



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

## DRAFT MINUTES

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Zoom

Wednesday 27 September 2023

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants to the meeting. Apologies were received from Brendan Byrne and Geert Meun in advance of the meeting. Apologies were also received by the presidency of the NWW Member States Group who had to cancel their attendance due to other commitments. The Secretariat will provide an update on the last Technical Group meeting on 06 September under agenda item 4.

#### Action points from the last meeting (05 July 2023, Ghent)

1	Secretariat to collect ExCom members written suggestions, add RoP definition of FG, draft amendments and present to ExCom for written approval to submit to GA in September
	<a href="#">Approved by ExCom, comments received during GA approval procedure from EAA</a>
3	Members to send additional questions for Director Donatella and additional comments on his intervention to the Secretariat for written follow up
	<a href="#">Email request sent to members 07/07, no responses received</a>
3	Secretariat to forward NWWAC outstanding list of topics as raised in the first half of the year, adding question if Celtic Seas fishing opps will be discussed, to NWW MSG presidency
	<a href="#">Submitted to NWW MSG presidency on 28/07</a>
4	Secretariat to liaise with performance review team regarding structure of final report
	<a href="#">Email sent 07/07, meeting held 11/08</a>
5	Secretariat to add "ecosystem based management" to WG3, adjust in WP FGs in brackets and add WG as originator in NWWAC WP
	<a href="#">Commission notified of update to Year 19 WP on 06 July</a>

#### 2. Approval of action points from the Working Groups

##### Working Group 1 Irish Sea

1	Members to send comments on the choke traffic light tool to the Secretariat
2	Chair and Secretariat will follow up on haddock de minimis exemption
3	Secretariat to draft letter to the Commission and Member States regarding the non-consideration of the spurdog exemption
4	Members to provide the Secretariat with written comments on the UK Discards Plan by the 20 September



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

### Working Group 2 Celtic Sea & West of Scotland

1	Members will send input to the consultation to the Secretariat by 20 September, matching the consultation format available online as much as possible. The Secretariat will then check which response format is possible and prepare draft advice based on previous advice and comments received from members.
2	The Secretariat will share an updated version of the traffic light choke spreadsheet after the meeting. Members will review it and send comments on West of Scotland stocks to the Secretariat.
3	Following up from the hake workshop held in June 2023, the pending issues of catch composition and application of the technical measures regulation across MS will be addressed with EFCA directly.
4	The Secretariat will draft letter to the Commission requesting that ICES and STECF are asked to look into mesh sizes and derogations for hake respectively.
5	The Secretariat will draft a letter to the Commission on the need of constructive collaboration, specifically on technical matters.
6	Following the meeting on 26 September organised by DG MARE on VMEs, the AC will discuss how to follow up on this topic during ExCom meeting on 27 September.

**ACTION:** rephrase action point 4 and 5 from WG2

### Working Group 3 Channel

1	The CNPMM will get in touch with the Secretariat following the meeting in France on red mullet with an updated proposal.
2	Inputs from members on the choke risks will be collated by the Secretariat and reviewed by the Focus Group Landing Obligation to prepare advice. The Secretariat will share an updated version of the spreadsheet with members for further comments if necessary.
3	Members to send comments on FMPs to Secretariat by 20 September. One response to be prepared for Seabass/Channel demersal non-quota species/Southern North Sea and eastern Channel mixed flatfish, and one additional each on scallops and whelk.
4	Secretariat to draft a letter on impacts of UK HPMAs to the Commission.

### Horizontal Working Group

1	Secretariat to draft advice on Irish Sea MPA/ORE/SPA plan, based on KFO / ISEFPO document provided and HWG members' response to input request.
2	HWG members to propose dates for Mission Atlantic stakeholder meetings in 2024 upon receipt of topics for discussion.
3	Propose discussion at ExCom whether or not NWWAC to reply directly to UK consultations on FMPs, REM & Discards plans.
4	Renew Focus Group Brown Crab with new terms of reference to follow up on issues raised in advice submitted in September 2023 once COM response has been received



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

5	The NWWAC will send another letter to the Irish Seafood/ORE group asking for update regarding request for membership.
---	---

**ACTION:** Follow up on VMEs initiative – request input from WG2 on how to follow up, ask view of membership on how this work should be dealt with – Secretariat to follow up with Ed Farrell and coordinate with SWWAC

### 3. Dialogue with DG MARE – Thomas Brégeon, Deputy Head of Unit MARE C5

The Chair welcomed the Deputy Head of Unit MARE C5 Thomas Brégeon to the meeting.

Brégeon thanked the NWWAC for the invitation and expressed Director Fabrizio Donatella's apologies.

