



## **North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council**

### **Working Group 1 West of Scotland and Western Approaches (ICES Vb and VI) CNP MEM – Paris**

**Tuesday 6th July 2010**

**9.30 – 13.00**

#### **Summary of Recommendations and Actions**

Chairman: Bertie Armstrong

Rapporteur: Rory Crawford

#### **1. Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed the members.

Apologies were noted from Victor Badiola, Emiel Brouckaert and Barrie Deas. The Chair introduced to the members Alan Coghill as the new president of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, who will now be attending NWWRAC meetings in place of Ian Gatt, the previous president.

The report of the last meeting (Madrid, 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2010) was adopted without comment.

The agenda was adopted, although it was decided that item 6 - the consultation on incidental catches of seabirds – should be taken before the coffee break.

There were no volunteers to take up the role of deputy rapporteur, so the post remains vacant.

#### **2. Review of Commission and Member States responses**

There was a brief review of the recent correspondence with the Commission. There have been no responses to the NWWRAC letter on MS involvement in anglerfish surveys to date, although this was only sent on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June.



The chair stated that it might be useful for members to reiterate the request to their respective Member State representatives, noting that it receives the full backing of the industry.

The NWWRAC received, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2010, a response from the Commission on the review of the deep sea fisheries access regime. The Commission agreed with a number of the NWWRAC proposals – their response in full is available on the publications section of the NWWRAC website.

The NWWRAC letter regarding the creation of regional task forces looking at data deficiencies was submitted to the Commission on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. While the Commission responded favourably to the concept, they passed the action back and suggested such a task force be set up within the remit of the NWWRAC. A discussion followed, concluding the following points:

- Key data on landings and discards are missing from Member States, and this needs to be addressed. The European Commission has sent the NWWRAC the public database displaying data that Member States are obliged to submit to ICES every year in compliance with DCR, with explanatory notes of the gaps in data submission. The Secretariat intends to place this information on the forum of the NWWRAC website.
- No public funding is available beyond the existing framework for data collection schemes.
- There is an STECF working group that looks at such matters, but this group has been closed to observers.
- The industry is keen to contribute more and to improve data deficiencies that exist for particular stocks. Closer industry-science partnerships were viewed as beneficial, and the imminent release of a pilot study funded by DG MARE on industry-science joint data collection in western waters was noted. The upcoming seminar on Fishery Dependent Information to be held in Galway in August, as well as another to be organised by the Belgian Presidency in the second half of 2010, were noted.



- A useful starting point would be to look at the gaps and identify potential data sources.
- The importance of data quality was noted – it needs to be verifiable and competent.

The practical implications of setting up a NWW group were discussed, particularly regarding the possible structure. Budgetary constraints for the present financial year were noted (it might have to commence after the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2010) and ensuring, in the light of the Commission's initial refusal, that the group is well resourced.

**ACTION:** Barrie Deas to prepare a paper looking at the above noted practicalities and the terms of reference for a focus group on data deficiencies, supported by input from working group members, for consideration by the Executive Committee at the next meeting in Madrid.

### 3. Update on LTMP for West of Scotland Haddock: latest developments and next steps

An economic impact assessment is yet to be conducted due to contractual problems with the first option chosen (SEAFISH in the UK). Negotiations between the Commission and two new economists are underway. The Commission noted, with regret, that the slow speed of progress was, amongst other reasons, due to lack of economic data from Ireland. However, it was noted that there are now legislative tools in place in Ireland to deal with this issue. While the delays in adopting a LTMP are frustrating, it was noted that there is a catch option table on which the Commission will base its proposal for fishing opportunities for 2011. STECF will also give their advice.

Finally, in reply to a question from the floor on Rockall haddock, the Commission representative clarified that this discussion is exclusively about the Haddock stock for sub-area VIa. He will consult his colleagues from the Commission about the state of negotiations between EU and Russia for co-management of the Rockall haddock stock in international waters.



#### 4. Consultation on incidental catches of seabirds

The Commission is currently consulting on a Plan of Action for dealing with seabird bycatch in fisheries. Seabird bycatch remains a problem in some EU fisheries, but simple technical fixes are available which can mitigate impacts on seabird populations and bring economic benefit to the fishers utilizing such measures. Rory Crawford outlined some of the key elements that a NWWRAC response could cover, including: working with fishermen on the ground towards local solutions, providing training for skippers and a legislative underpinning for the plan. Representatives from the Spanish industry (representing longlines, gillnets and trawl fleets) concurred with the concern about bycatch, and stated that they will consult skippers on the matter. The importance of solutions tailored to the local fisheries and types of gears was made clear, as well as the need to look at the efficacy of current practices and measures that are in place. Crew safety was noted as an important consideration in the development of any new measures.

**ACTION:** As this is a horizontal issue, Rory Crawford will draft a response to be circulated among all the working groups for comment. The deadline for the submission of a response to the Commission is the 9<sup>th</sup> of August.

#### 5. Principles and categories for setting fishing opportunities for 2011: analysis of EC Policy Statement and preparation of NWWRAC Advice

The Chair welcomed Kenneth Patterson, representative from the Commission, to the meeting. Mr. Patterson gave a presentation which had already been presented in May to the EU Council of Ministers. The presentation is available on the NWWRAC website.

Mr. Patterson outlined that the Fishing Opportunities for 2011 document was the fifth of its kind, and is done to show that the approach of the Commission is open, objective and based on science. The speaker started on a positive note, remarking that the number of stocks known *not* to be overfished has increased, and that the number of stocks where a closure is advised has not increased. However, he also remarked that there are still too many stocks outside safe biological limits, and that information is still poor.



