

Ms. Charlina Vitcheva
Director General
Directorate General Maritime Affairs & Fisheries
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Pelagic AC
Louis Braillelaan 80
2719 EK Zoetermeer
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)63 375 6324
E-mail: info@pelagic-ac.org
<http://www.pelagic-ac.org>

Date: 19 May 2021

Our reference: 2021PAC61

Subject: Agreed amendment to SHOM long-term management strategy

Dear Ms. Charlina Vitcheva,

Since 2014, the Pelagic AC (PelAC) has been working on a long-term management strategy (LTMS) for the Southern horse mackerel stock. This work has involved scientists and stakeholders from Spain and Portugal and has been conducted collaboratively with the South-Western Waters AC (SWWAC). An agreed LTMS was reviewed and deemed precautionary by ICES in 2018. Due to a significant difference in allowed catches between the subsequent ICES MSY advice for Southern horse mackerel in 2019 and the corresponding ICES advice following the management strategy, the work on the strategy was re-invigorated, as a number of stakeholders were dissatisfied with this perceived imbalance.

In Autumn 2020, the PelAC convened a Southern horse mackerel Focus Group (SHOM FG) with the SWWAC and discussed proposed amendments to the LTMS. It was proposed during the meeting that the established target year to reach F_{msy} within the strategy – the year 2025 – be amended to a target year of 2022, in order to bring the fishing opportunities based on the LTMS more swiftly in line with those based on the ICES MSY advice.

I am pleased to write today to inform you that, following a second meeting of the SHOM FG between the PelAC and the SWWAC on the 18th May, this single amendment – to Article 5.1 of the management strategy – has been agreed on a consensus basis:

“Article 5 - TAC setting procedures

1. *In the case that the spawning stock biomass is forecast to be above or equal to MSY $B_{trigger}$ (equivalent to B_{pa}) at mid-January* of the year for which the TAC is to be set, the TAC shall be fixed to a catch estimated based on an gradual increase of fishing mortality towards F_{msy} in 2025 **2022**”.*

Attached you will find the amended management strategy document for your reference. Please note that the management strategy has not been changed in any other way.

We kindly request that you urgently convey the revised LTMS to ICES in order that it can be included for consideration in the WGHANSA meeting that is taking place next week between 24th-28th May. Following this review, we would additionally request – via the Commission – that ICES use the management strategy as a basis for the top-line of the TAC advice for Southern mackerel in 2022 and onwards, with ICES MSY advice included as part of the subsequent ‘catch options’ table.

We look forward to your confirmation that this consensus-based management strategy has been conveyed to ICES in order that the above can be pursued and we thank you for your kind cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jesper Raakjaer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jesper Raakjaer
Pelagic AC Chairman

Annex I

PELAC proposal for **an amended** long-term management strategy for the Southern horse mackerel stock

Background

A long-term management strategy (LTMS) was developed for this stock by initiative of the Pelagic Advisory Council (PELAC) in a collaborative work between scientists from IPMA and IEO and stakeholders from Portugal and Spain, with collaboration/knowledge of the South Western Waters Advisory Council (SWWAC).

Objectives

The Parties agree to propose a LTMS for the fisheries on the southern horse mackerel stock, which is consistent with the precautionary approach and the MSY objective (article 2.2) of the Common Fisheries Policy¹.

Criteria and definitions

Article 1 - Subject matter

This management strategy pertains to the Southern horse mackerel stock.

Article 2 - Geographical definitions of stocks

ICES Division 9.a (The Iberian coast from the Strait of Gibraltar to Cape Finisterre in Galician waters).

Article 3 - Definitions

For the purpose of this management strategy, in addition to the definitions laid down in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1380/2013, the following definitions shall apply:

- i) “ $F_{\text{by-catch}}$ ” refers to the level of fishing mortality which shall be applied when the Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) is equal to or below B_{lim} to account for horse mackerel by-catches.

