



DRAFT Minutes

WORKING GROUP 3 (ENGLISH CHANNEL)

Wednesday 14 September 2022

13:30 – 15:00 CET

1. Welcome and introductions

The Vice-Chair Mathieu Vimard welcomed all participants and specifically the representatives from DG MARE and the Member States. Apologies were received from the Chair Pascal Coquet (FPDR) and Dominique Thomas. The agenda was adopted.

David Curtis mentioned that the UK is commencing work on a fisheries management plan on the Channel demersal non-quota stocks. He wondered if this was of interest to this Working Group.

The Vice-Chair stated that this was of great interest and could be include under agenda item 5.

- Action points from the minutes of the last meeting (4 July 2022)

1	Members to send comments on ICES advice and recommendations for issue to be included in fishing opportunities advice to the Secretariat Done – Fishing Opportunities advice delivered to the Commission on 25 August
2	Work of FG Seabass to resume. Secretariat to circulate email to previous and prospective members In progress – first meeting held on 8 September. This is again a joint Focus Group with the North Sea Advisory Council.
3	Members to review advice on whelk and scallop to establish if updates are needed prior to submission to COM at beginning of September. In progress – Members agreed that previous advice is still relevant. The Secretariat sent both recommendations as reminders to the Commission on 1 September. Further discussions on if/how to progress the work will take place under agenda item 3.
4	Secretariat to share 2022 Choke ID tool following an update on exemptions on technical measures for members to provide comments to feed advice preparation by the FG LO In progress – to be discussed under agenda item 2.

1. Discussion on choke risks in the Channel

The Secretariat shared the NWWAC traffic light tool on chokes and recalled its functionality to the members.

Withing 7d



Arthur Yon commented that the TAC is connected to the whole area 7 TAC so the risk should be increased to moderate.

Emiel Brouckaert agreed with this proposal or an even more serious increase to high risk as the North Sea also needs to be taken into account especially in light of the 0 TAC advice in other areas.

The Secretariat proposed to bring this discussion forward to the Focus Group Landing Obligation who will finalise this work.

Sole 7d

Vimard commented on the available knowledge regarding survivability and referred to the need to improve knowledge on survival rate on bigger vessels in areas that go beyond the coastal fringe.

Sole 7e

Franck Le Barzic commented on the specific exemption on the coastal strip in 7d and e. A survivability study was carried out and a document was submitted for the Joint Recommendation which hopefully will be included in the next document.

Cod 7d

Vimard suggested to include the same comment as in the previous year with the additional comment regarding the increase in abundance. This species seemed to have also disappeared from the Channel area but since the beginning of the year abundance seems to have increased which has also been noticed by ICES. Potentially here caution is needed and a closer look due to the variations may be needed.

No comments were received on plaice 7d, plaice 7e, skates & rays 7d and sprat 7d,e.

ACTION: Secretariat to update and finalise the choke traffic light tool based on today's discussions taking into account previous NWWAC advice.

2. Focus Group update

- Sea bass

A meeting was held last week in order to develop advice. Members were again the same as in the previous year. A question has arisen on the need to maintain the stock under the current fishing ban and if this is ban is still justified. Members of the group had their own interpretation of the state of the stock and agreed on keeping the current framework in place and maintain the current level of catches. For commercial fishing, the regulations are up to date and the level of discards is quite large, which



is a pity. A transformation of discards into landings would be beneficial. This specifically affects fly shooters. Currently the limit is on a bi-monthly basis, however, the same amount could be kept on an annual basis. The limit of 5% per fishing day is a protection to ensure this is not a targeted fishery. Regarding recreational fishing, the Commission developed a tool for the distribution of catches. The recommendations for the modification of this tool were included but there has been no update since May. The data that is integrated in this tool is quite reliable for commercial fisheries but not for recreational. The recommendation is to increase the bag limit from 2 to 3 fishes per bag and the open season increased from 9 to 10 months. Due to the lack of data the consequences of these actions cannot be evaluated taking this recommendation a minority proposal.

The Secretariat confirmed that the draft is currently being developed and that it is hoped to deliver this by mid-October.

Manu Kelberine stated that the industry position on removing the ban in March would be only considered for seiners and trawlers as they have higher discard rates.

David Curtis clarified that the take season for sea angling of 10 months includes a closed season in January and February, which is slightly different to the commercial closure in February and March. He pointed out that there are data deficiencies on both sides and stated that 2012 data used on recreational fishing is not satisfactory and data is urgently needed on this. The recreational sector is also frustrated with the lack of data on discarding from certain parts of the commercial sector.

