



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

MINUTES

WORKING GROUP 1 **(West of Scotland and Western Approaches)**

Conference Room 01, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh
Wednesday 6th of July 2016
16:30 – 18:00

1. Welcome and introductions

The WG1 Chairman, Ross Dougal, welcomed the members and the attendees to the meeting. The full list of participants is included as an annex to these minutes. Apologies for absence were received from Luis Francisco Marin, Patrick Murphy and Francis O'Donnell.

The agenda¹ was adopted as drafted. The following action points from the last meeting in Paris, 3rd February 2016, had been completed:

- ACTION 1: *MAREFRAME* to arrange additional Webex meetings to develop alternative scenarios for testing. AC members to test the Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) model to explore how it can be used contribute to the decision making process;
- ACTION 2: The AC Secretariat to forward invitations to members for MPA workshops organised by the Scottish Government to ensure stakeholder participation;

The NWWAC Secretariat was asked to follow up on point 3:

- ACTION 3:** Mr McLeod to provide the areas of importance defined by the NGOs and Fishermen (i.e. the lines that were drawn) during the last workshop, to show the AC how discussions have progressed.

2. Drafting advice to inform the development of the EU TAC proposal

The Secretariat (Barbara Schoute) briefly presented the need for input from the Working Groups on regional issues that should be taken into account in the NWWAC response to the EC Consultation on fishing opportunities for 2017.

Based on the initial comments from the group, the Chair commented that, on the basis of previous working group meetings, the following general comment could be endorsed: the use

¹ All relevant documents to the meeting can be found on the NWWAC website: [link](#)

of single species advice for setting the TACs for stocks in mixed fisheries should be augmented with information on mixed fisheries interactions. The group also noted that Member States were in a position to challenge (single species) TAC proposals on the basis of additional information and that the NWWAC could advise if that were required.

The French industry informed the meeting about the specific case for saithe in the West of Scotland and North Sea. ICES advises an increase of 62% of the TAC in 2017, based on a new benchmark assessment and reference points, while the TAC for 2016 was a slight reduction compared to the previous year. This type of fluctuation was difficult to deal with for the fishing industry and it was proposed that the Commission look for a way to adjust the TAC for 2016 to take into account the new and improved perception of the stock status. Previously, a management plan was in place for this stock between the EU and Norway. The group encouraged the EC to continue the development of a new management plan that would avoid these fluctuations.

The Commission (DG MARE) representative (Robert Griffin) commented that in-year TAC changes could be looked into, but would be very time consuming and that a draft management plan would be sent to ICES in 2016 for evaluation. The ICES representative informed the meeting that the previous management plan was no longer considered relevant, due to the changes in reference points made at the benchmark in 2016. An update of the plan would be desirable.

Sean O'Donoghue commented that in the West of Scotland, the zero TAC advice for cod and whiting were very problematic, especially since zero TACs were considered to restrict landings rather than catches. He recommended that previous AC advice on "breaking the cycle of decline" from 2012² should be revisited. There was no other conclusion than that the current management had failed, and a new approach should be looked for.

Mr Griffin agreed that the zero TAC advice for these stocks showed a lack of recovery, which had been the objective of the management plan for cod. He indicated that new proposals for management plans should be able to demonstrate that they would result in a reduction in fishing mortality.

Mr O'Donoghue indicated that the purpose of a management plan proposal should be to gradually reduce fishing mortality, and to ensure that landings reflect the actual catches.

Alan Coghill noted that the problems in the cod and whiting fisheries implied that for future management, clarity was needed on the implementation of the Landing Obligation, because stocks with such low catch advice would need to be dealt with as potential chokes. He noted that the 2012 advice would need to be reviewed specifically because of changes in the stock distribution since then.

John Anderson agreed with previous speakers that zero TACs would not reduce fishing pressure. He suggested asking the EC to consider cod in the West of Scotland under the AC request for an evaluation of measures for marginal bycatch species³. The Secretariat informed the meeting that this request had been sent and had been based on the NWWAC advice to

² NWWAC opinion June 2012: [link](#), December 2012: [link](#).

³ NWWAC advice May 2017: [link](#)

Member States on the Landing Obligation, and only highlighted sole in divisions VIIIh-k (referred to in the Annex).

Mr Griffin indicated that a response from the Commission would be sent to the AC shortly, which would indicate a willingness to evaluate measures, but noted that the AC response did not take cod into account.

