



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

MINUTES

WORKING GROUP 2 (CELTIC SEA)

**Conference Room 01, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh
Wednesday 6th of July 2016
10:30 – 11:55**

1. Welcome

The Chairman, Jesús Lourido Garcia, 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 Francis O'Donnell, Luis Marin and Patrick Murphy.

The agenda¹ circulated ahead of the meeting was approved without amendment. The following action points from the last meeting in (2nd February 2016, Paris) were completed.

Emiel Brouckaert noted that the Focus Group on VIIfg sole had produced advice and an STECF evaluation of the suggestions will take place in October. The result of this evaluation could be taken into account for advice to be drafted for the Council meeting in December 2016.

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

The meeting was asked to provide input for a response from the NWWAC to the EC Consultation on the fishing opportunities for 2017, with reference to the information contained in the ICES advice.

The group considered that mixed fisheries implications were important and that the mixed demersal fisheries of the Celtic Sea were a reality that needed to be considered when setting single stock TACs.

The meeting also noted that economic impacts have not been properly considered.

The Commission position on the setting of the TACs was clarified: TAC proposals would be based on single stock catch advice to achieve MSY in 1 year (unless a management plan is in place).

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

Since economic and social arguments for alternative mechanisms to set TACs must be made by Member States in order to change the current EC approach, it was important that NWWAC input is sent to both the Commission and Member States.

The group raised general questions on the status of the cod stock in relation to cod stocks in neighbouring areas, asking for evaluation of the accuracy of the stock definition to be able to understand the influence of the recovery of different stocks in different areas.

Industry members noted that the changed status of megrim in the Celtic Sea (subareas 7 and 8) was difficult for fishermen to understand, since the move to an analytical assessment had resulted in advice for a lower TAC for 2017 than that of 2016, but still higher than recent catches. For fisheries in some Member States, where quota uptake was high, following this advice could result in megrim becoming a choke species.

Concerns were also registered that the ICES advice notes that existing technical measures for haddock in the Celtic Sea had not had the impact on selectivity observed by the assessment and there was no explanation for this. The assumption that discarding was only of small, juvenile fish was strongly considered to be wrong by professional fishermen. An artificially low TAC and greater abundance on the fishing grounds were identified as primary drivers for the discarding of this stock.

Reference was made to the choke situation of Belgian fisheries in 7.h-k. The 21 June letter from the NWWAC on alternatives for quota management of by-catch species used sole 7.h-k as an example. In this respect a question was raised whether there is no contradiction between article 15 of the CFP and article 16, the latter expressing that there should always be a possibility to fish for the available quota.

ACTION: The NWWAC should draft advice that clearly sets out:

- The responsibilities of ICES, the Commission and the Council, respectively, in the TAC setting process;
- The mixed fisheries considerations;
- The implications of using different timescales in achieving MSY other than within one year;
- The importance of understanding economic impact properly when setting TACs;
- Species specific issues, in particular megrim 7, cod 7e-k and haddock 7 b-k.

3. Nephrops advice

The previous NWWAC position on management measures for the Nephrops stock on the Porcupine Bank (FU16) will be reviewed and updated later in the year when the latest ICES advice and more information on management options becomes available from the Marine Institute in Galway.

ACTION: Sean O'Donoghue and the Focus Group on Nephrops will review and update the NWWAC position on Management measures for the Nephrops stock on the Porcupine Bank (FU16) in light of the latest information available, which is expected to be released in autumn 2016

4. Marine Protected Areas and Seabed management (seismic research)

Concerns about the Haig Fras SAC management measures were again raised by members who were asked to submit any additional evidence and arguments to the NWWAC Secretariat. These would be fed into the formal consultation process.

Concerns were raised about seismic exploration for oil and gas, which was growing in prevalence in the area covered by WG2 and had the potential for conflict with fishing interests.

ACTION: Additional evidence and arguments regarding the management measure proposed for the Haig Fras SAC should be submitted to the NWWAC Secretariat;

ACTION: Request that the NWWAC Executive Committee raise a concern regarding oil and gas exploration in North Western waters with the relevant authorities/bodies and insist that fishing interests are respected and properly consulted.

