



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

MINUTES

WORKING GROUP 3 – ENGLISH CHANNEL

Virtual meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday 10 March 2021

09:00 – 10:30 CET

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Pascal Coquet welcomed all participants. A round of introductions was held. A minute silence was held in honour of Hugo Boyle, long-time member of this group, who sadly passed away at the beginning of this year.

The agenda was adopted as drafted. Apologies were received from the Commission representatives late yesterday that they cannot attend but invite the members to provide written questions on topics that need more information.

Mathieu Vimard: Members mentioned in the Horizontal Working Group meeting yesterday the lack of attention by the COM regarding these meetings. And again, there is no presence of the COM in this meeting. We had sent a message that we were looking for a conversation on seabass specifically and feel that there is less and less interest by the Commission regarding our work.

Caroline Gamblin: I agree with Mathieu, we had the same issue at the NSAC in the last Demersal Working Group when the COM said they would not participate the day before and they stated that the Inter-AC would be the forum to address our queries. But we should tell them that these Inter-AC meeting cannot replace participation in individual AC Working Group meetings.

Chair: We could send a report stating that their presence is really important. I think that the negotiations regarding Brexit are not a good excuse for not attending. We have been having meetings for years and when we have questions, we need answers, and we also have deadlines that we need to stick to. I also think people in the ACs are getting less motivated and it feels like the COM is not listening to us anymore so why should we put in the work.

ACTION: Proposal to draft a letter to the COM on the need to improve communication and engagement with the NWWAC, following the COM lack of involvement in the AC March meetings.

Action points from the minutes of the last meeting (03 September 2020) included:

1. Regarding the confirmation of the chair and vice-chair positions, members deferred this decision until after the update by the FG Brexit at the General Assembly on 24 September.



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Members have the opportunity to elect an interim vice-Chair to be in charge until elections in September under item 2 of this agenda.

2. Review of ICES advice for undulate ray once released and then make a decision if the submission to the Commission is needed at that stage.

The advice was taken into consideration by the Joint NSAC/NWWAC Focus Group on Skates & Rays, which submitted advice on undulate ray to the COM on 9 December 2020. The COM replied to the advice on 10 February: at that stage, with ongoing negotiations with the UK, it was too soon to comment upon the level of the TAC. The COM suggested that collaboration with ICES is maintained on the topic.

2. Election and appointment of interim Working Group Vice-Chair

Mathieu Vimard volunteered for the position. Members agreed with his nomination and confirmed Mathieu Vimard as Vice-Chair until the elections in September 2021.

3. Update on discussions on the Scallop stock management in 7d

Secretariat: The last meeting of the Scallop Focus Group was held on 28 September 2020. Unfortunately, it was not possible for members to reach an agreement and it was decided to put the work of the group on hold to wait and see developments on the issue after Brexit. The NWW Member States Group is preparing a joint recommendation on the topic (the draft was distributed to members in advance of the meeting) so it would be interesting to hear from them on their work.

Pauline Joyeux: This Joint Recommendation has been debated for a long time and the conclusion was subject to the Brexit negotiations. The draft JR which was sent to the AC is the same as last year. This is a French initiative, and we would like to have this enforced as soon as possible, however, we are waiting for the finalisation of the TCA.

Chair: Thank you to the MSG for progressing this JR. We would like to discuss the possibility to introduce some technical measures, in particular regarding the ring size, and we would like to hear the colleagues' opinion on the Irish proposal for a 12 meters length limit on the towing pipe.

Manu Kelberine: I would like to know if the proposal for the western Channel in Annex 2 is set in stone or if we can make changes to this? Do you think the area could be extended? I would also like to join the Focus Group Scallop.

Pauline Joyeux: Thank you for your queries. We would need to have a consultation with the rest of the group about these items, unfortunately we still didn't have the time to discuss this JR properly with the other MS.



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Olivier Lepretre: I would like to say that I support the 12 metres length limit proposal for the towing pipe.

Dimitri Rogoff: Scallop management may still change in the context of Brexit. The JR that has been prepared just outlines the basic requirements needed for this fishery and we will have to add technical measures as Pascal was pointing out and considering extending the management area, because the French industry depends very much on this species. The ring size for example is very important and we have been talking about this for a long time now. We want to manage this resource also outside the French national waters, and we hope that the MS will give us the support in this. We hope that there is still room for improvement regarding the text of the JR.

