



## North Western Waters Advisory Council

### REPORT

**Working Group 4 – Irish Sea - ICES Area VIIa  
Budongo Lecture Room – Edinburgh Zoo  
Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014  
16:00 - 17:30**

Deputy Chair: Barrie Deas  
Rapporteur: John Crudden

#### **1. Welcome**

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Chairman Alan McCulla could not attend the meeting and, in absence of a Vice-Chair, had asked Barrie Deas to deputise in his place subject to the approval of the members. The meeting approved the proposal.

The Deputy Chairman, Barrie Deas, opened the meeting at 16:00 and welcomed all participants.

- Apologies: The meeting received apologies from Michael Keatinge (BIM), Alan McCulla (ANIFPO) and Francis O'Donnell (IFPO).

In keeping with the format set at the previous WG meetings the participants introduced themselves to the meeting. The full list of participants is shown in Annex I.

- Adoption of the agenda: The agenda as circulated was adopted without change.
- Adoption of the report from the last meeting: The report from the last WG4 meeting held in Paris on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 was adopted with one slight change to the content on the intervention of Emiel Brouckaert that was submitted in writing on the day before to the Secretariat.



## **2. Towards a Mixed Fisheries Management Plan for the Irish Sea**

Barrie Deas briefed the meeting on progress to date. The report of the last Irish Sea Focus Group meeting held in Dublin on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014 is available on the NWWAC website. The framework and objectives for the management plan have been drafted using the template from the Celtic Sea. However, we haven't been able to get past this stage. He suggested it was important to maintain momentum, given that the mixed fishery plans were now seen as the alternative to the discredited Cod Management Plan. We would either have to do the work ourselves or get someone to do it for us.

### **The Deputy Chair opened up the discussions to the floor.**

Roy Griffin (DG MARE) told the meeting that the institutional impasse between the Member States, the Commission and the European Parliament had been resolved and a provisional timetable for putting forward Multi Annual Management Plans (MAMPs) is now in place. STECF is currently undertaking a scoping exercise for some management plans with impact assessments requirements being available in six months. ICES will also deliver their advice in about six months. The Commission is likely to wait until there is an output from the DAMARA project, namely the decision support tool, before deciding whether it could be used as a model for the Irish Sea. This is work in progress so it will take one more year before there is any movement for the Irish Sea management plan. It is likely that the Member States will be asking for advice from the NWWAC towards the end of 2015.

Barrie Deas said that this at least provided us with a timetable to work towards with time available to avoid any pitfalls that might arise.

Emiel Brouckaert said that the Member States will be asking the ACs for their advice on discard plans by the end of 2014 or early 2015. He asked the Commission if we could combine this advice with those on management plans. The Commission replied that the advice for a management plan will not be needed until the end of 2015 at the earliest and the discard plans advice would be needed much sooner than that.

Sean O'Donoghue said that using the DAMARA Project was the best way forward. He asked for an update on the Discards Project Coordinator we had been discussing for the past six to eight months.

Conor Nolan, Executive Secretary of the AC, said that unfortunately the funding for the Project Coordinator did not materialise. It was now up to the NWWAC to rise the funding and develop a job description within the shortest delay. The Secretariat has recently reviewed the budget, and there might be money available to pay someone until the end of the year. It would be up to the Executive Committee to decide if we would proceed further.



Barrie Deas summarised the discussions:

1. The Member States and the Commission will be asking advice from the NWWAC on MAMPs and implementing the Landings Obligation.
2. The DAMARA Project although being developed for the Celtic Sea is likely to have direct utility for the Irish Sea
3. We need to draft a programme of work to deliver this before the next meeting.

**Action: Alan McCulla, Barrie Deas and the NWWAC Secretariat will draft a Programme of Work to develop regional discard plans for each AC Working Group area. In this regard the Secretariat will progress with the recruitment of a Discards Officer/Project Coordinator to help the NWWAC deliver these plans to the agreed timetable.**

### **3. Implementing the Landings Obligation for demersal stocks**

Barrie Deas asked if there was any update on the request to ICES in relation to the Cod and Sole audit. Emiel Brouckaert said that ILVO had received a negative response from the Commission to their request for funding however they continue to collate data on Irish Sea Sole in Belgium.

Sean O'Donoghue brought it to the notice of the meeting that the new CFP does not allow Technical Conservation Measures to be considered as a solution to be included in regional or fishery discard plans when implementing the Landings Obligation.

Liane Veitch asked could Technical Conservation Measures be included in light of Article 15.8 of the CFP Regulation.

Barrie Deas said that the Landings Obligation will require all species subject to a TAC to be landed. This will create an incentive for individual vessels to reduce unwanted catches and is likely to be the main driver for selectivity into the future. Unless there is demonstrable need for additional technical legislation this might prove to be an opportunity to move away from micromanagement and over prescriptive Technical Conservation Measures.

The Commission replied that this question had come up several times and the Commission line is clear, TCMs cannot be part of the discard plans as understood in the present moment. However, this interpretation could change as it will eventually come down to which institution is competent in deciding.

