



▶ Pelagic AC

Working Group II meeting
8 July 2015
12.30-17:00 hrs
Parkhotel Den Haag, The Netherlands

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Participants

Sean O'Donoghue (chairman), Alex Wiseman, Anne Mette Bæk Jespersen, Christine Absil, Claus Reedtz Sparrevohn, Eric Roeleveld, Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, Eskild Kirkegaard, Fredrik Lindberg, Frederik Schutyser, Gary Taylor, Gerard van Balsfoort, Goncalo Carvalho, Iain MacSween, Ian Gatt, Irene Kingma, Jerome Jourdain, Jerome Nouis, Jesper Juul Larsen, John Ward, José Beltran, Kees Taal, Lesley Duthie, Lisbeth Nielsen, Martin Pastoors, Matthew Cox, Miren Garmendia, Niels Hintzen, Piebe Hotsma, Reine Johansson, Sheila O'Neill, Stella Nemecky, Tony Andrews, Uwe Richter, Verena Ohms, William Stewart

1. Opening of the meeting by the chairman, Sean O'Donoghue

The chairman opened the meeting at 12:35 hrs and pointed out that due to Working Group I finishing late the meeting started 35 minutes behind schedule, but that he nevertheless intended to close the meeting by 17:00 hrs.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without amendments.

3. Follow-up on action items

The chairman said that there had been a significant amount of action items and that a lot of work has been done, but not all items have been completed yet. The first action point was to liaise with other ACs in relation to the scope of the MIACO meeting. At this stage the other ACs did not consider it an issue to open the meeting to other participants and hence did not support such a letter. The chairman wondered whether this action item should be dropped.

Ian Gatt suggested sending it anyway on behalf of the Pelagic AC alone which was agreed by the meeting.

The next action item was to arrange a stakeholder meeting with WG WIDE prior to the WG WIDE meeting. ICES had been positive in its response to having brief stakeholder meetings before ICES working group meetings and the chairman asked Eskild Kirkegaard for guidance on practical arrangements.

Eskild Kirkegaard suggested sending a request to the ICES secretariat and pointed out that it was just a question of logistics to organize this meeting.

The third action item was in relation to sending a letter to ICES expressing concern that WKMSYREF has changed reference points for several stocks. The chairman explained that the Pelagic AC was still waiting for a response from the Baltic Sea AC and it was decided that Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn will talk to Reine Johansson in this regard.

The issues in relation to herring in VIa North and South, i.e. reference points, the combined advice and the development of a management and/or rebuilding plan will be discussed later during the meeting.

Invigorating the management plan for Irish Sea herring has so far been unsuccessful. The chairman proposed leaving the initiative to Alan McCulla given that his vessels are fishing the stock.

The in-year TAC revision for Celtic Sea herring will be dealt with during the meeting.

The work on Southern horse mackerel has continued and a document on reference points has been uploaded to the website. It was decided to discuss the latest developments towards the end of the meeting.

Another action item was to prepare a draft management plan for Western horse mackerel. Unfortunately this has not been completed despite a lot of effort.

Regarding mackerel the egg report is now available on the Pelagic AC website and the MCRS discussion is still ongoing. Rather than commenting at this stage the chairman suggested dealing with these issues again in October. The next point was to ask ICES to confirm F_{target} and $B_{trigger}$ values. While ICES has submitted some numbers it was not quite clear yet how to read the table and further clarification was required. Therefore a principle management strategy has been drafted, but without actual numbers. These will be inserted once clarification from ICES has been received. The chairman further explained that a list of general questions in relation to mackerel has been submitted to ICES, but the Pelagic AC was still waiting for a response.

The boarfish assessment has not been updated yet, but the Marine Institute in Ireland aimed to finish it just in advance of WGWIDE. A revised management strategy is on the Pelagic AC website and will be discussed later today.

4. Fishing opportunities 2016: presentation of ICES advice

- **Herring in VIa North and VIa South, VIIb,c**

Eskild Kirkegaard explained that the herring stocks in area VIa North and VIa South, VIIb,c have been combined into one assessment. Reason for this is that it is not possible to split catches and allocate them to the two different stocks. ICES still believes that there are two stocks, but it simply cannot assess them separately. The result of this combined assessment is an estimated average F for both stocks which is not indicative of F on either stock and does not reflect the status of either stock. Based on the MSY approach ICES advises 0 catches of the combined stock. The rationale is that despite a very low F there has been a decline in SSB and the stock size is now below B_{lim} . Eskild Kirkegaard emphasized that the reason for the stock decline is not an unsustainable fishery, but very poor recruitment. Even with no fishing stock size will further decline due to recruitment failure. The management plan that was available for herring in VIa North cannot be used for the combined stock and a new management plan covering both stocks is not available.

