



Ms. Charlina Vitcheva
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Date: 04 May 2021
Our reference: 2021PAC55
Subject: ICES advice following EU request to assess the rebuilding plan for Western horse mackerel

Dear Ms. Charlina Vitcheva,

The Pelagic AC (PelAC) has submitted a rebuilding plan for Western horse mackerel to the Commission on 28 July 2020, and has requested its evaluation by ICES. We were pleased with the publication of the ICES evaluation on 26th of April 2021¹, deeming the plan precautionary. We are grateful for the Commission support in getting the plan through the ICES system.

The PelAC would like to re-emphasise the amount of effort that has gone into developing the rebuilding plan, which has taken a number of years. The final plan was the result of a collaborate effort between PelAC members with contributions from scientists from a number of scientific institutions. We would further like to underscore the precarious state of the stock (currently estimated to be very close to B_{lim}), which is the main rationale for choosing to develop a rebuilding plan rather than a management strategy. We believe that agreement between parties setting TACs following the rebuilding plan would enhance the recovery of the stock, as well as ensure greater stability of the yield in the long term.

We would therefore be grateful if the Commission could pursue the general acceptance of the rebuilding plan for this stock in its negotiations with the United Kingdom, in order to jointly request that ICES use the rebuilding plan as a basis for the top line of the advice (rather than in a catch options table) for the TAC advice for Western horse mackerel in 2022, and onwards.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of the above,

Yours sincerely,

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

Jesper Raakjaer
Pelagic AC Chairman

¹ https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2021/Special_Requests/eu.2021.04.pdf