



NWWRAC Recommendation on Guidelines for Blue Ling Protection

September 2008

1. All parties agree that measures should be introduced to afford greater protection to the Blue Ling stock during the spawning period.
2. Furthermore, all sectors likewise agree that Blue Ling spawn at different times, in different sea areas, and not necessarily in line with the management units, thus protection zones should take note of this point. Industry agrees however that the Southern management unit (Subareas Vb, VI, and VII) spawn at a time covered by the three month period April-June.
3. Industry also agrees that some adaptation of the Commission's proposal, i.e. protection zones, should be set in place however, we emphasise the need to consider the "depth sensitive" nature of spawning aggregations.

Catches of spawning aggregations have been reportedⁱ at a depth of 470 fathoms, around 870 metres. It makes sense therefore to construct protection zones around this specific characteristic. We suggest an upper and lower limit of 1100 meters and 700 metres.

4. Industry is keen to work with the Commission and the scientific institutes to improve our understanding of the stock.

ⁱ Anecdotal information from both the Scottish and French catching sectors