- **Celtic Sea herring**

The advice for Celtic Sea herring is based on the MSY approach and catches should be no more than 23.000 tonnes. F is very low and well below F_{msy} while biomass is well above all reference points and recruitment is good. The management plan developed by the Pelagic AC is precautionary, but the Commission requested ICES to base its advice on MSY and to include the management plan in the catch options table. The stock was benchmarked at the beginning of 2015 which changed the assessment model and also the perception of the stock. The new assessment model is more consistent in assessing the state of the stock. The 2014 survey was not used in the assessment, because it did not cover the entire stock. While in general there were some problems with uncertainty of the assessment it gives a reasonable estimate.

- **Irish Sea herring**

The ICES advice for Irish Sea herring is based on MSY and catches should be no more than 4.575 tonnes in 2016. F has been reduced and is now close to F_{msy} . Stock size is above reference points and recruitment is good. Since there is no management plan available ICES follows MSY, but it is also ICES' understanding that a management plan is under review by the Pelagic AC. The assessment uses survey and commercial data and is quite consistent. No catch information was included in the assessment for 2014 due to inaccurate age information. This reduced the quality of the assessment, but a sensitivity analysis of the assessment model was conducted and it was found that the resulting estimates of population parameters are robust to this change.

The chairman thanked Eskild Kirkegaard for his presentation.

5. Herring VIa North and VIa South, VIIb,c

- **Discuss combined advice**

Ian Gatt said that he had problems recognizing the situation as assessed by ICES in the fishery. He was confident that the fishermen would have seen such a steep decline in stock size, but according to Scottish fishermen the catches are very stable. He also was concerned about the new reference points which, compared to the previous reference points for the separated stocks, seem unrealistically high. He doubted that it will be physically possible to rebuild the stock to such a high level as the new reference points suggest. It seemed to him that the productivity of the ecosystem is quite low and he wondered whether reference points should be looked at again. In terms of recruitment he wanted to know where the number is coming from. If it was coming from catches it was not at all reliable since the fishery is a very clean fishery that only catches adult herring.

Eskild Kirkegaard took note of what Ian Gatt said, but could not reply to his comments since he did not have any experience in this area.

Martin Pastoors explained that the reference points are based on the whole time series using a standard approach. A discussion point is the large distance between B_{lim} and B_{pa} which is due to a high uncertainty.

Gerard van Balsfoort said that combining the B_{lim} s of the previous two assessments would result in 130.000 tonnes. The new B_{lim} for the combined stocks, however, is 250.000 tonnes and he did not understand this huge difference. He also pointed out that it will be very difficult to rebuild the stock beyond 410.000 tonnes which would take a very long time during which there would be a 0 TAC. Herring in VIa North which until now has been a very successfully managed fishery and stable stock all of a sudden has a 0 TAC advice and he had trouble accepting this. He also wanted to know what

the influence of the North Sea stock is and how the interactions with the North Sea stock have been taken into account.

Eskild Kirkegaard replied that interactions with the North Sea stock are not taken into account. Regarding B_{pa} he pointed out that it was possible to be above B_{pa} as has been the case for nearly 80% of the time series. He furthermore said that combining two assessments is more complicated than just joining them and calculating new reference points cannot be done by simply adding up the previous reference points. The real question in his view was is there a new regime and whether it makes sense to use the whole time series. So far there was no reason not to use it, but he promised to take all comments back to the expert group.

Niels Hintzen explained that the recruits of the VIa components come from larval stages in the North Sea and that they are being backtracked from older ages since there is no recruitment information in the area itself. He also said that if it had been possible to separate the two stocks ICES would have done it, but since this was not possible the old assessments are not valid anymore and people have to forget everything they knew about the two stocks previously. The next step will be to figure out how to go back to two assessments.

Martin Pastoors who participated in the benchmark was quite surprised about the final ICES advice. He found it striking that there is such a low F and yet such a low stock size. Management only focusses on fishing, but he considered it equally important to find out what drives stock size down. He wanted to know of what use it is to remove fishing pressure if this has hardly any influence on stock size.

