



European Commission
Directorate-General Fisheries
c/o Mr Fokion Fotiadis
Office: J-99 0/07
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Date: 14 November 2008
Our reference: 0809PRAC10/AC
Subject: Recommendation on shared and horse mackerel stocks

Dear Mr Fotiadis,

The Pelagic RAC is pleased to present its unanimous recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2009 for a number of shared stocks and for three horse mackerel stocks, which you find attached in the annex to this letter. With the exception of the recommendation for Norwegian spring spawning herring, the Norwegian and Faeroes industry represented at the meeting underwrite the herewith presented recommendations.

For any questions, please contact the secretariat. Looking forward to your response,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Aukje Coers', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Aukje Coers
Pelagic RAC secretariat

c.c. Ms Isabelle Viallon (by e-mail)

Annex 1: Pelagic RAC Recommendations November 2008

Norwegian spring spawning herring

The Pelagic RAC recommends that the TAC is set incorporating an increase of 15% in comparison to the TAC of 2008 (i.e. at 1 745 kt). In effect this would mean that F would remain below F_{pa} and catches would therefore be in line with the precautionary approach.

Northeast Atlantic mackerel

Noting that the Pelagic RAC made a recommendation on options for the NEA mackerel long-term management plan, namely that:

- The new precautionary management plan should be based on an HCR which should include;
- A trigger value for SSB at 2400 kt;
- A target harvest rate set at 0,20 when SSB is above the trigger point and at $0.20 * (SSB)/2.4$ when SSB is below the trigger point and;
- An IAV limitation of 15%, which should be applied always (irrespective of level of SSB).

The Pelagic RAC recommends that the TAC for 2009 is set in line with the above described amended management plan.

Blue whiting – combined stock

The Pelagic RAC reiterates its disappointment in relation to the fact that it was not sufficiently given the opportunity to be actively involved in the process of discussing amendments to the management plan. The Pelagic RAC acknowledges that the stock is declining and accepts that a reduction in catches is necessary. The Pelagic RAC feels, however, that the reduction recommended by ICES would have significant socio-economic implications, which need to be taken into account. The Pelagic RAC therefore recommends that the target F is reduced to $F_{pa} = 0.32$ (as defined in the ICES advice), meaning that a TAC for 2009 would be set at 711 kt. It is envisaged that a further reduction is realised over four years, unless further insight gained during the next three years would show this to be unnecessary.

In addition, the Pelagic RAC would like to make a number of suggestions:

- Change the timing for the ICES advice by bringing it forward to June, the same as for the demersal stocks. This will allow for more time for consideration by the stakeholders, before the Coastal states meet at the end of the year;
- A benchmark assessment should be held to review the reference points and determine whether a target F of 0.18 leads to catch levels around MSY;
- The commission should request that ICES carries out a research programme, similar to the HOMSIR project, to identify possible stock components;
- In order to improve insight in the stock, fishermen's knowledge should be integrated into the assessment. The Pelagic RAC could play a role in this process.



Horse mackerel – Western, North Sea and Southern stocks

In the light of ICES reiterating their advice of last year, and until the assessment and management areas are aligned, the Pelagic RAC recommends to role over the TACs of 2008 for these three stocks. I.e. 170 kt for Western stock, 39 kt for the North Sea stock and 58 kt for the Southern stock.