



## **REPORT**

### **North Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee**

#### **Working Group 2**

**9 July 2009**

**14:00-17:30**

**CNPNEM –Paris**

Chairman: Hugo C. González García

Rapporteur: Paul Trebilcock

#### **Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted by consensus.

#### **Adoption of Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of WG 2 meeting held on 17 February 2009 were adopted by consensus.

#### **Review of ICES Advice 2009 for VIIbcfghjk**

Manuela Azevedo gave a presentation on behalf of ICES for the stocks concerning WG2.

The main stock assessments/advice in summary:

Hake:	Full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably
Cod VIIe-k:	Great uncertainty due to poor data quality Effort and catches should be reduced but no scale of reduction given
Sole VIIfg:	Full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably
Monkfish:	Effort should not be allowed to increase until a reliable assessment is ensured; quality of data needs to improve
Haddock VIIb-k:	Effort should not be allowed to increase; quality of data needs to improve

- Megrim: Effort should not be allowed to increase, stock appears stable
- Plaice VIIhjk: F above Fmax catches should be reduced; no clear advice
- Sole VIIhjk: Not over exploited; no advice
- Whiting VIIe-k: F should be reduced, although strong 2008 year class observed
- Nephrops VII: Porcupine fishery unit should reduce catches to lowest possible level; Aran Grounds fishery unit reduce catches, Celtic Sea fishery unit same advice as last year (no increase in effort or landings). Overall a reduction in TAC required

Full presentation is available on the NWW RAC website for information.

#### Comments from the floor

WG2 raised significant concerns regarding the Cod e-k assessment. There was frustration that although there had been the ICES benchmark meeting this year and a comprehensive French self sampling project coordinated by IFREMER the assessment on this stock seemed to have deteriorated. The industry was disappointed that despite great efforts there appeared to be a worse data situation rather than improvement.

There appeared to be a big difference in the ICES perception and the fishing industry perception of Cod VIIe-k. Industry reported high abundance of cod of all sizes across and in wide areas. It was strongly felt that a minimum of the status quo in terms of TAC was required and even that would probably lead to an increase of discards due to the abundance.

It was recognized that there was a fundamental problem with this assessment and WG2 looked to ICES for advice.

ICES recognized the excellent work of the French self sampling project and urged a continuation of this work. They were also looking at alternative assessment models. It was stated that it was difficult to extrapolate recent data sets due to variability in discard patterns across different fleets.

ICES felt that further work with the fishing industry could yield an improved assessment within 2-3 years and strongly encouraged continuation of collaborative projects such as the French self sampling scheme.



WG2 members felt that 2-3 years was too long however agreed that collaboration was the way forward to improve this assessment. At the moment it appeared that the ICES advice was simply wrong from an industry perspective.

Examples of industry/science partnership projects and initiatives (such as Trevoise closure) over the past few years were highlighted but it was explained that the fishermen could not ignore fish in sea. The fishing industry can contribute to sound assessment and management of this stock but there has to be an improvement in assessment and recognition of industry efforts.

ICES recognized the difficulties the fishing industry faced in such circumstances but again urged collaboration from all member states and national fleets.

Barrie Deas identified frustration as a significant issue and pointed to a UK project of Annual Fisheries Reports (AFRs) which attempt to systematically input fishermen's data into both science and policy formulation. It was felt that this could offer a useful starting point. Both WG2 members and ICES representatives agreed to review these AFRs and comment on their usefulness as well as possible improvements.

It was underlined that advice must be evidence based both in terms of assessment and management measures.

In relation to other stocks, concern was also expressed on the Nephrops assessment methodology and the use of an exploratory F value in the Plaice VIIhjk assessment. Manuela Azevedo gave a technical explanation about the way about how exploratory assessments were developed and offered the members to submit this information to the Secretariat in more detail if requested.

Spanish representatives reported that they would submit proposals for a spatial and temporal closure in the Porcupine Bank Nephrops fishery. These proposals would be submitted to the NWWRAC for consideration when they were finalized.

## **NWW RAC Focus Group on LTMP for Hake**

Jesus Lourido informed WG2 that the final conclusions of the Hake LTMP focus Group had not yet been ratified by its members but the report would be circulated within the next few weeks<sup>1</sup>

It was highlighted that this focus group was set up to assess and prepare a response to the proposal of Regulation presented by the Commission in March.