Eskild Kirkegaard replied that currently the only thing that can be regulated is fishing mortality. If the low recruitment is environmentally driven it will be necessary to identify the key drivers. Whether closing a fishery is sufficient to recover the stock remained to be seen.

Martin Pastoors asked Eskild Kirkegaard to speculate how ICES will handle this situation next year in the context of giving ecosystem advice. There are several stocks in the area with low productivity, but at the moment the focus is solely on fishing.

Eskild Kirkegaard admitted that it will be challenging to address these issues in the future. Part of the reason to provide fisheries and ecosystem advice in the future is to identify drivers, but for now he could not give any details.

The chairman agreed with Ian Gatt's perception of the stock and explained that for the past four years he has emphasized that the advice is wrong in terms of stock size and recruitment. He pointed out that the industry has provided sonar recordings from a herring school for the benchmark which was estimated by Canadian scientists to be 27.000 tonnes. The ICES advice does not resemble what fishermen are seeing on the fishing grounds and he was not sure whether combining the assessments is a proper way to deal with the stocks given that all scientists agree that there are two separate spawning components. He wanted to know whether there was a mechanism that would allow a review of the combined assessment such as an intermediate benchmark. In terms of exploitation overview he wanted to know how it was possible to provide a stock status for 2013 and 2014 given that there has been no combined assessment in those years. The chairman furthermore pointed out that the difference in SSB between 0 catch and applying the 2015 F is only 5% and that the uncertainty in the assessment is larger than that.

Eskild Kirkegaard responded that in order to have another benchmark additional information has to be contributed that has not already been considered at the last benchmark. The stock status estimates of 2013 and 2014 are based on the new assessment. Finally, the unrounded numbers in the catch options table gives the impression that assessments are very precise, which is not the case.

He acknowledged the concerns raised by the chairman, but also said that redoing the assessment just for the sake of redoing it would be a waste of resources.

Ian Gatt wanted to know whether in case the TAC is set to zero the situation in terms of knowledge will be better or worse next year.

Niels Hintzen said that HAWG was very clear that in a rebuilding plan it will be necessary to include a commercial monitoring fishery. Unfortunately this conclusion did not make it into the ICES advice.

Eskild Kirkegaard confirmed that ICES had agreed on the need for a small commercial fishery to monitor the stock. Otherwise the situation will only get worse.

The chairman noticed that the information provided by the industry before the benchmark meeting did not appear in the advice.

Eskild Kirkegaard said that the new advice sheets have a specific heading under which such information can be included, but he, too, noticed that it was not really reflected. He suggested discussing this at the next MIACO meeting.

Martin Pastoors recalled that one Advice Drafting Group (ADG) concluded that information from the industry should go through the expert groups and not the ADGs. It therefore had to be ensured that the expert groups will pick up this kind of information.

Tony Andrews considered Martin Pastoors' comments in relation to ecosystem drivers very interesting. He explained that the Atlantic Salmon Trust (AST) was using tags to figure out what is happening to salmon at sea. These tags can be read off on acoustic arrays and he wondered whether the same kind of monitoring could be used for herring. He said that the AST is very concerned about renewable energies and whether that disrupts salmon migration.

Martin Pastoors had thought about acoustic monitoring systems which provide interesting options.

Tony Andrews added that ICES gave a presentation to the NASCO convention on ocean tracking. He said that the whole area of monitoring fish tracking and genetics is developing very quickly. If there was anything the AST could do in terms of facilitating contacts he would be very happy to help.

John Ward wanted to know whether any consideration has been given to the effects of grey seal predation on the stocks.

Niels Hintzen replied that the working group touched upon the issue, but could not quantify seal predation.

- **Review management plan and rebuilding plan**

The chairman announced that he did not intend to cover any TAC recommendations for the herring stocks today, but rather deal with that in October. In terms of developing a rebuilding plan for herring in VIa and VIIb,c socio-economics will have to be taken into account next to environmental concerns. A zero TAC would have devastating consequences for artisanal fisheries. He considered it worthwhile to look at some of the catch options in the ICES advice as a starting point for a rebuilding plan. A zero TAC would lead to an SSB decrease of 14% whereas a TAC based on the 2015 F would reduce SSB by 19%. This is a small difference in SSB and the chairman hoped develop a rebuilding plan around this figure. The other issue will be to find a solution to separate both stocks. There was some genetic work going on and he hoped to have some results at the October meeting. He also thought that industry acoustic surveys could be very valuable and fishermen and scientists from Canada have successfully implemented such surveys. It will be crucial to develop them as quickly as

possible using a method that will be accepted by ICES. He envisaged the rebuilding plan to be an interim solution until more information is available.