Franck Le Barzic: I have a question on Annex 2, on which historical data was the closure area established?

Pauline Joyeux: This is a very interesting question, but unfortunately I don't have an answer right now.

John Lynch: The Irish industry broadly agrees with the proposed management for scallops in the Channel. One caveat they would have is that measures apply to all vessels including those under 15 meters of length. The closure dates can be agreed, but they should apply to all vessels of all sizes in line with the STECF comments. As mentioned earlier, the Irish industry supports the limit of 12 meters length on the towing pipe. We are not at this time ready to increase the ring or mesh size as the vessels would need to have two different types of gear for the two different areas. Bringing the small scallops on board and releasing them causes less damage than letting them out through a bigger ring. We definitely see the need for a good management plan for the scallop stock in the Channel that can benefit everyone, but it needs to apply to all fishers.

Chair: We have done a number of studies with regards to dredges ring size in France (Seledrag) and I would like to ask for John's proposal on this matter.

John Lynch: The current gear in Ireland is 80mm rings and we would need to discuss any changes with the industry, but they have been very reluctant to change.

Caroline Gamblin: From what I have heard, I think we can include a point of action in order to respond to the MS that we welcome this work and that indeed measured should be applied to all vessels. We need to tell them that those measures need to be implemented regardless of the size of the boat and this needs to be proposed also to UK vessels. We should be able to include technical measures. I believe we all agree that this is a first step and we could also include something on the size of the rings at a later stage, but we should already draft and advice on this.

Emiel Brouckaert: It would be good from this group to have a proposal to the ExCom to respond to the Joint Recommendation. We need to find a point of agreement in relation to the



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recommendation we are going to put forward: while it is worth to resume the Focus Group, I think the issues that Caroline mentioned are already a good starting point for a draft.

John Lynch: I agree with Caroline that we should go forward with these JR for consideration on Friday and we can discuss the other issues such as technical measures at a later stage.

Emiel Brouckaert: The Secretariat needs to decide the timeline for this recommendation. I assume WG3 will need to have a say on the draft recommendation before it is put forward to the ExCom.

ACTION: Secretariat to prepare a draft response on the Scallop JR, combining the comments put forward during the meeting, to be submitted to ExCom in written procedure after WG members have reviewed same.

Chair: For John Lynch's consideration, would it be possible maybe to increase the ring size to 97 cm in two years? In this way, the change is not too sudden for the Irish fishers and they would have time to adapt.

John Lynch: Yes, I certainly will discuss this with the fishermen and we look forward to further discussions, maybe at Focus Group level.

4. Update on management of the fly shoot/seine fishery in 7d

Caroline Gamblin: Last July I presented on this issue on seine fishing in the eastern part of the English Channel. This was about setting up the right structure for this type of fishery and we also presented our national and regional measures. We could not hold relevant discussions before the end of 2020, due to COVID 19 as well as the Brexit. A sector meeting with Belgian and Dutch representatives is planned for the end of March on this, and specifically we will talk about the details regarding the number of vessels in the eastern Channel, the technical measures, also geographical issues. We still need to give a few more details on the fishing effort and also on the minimum size we need to use for seine fisheries. Once this is concluded, we will be able to conclude the action point for the AC and will circulate the output to WG 3 and the ExCom. I can commit to drafting this text and circulate it. I will also add an update on scientific research: a study was carried out in 2010, this was a request that was made to the MS by French, Belgian and Dutch representatives and this was not carried out. This is linked to the end of the negotiations and we welcome that MS are already discussing this. The objective for this agreement is to go beyond the gentleman's agreement and include this in the Regulations.

Emiel Brouckaert: It would be good if this WG could agree that Caroline sends the draft gentlemen's agreement to the Secretariat and for approval to the ExCom. I think we can speed up the process for advice to the MS and start looking for an agreement on this.

ACTION: Caroline Gamblin to circulate the draft management plan on flyshoot fishery in the Channel. Members will be asked to provide input on it for the preparation of an advice.



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Olivier Lepretre: We need to stop the looting that is happening in the Channel right now, especially by the Dutch as there are no fish anymore. We know the problem is that Dutch vessels are gigantic, the Channel is too small and there are too many boats. We need to take action fast and need to come up with drastic solutions so that resources can come back to the Channel. Continuing as usual means we will just deplete the Channel of all resources.