Colm O'Sulléibhán, observer from the Irish Administration, said that the question of the inclusion of technical conservation measures in Discard Plans was raised at a recent Council meeting and the Commission reinforced their view that they could not be included. However, the Commission did say that if derogation was sought it could be done by way of the Omnibus Regulation.



The Member States were of the view that the European Parliament could support this if asked but this was an opportunity for the newly elected members of the EP to undo progress made in the past. A draft amendment is currently being worked on by the Member States and could be included as part of the mandate to bring to the negotiations with the EP.

**Action: In light of the discussions above, it was agreed to ask the Executive Committee to write to the Commission and the Member States by putting a request to allow Technical Conservation Measures to be considered as part of Management Plans by way of an amendment to the Omnibus Regulation.**

Barrie Deas outlined the role of the Irish Sea WG in relation to the Landings Obligation. He said that we will be asked to advise on a list of topics including:

- How to define the various fisheries
- What will be the targeted species
- A gradual implementation of the LO, i.e. phases of introduction from 2016-2019
- Inter-species flexibility
- Quota flexibility
- Exemptions
- High survival rates
- Economic impact: disproportionate costs?
- Choke species

This is likely to be an iterative process but within a challenging timeframe. The Member States' thinking is evolving and scientific understanding is also evolving so our own thinking as a NWWAC needs to progress as well and this will be a big challenge for all concerned parties.

Emiel Brouckaert said that this will be a process for all Working Groups. We need to be in continuous contact with the Member States Group and cooperate with them in their evolving thought process.

Liane Veitch proposed that we establish a Focus Group / Horizontal Working Group for setting the high level objectives and then implement the different measures and continue with the specific work at Working Group level.

Alex Rodriguez, Secretariat, said that we are already working in this direction in the West of Scotland Steering Group.

Barrie Deas suggested that we could draft a series of questions to be addressed by all members as a basis for WG4's advice on the landings obligation.



This approach was agreed but it was highlighted that it would need cooperation from all participants and meeting deadlines.

Miquel Ortega said that we need to include people who are not members of specific WG in these discussions.

Conor Nolan said that the Discards Officer/Coordinator was central to this work. This was practical work that needs doing and requires a dedicated individual to do it. Speed and focus are essential requirements.

**Actions:**

- 1. The Secretariat will work on recruitment procedure for a Discards Project Officer.**
- 2. The Secretariat will circulate a questionnaire based on initial comments received**
- 3. Barrie Deas would prepare a draft questionnaire with a deadline for response from commercial interests, NGOs and scientists.**

#### **4. ICES advice on Irish Sea stocks**

There were no specific comments or questions on the ICES advice for 2015 from the members.

#### **5. Management of Skates and Rays**

Eibhlin O'Sullivan said that no progress had been made on these stocks since the last meeting. She asked that this item be deferred until later in the year when ICES advice on elasmobranchs (skates, rays and sharks) becomes available.

#### **6. Close of the meeting**

With no other business to discuss the Chairman thanked the participants for a very constructive meeting. He reminded the participants that there is a lot of work to be done in the short term and asked for their cooperation and support.

The Chair thanked the interpreters for the professional manner in which they conducted their business and the Scottish Government for kindly hosting and sponsoring the event.

**The meeting was adjourned at 17:00**



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

<b>MEMBERS</b>		
<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Surname/s</u></b>	<b><u>Organization</u></b>
Barrie	Deas	NFFO UK – <b>WG4 Deputy Chair</b>
John	Crudden	EAA – <b>WG4 Rapporteur</b>
Bertie	Armstrong	NWWAC Chairman
David	Beard	Manx Fish Producers Organisation
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Luc	Corbisier	SDVO
Dave	Cuthbert	New Under Ten Fishermen’s Association
John	Lynch	Irish Fishermen’s Organisation
Sean	O’Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen’s Organisation
Caitlín	Uí Aodha	Irish South & East FPO
Liane	Veitch	Client Earth
John	Ward	Irish Fish Producers Organisation
John	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary



<b>OBSERVERS</b>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Surname/s</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Stéphan	Beaucher	Fisheries Consultant
Andrew	Clayton	The Pew Charitable Trusts
Alan	Coghill	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Carmen	Fernández	ICES ACOM Vice-Chair
Iain	Glasgow	DEFRA – UK MS Rep.
Melanie	Gomes	BirdWatch Ireland
Robert	Griffin	DG MARE - European Commission
Laurent	Markovic	DG MARE - European Commission
Karen	McHarg	DEFA – Isle of Man – MS Rep.
Eibhlín	O'Sullivan	Irish South & West FPO
Miquel	Ortega	Fundació ENT
Glenn	Quelch	European Fisheries Control Agency
Cathrine	Schirmer	The Pew Charitable Trusts
Sara	Vandamme	ILVO

<b>NWWAC SECRETARIAT</b>		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Joanna	McGrath	Executive Assistant, Administration and Finances
Alex	Rodríguez	Executive Assistant, Fisheries Policy and Communication