- **Next steps and time table**

The chairman suggested developing a rebuilding plan in September and to discuss the plan at the October meeting. He also proposed designing an industry-science acoustic survey to be carried out in January 2016 and to present genetic data in October and to analyze further samples. Taken together, this should justify an interim benchmark.

Ian Gatt agreed that it was necessary to kick-start some sort of process. He remarked that he had a meeting with the Marine Lab in Scotland recently which had indicated its willingness to host meeting between Scotland and Ireland. He said that it would be better to develop ideas together rather than working in isolation. He offered to talk to the Marine Lab again to set up a meeting together.

The chairman thanked Ian Gatt for this offer and added that the meeting should take place under the auspices of the Pelagic AC.

John Ward said that no fisherman believes the status of the stock is as bad as science thinks it is and therefore he found it peculiar to develop a rebuilding plan. However, he agreed that something had to be done.

Gerard van Balsfoort announced that he would like to participate in the meeting. The ICES advice hit him by surprise and he thought that returning to two separate assessments would be the preferred option. He also referred to the WESTHER project which had concluded that the stocks intertwine and he considered it very difficult to prove WESTHER wrong in such a short time frame.

The chairman said that the information from WESTHER is ten years old and based on poor resolution. Nowadays the genetic tools are more powerful.

Christine Absil said that the discussion on VIa North and South herring has been going on for a number of years and while genetic techniques might have developed she claimed that these developments were not that recent. Therefore she wanted to know why there are still no genetic data available.

The chairman replied that this herring stock is a relatively small stock with a low value compared to other pelagic stocks and hence was not a priority stock. It only became clear at the benchmark that separate assessments was not possible and that genetic data may be a possibility to separate the stocks given the developments since the WESTHER project.

Martin Pastoors was quite skeptical about genetic analysis. Rather than identifying two stocks the analysis might also identify many little stocks. The true question was in how far genetics can help with management. Also, the methods used will have to be reviewed and he was not optimistic that the stocks can be split again in September.

The chairman was aware of a boarfish genetics paper that will be relevant in relation to VIa herring. He feared that if it was not possible to split the stocks based on genetics data the work on these stocks would have to start all over.

Irene Kingma understood that the biggest problem was separating the catches. She wanted to know how this could be fixed using genetics.

The chairman replied that genetics should show which spawning component the catches are coming from.

Martin Pastoors said that it was necessary to look at available acoustic information and how the knowledge base could be improved significantly. He was keen on applying methods discussed at the PELACOUSTICS workshop in June. He also stressed that, next to the Irish, Scottish and Dutch industry, NGOs should be invited to the meeting in Edinburgh.

The chairman asked Martin Pastoors to draft a plan on how to implement acoustics.

Gerard van Balsfoort pointed out that most of the Dutch vessels fish after September and normally they need quota to go into an area. Going out only for an acoustic survey is very expensive and with a zero TAC it was not feasible to do it.

However, the chairman replied that in Canada acoustic surveys are built into the fishing operation and this is what he was aiming for as well.

Martin Pastoors explained that there is already an operating trial program on freezer trawlers. Data from 4 or 5 vessels from last year are available, but the challenge is to interpret the data correctly. The PFA is collaborating with IMARES to develop stock size indicators based on these data. The way the fishery is hereby modeled is more like a predator and not like a survey. He promised to write a plan on how to use and expand this methodology.

The chairman also invited him to give a small presentation on the PFA work at the next Working Group II meeting.

6. Celtic Sea herring

The chairman expressed his disappointment that the ICES advice is again based on MSY rather than the management plan. He pointed out to Christine Absil that the management plan was giving a lower figure than the MSY advice and that the industry fully supported this lower figure. He was not aware that any party had objected the plan.

Eskild Kirkegaard explained that the Commission did not want ICES to base its advice on the management plan since it has not been formally adopted in the EU system and therefore the Commission could not refer to it.