Particular concerns arose regarding the fishing mortality targets, TAC calculation methodology and margin of tolerance. It was agreed that close liaison with the SWWRAC for the development of advice remained important on this issue.

The existing recovery plan measures were delivering an overall improvement in this stock. It was acknowledged that the current situation with the stock trends were positive and therefore it was felt that there was sufficient time to properly assess and discuss the detail of the LTMP before its introduction.

WG2 heard that ICES had not yet assessed the Hake LTMP. Given the Commission rhetoric that it claimed to be evidence based in its approach it was strongly felt that the LTMP should pass an evaluation process by ICES before its introduction which is scheduled for 1 January 2010.

Furthermore as there is an ICES Hake Benchmarking workshop planned for early 2010 which will look at new and available data, the LTMP could be reviewed as part of that process.

There were opinions expressed that the existing 120mm static gear and 100mm towed gear mesh restrictions in Area VII currently in force, in particular the Biologically sensitive Area (BSA) should be retained.

It was recognised that a derogation to use 100mm static gear in depths greater than 200m of water had been secured for 2009 and it was felt that this should be assessed on its impact on Fishing Mortality.

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<sup>1</sup> This report is now available on the NWWRAC website for information:  
[http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/MEETING\\_REPORT\\_NWWRAC\\_FOCUS\\_GROUP\\_HAKE\\_SANTIAGO\\_170609\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/MEETING_REPORT_NWWRAC_FOCUS_GROUP_HAKE_SANTIAGO_170609_EN.pdf)

It was agreed that the assessment of mesh size changes on Fishing Mortality and stock levels should be reviewed and an assessment on effort implications be looked at carefully before any recommendations were made by WG2.

### **Cod Recovery in Celtic Sea**

WG2 heard that the EAPO letter sent in June to the Commission had now been superseded by a new Commission's proposal on Celtic Sea Cod. The new proposal was based on the Biscay Sole plan and in reality was not felt to be appropriate.

Concerns over the Fishing Mortality target and trajectory to achieve any such target were once again expressed. There remained opposition to a days-at-sea regime and reference to biomass limits that were unachievable and irrelevant.

It was reported that the industry continued to develop an alternative proposal covering F targets, TAC calculation, capacity restriction and technical measures. There remained a lot of work and further meetings to refine and resolve details.

WG2 felt that it was important to get this right and that the industry must take the initiative or risk a draconian and largely ineffective regime being imposed by the Commission.

The EAPO grouping of French, Irish, Belgian and British would continue to develop a working document that would be made available to the NWW RAC.

Additionally, it was suggested that the NWWRAC could set up a focus group on Celtic Sea Cod if required. This would be considered in light of the outcomes of the EAPO work.

### **Report from ACFA WG3 Meeting (8 July 2009): Reform of Fisheries Common Markets Organisation (CMO)**

Members of WG2 heard that Sean O'Donnogue had attended the meeting on behalf of EAPO. He gave a brief summary of the meeting. The official report of the meeting will be made available to WG2 members via the NWWRAC website.

There was extreme concern expressed about low market prices for fish across Europe. Cheap imports were seen as a major factor in the low prices and investigation into possible mitigation strategies were felt to be important.



In particular the Commission's ability to use existing and new regulation to support fishermen and control imports should be explored. Concerns regarding production standards from third country imports were expressed and it was felt that controls should look to ensure a 'level playing field' on production standards.

Concern was expressed at a recent request from processing interests for autonomous import tariff reductions on 50,000 tonnes of pangassius imports for 2010. It was reported that EAPO had stated that at a minimum status quo restrictions should be maintained and in fact reductions should be considered given the volume of imports.

It was reported that an EU workshop on this issue that was requested by the NWWRAC as a matter of urgency would not now take place until early 2010.

It was stated clearly that the fishing industry needed immediate action as this was a crisis situation. It was agreed that WG2 should recommend that the NWWRAC request the Commission to bring this workshop forward in due time.

### **Presentation of GEPETO Project on LTMPs**

Members of WG2 were asked to note the presentation on this project (available on the NWWRAC website for information). Victor Badiola would give an update at the next meeting and any questions should be directed through the NWWRAC secretariat.