The speaker reiterated the Commissioner's wish to move on the commitment to reach MSY for all stocks by 2015 through a stepwise approach, and for this reason the Commission had asked ICES for scientific advice on moving in four equal steps to MSY by 2015. He ran through the 11 rules for setting TACs, to which there are slight changes from last year in categories 2, 3 and 4. There is also an ongoing process to review Category 11.

The next steps are for the Commission to consult on the policy statement, and there will be a seminar on September 14<sup>th</sup> in Brussels on the scientific advice, to which the RACs will be invited.

There was then a discussion about the policy statement, particularly the commitment to reaching MSY:

- The industry members expressed concern about the difficulties implementing the concept of MSY in mixed fisheries, the possible implications of reaching this target by 2015, the range of values that MSY encompasses and its effect in future on calculation of TAC and quota, and pointed to tools beyond the TAC and quota regime that could be used to reduce fishing mortality. Strict application of the MSY to all fisheries might be in conflict with discards policy without the accompaniment of other measures.
- It was noted by the Commission that achieving MSY will help improve the economics of fishing in terms of fleet profitability and efficiency in the long-term, and that although targets on MSY are imprecise, that positive changes in the stocks should be seen with this as the direction of travel. It was also noted that the fishing industry would need to choose the best available tools to manage and meet the targets on catches restricted by TACs and quotas when adopting the MSY approach (e.g. catch composition, adjustment of technical measures and improvement of selectivity, time and activity in sensitive areas such as fish nurseries...)
- The Commission representative stated that the commitment to MSY is a political one and the date for achievement for all stocks is 2015. With this in mind, they are asking the RAC to give advice on the MSY approach, i.e. is four equal steps the most appropriate itinerary? There may be a policy choice of speed, so should there be less now and more later, or *vice versa*?



- Given the data deficiencies highlighted in the document resulting in an automatic application of the precautionary approach, the importance of Member States supplying data in a timely fashion was once again reiterated.
- The Commission encouraged the members to help by supplying the best information available to ICES and STECF for feeding into the advice on the stocks, and to contribute to drawing a range of options for managing stocks in accordance with the scientific objectives. The work model of consultation between Pelagic RAC and ICES on mackerel was highlighted as a good example of joint collaboration between the Commission, stakeholders and scientists.
- The French industry representatives highlighted concerns about blue ling management, requesting to link sub-area Vb to areas VI and VII for TAC purposes. The Commission representative noted this request and will take it back to colleagues.

**ACTION:** Bertie Armstrong to begin a draft NWWRA response with the assistance of the Secretariat. This draft will require a quick turnaround of comments from members so that a final response can be submitted to the Commission by the end of July.

## **6. Audit of EU measures to reduce overcapacity of EU fishing fleets – European Court of Auditors**

Colm Friel, representative from the European Court of Auditors, indicated that they would be carrying out an audit of EU measures designed to deal with overcapacity, as part of a performance audit of the CFP (a result of the special report on control). This will include examining if measures funded by EFF Axis 1 for scrapping and modernization schemes have increased overcapacity, as well as examinations of current community and national regulations and the entry-exit regime. They have already visited some EU countries (France, Denmark and Spain) and they will be visiting a number of other EU Member States and Norway in the following months to gather information.



The key questions they are seeking to answer are contained in an annex to the letter the Court of Auditors sent to the NWWRAC – available on the NWWRAC website. They are looking to finish this work by spring next year, and so would appreciate input from the NWWRAC before Christmas.

The Chair thanked the speaker, and noted that there will be differing national perspectives on many of the questions. Many of the questions were considered to be better answered at a Member State level, although the NWWRAC has set out some thinking on overcapacity within its response to the Green Paper on CFP reform (December 2009). The Auditors have a copy of this paper.

Hugo Gonzalez suggested it might be possible for the RAC to offer some general input and offered to circulate his comments on capacity reduction.

**ACTION:** Hugo Gonzalez to send to the Secretariat a position paper from his organization on capacity reduction. Scottish Fishermen's Federation and other organizations to submit their comments in order to build a contribution towards a generalized response from the RAC.

**Meeting was adjourned at 12.55 h**



## **ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Surname/s</u></b>	<b><u>Organization</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>
Bertie	Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	<b>WG1 Chairman</b>
Ted	Breslin	Killybegs Fishermen Organisation	Member
Alan	Coghill	SFF / Orkney FPO	Member
Juan Carlos	Corrás Arrias	Pescagalicia Arpega	Member
Rory	Crawford	RSPB – Birdlife International	Member – <b>Rapporteur</b>
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Member
Louise	Cunningham	Marine Scotland	Member State rep.
Colm	Friel	European Court of Auditors	Observer
Laure	Gatter	European Court of Auditors	Observer
Hugo	González	ANASOL	Member
Sam	Lambourn	NWWRAC Chairman	NWWRAC Chairman
Colm	Lordan	Marine Institute	Scientific expert
Jesús A.	Lourido García	Puerto de Celeiro S.A.	Member
Joe	Maddock	Irish Fishermen Organisation	Member
Eamon	Mangan	Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche de France	Member State rep.
Kevin	McDonnell	Mállaig North West FA	Member
Conor	Nolan	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Eibhlin	O'Sullivan	Irish South West FPO	Member





<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Status</u>
José Luis	Otero	Lonja de la Coruña S.A.	Member
Kenneth	Patterson	European Commission	European Commission
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Mercedes	R. Moreda	OPP-07-LUGO	Member
Stéphanie	Tachoures	CNPMEM	Member
Pieter-Jan	Schon	AFBINI	Scientific expert
Stéphanie	Tachoures	CNPMEM	Member
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish Fish PO	Observer
Borja	Velasco	SEGEPESCA – MMARM Spain	Member State Rep.