He stated that the SCF meeting held on 22 September was the closing meeting at the end of a productive year and pointed out the achievements in July including the decision on a permanent mechanism for voluntary transfer between EU-UK, guidelines for notification of measures between EU-UK to ensure measures are in line with the TCA requirements, as well as recommendations regarding TAC alignment for 4 shared stocks in the North Sea. Work has also advanced on skates and rays and long-term work plan has been agreed.

To facilitate discussion regarding the annual consultations and clarify as many issues as possible in advance, preliminary contact was made with the UK, taking into account the difficulties in relation to an increasing number of advice on 0 catch or descending trend. *"All the technical work and advice sent by the AC are very important for preparing the strategy and the concrete proposal we will put on the table"*. Currently, the mandate is being discussed with the Council, prior to the consultation process with the UK starting in October/November.

Following the CFP package publication in February, Council conclusions were adopted in June. The European Parliament is working in parallel on three initiative reports on functioning of the CFP which are expected to be presented in the PECH Committee in October. Dialogue is also ongoing between the Commission and the Member States in relation to national specificities and challenges in the implementation of Action Plan.

The Chair thanked Brégeon for the detailed update and opened the floor for questions.

Patrick Murphy asked if the timelines for the Brexit Adjustment Reserve could be reviewed and possibly extended.

Jan Kappel referred to the Nature Restoration law, and wondered if the CFP would be one of the issues to be discussed in that regard.

Sean O'Donoghue asked if a start date had been set for the EU-UK negotiations and if a significant number of rounds was envisaged. He mentioned the 0-catch advice as a key topic under the SCF and commented that under the TCA both parties are meant to agree how this is dealt with. *"Has there*



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

*been much interaction at this stage between EU-UK on 0 catch options?”* Regarding the CFP report and Council conclusions he enquired how the commission would take these forward and what the roadmap and timeframe would be once the opinion of Parliament was also available.

John Lynch asked for additional information regarding what had been discussed/agreed on the long-term plan for skates and rays.

Regarding the BAR funding, Brégeon confirmed he had taken note of this call to expand the timeline for implementation and would inform MARE C2 colleagues who are dealing with this. As the Nature Restoration Law is an encompassing file falling under both DG MARE and DG ENV he would pass Kappel's question on to colleagues.

[Update received following the meeting:

Concerning the links between the Nature Restoration Law and the CFP, the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law (NRL) proposal complements existing environmental policy and is designed to work effectively in synergy with EU environmental law. Where the protection of coastal and marine habitats requires that fishing or aquaculture activities are regulated, the common fisheries policy (CFP) applies. Member States should make full use of the possibilities provided under the CFP. The National Restoration Plans (key instruments to implement to NRL) must take into account conservation measures that Member States has already taken and/or intend to adopt under the CFP, including conservation measures at national level and through joint recommendations that Member States have taken and/or intend to initiate in accordance with the regionalisation procedure of the CFP. There is a need to significantly step up mapping, monitoring and research, and to foster regional cooperation in the framework of the CFP regionalisation process for implementation of fisheries management measures that will be needed for restoration. The NRL does not put any direct obligations on fishers but only on Member States. Restoring marine and coastal ecosystems, in particular important fish spawning and nursery habitats, will help allow fish stocks to recover and will contribute to providing economic and social benefits from increased catch to fishers. New forms of income will also become available, as business models adapt. Tourism and recreational activities, for example, are likely to increase incomes, as healthy ecosystems are primary locations for quality tourism. NRL is under the negotiations. Commission is working hard with co-legislators to come with an outcome that helps deal with the challenges while ensuring full coherence with CFP legislation.

Concerning the Brexit Adjustment Reserve, in anticipation of the closure of the BAR period at the end of 2023, and due to the low take-up of the available funds across sectors and Member States, Member States were allowed to transfer unused BAR allocations to REPowerEU under their Recovery and Resilience Plan end February 2023. Overall, Member States transferred 38% of the total BAR budget to REPowerEU. The general explanation provided for the transfer of unused BAR funds to REPowerEU is that the direct negative impact of Brexit was less severe and immediate than anticipated in most economic sectors. Also the limited time for using the BAR made it challenging for MS to develop and implement State aid schemes in time. The six MS with earmarked amounts for the fishery sector transferred between 13% (Ireland) and 69% (France). The minimum amount earmarked for local and regional coastal communities depending on fisheries for the six MS concerned has been reduced accordingly. Nevertheless, based on their state aid notifications and other information provided to the Commission services, all six MS concerned (BE, DK, DE, IE, FR and NL) have already exceeded the initial minimum in their budget allocation for fisheries related support (i.e. minimum



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

before transfer of funds to REPowerEU). While BAR support focuses on short-term support, EMFAF is designed to take over from BAR for the mid- to long-term structural adaptation of the sector in the wake of Brexit. EMFAF is nevertheless limited in budget and scope of support.]