The chairman, however, pointed out that in the past ICES did base its advice on plans which had not been formally adopted.

Frederik Schutyser said that the Commission has been consistent in its view and that the same discussion takes place each year. Since the management plan has not been officially adopted the Commission asked ICES to use MSY as basis, but explicitly asked to include the plan in the catch options table. He added that in the past years the Commission has proposed, and Council always adopted a TAC in accordance with the management plan and the Commission is very supportive of the work carried out by the Pelagic AC. He said that the issue should only be seen as a semantic issue.

The chairman replied that this was more than just a semantic issue since the first line of the ICES advice recommends MSY and most people will not read beyond the first line of the advice. Consequently, some people will claim that setting a TAC according to the management plan is not in conformity with scientific advice. He also wanted to know why Celtic Sea herring was the only stock that was treated this way.

John Ward encouraged following the management plan when setting the TAC.

Frederik Schutyser explained that both the Commission proposal and the TAC are usually based on the management plan and that only the first line in the ICES advice is not. That did not mean, however, that the Commission could not propose a TAC in line with the management plan.

The chairman concluded to send a letter again in relation to this issue. He remarked that ICES also gave advice based on the management plan for Western horse mackerel, even though this plan never got adopted.

- **Request from the Celtic Sea Herring Management Advisory Committee for an in year TAC review based on the revised ICES stock assessment**

John Ward explained that in light of the benchmark results the 2015 forecast has changed and there is scope for a TAC increase. He pointed out that the fishery will only commence in September.

The chairman proposed sending a request to the Commission to ask ICES for an updated forecast. Should this result in an increase of fishing opportunities, an in-year review of the TAC would then be recommended.

The meeting agreed to the proposal.

- **Revised management plan (John Ward)**

The chairman pointed out that the management plan for Celtic Sea herring has been revised reflecting the new B_{lim} based on the recent benchmark. The meeting agreed to the revision.

7. Irish Sea herring

The chairman suggested following the ICES advice as in previous years. However, he also wanted to deal with the stock in October given that the main stakeholder, Alan McCulla, was not present.

8. Western horse mackerel

- **Discussion of draft management strategy**

The chairman summarized that since the last meeting in Bilbao a number of people has put enormous efforts into revising the management plan for this stock, because ICES has concluded that the plan is no longer precautionary. Several lengthy technical reports have been produced. However, there are a number of issues which cannot be easily resolved and require further efforts, e.g. simulations show that even under no fishing there is a high risk of the stock falling below B_{lim} paired with long recovery times. Recruitment spikes are a dominant feature of population dynamics and when ignored it seems that the stock is no longer capable of sustaining an exploitation level that meets the 5% risk criterion. Reducing catch levels for 2016 has a negligible impact on recovery times and risk and defining reference points proves problematic. Due to these circumstances it was not possible to present a new draft management strategy today.

- **Next steps and time table**

The chairman presented an overview of the action points identified by the sub group dealing with the stock. These included utilizing other data sources such as retrospective analysis and coordination of acoustic surveys and exploring ways of how the industry could contribute acoustic data.

Goncalo Carvalho said that he had tried to follow the work of the sub group and experienced the process as very worthy despite the very technical aspects. He promised to continue following the work and he agreed with the way forward as suggested by the chairman. He said that the only thing

he will insist on is that the new CFP will be adhered to, but he is confident that the Pelagic AC will be able to come up with a reasonable proposal.

The chairman thanked him for his efforts and fully agreed with his remarks.

Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn said that the expansion of the mackerel and horse mackerel egg survey should be added to the list of things to improve the data situation.

The chairman thanked everyone involved in the process and announced that he will try to arrange a face to face meeting since of the issues are extremely technical and difficult to follow by WebEx meetings.

9. Northeast Atlantic mackerel

• Discussion of draft management strategy

The chairman recalled that the EU and Norway have both put forward draft management plans for this stock. However, these plans are very far apart. At the Bilbao meeting it was therefore decided to draft a strategy that could be a compromise between the two differing proposals and acceptable for all Coastal States. In order to do so ICES has been asked to provide other F_{target} and $B_{trigger}$ values, but it was necessary to check with ICES what the correct interpretation of these values is. The chairman expected a trigger value around 3.5 million tonnes and a fishing mortality in the region 0.26 to 0.29, but this had to be confirmed by ICES. He also said that the strategy will have a 20% TAC stability mechanism, a B_{lim} of 1.84 million tonnes and a review clause. He promised to fill in the blanks of the strategy over the coming weeks and to submit the new draft well in advance of the October meeting.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen supported the work. He referred to a Coastal States request on density dependence and wanted to know what the status of this request is.