The Chair invited the Dutch and Irish colleagues to intervene if needed.

John Lynch stated that commercial fishing on seabass is banned in Ireland. There are some discards though as part of Irish fishing activity.

The Vice-Chair asked Lynch if he shared the ICES opinion regarding the recovery of the stock?

Lynch replied that there is no interest in the stock from an Irish point of view.

Geert Meun confirmed that in the Netherlands an improvement of the stock has been observed but that the discard rates are much too high, which is related to the small bycatch allocation under the legislation. Management is necessary but it is felt that the current regulation is not the right way forward as it is very frustrating to the fishers.

The Vice-Chair asked if the Secretariat had sent any comments on the catch distribution tool.

The Secretariat confirmed that a letter had been submitted to the Commission in spring and that the Commission reported that the Terms of Reference had been agreed for the use of the tool which have been sent to ICES. A benchmark is being carried out in 2023 which will influence the development of the tool. It is estimated that the tool will be ready in time for 2024 management measures.

- Whelk

Xavier Tétard, Chair of the Focus Group, stated that the FG is sending the advice back to the



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Commission for additional review and discussion. There is an urgent need to work on this and assistance is needed.

Paulo Vasconcelos stated that the Commission is addressing whelk as part of the broader topic of non-quota stocks. Under the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, wider management plans are being looked at and multi-year strategies. He thanked the NWWAC for resending the previous submissions.

The Secretariat queried if any specific updates came from a meeting of the French sector and if the FG should be put on hold or should a meeting be organised in the near future.

Tétard stated that the French meeting has not yet taken place and that the FG should reconvene to update the recommendations.

The Vice-Chair confirmed that for the Channel fishers recently there has been only a very low yield. Low yields during the summer are usual but this time the low yields have extended beyond the summer months. But this shows again how important it is to have management measures in place. He felt that the proposals provided will not be implemented prior to the Commission's multi-annual strategy. Is there any indication of a timeline and when the Commission might move forward on this topic?

Vasconcelos stated that the non-paper on the multi-year strategies needed to be finished and agreed first. Based on these strategies for individual species can be developed. The test multi-year strategy should focus on King Scallop in the Channel. But no concrete timeline is available now.

The Chair felt that this was not very satisfactory as these situations are reality for the fishers at sea and it is vital to understand the situation in the field. We understand that the Commission is thankful for the information provided by the AC, but the AC does not always see how the proposals are being used.

Vasconcelos reassured members that all submissions are highly valuable and explained that every step in this work needs endorsement from the MS as well as the UK side making progress slow. He stated that whenever management measures are suitable for the sustainable development of the species they will be used as a basis for the development of multi-annual strategies.

Manu Kelberine stated that he felt it was hard to understand that in this WG did everything possible to avoid interfering in the EU-UK negotiations. Therefore, the group only dealt with the EU waters and he felt it was surprising that there is no scientific back up and now it is stated that this is a political issue.

The Chair added that UK's proposals are implemented immediately, for example the 2023 measures. This group proposed measures only for the EU waters to speed up this process and it seems the UK is far more reactive, while the EU is dealing with a much longer consultation process.

Tétard added that it is difficult to understand that the measures were a framework more than specific measures and it is disappointing to see some resistance in progress.



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ACTION: Tétard to provide an update on the French sector meeting to identify way forward for this FG.

- Scallop

Lynch supported the statements from the French industry and felt that the measures that had been agreed between the French and the Irish should have been put forward. He stated that the UK brought in a closure from 01 July to 30 September without any consultation for the scallop dredge fishery in 7a. In Ireland a trial will be carried out on the 97mm ring size in spring 2023. With regards to the French proposal to extend all closures to area 7, this will pose a large issue to the Irish scallop fleet which is licensed only for scallop fishing. Dates for the trials are not yet confirmed.

The Secretariat asked the Vice-Chair if this FG should be put on hold since the advice was provided in 2021 and the group has not met since.

Lynch felt that further meetings of this FG would be beneficial.

The Vice-Chair stated that technical measures were updated this year and the closure in 7d between 15 May and 30 September was extended to 15 October.

Lynch stated that he understood there was a proposal to close all of area 7 from 15 May to 30 September.

The Vice-Chair did not think that this was the case and that the focus was on mesh size (97mm) and the maximum length of the beams (12m).

Anais Mourtada confirmed that she was also not aware of any discussion regarding closing all of area 7.

Lynch thanked the French colleagues for the clarification. He will look for supporting evidence for the 12m beam length.

