



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
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MINUTES

WORKING GROUP 3 - ENGLISH CHANNEL

Virtual meeting

Tuesday 15 March 2022

15:15 – 17:00 CET

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Pascal Coquet welcomed all participants to the meeting. The chair of Member States Group had sent his apologies. Margot Angibaud (CNPMEM) took the seat of Anais Mourtada (CNPMEM) for the meeting. The agenda was adopted with the addition of the fuel crisis as a topic for discussion.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion on the fuel crisis. Vallerani briefly introduced what had been discussed at previous Working Group meetings, including the letter to the Commission, which had been sent on Monday as a joint submission with the NSAC. She detailed how the discussions in the Horizontal Working Group had led to a first draft of a second letter on precise recommendations on fuel crisis. Vallerani reported that this letter was yet open for input and to be discussed at ExCom before being sent to the Commission.

Mo Mathies reported that there were two initiatives happening at other ACs. The first was the idea to set up a focus group to examine the impact of the war in the Ukraine on the seafood sector. The other was to convene ACs urgently to draft a joint response to the Commission which was an action point for the ExCom the following day.

Olivier Lepretre asked if it would be possible to review the second letter and how much time was available to to modify it. Mathies shared the draft letter on screen giving members the opportunity to review it and include any further comments before it would be sent to the NWWAC Chair. She also mentioned that the ExCom meeting was open to be observed tomorrow.

Lepretre asked about including the idea of adding a tax fuel on kilos of fish sold or a possible indexation on kilos of fish sold to account for the cost of fuel. Mathies wondered if this could be a point on marketing initiatives at EU and national level as the industry can't pass costs onto customers. They agreed to discuss this point again during the ExCom meeting.

Mathieu Vimard seconded Lepretres proposal. He commented that in other sectors the costs are passed onto the final consumer. He detailed the cost of fuel in France had risen to 1- 1.20€/l for fishermen which had provoked strikes.

Sander Meyns explained the situation in Belgium was that one vessel had stopped fishing and with prices at 1 -1.2€/l other vessels were fishing but may not go back to sea.



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John Lynch felt it was a supply issue and that if this was resolved reasonable prices could be secured. He reported on a meeting with the Irish Minister last week how the return to the vessel from retail price was 10 -15% of end prices. He felt this return was very low and that the fuel crisis was highlighting this. He reported that the prices in Ireland were the same for the fishermen, and that most vessels are at sea but would not return to fish if the fuel prices remained high.

ACTION POINT: Secretariat to collect comments from members on fuel crisis and collate them in the letter for discussion at ExCom.

Vallerani outlined the progress made on the action points from the minutes of the last meeting (09 September 2021, virtual):

- 1 The Secretariat will draft a letter to the Commission to request that the implications of Brexit (in particular the new UK technical measures) be taken into account when setting the Fishing Opportunities for 2022.

Point raised in both the 2022 fishing opportunities advice and in the 2021 choke risk advice. The issue of the divergence of technical measures between the EU and the UK and the importance of timely notifications on new measures to be implemented in the UK were also regularly raised with Member States.

- 2 Highlight the importance of collecting information on the implementation of Article 12 of the North Sea MAP.

Raised in meetings with MS Group and a letter was sent to both COM and MS on 11 October 2021. Further discussion under Agenda Item 3.

- 3 Organize a meeting of the Focus Group Scallop to continue work on technical measures.

Not yet possible to arrange a meeting. Topic to be discussed under item 3 of the agenda.

- 4 The Secretariat to contact the Commission for an update on seabass and on the catch allocation tool.

The joint NWWAC/NSAC Focus Group Seabass provided advice on seabass to the Commission on November 10, 2021. The Commission responded on December 9, 2021. Further discussion under item 3 of this agenda.

2. Review of TACs and quotas in ICES area 7d,e in light of bilateral EU/UK and Tri-lateral negotiations and arrangements for TAC recommendations 2023

Vallerani introduced the representatives from DG MARE (Cristina Ribeiro and Paulo Vasconcelos). Ribeiro gave an overview on the tentative calendar for the consultations in 2022 regarding the fishing opportunities and the upcoming work. She mentioned that the bulk of the work will be carried out in the second half of the year. This is to coincide with the release of ICES advice as in other years. She



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reported that EU-UK and EU-Norway consultations would take place in the last week of October. The provisional calendar also planned other consultations relevant to the Channel such as sprat to take place in early May. She advised that besides the consultations themselves, planning was taking place for the meetings of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF) which would take place by the end of April, and again in July and September. Ribeiro explained that there could be a disruption to ICES advice by the conflict in Ukraine as ICES had halted their meetings until the beginning of April. Ribeiro reported that there are many topics that were committed to be discussed in the Written Record but the priority of which have not yet been agreed. She highlighted two points that were important for the English Channel. The first was that the TAC for plaice doesn't coincide with the advice, because the stock distribution and the management area are different. The second point was the allocations for sprat, which would be discussed to be amended to follow the calendar year.