5. Technical measures

The meeting was asked to provide comments for input to the NWWAC response on the proposal for Technical Measures.

The main concern of the group was the proposed increase from 80mm to 120mm minimum mesh size. Particular concerns about the effects of increased mesh size on megrim and queen scallops were expressed. The group considered that ultra-mixed fisheries in the area would have significant problems with such a blanket increase in mesh size.

The group noted that a process of adaptation and phasing of any new proposals would be essential to avoid the economic elimination of many parts of the fleet.

ACTION: The NWWAC to draft advice on the Commission's Technical Conservation Measures (TCM) proposals that reflects the concerns raised by WG2.

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

ACTION 1: The NWWAC should draft advice that clearly sets out:

- The responsibilities of ICES, the Commission and the Council, respectively, in the TAC setting process;
- The mixed fisheries considerations;
- The implications of using different timescales in achieving MSY other than within one year;
- The importance of understanding economic impact properly when setting TACs;
- Species specific issues, in particular megrim 7, cod 7e-k and haddock 7 b-k.

ACTION 2: Sean O'Donoghue and the Focus Group on Nephrops will review and update the NWWAC position on Management measures for the Nephrops stock on the Porcupine Bank (FU16) in light of the latest information available, which is expected to be released in autumn 2016

ACTION 3: Additional evidence and arguments regarding the management measure proposed for the Haig Fras SAC should be submitted to the NWWAC Secretariat;

ACTION 4: Request that the NWWAC Executive Committee raise a concern regarding oil and gas exploration in North Western waters with the relevant authorities/bodies and insist that fishing interests are respected and properly consulted.

ACTION 5: The NWWAC to draft advice on the Commission's Technical Conservation Measures (TCM) proposals that reflects the concerns raised by WG2.

NWWAC Document
Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock
Review and editing: Barbara Schoute, Conor P. Nolan

Annex 1 – List of Participants

NWWAC members		
Lourido García	Jesús A.	Puerto de Celeiro S.A. OPP-77
Armstrong	Bertie	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Ares Lago	Severino	Fundación Rendemento Económico Mínimo sostible e Social
Boyle	Hugo	Irish South & East FPO
Brouckaert	Emiel	Rederscentrale
Chaparro	Lydia	Fundació ENT
Corrás Arrias	Juan Carlos	Pescagalicia Arpega Obarco
Crudden	John	European Anglers Alliance
Cuthbert	Dave	New Under Ten Fishermen's Association
Deas	Barrie	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
Egan	Siobhán	BirdWatch Ireland
Gamblin	Caroline	CNPMEM
Ghiglia	Marc	Union des armateurs de la pêche en France
González Garcia	Hugo	ANASOL
Le Bleis	Romain	CDPMEM du Finistère
Le Nézet	Olivier	CRPMEM de Bretagne
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 S.A.
Lamothe	Julien	Association Nationale des Organisation des Producteurs
Portus	Jim	South West FPO
Trebilcock	Paul	Cornish Fish Producers Organisation
Observers		
Ares Lago	Severino	Fundación Rendemento Económico Mínimo sostible e Social
Baxter	Emily	UK Wildlife Trust
Beaucher	Stéphan	Consultant
Brouzes	Richard	OPBN
Duane	Paul	Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority
Chouinard	Ghislain	ICES
Graham	Norman	European Commission
Griffin	Roy	European Commission
Grossmann	Jenni	ClientEarth
Venzat	Damien	OP COBRENORD
Francoise	Paul	CRPMEM de Basse Normandie
Poza Poza	Juana	Mº DE AGRICULTURA
Symons	Despina	European Bureau for Conservation and Development
Dougal	Ross	SFF
Meun	Geert	VisNed
Veitch	Liane	ClientEarth
Le Gurun	Marina	Blue Fish
Coquet	Pascal	CRPMEM Ht Normandie
Taylor	Phil	RSPB
Thomas	Dominique	OP CME
Hennuyer	Francois	FROM Nord
Le Barzic	Frank	Cobrenord
Coelho	Vera	PEW
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