Mourtada stated that the FG may come with additional measures for a recommendation which the French industry would like to submit to the administration.

The Vice-Chair stated that it would be useful to have an update from the UK for these meetings as well. He stated that in 7d the UK closed from 30 August to 30 September which is very different from the EU closure from 15 May to 30 September.

ACTION: The Secretariat will organise meetings for both FG Whelk and Scallop in October to follow up on previous recommendations.

3. Presentation by DEFRA on the HPMA initiative (tbc)

The UK launched a consultation on 5 Highly Protected Marine Areas, 3 of which could affect EU



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stakeholders. A meeting was held on 15 August which was attended by the Secretariat and a report is available on the Members Area. AC members have been invited to attend a Focus Group meeting on 22 September which is being held online and the Secretariat will circulate the link to members.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Secretariat for making available the information but felt that all information that had been provided was very repetitive. There seem to be no reference points and the information provided is very general. He stated that he felt that each organisation should put forward their positions and that no AC position can be shared yet.

The Secretariat confirmed that its attendance is for reporting purposes only and that no AC position will be put forward.

ACTION: The Secretariat to share link to DEFRA Focus Group on Dolphin Head HPMA and attend for reporting purposes only.

4. UK consultation on flyshoot fishing

There is an increase in flyshoot fishing in the UK which increases the pressure on non-quota species. There is a UK consultation on new technical measures in order to protect vulnerable stocks with the idea to improve data collection as these stocks are not subject to TACs and scientific research. Very concrete proposals are included, for example licences, technical measures, applied in the UK zone and a limit to vessel power, gear and mesh size. Flyshooting is a difficult topic for the EU as well with discussions and consultations regarding the French waters under way. The French administration has stated that there should be an amendment to the CFP as it is not a traditional fishing technique. More coordination is needed, and it is important to understand what is happening on the UK side and if the AC should enter into this dialogue.

The Secretariat asked if members would be interested in preparing an AC response to this consultation, for example via a task force. Members can of course respond in their own right.

Mourtada wondered if within this WG something could be done similar to Working Group 2 to collate the data on EU activities, i.e., what are the practices by EU vessels involved in flyshooting.

The Secretariat stated that the Scheveningen Group collected information so some data should be available.

Mourtada stated that the Channel is more specific and data could be collected separately from the North Sea.

ACTION: Secretariat to enquire the NWW MSG about information on flyshoot fishing activities in EU waters. If data is available, an ad-hoc group could be established to respond to the UK consultation on the matter.

Curtis asked for clarification if the EU Parliament is looking at a ban on flyshooting in EU waters.



The Vice-Chair stated that the Parliament has voted on this, but negotiations need to now take place in a tri-partite approach. This will be discussed on 30 September, and if the dialogue validates this proposal then flyshooting will be banned in French waters.

Pauline Joyeux stated that the work carried out on this in the Scheveningen Group included a compilation of data on capacity thresholds in the Channel area from the WW plan. But this data was not shared.

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

1	Secretariat to update and finalise the choke traffic light tool based on today's discussions taking into account previous NWWAC advice.
2	The Secretariat will organise meetings for both FG Whelk and Scallop in October to follow up on previous recommendations.
3	The Secretariat to share link to DEFRA Focus Group on Dolphin Head HPMA and attend for reporting purposes only.
4	Secretariat to enquire the NWW MSG about information on flyshoot fishing activities in EU waters. If data is available, an ad-hoc group could be established to respond to the UK consultation on the matter.

6. Participants

NWWAC members	
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
David Curtis	EAA
Gérald Hussenot Desenonges	BLUE FISH
Manu Kelberine	CRPMEM de Bretagne
Franck Le Barzic	OP COBRENORD
John Lynch	Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation Ltd
Liborio Martinez Latorre	IFSUA
Geert Meun	VisNed
Anais Mourtada	CNPMEM
PATRICK MURPHY	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation
Aodh O'Donnell	IFPO
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermens Organisation
Corentine Piton	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Jean-Marie Robert	Pêcheurs de Bretagne PO
Xavier Tétard	Comite des pêches de Normandie
Mathieu Vimard	Organisation des Pêcheurs Normands
Arthur Yon	FROM Nord
Experts and Observers	
Marta del Avellanal	Ministerio de Agricultura Pesca y Alimentación



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Pauline Joyeux	French administration
Marie Lecomte	MSC
Ana Leocadio	European Commission
Oisín O’Kelly	DAFM
Jonathan Tholo	French administration
Paulo Vasconcelos	European Commission - DG MARE
NWWAC Secretariat	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary

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