Mr O'Donoghue also suggested that the NWWAC should ask for an evaluation of the genetics of the distribution of cod stocks to see if the stock definition between the North Sea and North Western Waters should be reconsidered. Hugo González agreed with Mr O'Donoghue that effort was needed to find out what the problem was with cod in this area. He drew a comparison with the northern hake stock, where an industry-science study was set up to improve data collection when the stock was in a bad state. Members were informed that it had taken 8 years before the historic time series was deemed sufficient by scientists and during that period the stock had recovered.

The ICES representative indicated that depleted stocks may respond quickly to the right management measures, but that this took both good management and luck. For other stocks it had been shown that that recovery could take much longer and the timing of the recovery could not be guaranteed.

The meeting concluded that research into practical procedures to allow the quick implementation of new data sources into scientific assessments would be much welcomed, evaluating if this could be achieved in 3 years rather than 5 or more.

The chair summarised that the points raised at the meeting should be used in the drafting of the TAC consultation reply from the NWWAC. Specifically, the EC should be asked to consider an in-year increase for saithe, and ICES should be requested to investigate the genetic identity of cod in areas 4, 6 and 7.

The chair noted that for stocks such as: haddock, *Nephrops*, megrim and anglerfish, advice would be available in autumn and where this gives rise to specific comments, these will be sent to the EC by that time.

3. MPAs

The chair reminded the meeting that the Scottish national process to define MPAs and management measures had been a good process, where full consultation of all stakeholders was sought. The final proposal for management measures was, however, based on a political decision that went beyond the results of scientific and stakeholder consultation. It was felt that this reduced future interest in stakeholder engagement on the subject in Scotland. A broad brush, socio-economic evaluation had been presented, which was deemed insufficient to assess the implications from management measures for specific fleets and areas. Improvement of this evaluation would need additional data, to be provided by fisheries as well. The level of detail of the input data was very important to the usefulness of socio-economic evaluations.

The meeting agreed that both the direct and indirect effects of MPAs should be taken into account when evaluating both positive (e.g. increased fish stocks) and negative (e.g. financial and biological effects of displacement of effort) effects. VMS information was considered a very relevant tool when making decisions on management measures.

The group was also concerned about the appropriate consultation process for offshore MPAs. The Secretariat explained that when national measures for MAPs in CFP fishing areas were proposed, it was the duty of that Member State to consult the NWW group of relevant Member States (MS), now called the 'Article 11 subgroup' after the relevant CFP article. This group would produce a Joint Recommendation to the Commission similar to that on the Landing Obligation, after consulting the NWWAC. This process had been confirmed by the NWW MS group at the first meeting of the Art. 11 subgroup on the 26th April 2016. In the context of the result of the UK referendum to leave the EU however, it was unclear how the UK plans for MPAs would be dealt with in future.

4. MAREFRAME project

The Secretariat (Barbara Schoute) reminded the meeting about the previous presentations and updates on the Mareframe project. An invitation for a half day meeting on the 25th of August in Aberdeen had been circulated to the WG and members were urged to provide their input on scenario options in order to improve the modelling outcome of the project.

Hugo González suggested that the Secretariat could attend this type of meetings should members be unavailable due to other commitments and encouraged the Secretariat to take more time to attend these type of meetings on behalf of the AC.

The Secretariat (Conor Nolan) thanked Mr González for his confidence in the Secretariat but stressed that the Mareframe project required stakeholder input and had provided funding to the AC for this purpose. As the attendance of the Secretariat at meetings, which required stakeholder input would not provide the essential, practical feedback needed, it was the considered opinion of the Secretariat that members should attend meetings requiring such stakeholder input, whenever possible.

The Chair agreed and emphasised that the Mareframe project was looking for input from local stakeholders. If members were not available and the Secretariat was required to attend the meeting there would still remain a need for local stakeholders to provide input to the Secretariat to represent their views.

The SFPO (Kevin McDonell) and John Anderson indicated they intended to attend the meeting or at least provide input.

ACTION: The meeting agreed to look for further participants to the Mareframe meeting on the 25th of August 2016.

5. Technical measures

The meeting was asked to provide comments for input into the NWWAC response on the EC proposal for Technical Measures. Generically, the meeting was concerned with the effects of the proposed increase from 80mm to 120mm minimum mesh size for specific fisheries, specifically megrim and queen scallops.

