



International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

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Date: 28 May 2015
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Subject: Questions on mackerel

Dear Katja,

During a recent Pelagic AC Working Group II meeting the Working Group has discussed, among other things, how to properly manage the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock while taking into account biological and ecological characteristics of this stock. Worries have been expressed in regards to observed decreased weights at age, earlier spawning and later maturation. Therefore the Working Group has formulated a number of questions seeking expert advice from ICES to address these.

In recent years mackerel abundance has increased dramatically and the question arises whether this increased abundance leads to density dependent effects which in turn can negatively affect individual growth due to resource constraints.

Furthermore, has ICES considered other reasons for decreased weights at age, earlier spawning and later maturation?

In relation to this has ICES considered how to manage exploitation in large stock scenarios and if not, what criteria should be used?

One of the important aspects in developing multi-annual management strategies is the time horizon and in providing forecasts ICES often differentiates between short, medium and long term. However, it remains unclear how ICES defines short, medium and long term and why these time frames are different between stocks.

We hope that you will be in a position to address these questions and we are looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sean O'Donoghue'.

Sean O'Donoghue
Chairman Working Group II

