

**Minutes**  
**North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council**  
**Executive Committee**  
**Madrid**  
**31<sup>st</sup> of January 2006**

**1. Welcome**

Fernando Curcio Ruigómez Director General of MAPA welcomed the Chairman and all guests to the meeting and wished members a fruitful meeting.

The Chairman of the NWWRAC thanked Sr Ruigómez and welcomed all members, observers and the Commission. He informed the meeting that there were a number of experts present, Dominic Rihan, a Gear technologist from BIM and Álvaro Fernandez of the Oceanography Institute in Spain. He also informed the Group that Ken Patterson and Christian Rambaud of the EU Commission were present. Finally the Chairman welcomed the Spanish fishermen who were attending as observers.

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Lorcan O’Cinnéide asked that a short time be allocated under AOB to the Irish Sea Recovery Programme. This was agreed and the agenda was adopted

- **Adoption of Minutes of the last meeting**

Claire Pescod of WWF asked that an additional line be included in the minutes of the last meeting to reflect the consensus at the meeting that a clean up of ghost nets be instigated immediately in the affected waters. It was agreed that this would be inserted in consultation with the Secretariat and Executive Committee members. The minutes were adopted.

**2. Reports on Meetings**

- **Meeting with the Commission on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November**

The Chairman stated that members had the report of this meeting for sometime now and opened the floor to comments. Kara Brydson (RSPB) stated that although many good points were made in this report and the discussions proved to be fruitful, there is a section on Fuel Oil that was not discussed in depth in the Executive Committee and which should have had a consensus view before bringing to the Commission. The Chairman acknowledged that this was not discussed in the Executive Committee, but in the meeting of Working Group 3, as it is a pressing issue for the beam trawl fishermen in this Working Group it was presented as a difficulty to the Commission. It was acknowledged by both Miss Brydson and the Chair that due to the time constraints of the meetings in November it was not possible to circulate a finalised briefing paper before meeting with the Commission. It was agreed that the NWWRAC will aim to achieve this in future.

- **Meeting with Inter RAC Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December**

Again papers had been circulated on this meeting for consideration. No comment was made on this meeting. The InterRAC position on the European Control Agency was adopted.

- **December Council**

No Comment was made on this issue

- **Meeting with ICES on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February**

The meeting was informed about the invitation from ICES to meet with all the RACs to discuss the way forward with providing scientific advice.

**Action** It was agreed that Lorcan O’Cinnéide (IFPO) and Patricia Comiskey would attend on behalf of the NWWRAC.

- **Visit to non EU countries in Spring 2006**

Miriam García Ferrer of the EU Commission updated the NWWRAC on this issue. She informed the meeting that the Commission had not formalised its plans but it looked like the Non-EU countries to be visited will include the Iceland, Canada and the US. The Commission are requesting advice from the NWWRAC on fishery contacts in these areas. A number of members agreed to forward on information.

### **3. Discussion Items**

#### **Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament 2006-2008 Action Plan for Simplifying and Improving the Common Fisheries Policy**

The Chairman asked Christian Rambaud of the EU Commission to give some background to the Executive Committee on this issue. Mr Rambaud informed the meeting that the Commission wished to get feedback from the RAC on this paper by the end of March at the very latest as this issue is due to be discussed with the Council in April.

**Action** It was agreed that a focus group would be established to develop a paper on this issue. This paper will be circulated by the Focus Group by electronic means in March. It was further agreed that the lead person for this Focus Group will be Barrie Deas and that the RAC should approach the expert Barry Edwards to work with the Focus group on this issue. Other members of the RAC who wish to be on this Focus Group are Claire Pescod, Victor Badiola and Lorcan O’Ceinnede/Sean O’Donoghue. The Secretariat will circulate an email to seek interest from other NWWRAC members.

#### **Non- Paper on Implementing sustainability in EU Fisheries: strategies for growth and employment**

The Chairman asked Ken Patterson of the EU Commission to update us on this issue. Dr Patterson informed the meeting that the Commission wished to reduce high mortality levels for recovery stocks and move them away from the danger of collapse, so that catches would be more stable and more valuable in the long run. He informed the meeting that the current paper was a non-paper to promote discussion but the Commission are moving to implement a formal discussion in the form of a Commission Communication. Once this is in place each RAC will be requested by the Commission to produce fleet based plans.

After a lengthy discussion where concerns were expressed by the members as to how this would affect the industry, while bearing in mind the need to work towards MSY of stocks by 2015, it was suggested that the NWWRAC work with the NSRAC on this issue. A workshop on Long-term Management is to be held by the NSRAC in Edinburgh in March to further explore this issue.

