



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

RESOURCES

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, INTER-INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS, EVALUATION AND PROGRAMMING

Brussels, 14.11.2008 D 12914  
DG MARE - C2/JPP D(2008)

Mr. Sam Lambourn  
North Western Waters RAC  
Bord Iscaigh Mhara  
Crofton Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Co Dublin  
Ireland

**Subject: Protection of blue ling aggregations in area VI**

Dear Mr. Lambourn,

Thank you for your opinion on the protection of the blue ling in area VI which you express in your recommendations. We regret to see, however, that the NWWRAC is not in a position to choose any of the options suggested by the Commission.

As you know, all of the different possible avenues for creating a protection area had been discussed during our meeting on 24 September 2008 with a sizeable French delegation, a Scottish delegate, an NGO representative and a scientific adviser. Unfortunately, no Spanish delegates were able to attend this meeting. Upon conclusion of the meeting, we felt that it had been highly productive and we had hoped for a clearer view from your perspective. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

You mention as one of the reasons that we may be at too early stage for you to provide valuable and accurate advice. In particular, you complain about a perceived lack of information on the biannual TAC proposal for 2009 – 2010 and blue ling stocks in areas VI-VII.

I would draw the attention of your members to the fact that our services have clearly indicated during the several meetings on blue ling stock in VI and VII that these measures will be included in our annual TAC & Quota Regulation to be discussed in December. Moreover, during our ACFA meeting on 18 September 2008 and our joint ACFA-RAC meeting on 16 October 2008, we provided enough information to be able to infer the level of TAC to be set.

I would also like to clarify three other points you raised:

- Your letter refers to a "proposed fisheries closure" reference made in the map. I would like to remind you that all references made by the Commission services to the possible

proposal were made in terms of a fisheries protection area and not in terms of a fisheries closure.

- The coordinates were not included in the proposal because the Commission was expecting data that one of the participants in the meeting volunteered to provide. We didn't receive these data.

- With regard to the possibility of limiting catches in any of the proposals discussed, let me again draw your attention to the fact that these figures were mentioned and discussed during our technical meeting on 24 September. It is true that no scientific evidence clearly sways towards a specific proposal. However, we need to draw on a figure based on the number of vessels that will be targeting blue ling during the spawning period.

Finally, I would like to refer to the very first recommendation made by NWWRAC in September 2008, which read: "All parties agree that measures should be introduced to afford greater protection to the blue ling stock during the spawning period." The Commission firmly agrees with this statement and expects all stakeholders to constantly work towards achieving this goal.

Yours sincerely,



Fokion Fotiadis