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Date: December 4<sup>th</sup> 2019  
Our reference: 1920/PAC14  
Subject: Management Strategy for Southern horse mackerel

Dear Ms. Alicia Villauriz Iglesias,

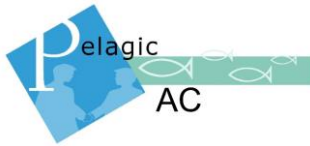
On behalf of the Pelagic Advisory Council for Fisheries (Pelagic AC) I would like to thank you for your letter on the management strategy for Southern horse mackerel. Your concerns are duly noted, and the Pelagic AC intends to discuss these at its next meeting of Working Group II scheduled for early March 2020.

To avoid any misunderstanding as to how the Pelagic AC arrived at its recommendation for 2020 I am setting out below the process we undertook to arrive at our recommendation.

The Pelagic AC holds as a core principle since its inception to develop long term management strategies for the stocks in its remit. Since 2014, significant time and effort have been spent to develop management strategy for Southern horse mackerel and all the other stocks under our remit. This management strategy was developed by scientists from the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO) and the Portuguese Institute for Sea and Atmosphere (IPMA), relying on stakeholders' input (using questionnaires and giving presentations at meetings), both in the Pelagic AC and industry stakeholders forums in Spain and Portugal. The management strategy having been unanimously agreed was submitted by the Pelagic AC to ICES through the Commission. ICES has evaluated the management strategy in 2018 and deemed it to be precautionary. It is worth noting that the ICES advice on management strategy (see below) states that none of the elements of the harvest control rule in the management strategy are in contradiction with ensuring that the stock is fished and maintained, also in the future, at levels that can lead to MSY :

*"ICES advises that the harvest control rule (HCR) of the proposed long-term management strategy for southern horse mackerel in ICES Division 9.a is considered precautionary. Calculations show that when the HCR is applied, the stock is maintained at levels that can lead to catches around MSY.*





*ICES advise that none of the elements of the HCR are in contradiction with ensuring that the stock is fished and maintained, also in the future, at levels that can lead to MSY.”<sup>1</sup>*

In light of the ICES advice on the management strategy and also respecting the core founding objective of the Pelagic AC to develop management strategies for stocks within its remit, the Pelagic AC both last year, and again this year, unanimously recommended to follow the management strategy advice and has actively engaged with Commission on our recommendation. In addition, the Pelagic AC decided to investigate with the scientists why there is such a large difference between the ICES MSY advice and the management strategy advice. This process is on-going at present.

Hoping the above is helpful to you to explain the rationale behind the Pelagic AC recommendation, we forward to your continued participation on this important issue at our next working group meeting.

Thanking you for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jesper Raakjaer'.

Jesper Raakjaer  
Pelagic AC Chairman

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<sup>1</sup> ICES. (2018). EU request to ICES on the assessment of a long-term management strategy for southern horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*) in ICES Division 9.a. ICES.  
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ICES.PUB.4180>