**Action:** It was agreed that a Focus Group would be established to attend this meeting and to develop a position paper on this issue. It was further agreed that the lead person for this Focus Group will be Alan McCulla. Other members of the RAC who wish to be on this Focus Group are Kara Brydson and Barrie Deas. The Secretariat will circulate an email to seek interest from other NWWRAC members.

#### **Non Paper on Technical Conservation Measures**

The Chairman asked Ken Patterson of the EU Commission to update the meeting on this issue. Dr Patterson informed the meeting that this issue is still in its early phases, but that there are a number of questions in the non-paper which needed to be answered by the NWWRAC.

**Action** It was agreed that a long-term focus Group be established on this issue. It was further agreed that the lead person for this focus group will be Jason Whooley. It was suggested that the working group of ICES on TCMs be informed of this focus group and be invited to attend meetings. The Secretariat will circulate an email to seek interest from other NWWRAC members.

#### **European Measures to reduce Incidental catches of Cetaceans in Fisheries**

The Chairman asked Stephanie Tachaires of CNPMM to make a presentation on this issue. Ms Tachaires informed the meeting that the Commission had implemented a regulation that enforced the placing of ‘pingers’ on all bottom gillnets as of the 1/1/2006 (Council Regulation (EC) no 812/2004).

The CNPMEM conducted trials to assess the viability of this and found that using these 'pingers' was potentially unsafe for fishermen onboard. The floor was opened to members of the NWWRAC for comment. Mr Dominic Rihan (BIM) stated that trials conducted by BIM found that the four 'pingers' available on the market were not suitable for long-term and sustained use, but that work was being done to develop more suitable 'pingers'. Barrie Deas (NFFO) stated that there was a cost issue also to be considered on this issue. David Wall (IWDG) stated that although his organisation supported the use of 'pingers', he recognised that the legislation that was enforcing this was not well thought out and that a staggered and managed approach seemed to be necessary to introduce them across the board.

**Action** It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the Commission highlighting the RACs concerns on this issue. It was further agreed that the letter would be drafted by David Wall, Dominic Rihan and Barrie Deas. This issue will also be considered further by the TCM focus Group.

#### **Regulation of Marking of Gear**

The Chairman asked Juan Corlas Corras (Pescagalicia-Arpega) to speak on this issue. Mr Corras spoke of the practical issue of marking the gear on the high seas. He informed the meeting that the markers are extremely large and cumbersome to deploy he also informed the meeting that they have a tendency to fall over because of wind and tide and not be seen. Therefore he feels that this buoys are not practical for use on the high seas. His organisation has suggested to the Commission that radar reflectors similar to those used on yachts be considered. The floor was opened for debate. Ian Gatt (SFF) stated that trawling fishermen would welcome a practical solution to this issue and that unmonitored gear was a particular problem to his members. The consensus from the floor was that to ensure the implementation of this regulation, the practicalities of using these surface marker buoys must be seriously considered.

**Action** It was agreed that the NWWRAC will write to the Commission highlighting the RACs concerns on this issue. This issue will also be considered further by the TCM focus Group.

#### **Deepwater Gillnet Fishery**

The Chairman requested that Ken Patterson (EU Commission) give some background on this issue. Dr Patterson informed the meeting that an emergency closure of is fishery has been implemented under Annex III of Council Regulation (EC) no 51/2006. The need for this measure was based on exploratory work by a number of Member States which was published in the DEEPNET report in 2005. The Commission released a non-paper in September 2005, proposing an emergency closure and following consultations with Member States the Council implemented the closure to take effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2006.

The floor was opened for comment. Barrie Deas (NFFO) informed the meeting that the NWWRAC should concentrate on how to reopen the fishery as a matter of urgency. In order to do this the NWWRAC should meet with the Commission to discuss terms and conditions for reopening this fishery in a managed fashion. Juan Corlas Corras (Pescagalicia-Arpega) informed the meeting that it was his members who were largely affected by this ban and that he estimated that 1500 people will be directly affected and will have no employment until the ban is lifted. He agreed that the NWWRAC should concentrate on this to look for a solution immediately. Jason Whooley (ISWFO) empathized with Mr Corras and noted that his fishermen had a similar situation a number of years ago with the ban on driftnet fishing for Tuna. However Mr Whooley stated that although he did not condone rushed legislation, he strongly believes that ghostnet fishing is a real problem that needs to be addressed.

**Action** It was agreed that the NWWRAC would seek to meet with the Commission as soon as possible to discuss this issue and a small group of representatives should be selected to meet with the Commission. A paper will be drawn up and circulated to all members for comment before this meeting. The paper will promote an immediate cleanup, an observer scheme, marking of gear and control of soaking time and net length.