As a general point, Juan Carlos Corrás Arias noted that it was important to request a correction of the proposal for fixed nets, adapting the proposal to the current situation, as was suggested in the aims of the proposal.

Julian Lamothe mentioned the specific protection areas for blue ling in the West of Scotland, which were set up when the stock was in a bad situation. The stock had since increased but it was noted that the proposal was to keep these areas. It was suggested that the AC argue against these closed areas unless sufficient reason for their need could be presented.

Mr O'Donoghue noted some general points, warning that detailed measures such as cod-end mesh sizes should be delegated to the regional MS and should be mentioned in the annexes rather than in the body of the regulation to avoid lengthy processes at EC level needed for regional changes. This also included management options such as Real Time Closures (RTCs), which would probably have to be defined and implemented on a regional basis.

A specific point on Deep Sea fisheries was made by Mr Corrás Arias, who asked the Commission to explain the political compromise that was reached between the Council and Parliament. The Commission representative (Mindaugas Kisieliauskas) indicated that the agreement had just been reached and that the final document was due in about two weeks. The agreement included a capacity maximum (2009 – 2011) and for EU waters the following measures were agreed:

1. Two kind of fishing authorisation for vessels:
 - Those vessels targeting deep sea species (min 8% of the total catch and > 10kt)
 - Those for vessels with bycatch of deep sea species
2. Trawling would be limited to waters less than 800 m
3. Catches of vulnerable marine species below 400 m need to be notified
4. An observer programme would be set up

The Commission noted that these measures were already in place in NEAFC waters and that the final document on Deep Sea species would be forwarded to the AC.

ACTION: Secretariat to forward information from the EC on the political agreement on Deep Sea fisheries management to AC members.

The Chair noted the comments and the meeting agreed that the minutes of the meeting should serve as draft input on the Commission's Technical Conservation Measures (TCM) proposals.

6. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair

The NWWAC Secretariat was asked to follow up on point 3 from the meeting in Paris:

ACTION 3: Mr McLeod to provide the areas of importance defined by the NGOs and Fishermen (i.e. the lines that were drawn) during the last workshop, to show the AC how discussions have progressed.

ACTION 4: The meeting agreed to look for further participants to the Mareframe meeting on the 25th of August 2016.

ACTION 5: Secretariat to forward information from the EC on the political agreement on Deep Sea fisheries management to AC members.

NWWAC Document
Chairman: Ross Dougal
Rapporteur: Barbara Schoute
Review and editing: Conor P. Nolan

Annex 1 – List of Participants

NWWAC members		
Dougal	Ross	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Anderson	John	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Bryan-Brown	Tom	Mallaig and North West Fishermen's Association
Coelho	Vera	The Pew Charitable Trusts
Coghill	Alan	Orkney Fish Producers Organisation
Corrás Arrias	Juan Carlos	Pescagalicia Arpega
Crudden	John	European Anglers Alliance
Ghiglia	Marc	Union des Armateurs de la Pêche en France
González	Hugo	Asociación Nacional de Armadores de Pesca de Gran Sol (ANASOL)
Lourido García	Jesús A.	Puerto de Celeiro S.A. OPP-77
Lynch	John	Irish Fishermen's Organisation
Ward	John	Irish Fish Producers Organisation
O'Donoghue	Sean	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Otero	José Luis	Lonja de la Coruña
Lamothe	Julien	Association Nationale des Organisation des Producteurs
Young	Iain	The Scottish White Fish Producers Association
Observers		
Chouinard	Ghislain	ICES
Ares Lago	Severino	Fundación Rendemento Económico Mínimo sostible e Social
Baxter	Emily	Cumbria Wildlife
Gamblin	Caroline	CNPMEM
Boyle	Hugo	Irish South & East FPO
Chaparro	Lydia	Fundació ENT
Egan	Siobhán	Birdwatch Ireland
Griffin	Roy	European Commission
Grossmann	Jenni	ClientEarth
Poza Poza	Juana	Mº DE AGRICULTURA
Symons	Despina	European Bureau for Conservation and Development
Veitch	Liane	ClientEarth
Kisieliauskas	Mindaugas	European Commission
NWWAC Secretariat		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Barbara	Schoute	Deputy Executive Secretary
Sara	Vandamme	Project Development and Communications Manager
Aoibhín	O Malley	Financial Administrator and Event Manager