Dimitri Rogoff: I would like to echo what Olivier just said. Fishers from Normandie only work in the eastern Channel and we saw the big Dutch vessels causing a lot of conflict in that area. The problem is that a lot of the species are not subject to quotas and the competition is getting ever bigger. In the northern part of the eastern Channel we really see resources dwindling and the dimensions of the boats is a real issues, going up from 20-25 meters to 30 meters boats. The conflict may grow even bigger if it not controlled by the European authorities. We should also provide transparency as there are a lot of boats coming to France which are not controlled by the French authorities and we do not know what is being landed.

Chair: I agree with Dimitri and Olivier and I would like to ask Geert Meun's opinion on this.

Geert Meun: We are all concerned, but it is not the right way to blame only one country for all the issues. If you look at the fleets that are involved, you can also see an increase in vessels under French and UK flags. Blaming each other is not the best way forward: to address these issues we all need to sit around the table, including the UK, as we all have a common interest, which is to find a solution. For the Dutch industry, discussions on effort limitation are also possible, we are open for implementing measures and regulating the fisheries in the Channel. The Dutch fishermen and fly shooters are also concerned about these issues in the Channel, they agree that arrangements are needed to decrease the effort and lead to stocks recovery.

Mathieu Vimard: When mentioning the increase of fishing effort in the Channel, I have a question that was asked to the French authorities and never received an answer, so I would like to propose it is brought to the attention of the Commission. The access to the eastern Channel area is regulated by fishing authorizations under the cod recovery plan. Before it was covered by a contingency of kilowatts obtained through historic data of fishing effort in the Channel and North Sea. The plan has been reviewed two years ago and normally there should be only the historic activity in the eastern Channel which allows fishing in the eastern Channel. We are regularly seeing new vessels, more modern and powerful, and we are wondering if capacities historically linked to the North Sea are being used to work in the eastern Channel. At the French level, we did a review to check this and have asked our ministry to ask the COM to perform a state of play analysis of this ceiling for the other MS, as it seems that the reduction on the kilowatts was not implemented for all nationalities.

ACTION: Submit question to the COM asking to clarify the implementation of capacity ceilings and fishing authorisations in the Channel (Art 12 Reg (EU) 2018/973).



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As the group was running out of time, members proposed to organise an additional meeting, as it was not possible to discuss the three remaining items on the agenda.

ACTION: Secretariat to liaise with WG3 Chair to organize a second meeting of WG3 in order to address items on the agenda that could not be discussed on 10 March for lack of time (seabass, whelk, improving functioning of the AC)

5. Review of progress, summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted (Chair)

1	Proposal to draft a letter to the COM on the need to improve communication and engagement with the NWWAC, following the COM lack of involvement in the AC March meetings.
2	Secretariat to prepare a draft response on the Scallop JR, combining the comments put forward during the meeting, to be submitted to ExCom in written procedure after WG members have reviewed same.
3	Caroline Gamblin to circulate the draft management plan on flyshoot fishery in the Channel. Members will be asked to provide input on it for the preparation of an advice.
4	Submit question to the COM asking to clarify the implementation of capacity ceilings and fishing authorisations in the Channel (Art 12 Reg (EU) 2018/973)
5	Secretariat to liaise with WG3 Chair to organize a second meeting of WG3 in order to address items on the agenda that could not be discussed on 10 March for lack of time (seabass, whelk, improving functioning of the AC)

6. List of participants

Name	Organisation
Anais Mourtada (observer)	CNPMEM
Caroline Gamblin	CNPMEM
Catherine Paul (observer)	CRPMEM Normandie
Delphine Roncin	FromNORD
Dimitri Rogoff	CRPMEM Normandie
Dominique Thomas	OPCMEMMN
Egon Patteuw (observer)	NWW Member States Group (BE)
Emiel Brouckart	Rederscentrale
Frank Le Barzick	Cobrenord
Geert Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij
Gerald Hussenot	BlueFish
Jean-Marie Robert	Pêcheurs de Bretagne
John Lynch	ISEFPO
Juan Antonio Espejo (observer)	NWW Member States Group (ES)
Llibori Martinez	IFSUA
Manu Kelberine	CDPMEM 22



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Mathieu Vimard	Organisation des Pêcheurs Normands
Norah Parke (observer)	KFO
Olivier Lepretre	CRPMEM Hauts de France
Pascal Coquet	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Pauline Joyeux (observer)	NWW Member States Group (FR)
Sonia Muller	CRPMEM Normandie