

SUMMARY REPORT ON TCMs FOR CELTIC SEA

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Following the Draft STECF report 'Review of Scientific Advice: Technical Measures in the Celtic Seas (WoS, IS, CS), the STECF Committee made the following general points:

- Agreed with the general content of the report
- Recognized there is a discard issue in these fisheries
- There is a need to improve selectivity
- Measures should be introduced immediately to protect vulnerable incoming year classes
- Recognized that white fish by-catch is important in some nephrops fisheries but if you want to keep mixed fisheries there must be improvement in size selectivity –at present a selection grid is the identified way to reduce fishing mortality and discards of small fish
- Recognized that gear options will lose marketable fish (a potential consequence would be to increase effort to compensate for these losses which is not desirable)

In specific relation to Celtic Sea (STECF and Commission both stated that this means VIIIfg only)

Beam- Trawl Plaice Discards (same applies for VIIa)

- Severally limited what is possible with gear on this issues –primarily mesh size
- Any mesh increase to improve plaice selectivity would have a massive effect on sole landings –in economic terms render beam-trawlers unviable
- There were no recommendations for gear measures from STECF and no emergency technical measure will be proposed

Cod/Haddock/Whiting

- Given the exceptional growth rate of Cod there is a small selection window therefore technical measures offered limited benefit for Cod but any technical measures would help haddock/whiting selectivity.
- There are a range of measures that would be of benefit –but STECF does not recommend any specific gear configuration instead it provides simulations of various configurations and expected results
- Ultimately it would be a management decision (Commission) on what should be proposed

NWW RAC representatives made the following points:

- It is important to de-couple the West of Scotland, Irish Sea and Celtic Sea fisheries and address each of them as specific areas.
- It is not appropriate to use emergency measures in the Celtic Sea – there is no emergency situation with the stocks and therefore clear that emergency measures are not appropriate.
- The NWW RAC recognizes that there is an issue with discards/selectivity that needs to be addressed. The NWW RAC has put forward proposals that begin to address these issues (NWW RAC position paper). This is regarded as a good start particularly for Haddock and Whiting. In light of the STECF report the NWW RAC is looking at measures to address Plaice discards in VIIIfg.
- The NWW RAC would hope that the Commission to take on board the NWW RAC proposals and respect/understand the measures proposed as effective, proactive and collaborative
- If the Commission chose to ignore the NWW RAC proposals it would have negative consequences for collaborative working and indeed the development of Celtic Sea LTMP

The Commission responded:

- Variation in areas and fisheries was recognized
- The Commission felt that the STECF report justified emergency measures
- The Commission wanted to work with the NWW RAC and appreciated the Celtic Sea proposals on this issue –The commission felt it was important to justify and explain why the NWW RAC proposals were positive and met objectives in the STECF report

In my opinion the meeting was positive and the Commission and STECF representative present understood our position and recognized the importance of taking on board our proposals. They also clearly understood the implications of ignoring them.