SDVO	Member
Rory	Crawford	RSPB – Birdlife International	Observer
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Member
Barrie	Deas	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	Member
Thomas	Diaz	FROM Bretagne	Member
Lyndsay	Dodds	WWF	Presentor
Ian	Gatt	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	Member
Charline	Gaudin	European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD)	Member
André	Gueguen	OPOB	Member
Sam	Lambourn	NWWRAC Chairman	NWWRAC Chairman
Daniel	Lefèvre	CNPMEM Basse Normandie	Chairman WG3
Joe	Maddock	Irish Fishermen Organisation	Member
Mathieu	Nimard	OPBN – COPEPORT	Member (<i>replacing R. Brouzes</i>)
Conor	Nolan	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Kenneth	Paterson	DG MARE	European Commission
Jim	Portus	South West Fish Producers Organisation Ltd	Member - Rapporteur
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Stéphanie	Tachoures	CNPMEM	Member
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish Fish Producers Organisation	Member