

Mr Joao AGUIAR MACHADO
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Date: 29 May 2019
Our reference: 1819/PAC71
Subject: Request for setup ICES working group to investigate impacts of seismic activities on (herring) spawning grounds

Dear Mr. Aguiar Machado,

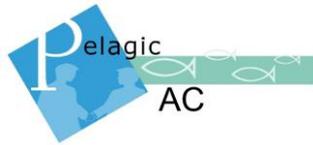
The Pelagic Advisory Council would like to request the cooperation of the Commission on an important issue. This request has unanimously been endorsed by the Executive Committee.

Over the past years, the Pelagic AC has paid careful attention to ongoing developments as regards the effects of seismic activities on herring spawning grounds. It is becoming increasingly clear that oil/gas exploration, wind farm construction and cabling are an important development in European offshore areas and the continuous growth of these sectors is to be expected. However, the impacts of these activities on fish, spawning grounds and larval development remain poorly understood by the scientific community. Pelagic AC members are concerned over these potential impacts given the importance of spawning grounds for the health of the stocks under the Pelagic AC remit (notably, herring).

The Pelagic AC is concerned over the quality, thoroughness and independence of impact studies carried out in advance of offshore projects. To date, most impact studies are being commissioned and/or funded by the energy sector, raising the question of impartiality. The Pelagic AC is of firm belief that independent scientific research regarding the impacts are necessary and urgent. We would therefore highly encourage the development of scientific expertise by ICES in this research field.

The members of the Pelagic AC would be very grateful if the Commission could ask ICES to set up a working group, that specifically investigates the effects of seismic surveys and cabling, on spawning grounds, larval development and fish biology. We see this working group as separate from the existing ICES group focusing on effects of underwater noise on marine mammals.





We would be very grateful if the Commission could discuss this possibility with ICES, to help ensure delicate spawning grounds are given their due preservation.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of the above.

Looking forward to your response,

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jesper Raakjær".

Jesper Raakjær
Chairman Pelagic AC

