



North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council

Report Working Group 4 (Irish Sea) CNP MEM HQ – Paris

Thursday 8th of July 2010
14:00-17:30 h

Chairman: Lorcan O’Cinnéide
Rapporteur: John Crudden

1. Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting at 14:00h and welcomed the WG members, observers, the EU Commission representative Ken Patterson and representatives of the JNCC.

Apologies were recorded from Sean O’Donoghue, Eileen O’Sullivan and John Crawford.

The agenda as circulated was agreed with some changes to the order.

The report of the last Working Group meeting of 2nd March 2010 was adopted.

2. Review of management measures for Irish Sea Stocks: proposed way forward

a. Alternative proposals to cod recovery plan

The Chairman informed the meeting that while there is considerable unhappiness with the current Cod recovery management system in the Irish Sea however the industry was not in a position to present an alternative paper at this time.

b. Proposal from the Irish Seal Sanctuary on Irish Sea closures

This paper was read at the last WG meeting in Madrid (2nd March 2010) but had not circulated in time for discussion. The paper called for a closure of the Irish Sea to trawling to allow cod and other stocks to recover. John Woodlock gave a presentation on the ISS paper to the meeting.

The paper quoted examples of recovery of stocks following closures. The proposal would allow for some boats to continue fishing using selective methods. It also called for EU financial support for boats that were tied up during the closed periods.

c. The response from the fishing industry:

Barrie Deas said that the proposal needed to be looked at in great detail. The terms of the closures would need to be set out, what fleets would be affected, the duration of the closures, quantifying lost income, compensating those affected, where would the money come from etc. Joe Maddock said that the cost of this proposal would not be landed on the shoulders of fishermen. Most boats are fishing nephrops and are relatively happy with quota and would not give this up for set aside.

Lorcan O’Cinnéide said that he and the organisation he represents are totally opposed to this proposal and would not accept it in any circumstances. There is no money to pay for it and it is not credible to suggest that compensation would be forthcoming. There is a good and sustainable nephrops fishery in the Irish Sea giving a good living to a large number of people. There is a considerable element of discarding that needs to be addressed but closures are not the answer. He acknowledged the paper as an alternative view. It does provoke and challenge the present Cod Recovery Plan and the need for alternatives. Some boats are using the Swedish grid and are losing considerable amounts of money as a result, in the interests of conservation. All stakeholders need to redouble their efforts to sort the problems that exist in the Irish Sea.

d. The response from the Commission:

Ken Patterson welcomed the paper as a stimulus. He posed the question whether there a scientific basis for the proposal and said that there was none. He said that the Commission had contemplated closures in the past but had decided that the policy would be to keep fisheries open. At the present moment there was no financial aid available to compensate those that would be affected.

Actions:

- It was agreed to renew efforts to progress the discussions and actions from the Focus Group meeting held in Belfast on 30th September 2009 with a greater focusing on cod mortality.

- It was also agreed that Lorcan O’Cinnéide and the Secretariat would initiate a work programme to review the current Irish Sea Cod Recovery Plan and available data from various sources and consider alternative management measures which could include further consideration of the proposal from the Irish Seal Sanctuary.

In his closing remark on the item the Chairman referred to the issuing of a press statement by the Irish Sea Sanctuary on this subject. The statement gave the impression that discussing the item at this RAC meeting was tantamount to its acceptance. This was contrary to agreed protocols and was not acceptable. The Secretariat clearly stated that there are procedures for the issuing of statements and that this had not been followed in this case. The NWWRAC Chairman also stated his opinion that the issuing of such a statement was contrary to the spirit in which the NWWRAC operates as well as procedures The Irish Sea Sanctuary said that this had not been its intention and apologized for the matter.

f. Management options for Nephrops:

This subject had also been discussed in WG2. The current advice from ICES is that the stock should be managed in “functional units”. The industry view is that this system is too rigid and is opposed to it. It was reported to the meeting that the NSRAC has been working on a draft Management Plan for some time.

Action:

- It was agreed that Colm Lordan would draft a discussion paper on effort management and the secretariat would circulate it along with the draft plan from the NSRAC.

3. Horizontal issues

a. Initiatives to improve data quality:

This item had been discussed at several WG meetings in the past. A letter had been sent to the Commission proposing it should establish a Regional Task Force to drive the initiative forward. The reply from the Commission encouraged the RAC to establish the Task Force itself and that it would cooperate fully.

Action:

- It was agreed to ask the Executive Committee to convene a meeting of the Task Force in September or October, possibly in conjunction with the General Assembly. In the meantime Barrie Deas was tasked with drafting the Terms of Reference.

b. Debate on socio-economics aspects of fisheries management:

This is a theme that has come up regularly at previous meetings but so far has not progressed past the initial debate. It is well recognized that the integration of socio-economics into fisheries and fisheries management is lacking. DG ENV has established a WG on socio-economics however a request by the RAC to be represented has been rejected.

Action:

- It was agreed to include this topic in the discussions of the Regional Task Force on data quality.
- Ask the Executive Committee to re-apply for a seat on the DG ENV Working Group on socio-economics.

c. CFP Reform:

A short briefing was made to the meeting on the consultation taking place on the CFP Reform. A whole series of follow-up workshops have been held by the Commission to further consult stakeholders and the Belgian Government plans a major event in the autumn during its Presidency.

4. Marine Spatial Planning - stakeholder engagement in designation and management of sites in the UK.

Tom Blasdale and Johnny Murt from JNCC delivered a presentation on the designation of Marine Conservation Zones in the UK. These sites are additional to Natura 2000 sites and will protect species and habitats not currently covered by Natura sites. The sites are designated based on science with socio-economics being part of the consideration. Individual organizations within the RAC are invited to participate and the RAC is being asked to assist in information distribution. The collecting of fisheries data is a key consideration and a deadline of October 2010 has been set for finalising this.

Actions:

- Ask the Executive Committee to urge individual organizations within the RAC to participate with the projects.
- Ask the Executive Committee to write to the relevant UK Minister urging an extension for the provision of fisheries data.



5. Any Other Business

The Commission reminded the RAC that it has requested advice on Sole and Whiting with a deadline of the end of July. The Secretariat reported that no progress has been made on the request.

Action:

- Lorcan O’Cinnéide and Colm Lordan to produce a draft discussion document by 20th July. The Secretariat to circulate the current advice along with the draft discussion paper.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 17:30 h

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Tom	Blasdale	Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)	Scientific Expert
Thomas	Bryan-Brown	Manx Fish Producers Organisation	Member
Luc	Corbisier	Stichting voor Duurzame Visserij	Member
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Member – Rapporteur
Barrie	Deas	NFFO	Member
Sam	Lambourn	Chairperson NWWRAC	Chairperson NWWRAC
Colm	Lordan	Marine Institute	Scientific Expert
Joe	Maddock	Irish Fishermen Organisation	Member
Alan	McCulla	ANIFPO	Member
Conor	Nolan	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Lorcan	O’Cinnéide	Irish Federation of Producers’ Organizations (IFPO)	WG4 Chairman
Kenneth	Patterson	DG MARE	European Commission
Brendan	Price	Irish Seal Sanctuary	Observer
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Pieter-Jan	Schon	AFBINI	Scientific Expert
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish FPO	Member
John	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary	Member