He stated that no starting date for UK negotiations had been agreed yet but expects the end of October to be the beginning of this condensed and packed period of discussions. Weekly meetings will be held with the UK during which coordination with the Member States is needed as well as with stakeholders. The Commission is aware of the tricky situation regarding the 0-catch advice which will be a core issue of the technical discussion to be held with the UK prior to engaging in formal consultations.

The Commission will take stock following Council and Parliament's opinions on the CFP package and analyse elements in these conclusions to feed into their reflections on implementation of the CFP package. No timeline is available at the moment, however, as this is a very important file, ongoing work will also mobilise colleagues especially from MARE D3. MARE will be ready to contribute to the setting of priorities of the new college depending on next year's election and will prepare proposals subject to direction indicated by the new political priorities. Internal preparations regarding this are ongoing.

Regarding skates and rays, Paulo Vasconcelos commented that there were no specific updates from the recent SCF and recalled that this process started a long time ago and profited from the excellent joint workshop organised by the NWWAC/NSAC on this topic. The Commission has started engaging in technical discussions with scientist important to prepare the roadmap ahead. Two non-papers have been developed, one regarding the methodology on hypothetically establishing species specific TACs and the second on a roadmap for the future. The latter was agreed on at the last SCF including a tentative time schedule. The Commission will continue engaging at technical level bilaterally to move forward.

The Chair referred to the upcoming elections in 2024 as well as the 2026 date for review of the TCA and wondered if any discussion were already being held or if this was going to fall under the competence of the next Commission.

Brégeon stated that the 2026 date would not mean the end of the TCA and that the fisheries chapter would continue as part of the framework for discussion with the UK. Important electoral milestones are happening before 2026 on both UK and EU sides. The Commission is currently reflecting on how best to prepare for this moment.

Murphy stated that the spatial squeeze is becoming huge issue for fishers with major concerns related to potential displacement and access to fishing grounds. He was wondering if any work is being carried out on this in either DG MARE or DG ENV, and if the DGs were engaging in any conversation on the implications. He suggested that this should be brought forward if no action has been taken so far.

Brégeon agreed that this is clearly a challenge with maritime spatial planning at its core which can be a challenge timewise as MSP is naturally slow touching on international law and complex to articulate. He suggested that the European Blue Forum would be a good setting to express views on this.

**Action:** Members to send input to the Secretariat on Blue Forum activities



O'Donoghue referred to the agreed new Control Regulation and enquired regarding the timeframe for it to enter into force as well as if an information campaign on this was planned by the Commission. Brégeon stated that he would enquire with the relevant colleagues regarding any information campaign and ask them to report back to the AC. He voiced the Commission's appreciation regarding the cooperation with the NWWAC as key contributor and felt that it was important to continue this dialogue.

#### **4. Topics addressed at last MS Technical Group**

The Secretariat reported that this was the first meeting under new Dutch presidency of the group. Representatives were invited at the end of the meeting for an update on discussions.

- Draft letter to the Commission on rollover request for technical measures in the Celtic Sea (submitted week of 11 September)
- Draft letter to the Commission on rollover request on red seabream management (submitted week of 11 September)
- Discussion on preparation of a joint recommendation on directed fisheries for squid. Ireland unable to support current text so further discussions needed

NWWAC Secretariat:

- Provided update on membership
- Mentioned planned NWWAC/EFCA workshop
- Enquired re. UK FMP consultations (MS agreed to respond individually)
- Mentioned NWWAC/PelAC anniversary event March 2024

The next meeting of the Technical Group is scheduled for 05 October.

#### **5. NWWAC Work Programme and Budget review Year 18 (Secretariat)**

Slides are available [here](#).

The Secretariat provided an overview on:

- the meetings organised and attended by the NWWAC in Year 18.
- The recommendations submitted by the NWWAC and those still in progress, in relation to the planned submissions included in the grant application.
- The NWWAC workshop reports published.
- The upcoming meeting planned in Year 19.

The NWWAC successfully met its deliverables according to the grant application submitted to the Commission.

The Secretariat then provided an overview of Year 18 accounts under the new lumpsum approach.

Finally, the Secretariat informed the ExCom of the new agreement between the NWWAC and BIM,





CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

approved by BIM Board on 18 September 2023. BIM are likely to move premises in 2024 with new plans based on an open office approach. The NWWAC will be provided with access to a hot-desk office on an occasional basis, car parking for staff and visitors, meeting rooms, reception service, BIM business centre and all associated equipment and IT support for same. BIM will cease providing Payroll for NWWAC from 01/01/2024. Payroll will be outsourced to a specialist agency. This agreement has an annual fee of € 15,000 and was signed on 25 September 2023.