The Chair expressed his surprise that ICES had stopped working. Ribeiro explained that as Russia was one of the members of ICES, they were working on a strategy to deal with the situation and as soon as there was an information it would be passed on.

Manu Kelberine requested an update on the membership of the Anglo-Norman islands in the Specialized Committee on Fisheries. Ribeiro replied that the talks were continuing on the forum for this Committee and as yet she didn't have an answer to give.

Mo Mathies mentioned that there were discussions with the other ACs in the process of writing to the Commission to confirm the arrangements for this Committee.

3. Dialogue with DG MARE and NWW MSG on:

Management of fishing effort in the Channel

Vimard explained that this topic relates to the application of article 12 of the North Sea Multiannual Plan, as the number of vessels in 7d is increasing. Joyeux replied that the topic is on the agenda of the Scheveningen Member States Group. It was decided to collect information on authorizations and licences in the different Member States to have a clearer picture of the situation.

Vimard raised a question for Lynch and Meyns regarding when their ships requested to fish in the Eastern Channel would they get authorisation. Lynch replied that their vessels only fish in the Channel for scallop. He continued by mentioning that years previously the vessels had fished for cuttle fish, but he confirmed that his organisation didn't have demersal vessels targeting TAC stocks in the area. Meyns added that the Belgian fleet had a lot of activity in the Channel and had authorisation to fish there.

Vimard explained how the French administration was interpreting the regulation and questioned what can be done to regulate fishing effort in the Channel if there are no limits. He felt there was an alarming situation in the stocks and no control of fishing activity. A new regulatory framework is needed.

Vallerani explained that she would keep the members updated as to what happened at Member States level. She mentioned that letters had been sent to the Commission regarding this and reply was that an STECF expert working group was being set up and planning to discuss this topic as well. Paulo Vasconcelos commented that he expected the data call and expert group would improve the



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knowledge on the topic.

Brouckaert mentioned that an advice request was sent to ICES regarding the effort level in the Channel and wondered whether this was now being dealt with by the STECF. Vasconcelos confirmed that this subject would be dealt with by the expert group and the SCF will focus on non-quota species in their discussions.

EU-UK Technical Measures

Ribeiro mentioned that she had no specific point for discussion regarding EU-UK technical measures in the English Channel but wondered if there could be interrelated subjects with the Celtic Sea that might be discussed.

Whelk

Vimard asked whether the recommendation by the working group on whelk was being considered by DG MARE and questioned why the proposed measures for the EU EEZ were not being explored.

Vasconcelos thanked the NWWAC for issuing the advice, however this and other non-quota stocks can only be dealt within the SCF. He emphasised that this would be a priority topic for the SCF and an STECF expert group had been launched to advance solid management measures in the EU for non-quota stocks. He stressed that it was very important to gather more scientific evidence before adopting the technical measures for these stocks.

Vimard felt that it was unfortunate as there was no need to wait for science in order to be more selective. Xavier Tétard supported Vimard, adding that the scientific data had been collected and selectivity studies had been completed. Vasconcelos agreed that there was some knowledge on these stocks but that it was scattered between various research agencies across the EU. The aim of the STECF expert group is to gather and improve this knowledge to have solid information on these stocks before new technical measures are implemented.

Vallerani asked whether it was too late to provide recommendations on the terms of reference for the expert working group. She also queried if and how the Advisory Council could contribute to the work of this group. Vasconcelos confirmed that the ToR had already been delivered to the expert working group. He mentioned that he had sent an email to the NWWAC and NSAC to invite nominations of experts to participate in the expert group.

Vimard requested details on the data the Commission would need and offered to compile the data and studies available if a specific timeframe could be agreed on. He felt that a lot of work had been done in the NWWAC and wanted to provide the information that was expected. This should be given priority as it had been postponed on many occasions. Lepretre agreed that the advice provided to the Commission reflected what was seen on the fishing grounds but felt this was not being listened to. He queried whether this advice on whelk would be considered so that measures could be taken to preserve the resource.



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Vasconcelos felt this comment was unfair as the Commission was dealing with a growing number of recommendations by ACs that reflect the needs of the sector. He reported that the Commission was doing its utmost to incorporate recommendations into legislation to enable the adoption of measures.

Vallerani queried if the best way to progress would be to follow the work of the STECF closely or if it was possible to send an observer to the working group. Vasconcelos explained that the working group was not open to observers due to the sensitive nature of the discussions, but experts nominated by the AC could be invited. The AC should contact the chair of the expert group who would be able to provide the type of information and expertise that is required for the working group. This information would also be available on the website of STECF.

ACTION POINT: Members to propose experts for STECF EWG on non-quota species. The Secretariat will send an email informing on the application procedure and deadlines.

Scallop

Vallerani introduced the topic and asked for an update on the implementation of the delegated act. Vasconcelos explained that the draft delegated regulation had been revised internally and was shared the previous Friday with Member States, giving them the opportunity to provide their comments on the draft regulation. Joyeux commented that it hadn't been received and if it could be provided.

The Chair asked if Ireland was testing mesh sizes for scallop. Lynch replied that trials weren't being conducted presently, but that fishers were willing to trial larger ring sizes if observers were on board and if the cost of the gear would be covered. He also reported that some fishers were using 80mm rings but that these would wear to 90mm after a few days use, and this was relevant to the minimum landing size with negligible discards. The Chair agreed that the larger rings would need to be trialled. He reported that in French trials no loss of catch was seen and agreed that subsidies would be needed to test larger rings.

Seabass

Vasconcelos reported that the Commission was waiting to start the work within the SCF, which would involve engagement with the UK. He acknowledged the delay and frustration with the process.

David Vertgaal queried whether the improvement of the catch allocation tool was among the priorities to address. He stressed that the tool is still not fit for purpose and needs to be fixed before it is used for discussing management measures for the next year. Vasconcelos said that he would take note and pass to his colleague that was dealing with this file.

Vimard stressed his frustration that nothing has been done to improve the tool and felt it was not enough to postpone this again. Kelberine expressed his agreement with Vimard and added that this tool had been a failure for the past two years and maybe it was time to abandon it.



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Vertegaal mentioned that he still felt it was possible to get to a model that does justice to reality. He explained that the data was there but what was missing was a reliable estimate of the number of ships in the area that may catch seabass. He suggested to send a reminder to the Commission on the recommendations and concerns expressed by the NWWAC on the tool.

ACTION POINT: A reminder should be sent to the Commission on the recommendations made by the NWWAC on the use of the seabass catches allocation tool.

4. Discussion and inputs on Discard Plan

Vallerani explained that in preparation of advice on JR Discard Plan 2023 comments were welcome from the group and that the Focus Group Landing Obligation would draft the advice. She suggested that due to there being no further updates from the Member States group and time constraints, it would be pertinent to move on. She also mentioned that the Secretariat would be happy to receive input on the Discard Plan via email. The Chair agreed and closed the meeting.

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

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|---|---|
| 1 | Secretariat to collect comments from members on fuel crisis and collate them in the letter for discussion at ExCom |
| 2 | Members to propose experts for STECF EWG on non-quota species. The Secretariat will send an email informing on the application procedure and deadlines. |
| 3 | A reminder should be sent to the Commission on the recommendations made by the NWWAC on the use of the seabass catches allocation tool. |

6. List of participants

| NWWAC members | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Margot Angibaud | CNPMEM |
| Patrick Murphy | IS&WPO |
| Olivier Lepretre | CRPMEM Hauts de France |
| Mathieu Vimard | OPN |
| Pascal Coquet | France Peche Durable et Responsable |
| Xavier Tetard | CRPMEM Normandie |
| Dominique Thomas | OPCMEMMN |
| Manu Kelberine | CDPMEM 22 |
| Gerland Hussenot Desenonges | Blue Fish |
| Jean-Marie Robert | Pêcheurs de Bretagne |
| Delphine Roncin | FROM Nord |



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| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Julien Lamothe | ANOP |
| Emiel Brouckaert | Rederscentrale |
| John Lynch | ISEFPO |
| Aodh O' Domhnaill | Irish Fish Producers Organisation |
| Sander Meyns | Rederscentrale |
| David Vertegaal | EAA |
| Corentine Piton | France Peche Durable et Responsable |
| Franck Le Barzic | COBRENORD |
| Experts and observers | |
| Léa Pertel | French Administration |
| Caroline Gamblin | MSC |
| Pauline Joyeux | French Administration |
| Paulo Vasconcelos | DG MARE |
| Cristina Ribeiro | DG MARE |
| NWWAC Secretariat | |
| Deirdre Hoare | Rapporteur |
| Mo Mathies | Executive Secretary |
| Matilde Vallerani | Deputy Executive Secretary |