Article 4 - Reference points

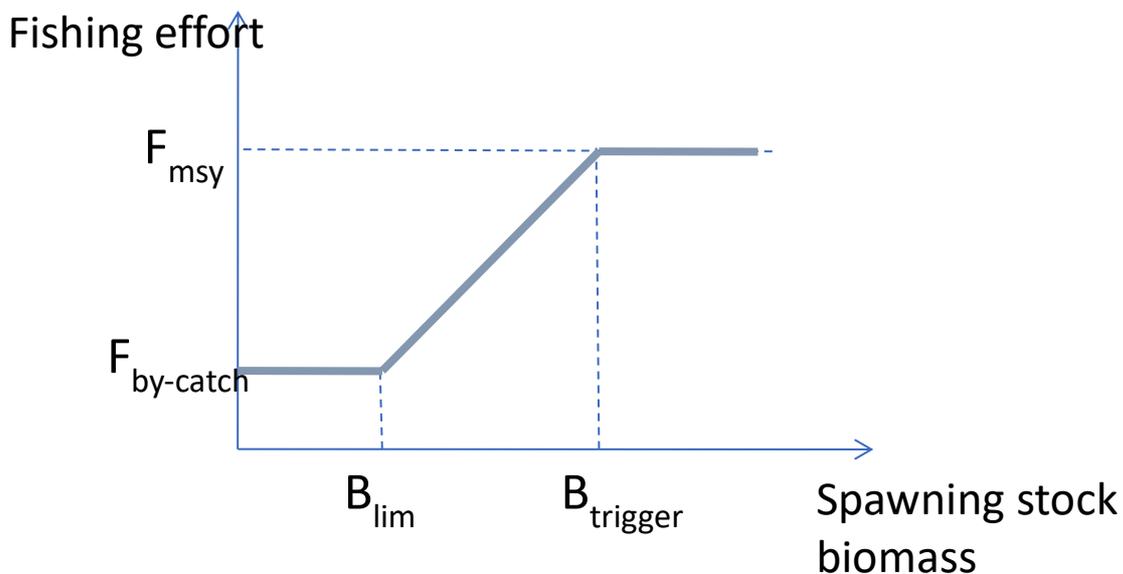
- i) The minimum spawning biomass level and the precautionary spawning biomass level for the combined shall be as follows: $B_{\text{lim}} = 103\,000$ tonnes, B_{pa} or MSY $B_{\text{trigger}} = 181\,000$ tonnes (ICES, 2017a,b).
- ii) The maximum fishing mortality associated with Maximum Sustainable Yield (F_{msy}) for the southern horse mackerel stock shall be as follows: $F_{\text{msy}} = 0.11$ (ICES, 2017a,b).

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0022:0061:EN:PDF>

Article 5 - TAC setting procedures

2. In the case that the spawning stock biomass is forecast to be above or equal to MSY $B_{trigger}$ (equivalent to B_{pa}) at mid-January* of the year for which the TAC is to be set, the TAC shall be fixed to a catch estimated based on an gradual increase of fishing mortality towards F_{msy} in 2022.
3. In the case that the spawning stock biomass of the stock is forecast to be less than MSY $B_{trigger}$ and larger than B_{lim} at mid-January of the year for which the TAC is to be set, the TAC shall be fixed that is consistent with a fishing mortality (F) given by the harvest control rule:

$$F = F_{by-catch} + [(F_{MSY} - F_{by-catch}) / (B_{trigger} - B_{lim}) / (SSB - B_{lim})]$$
4. In accordance with the objectives of the plan detailed in article 1 above, where the rules in paragraph 1 and 2 would lead to a fishing mortality higher than F_{MSY} , this fishing mortality shall be set in line with article 2.2 of the CFP.
5. Where the rules in paragraph 1, 2 and 3 would lead to a TAC which deviates by more than 15% from the TAC of the preceding year a TAC shall be set that is no more than 15% greater or 15% less than the TAC of the preceding year.
6. In the case that the spawning biomass is forecast to be equal to or less than B_{lim} in mid-January of the year for which the TAC is to be set, the TAC will be fixed corresponding to a fishing mortality $F_{by-catch}=0.01$.



*For this stock, the spawning stock biomass is determined at spawning time (assumed to be mid-January)

Article 6 - Conditions of the monitoring fishery

Vessels participating in the fishery, if requested, shall take on-board scientific fisheries observers under the Data Collection Framework (DFC) to improve knowledge of the state of the stock. Those vessels upon request shall provide samples for the same scientific purpose.

Article 7 - End of the management strategy

The Parties, on the basis of ICES advice, shall review the biological reference points and this long-term management strategy at intervals not exceeding five years.

References

ICES, 2017a. Report of the Benchmark Workshop on Pelagic Stocks (WKPELA), 6–10 February 2017, Lisbon, Portugal. ICES CM 2017/ACOM:35. 294 pp.

ICES, 2017b. Working Group on Southern Horse Mackerel, Anchovy and Sardine (WGHANSA), 24–29 June 2017, Bilbao, Spain. ICES CM 2017/ACOM:17.