## 6. Future meeting schedule (Secretariat)

The Secretariat presented a proposal to change the NWWAC meeting calendar, specifically postponing the Working Groups and ExCom meetings from September to October after the start of a new financial year to review the work programme and direct AC work. The March and July rounds would be kept as is, and a General Assembly would be organized in September before the closing of the financial year. The Secretariat explained that this proposal is motivated by the fact that WG discussions only start halfway through the work programme and the current second and third round of meetings (July and September) are too close together. Moreover, little work can be done over the summer break to prepare for working group meetings in September.

As the ExCom has to approve the annual reporting to the GA in September, a written procedure could be initiated.

**ACTION:** Put forward this proposal to the General Assembly.

The Secretariat also gave a quick update on the NWWAC/PelAC Anniversary Event planned for 14 March 2024. More details were given on venue, timelines, invitees. A budget estimate was also provided.

## 7. AOB

A question on was raised on how to respond to the current DEFRA consultations, directly or through the Commission?

The CNPMEM felt it would be less strategic to send detailed information directly to the UK and would prefer sending more general answers regarding having better cooperation and need for harmonisation. At the same time, they felt that it was important to send advice to the Commission to ensure a level playing field and that the terms of the TCA are followed properly.

Lynch agrees with sending broader comments to the UK and referred to the draft submission on the scallop FMP which reflects this approach. He added that all work should be carried out with the TCA in mind as well as the work of the SCF.

Philippe suggested to use the Inter-AC Brexit Forum more in these circumstances if possible.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to submit NWWAC advice to the Commission on these topics



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

The question was raised how the work of the FG Brown Crab could be continued following the Chair's retirement.

The Secretariat felt that it would be difficult to replace the outgoing Chair Norah Parke who had been dedicated to running this FG over the past number of years. It suggested to wait for the receipt of the Commission's reply to the advice submitted on 22 September and identify any follow up action based on the contents of same.

Manu Kelberine raised the issues of fish consumption and fuel prices and asked how other countries are dealing with these.

Murphy responded that in Ireland these issues have been raised with the relevant Minister, but unfortunately nothing has developed since. The fishing organisations are working on creating media coverage to communicate these issues to the wider public. He commented that it would be desirable if the industry and the AC could be more involved with the Member States regarding information sharing on their work programme, budget and allocation of EMF money.

After Woodlock mentioned radio coverage on this specific item in Ireland, José Beltran added that this is a recurring theme in Spain as well. His organisation, OPP-7 Burela, has been carrying out promotional and informative initiatives with schools and other groups, promoting seafood consumption, also from a nutritional point of view. He felt that the nutritional benefits of seafood consumption should also be better showcased.

The Secretariat felt that the AC could not pursue this as a standalone topic on its own, but should utilise the existing channels, for example the joint NSAC/NWWAC FG Social Aspects which has addressed the issue of fuel prices in the past and the MAC.

**ACTION:** Pricing issues both on cost and revenue sides to be addressed in joint FG Social Aspects and Secretariat to highlight these issues to the MAC.

## 8. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair

### Action points

1	Follow up VMEs process and liaise with SWWAC
2	DG MARE to follow up on two pending questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Brexit Adjustment Reserve extension request</li></ul> Linkage between CFP and Nature Restoration Law
3	Secretariat to submit NWWAC advice on UK FMP consultations to the Commission
4	Pricing issues both on cost and revenue sides to be addressed in joint FG Social Aspects and Secretariat to highlight these issues to the MAC.

The Chair thanked all participants and closed the meeting.





CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

## Participants

NWWAC members	
José Beltran	OPP-7 Burela
Emiel Brouckaert (Chair)	Rederscentrale
Bruno Dachicourt	ETF
Gerald Hussenot	Blue Fish
Jan Kappel	EAA
Manu Kelberine	CRPM de Bretagne
John Lynch	IS&EFPO
Llibori Martinez Latorre	IFSUA
Anaïs Mourtada	CNPMEM
Patrick Murphy	IS&WFPO
Sean O'Donoghue	KFO
Alexandra Philippe	EBCD
Corentine Piton	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Irene Prieto	ANASOL
Jean-Marie Robert	Pêcheurs de Bretagne
Dominique Thomas	OP CME MMN
Johnny Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Arthur Yon	FROM Nord
Experts & Observers	
Thomas Brégeon	DG MARE
Julia Rubeck	DG MARE
Paulo Vasconcelos	DG MARE
NWWAC Secretariat	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary