

MINUTES

**NWWAC Focus Group
West Scotland Mixed Demersal Fisheries
Georges Hall, Dublin Castle
Wednesday 26 March 2014
11:30am-1:00pm**

Chairman: Sean O'Donoghue
Rapporteur: Caroline Gamblin

1. Welcome and opening by Chairperson Sean O' Donoghue

- Introduction of participants

Sean O'Donoghue, chairperson of the focus group, welcomed all the participants to the meeting. Going round the table all the participants introduced themselves. The list of participants and organisations they represent is given in appendix 1.

Apologies received from:

- Victor Badiola (OPPAO, Spain)
- Hugo Gonzalez (ANASOL-ARVI is represented by Purificación Fernández)
- John Hermse (Scallop Association, UK)
- Jesús Lourido García (Puerto de Celeiro, Spain)
- Jacques Pichon (ANOP, France)

The chairperson noted the presence of many people from this group.

- Approval of the agenda

The chairperson reminded participants that the aim of the meeting was to discuss the follow up of work on cod management in West Scotland and the implementation of a management plan for mixed demersal fisheries. The agenda was approved by members present.

- Approval of the minutes of the last meeting (Paris, 31 January 2013)

The minutes of the last meeting on 31 January 2013 in Paris, drawn up by Caroline Gamblin, were approved without any modifications.

2. Analysis of the focus group's working objectives and priorities

The chairperson reminded the meeting that the focus group had carried out significant work to develop an alternative approach to cod management in area VIa. TAC 0 does not allow for the appropriate management of cod. A statement relating to management measures *"breaking the cycle of decline in demersal fisheries in the West of Scotland"* was finalised, but was not received favourably. Estimating discards and associated mortality had been planned as well as proposing an alternative to TAC with the aim of reducing fishing mortality with technical measures. The position also proposed full documentation of catches. The focus group held in January 2013 consisted of reviewing the different actions to be implemented to draft the contents of the "management plan" for cod in West Scotland and appointing responsible persons for each assigned task.

It was not possible at that time to have an estimation of discards and F because ICES did not have these data. The first part of the plan could not be drafted. In July 2013 the ICES modified its view on discards data. This is a positive step. In the West of Scotland focus group (FG1) in November 2013, some members expressed reservations with regard to the process underway and the alternative process proposed within the focus group. Since then, no progress has been made. The actions have not progressed since February/March 2013.

The chairperson stated that he shared the idea of organising this focus group. He noted that implementing the landing obligation (LO) for discards in 2016 will have implications and will need to be taken into account in our work. Nevertheless, a focus group is only of interest if its work progresses.

Before going round the table to collect the opinions of members, the chairperson wished to give the floor to the scientists.

Jane Sandell (JS), in her capacity as WG1 chairperson, stated that efforts had been made following the last focus group in order to try to work on an agreement to finalise a document before the Council of Ministers in December 2013. Nevertheless, in view of the very short deadline, it was not possible to find a consensus.

Colm Lordan (CL) stated that indeed in 2012 cod catch data had a significant *"not allocated"* proportion. In 2013 this was reviewed and an estimation of discards was carried out. A table with the different total catch options is now provided in ICES advice. The option for $F_{total}=0.37$ in 2014 (close to objective $F=0.4$) thus corresponds to catches in 2014 with 190t and 40t of discards.

Barrie Deas (BD) presented the approach chosen within the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) Demersal Species Working Group. The NSAC began to debate the implementation of the LO. The aims are namely to reduce fishing mortality, reduce discards, ensure that rules are understood and observed by fishermen and introduce mixed fisheries considerations into management. The LO led to many uncertainties with regard to the viability of businesses. The NSAC thus decided to try and set itself objectives with a vision. To establish the draft position, tasks were distributed amongst members to work on different subjects (MSY, exemptions, etc.). This draft position is rather ambitious. The next meeting was planned for April. The NSAC wishes to work in close collaboration with Member States (MS), but this possibility does not yet seem very open. The NSAC has nevertheless sent an invitation for a Scheveningen MS group technical meeting to develop a discards atlas.

BD proposes continuing the work of the focus group including it in the wider issues of LO implementation.

JS indeed considered that both items now converge and that discussions on cod should restart within the framework of a long term management plan for mixed fisheries and in the shorter term on a “discards plan”. The focus group’s work would thus be re-included within WG1.

It was noted that other species pose problems also, such as whiting or haddock. It is important to have a global approach here and highlight the different problems posed by the implementation of LO.