#### **Scallop management in the Channel**

The Chairman asked Jacques Bigot (CFTC/ETF) to introduce the Scallop questionnaire. Jacques informed the meeting that he would like the questionnaire to be circulated to all members with an interest in Scallop management.

**Action** It was agreed that the secretariat would circulate the questionnaire and look for responses to it before the meeting of the Working Groups.

#### **Fishermen input into Scientific Assessments and Surveys**

The Chairman asked Jacque Bigot (CFTC/ETF) to introduce this item. Mr Bigot stated that this is an issue that should be looked at with ICES. Scientific Assessments were being conducted without the input of the experts, the fishermen. A short discussion ensued regarding the inherent differences between fishing practises and survey methods. It was agreed that the RAC should look into this issue and that a review of practises and standards of surveying should be raised at the meeting with ICES on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February.

**Action** It was agreed that this issue should be raised by Lorcan O’Ceinnede at the ICES meeting and that this item should be reconsidered at the next Executive Committee meeting.

#### **Fuel Oil Prices**

The Chairman asked Michael Keatinge (BIM) to talk on this item. Michael informed the meeting that the Commission was due to hold a seminar on this item in the Spring. Miriam Garcia Ferrer (EU Commission) confirmed that it was to be held in April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Action** it was agreed that Michael and Sam would prepare a paper on this issue and circulate it to the membership before the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

### **4. Review of Budget**

#### **Summary of Budget spend to date**

The Secretariat gave an update on budget spend and informed the meeting that the NWWRAC is running within budget. However it was proposed that due to unforeseen expenses that the Chairman has incurred due to his work with the NWWRAC he should be allocated a fee of €15,000 per annum. This was seconded by Jacques Pichon (ANOP) and was widely supported by the meeting.

#### **Decision on Working Group Membership**

It was agreed that all who have applied for working group membership should be accepted.

The Executive Committee debated the membership subscriptions for the coming three years based on a number of scenarios presented by the secretariat. It was agreed that the most appropriate subscription rate will be:

General Assembly:	€250
Executive Committee:	€300
Working Group:	€200 (per working group)

### **5. Proposed Seconded to the NWWRAC from UK**

The Chairman asked Ben Cuttermole (DEFRA) to introduce this topic. Ben informed the meeting that DEFRA had been investigating ways to assist the NWWRAC; one of these is to fund a secondee to work with the Secretariat providing support and developing discussion papers. Although this initiative was largely welcomed by the NWWRAC, members of the meeting asked for time to consider this issue.

**Action** It was agreed that the secretariat would re-circulate details of this secondee and ask for comments back within two weeks.

### **6. Work Programme for 2006**

It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat will consider this and circulate.

**7. Date and venue for the next meeting**

It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat will consider this and circulate.

**8. AOB**

Lorcan O’Cinnéide of IFPO asked that the NWWRAC send a letter to the Commission requesting a review of the Irish Sea Cod recovery Programme in 2006.

**Action** It was agreed that Mr O’Cinnéide will circulate an appropriate text for approval.

## Attendees

### Chairman

**Sam Lambourn**

### Secretariat

Claudia Saumell  
Conor Nolan  
Michael Keatinge  
Patricia Comiskey

### Members of the Executive Committee

#### *Fisheries Sector*

Barrie Deas  
Bertie Armstrong  
Steven Park  
Hugo Crisanto Gonzalez Garcia  
Jacques Bigot  
Jacques Pichon  
Jason Whooley  
Jesus A Lourido  
Luc Mellaerts  
Margaret Downey Harrington  
Ted Breslin  
Victor Badiola  
Andre Gueguen

#### *Other Interest Groups*

Brendan Price  
Claire Pescod  
David Wall  
John Crudden  
Kara Brydson

### Observers

Daniel LeFevre  
Alan McCulla  
Barbara Strathern  
Brid Duncan  
Iria Soto  
Thomas Diaz  
Fernando Curcio Ruigomez  
Juan Carlos Corras  
Paddy Campbell  
Thierry Lepretre  
Javier Pita Lopez  
Manuel Otero Eijo  
Juan Antonio Pintos  
Marcos Preciado Vazquez

Stephanie Tachaires  
Alvaro Fernandez  
Ben Cuttermole  
Concepcion Sanchez Trujillano  
Mari Laura Metayer  
Eamon Kelly  
Javier Garat  
Nicolas Le Berre  
Teresa Rodriguez - Trench  
Luis Martinez Villar  
Pedro Dennit  
Lorcan Kennedy  
Maria Jose Gonzalez

### EU Commission

Kenneth Patterson  
Miriam Garcia Ferrer  
Christian Rambaud