

# NORTH WEST WATERS REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Working Group 1 - West of Scotland (ICES Vb & VI)

The Hague, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006, 9am-1pm  
Summary of Recommendations and Actions

### **2a: Deepsea gillnet fishery**

#### Recommendations:

- WG1 recommends that consideration be given to the reopening of the Gillnet Hake Fishery in Areas Via, b, VIIb, c, j, k, and XII to the East of 27W, subject to an accompanying scientific programme.
- The Scientific programme should investigate *inter alia*:
  - Maximum soak time (the WG discussed a period of 24 hours).
  - Technical measures: minimum mesh size (the WG discussed the Hake Recovery Plan in Areas VI and VII which calls for 120mm mesh); maximum length of nets.
  - Maximum number of nets per vessel (the WG discussed carrying only that which could be recovered in one trip – it was agreed that nets were not to be left fishing between trips).
  - Marking of gear. The WG discussed the importance of this, and recommended that visual means alone were inadequate and that the use of transmitters should be considered.
  - By-catch in this fishery.

These recommendations have some caveats, both from the fisheries and environmental sectors. Questions were raised by Bird Life International over by-catch and sustainability issues in the Hake fishery and by the Irish delegation on the make-up of the whole package. One member (WWF) is opposed to any reopening of the deep water gillnet fishery until sustainability, by-catch and discarding issues are addressed.

Regardless of the specific topic of the reopening of the Hake fishery, the WG unanimously calls on the Commission to implement immediately a large-scale clean up of lost and discarded nets. Funding should be sought using the “polluter pays” principle, and incentives for recovery of gear by non-involved vessels should be considered. There was a further suggestion that the boats affected by the current closure might be utilised in the clean-up.

### **2b: Cod recovery programme**

#### Recommendations:

- WG1 welcomes the review by the Commission, and supports issues laid out in the North Sea RAC discussion paper on the CRP, for example that the review should consider appropriate targets and timescales, developments in scientific

- knowledge, impacts of non-whitefish fleets, and the optimum mix of measures set at community level and Member State level.
- Selected individuals from WG1 should be involved in the NS RAC drafting group taking forward these considerations. This would avoid duplication of work and give both RACs a more powerful voice.
  - WG1 agrees that closed areas are one available tool, but that proposed closures require good quality data, clear objectives, economic assessment, analysis of displacement and bycatch, appropriate scientific studies including monitoring to advise if goals have been met, and that proposals must be SMART.

Actions:

- Approach NS RAC to ask for involvement in their drafting group. Ross Skinner, Sean O'Donoghue (fishing sector) and Helen McLaughlin (others) had their services volunteered to the NS RAC.
- WG1 or Executive Committee to invite a representative from NS RAC give a presentation on work to date.
- Barrie Dees to disseminate the NS RAC discussion paper.

**2.d: Monkfish Science:**

Recommendations:

- WG1 welcomed that French colleagues had joined the Scottish industry in contributing to the monkfish catch data study. This is one of two projects to gain accurate monkfish data.

Actions:

- Secretariat to distribute presentation on monkfish science.
- WG1 to follow quota revision. STECF will consider stock abundance on April 20<sup>th</sup>, but this will not affect the ongoing scientific work.

**2.c: Marking and Identification of gear**

**2.e: Rockall issues**

These agenda items were not reached due to lack of time. WG1 members felt that in future each agenda item should be given an allocated time to ensure that all agenda items are reached. Issues such as the new Russian administration and closing areas of Rockall to protect coral should be addressed at the next meeting.

**AOB:** Members were concerned that processes within the WG do not allow recommendations agreed by WGs to be put forward to the Executive Committee before important meetings arranged with the Commission. This was particularly concerning when two WGs were considering the same topic.

Bertie Armstrong  
Chairman of Working Group 1  
NWW RAC

**ANNEX**

Comité National des Pêches (National Fisheries Committee)  
CNPMEM

Paris, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Addressees:  
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Document:

Memo on the NWWRAC working groups  
held on February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 in The Hague (Netherlands)

Dear Sir or Madam

Please find attached a brief summary of the Celtic Sea, West of Scotland and English Channel working groups of the NWWRAC that were held in The Hague on February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>, and which the CNPMEM participated in. These documents do not replace the minutes that will be drawn by the rapporteur of each group.