The Focus Group chairperson wanted cod to be considered a priority and for a sub-group to be able to work more particularly on this subject.

JS considered that it is important upstream of FG1 to define a working method and a precise framework with objectives.

In order to prepare the next WG1, a proposal was made to work with key members identified at the previous focus group, and to review the 7 parts/elements of the document to revise it in light of art 15 of the new CFP Regulation. The aim was also to bring together the scientific data available.

Alexandre Rodríguez (AR), from the NWWAC Secretariat, informed members about the existence of the MAREFRAME FP7 project which deals with the implementation of the Framework Directive on Marine Strategy (MSFD) and includes multi-species interactions. He stated that the kick off meeting of the Case Study for the West of Scotland is planned to take place in May.

The Chairperson summarised the interventions and actions decided upon as follows:

- *This focus group's work is included in that of WG1 considering the fact that there is a link with new LO policy and work on the discards plan.*
- *The aim, so as not to lose work carried out, is to maintain a focus on cod and finalise a draft position for the July meeting.*
- *The secretariat will assist in compiling the scientific information available and those concerning the development of 7 actions/elements contained in the position paper. The items will then be discussed and updated by those who have already contributed to this work and taking into account the new landing obligation. A working method with clear aims will also be proposed.*

3. Update on Marine Protected Areas in Scotland

Michael McLeod (Marine Scotland) presented the state of play of discussions concerning Scotland's MPA: offshore MPA and SCI and the study on the effort displacement effects of fisheries. Details of the presentation are available on the NWWAC website.

Concerning offshore SAC: a workshop was planned in Edinburgh on 15 and 16 April. 4 sites concern North Western Waters AC and 1 the North Sea AC. Simultaneous interpretation services were provided. This meeting was open to EM, NGO, scientists, professionals and the Commission. All the details are available on the Scottish government's website.

With regard to MPA offshore proposals: responses to the consultation were studied and an alternative approach proposed namely for 3 sites (cf. map). An alternative had been proposed in pink but the JNCC wanted an equivalent in terms of ecological value. The new boundaries in blue were thus proposed. The next step is to discuss the different management scenarios. Several scenarios will be proposed. Professionals will be consulted by email. Sites must be named before 25 July 2014.

The study on the displacement of fisheries was launched. Meetings with fishermen to find out their point of view on management scenarios and possible consequences took place. A compilation phase for results is underway. The consultation phase will be opened up more extensively.

BA insisted on the need to have a coherent MPA network and thus on the need to widen the study. The chairperson thanked Marine Scotland for regularly informing the NWWAC on the state of progress of discussions concerning MPA.

End of Meeting

Appendix 1. List of participants

Chairpersons

Sean O'Donoghue (Focus Group)

Marc Ghiglia (General Assembly)

Bertie Armstrong (Executive Committee)

Jane Sandell (Working group 1)

Daniel Lefèvre (Working group 3)

Rapporteur

Caroline Gamblin

Secretariat

Michael Keatinge

Conor Nolan

Alexandre Rodríguez

Joanna McGrath

Members

Kara Brydson

Alan Coghill

Juan Carlos Corrás

John Crudden

Bruno Dachicourt

Barrie Deas

Purificación Fdez.

José Manuel Fdez.

Thierry Lepêtre

Olivier Le Nezet

John Lynch

Kevin McDonnell

Francis O'Donnell

Eibhlín O'Sullivan

José Luis Otero

Antony Viera

Observers

Stéphan Beaucher (Consultor)

Tom Blasdale (JNCC)

Isobel Bloor (University of Bangor)

Emiel Brouckaert (Rederscentrale)

Richard Curtin (BIM)

John Daly (Irish Seal Sanctuary)

Ramón de la Figuera (MAGRAMA)

Siobhán Egan (BirdWatch Ireland)

Robert Griffin (DG MARE)

Colm Lordan (Marine Institute)

Laurent Markovic (DG MARE)

Michael McLeod (Marine Scotland)

Rémi Méjécaze (French authorities)

Eduardo Míguez (EAFPA)

Sean Murray (Irish authorities)



Observers

Stéphanie Newman (IEEP)
Miquel Ortega (Fundació ENT)
Brendan Price (Environmental consultant)
Glenn Quelch (EFCA)
Dominic Rihan (DG MARE)
Cathrine Schrimmer (PEW)
Sara Vandamme (ILVO)
Liane Veitch (ClientEarth)
John Woodlock (ISS)