### **Progress on Study on Review of Gear Marking Regulation & Update Information on DEEPCLEAN Project**

Members of WG2 were directed to the final report produced by BIM for the European Commission, titled '*Evaluation of Various Marker Buoy Techniques for the Marking of Passive Fishing Gears*'. Some concerns were raised on the detail of the report giving an inaccurate reflection of some fleets it described. This was seen as an important report and members of WG2 were encouraged to review it thoroughly and submit written comments to the NWWRAC Secretariat. It was agreed by WG2 to put forward the Executive Committee a letter to the Commission asking if they are going to amend or modify the current Regulation EC no 365/2005 based on the outcomes of this study and, if so, making it clear that they should open a procedure for consultation among stakeholders before submitting their final proposal to the Council of Ministers.



Members of WG2 were directed to a summary update presentation on the DEEPCLEAN project prepared by Norman Graham<sup>2</sup>. There was a seminar planned for the last week in July to review the project to date and look at how to progress this issue. An invitation to members of NWWRAC was noted and it was further noted that active fishermen (both static gear and mobile gear operators) should be encouraged to attend. Again this was seen as an important issue and members of WG2 were encouraged to review the summary and submit comments and nominations for the proposed seminar to the NWWRAC Secretariat.

### **Organisation of a Focus Group/Workshop on Discards in Area VII**

A response from the Commission to the NWWRAC, dated 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2009, was noted<sup>3</sup>. Members of WG2 were disappointed and concerned with the content and tone of the response. The response had failed to address the issues raised by the NWWRAC.

The implications for all fisheries in ICES Area VII were extremely serious and it was proposed that the NWWRAC should press for a workshop or focus group involving the Commission as a matter of urgency to examine this issue fully.

### **Any Other Business**

WG2 heard that this would be the last meeting that Patricia Comiskey would be attending as she would be moving to a new job in the Irish public sector within the next month. WG2 thanked her for her excellent work during the last 5 years and wished her the best for the future.

**The meeting ended at 18 h.**

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<sup>2</sup> This presentation is available on the NWWRAC website for information:  
[http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings\\_ENG/Navigation.php?id=366&language=English](http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=366&language=English)

<sup>3</sup> See publications section of the NWWRAC website:  
[http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/EC\\_Response\\_NWWRAC\\_Opinion\\_Discards\\_VII\\_290609\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/EC_Response_NWWRAC_Opinion_Discards_VII_290609_EN.pdf)

## ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Kristel	Adriaenssens	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Bertie	Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	Member
Manuela	Azevedo	ICES Advisory Committee	Scientific Expert
Iwan	Ball	WWF	Observer
Alain	Biseau	IFREMER	Scientific Expert
Kara	Brydson	RSPB	Observer
Delphine	Ciolek	CNPMEM	Member
Patricia	Comiskey	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Luc	Corbisier	SDVO	Member
Juan Carlos	Corrás Arrias	Pescagalicia Arpega	Member
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Member
Barrie	Deas	NFFO	Member
Thomas	Diaz	CAPSUD	Member
Antonio	Flórez	MARM	Member State Rep.
Ian	Gatt	Scottish Fishermen's Federation	Member
Marc	Ghiglia	UAPF	Member
Hugo	González	ANASOL	<b>Chairman</b>
Sam	Lambourn	Chairperson NWWRAC	Chairperson NWWRAC
Colm	Lordan	ICES WG on Northern & Southern Shelf Demersal Fisheries	Scientific Expert



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 RÉGIONAL POUR  
 LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
 SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
 WATERS  
 REGIONAL ADVISORY  
 COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO  
 REGIONAL PARA  
 LAS AGUAS  
 NOROCCIDENTALES

Jesús A.	Lourido García	Puerto de Celeiro S.A.	Member
Joe	Maddock	Irish Fishermen Organisation	Member
David	Milly	CAPSUD	Member
Lorcan	O’Cinnéide	IFPO	Member
Gerard	O’Flynn	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation	Member
Sean	O’Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermans Organisation	Member
José Luis	Otero	Lonja de la Coruña S.A.	Member
Jacques	Pichon	ANOP	Member
Jim	Portus	South West Fish Producers Organisation Ltd	Member
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	Secretariat
Mercedes	Rodríguez Moreda	OPP-07-LUGO	Member
Pieter-Jan	Schon	ICES WG on Northern & Southern Shelf Demersal Fisheries	Scientific Expert
Paul	Trebilcock	Cornish Fish Producers Organisation	Member - <b>Rapporteur</b>
Michael	Walsh	ISEFO	Member