Yours sincerely,

Hubert CARRE  
*Signature*  
Managing Director

**MEMO**

NWWRAC Working Group - 28/02 and 01/03/06 - The Hague

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**NB: Translation problems occurred during the meeting.**

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***West of Scotland Working Group (ICES Vb and VI areas)***

*1. Adoption of minutes:*

Comments were made by the French delegation:

- The working group had to be reminded of the French position on monkfish in relation to bring together the North Sea TAC and the West of Scotland TAC. The ANOP has reservations regarding this point. Besides, the French are opposed to an additional limitation on monkfish fishing.
- The CNPMEM emphasised the additional note of principle added by the WWF in relation to deep-sea fishing, indicating that no deep-sea species fishing should be authorised due to the level of bycatch and discards. As this position was not voiced during the meeting, it should not appear in the minutes of the meeting.

*2. Issues discussed:*

*a. Ban on gillnet fishing (TAC and quota regulation 51/2006)*

As the Spanish representatives have not come to an agreement between trawlers and netters, the discussion on a proposed reopening was difficult. NGO representatives were opposed to any reopening without scientific data. The association of ship-owners affected by the closure had proposed a reopening with specific supervision measures for each fishing practice (hake nets, monkfish nets, deep water shark nets): a limit on the length of nets, immersion time, polmar type gear logbook keeping, banning of gear disposal, supervision requirements, marking of gear .... It was proposed to accompany this reopening proposal with a campaign using onboard observers to enable a genuine

scientific fishery impact study to be carried out. The CNPMEM supported this supervision proposal. Barrie Deas of NFFO (UK) proposed a partial opening to 15 vessels to carry out an experimental campaign.

Following discussion, the members of the group finally agreed:

- to denounce such a banning regulation,
- to consider that hake gillnet fishing ("volanta") should not be considered in the same way as monkfish and shark net fishing, as this fishery is not incriminated in the Deepnet report, although the WWF has reservations.
- To ask the Commission for a reopening of hake net fishing in accordance with the conditions proposed by the affected ship-owners, i.e.:
  - Immersion time limited to 24 hours,
  - Programme of onboard observers,
  - Study of standardisation of the mesh size at 100mm in areas VII and VIII (instead of 120mm in area VII) with the resulting limitation in net length. This shall be subject to scientific opinion.

[The chairman of the RAC emphasises that there may be a problem, should the mesh size be modified, as the hake recovery plan is based on this mesh size].

- Banning of unattended nets and disposal of gear in the sea,
- Compulsory gear logbook (purchase, loss, ...),
- Compulsory reporting of onboard gear when entering and leaving port.
- A campaign to retrieve lost nets, where vessel VMS data could be used for this purpose.

The rest of the discussion was adjourned to the Celtic Sea group (see the definitive decision hereafter). However, Mr Hopkins, representing the European Commission, pointed out that the decision to ban was made by a Council ruling. In order to modify the decision the Commission needs to make a new proposal that has to be matched by opinions from the CSREP, the European Parliament and then a new submission to the Council of Ministers. Therefore he did not think that a full reopening of deepnet fishing (greater than 200m) would be possible before September.

#### *b. Cod Recovery Plan*

The members of the RAC believe it necessary the results of the "cod" plans should be examined and that they should be re-evaluated. It appears that it is necessary to identify areas where this management method is not appropriate and to propose other methods of management. Specifically regarding the closure of areas, the members of the RAC indicated that the following approach should be taken: development of clear objectives / setting up of a closure schedule/ date of reopening / setting and monitoring of indicators to assess achieved objectives. The members also emphasised how the levels of biomass of a species depend on environmental conditions and that this fact needs to be taken into account. The North Sea RAC (of which the CNPMEM also is a member) decided to call a meeting to examine the Cod Recovery Plans. It was agreed to ask NWWRAC experts to attend this group and to ask the North Sea RAC for information on the subject. These experts should be experienced with the problems of Cod Recovery Plans. The mission of the North Sea RAC is to evaluate the availability of scientific opinions and information relating to the biomass condition of cod, to study the difficulties affecting professionals

due to a reduction in the number of days at sea, to include the taking into account of fleet outings into the evolution of these plans, to determine objectives that are more appropriate to the recovery of cod stocks, to encourage scientific research on the environment and climatic changes, to study fishery management involving the closure of areas rather than managing fishing effort.

Mr Hopkins, representing the European Commission, also explained that the Commission was preparing a 'non-paper' about reviewing cod recovery plans by examining the programmes of these plans. A consultation of member states and professionals will be organised.

*c. Scientific knowledge on monkfish*

The chairman of the group, M. Bertie Armstrong, told the members of the group that two studies had been launched. A description of these projects will be sent to the members of the West of Scotland Working Group.

*d. Questions related to Rockall*

This question was not discussed and will be carried on the agenda of the next working group meeting.