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European Commission
Directorate General Fisheries
Att. Mr. J. Holmquist
Rue de la Loi 200
B 1049 Brussels
Belgium

Date: 14 July 2006
Our reference: PRAC06.11/IH
Subject: Further studies/scenarios for North Sea Herring

Dear Mr. Holmquist,

At the Pelagic RAC executive committee meeting on July 5th, discussed was the issue of the North Sea herring stock and the proposed TAC reduction for next year. The ICES/ACFM advice presents a number of options. As there was no consensus on this matter it was agreed to explore the matter further and hopefully get a common position before the end of September. The Pelagic RAC would like to request the Commission to let ICES make some further studies on the North Sea Herring Stock and calculate a number of scenarios presenting a longer-term perspective.

When analysing the stock/recruitment relationship for the North Sea herring stock it seems like the reference point B_{lim} is set overly conservative (see figure 1). One might argue that B_{lim} could be set at e.g. 600,000 tonnes instead of the present 800,000 tonnes. If the B_{lim} is changed B_{pa} should also be changed. Therefore, the Pelagic RAC would like to ask ICES to re-evaluate the existing reference points.

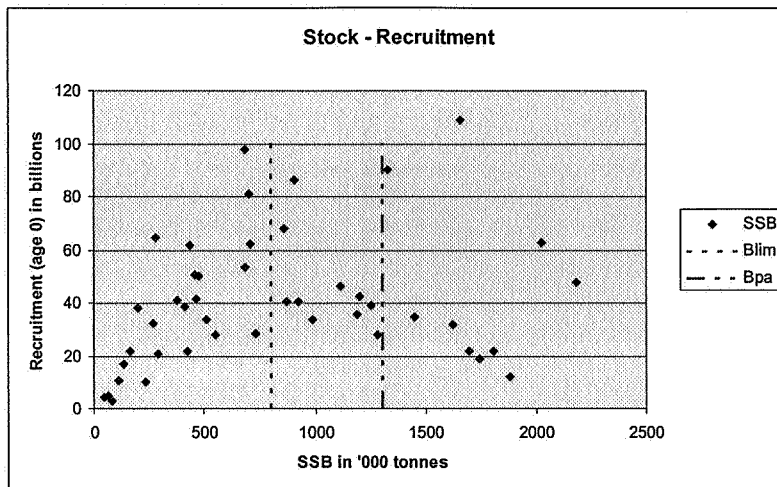


Figure 1. Stock – recruitment relationship for the North Sea herring stock.

Furthermore, in the ACFM advice for the North Sea herring stock, a set of scenarios for fishing mortalities for the different fleets that exploit the stock are made. When running these scenarios, the 2005 fishery is used as the baseline for short term predictions. In 2005 and the previous year a part of the fishing mortality is caused by misreporting of landings taken in the North Sea but reported as being taken in adjacent areas. The Pelagic RAC is supporting initiatives taken to reduce the present level of misreporting. As the present magnitude of misreporting is expected to be reduced the Pelagic RAC would like to ask ICES to run a number of short-term prediction scenarios based on the following changed assumptions:

- misreporting is reduced to max 5% of the total TAC in 2006,
- recruitment of 0-ringers in 2007-2010 equal to the size of the 2005 year-class
- F_{0-1} is assumed to be 0.05.
- Catch of North Sea herring by Fleet C set to 24,000 tonnes.

Result of the following scenarios we like to be made:

- Scenario 1. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 15% of the TAC_{2006}
- Scenario 2. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 20% of the TAC_{2006}
- Scenario 3. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 25% of the TAC_{2006}
- Scenario 4. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 30% of the TAC_{2006}
- Scenario 5. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 15% of the TAC_{2006} and changes in TAC_{2008} and TAC_{2009} are maximised to 15%
- Scenario 6. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 20% of the TAC_{2006} and changes in TAC_{2008} and TAC_{2009} are maximised to 15%
- Scenario 7. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 25% of the TAC_{2006} and changes in TAC_{2008} and TAC_{2009} are maximised to 15%
- Scenario 8. TAC_{2007} (catch fleet A) is set at minus 30% of the TAC_{2006} and changes in TAC_{2008} and TAC_{2009} are maximised to 15%

The output from these longer-term prediction runs should also show the catches, F and SSB in 2008-2009-2010.

As we have planned the next meeting of our Working Group I for September 12th, we would like to have these results no later than August 15th.

We are looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

i/o


Iain MacSween
Chairman Pelagic RAC

c.c.: Mr Ken Patterson, Mr John Farnell, Ms Chiara Gariazzo, Mr Poul Degnbol, Ms Miriam Garcia-Ferrer.