



Ms Lowri Evans
European Commission
Directorate General - Mare
Office J-99; 0/07
B-1049 BRUSSELS
Belgium

Pelagic RAC
Treubstraat 17
PO Box 72
2280 AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)70 336 9624
Fax: +31 (0)70 399 3004
E-mail: info@pelagic-rac.org
<http://www.pelagic-rac.org>

Date: 7 December 2010
Our reference: 1011PRAC32/AC
Subject: Fishing opportunities 2011 for widely distributed stocks
CC: Ms Isabelle Viallon
(by e-mail)

Dear Ms Evans,

The Pelagic RAC is pleased to present you its unanimous advice on fishing opportunities for 2011 for several widely distributed stocks.

Looking forward to your response,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Aukje Coers', written over a horizontal line.

Ms Aukje Coers
Pelagic RAC secretariat

Annex 1: recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2011 for widely distributed stocks

Western horse mackerel

The Pelagic RAC recommends that the TAC is set based on the LTM plan, i.e. at 181 kt. The Pelagic RAC notes that the option according to MSY in the ICES advice provides the opportunity to set the TAC substantially higher, i.e. at 229 kt. However, the Pelagic RAC is committed to keep following the management plan expecting that the Commission is too and would follow the same approach if the situation were the other way around when the management plan would suggest a TAC higher than the MSY approach. In addition, the Pelagic RAC would like to ask the Commission what action is being taking to bring the Norwegian catches on stock under control.

North Sea horse mackerel

The Pelagic RAC recommends that the TAC is rolled over, i.e. set at 47,454 tons. In addition, the Pelagic RAC would like to ask the Commission what action is being taking to bring the Norwegian catches on this stock under control.

Southern horse mackerel

The Pelagic RAC recommends that the Commission's policy statement is followed and the TAC is reduced by 15% in comparison to 2011, i.e. at 26.4 kt.

Blue whiting

The Pelagic RAC finds it very difficult to give a recommendation on an exact TAC number considering the major problems with the latest survey and the consequent weak ICES advice. The industry in any case could not support setting a TAC of 40,1 Kt. The Pelagic RAC in light of this:

- Acknowledges that the stock is in a poor state and action should be taken accordingly, but;
- Feels that the assessment and the management plan HCR are not fit for purpose, because they are not dealing with the major uncertainties in the survey data in a satisfactory manner;
- Can therefore unfortunately not make a recommendation on a specific TAC number, because it feels that there is no decent scientific basis to find common ground on;
- Will be setting up a focus group that should address the management of this stock. Norwegian scientists as well as stakeholders will be invited to participate in

this group. The results should feed into the ICES benchmark assessment which should take place a.s.a.p.;

- Hopes that the Commission will be supportive of this initiative and will show its support by tabling the issue during the Coastal States meeting;

North East Atlantic mackerel

Considering that the major problems in this fishery were at a political level, in which the Pelagic RAC engages as little as possible, Pelagic RAC merely recommends that:

- All parties should spare no effort in finding an international acceptable agreement, with an outtake based on the existing management plan;
- In the case that no agreement is found in 2010, the EU and Norway should together base their TACs on the existing management plan.

The Pelagic RAC would further urge the Commission to ensure sufficient control measures in relation to catches within the EU.

North East Atlantic herring

The Pelagic RAC recommends that the LTM plan is be followed, but at the same time that the HCR should be evaluated to see if the target F could be increased, considering that F_{MSY} has been estimated by ICES at 0,15 and realised fishing mortality has been higher then estimated earlier, without having had any negative consequences and so there seemed to be space for manoeuvring.