Eskild Kirkegaard replied that the density dependency request will be dealt with by WGWISE at the same time as the draft management plans by the EU and Norway. Both will be released together with the mackerel advice on 30 September.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen wondered whether ICES will be in a position to respond to the full request, especially in terms of density dependency.

Eskild Kirkegaard said that it is unlikely that ICES will be able to quantify density dependency, but it will definitely be addressed. According to the expert group at this stage there is not enough information available for providing quantitative advice.

Claus Reedts-Sparrevohn added that he was busy setting up a small workshop with Dankert Skagen to see how density dependency could be incorporated in stock assessments. Katja Enberg, chair of WGWISE, will also participate in the workshop.

Eskild Kirkegaard explained that the issue is not so much how to deal with density dependency, but rather to find out what is density-dependent.

The chairman hoped that during the workshop a way can be found to translate qualitative information into quantitative information.

10. Boarfish

- **Progress report updated assessment**

The chairman said that the assessment has not yet been updated, but Irish scientists are currently working on this and he was hopeful that an updated assessment will be available when WGWIDE meets at the end of August.

- **Revise management plan**

The chairman explained that the management plan has been revised to get it line with the 6 categories used by ICES. The only other change concerned the closure date which has been changed to 31 March. Reason for this being other fisheries going on at that time and the fishery should not be closed before the other fisheries are finished as well. The meeting agreed to the revisions.

- **Next steps and time table**

The chairman said that the boarfish acoustic survey has just started and that the finances have been sorted out as well. From 2016 onwards the survey will be covered under the data collection framework. In 2015 the industry pays 50% of the costs. In October the results of a genetic study will be presented.

11. AOB

- **Southern horse mackerel**

Goncalo Carvalho summarized that Spanish and Portuguese scientists are working on reference points for Southern horse mackerel and are deciding how to put forward a new Blim. While the work is still in early stages it is good that things are moving forward.

José Beltran added that the scientists are trying to come up with a stock-recruitment relationship. There were some drawbacks, but overall progress is being made. They are simulating what happens to the stock under different conditions. They hope to have good results early next year. He suggested inviting them to our October meeting to give a presentation.

The chairman agreed that it would be useful to have a presentation on the preliminary results at the October meeting and asked Jose Beltran to arrange this together with the secretariat.

- **FREMSS proposal**

The chairman recalled that at the Bilbao meeting there had been an intervention from one of the Spanish members related to a lack of taking into account socio-economics within the Pelagic AC. While the chairman disagreed on this, he invited him to present his thoughts in writing. The received document seems solely based on the need for additional quota in relation to mackerel and horse mackerel for part of the Spanish fleet. Without explicitly mentioning it, this proposal would change relative stability and the Pelagic AC has decided not to touch upon that. He was not sure whether it would be possible to have a sensible discussion on this, but he asked José Beltran to take the document into account when developing a management plan for Southern horse mackerel.

Miren Garmendia said that this proposal is not being accepted in Spain. While she did not have any more details on the plan than what is written in the proposal, she also thought that it changes relative stability. Right now she was not able to take a clear position.

José Beltran pointed out that Southern horse mackerel is doing quite well. One of the issues that came up in the FREMSS proposal is to combine area VIIIc with the southern stock, but from a scientific point of view this is not possible and scientists certainly did not support the idea. He furthermore explained that Ian Gatt had received an invitation from Torcuato Teixeira to attend a meeting by the SWWAC dealing with the proposal, but Ian Gatt had asked him to attend on his behalf and he wanted to know what his mandate would be for the meeting.

The chairman summarized that some of the issues mentioned in the proposal are internal Spanish issues and should be left to the Spanish organizations to resolve. Another thing is that the proposal tries to change relative stability and to include area VIIIc, which is part of Western horse mackerel, in the Southern horse mackerel stock. In view of the chairman the Pelagic AC should not get involved in this and he could not see any other parties agreeing to the proposal either. He therefore suggested taking note of the proposal, but not going any further than that.

Gerard van Balsfoort found the document difficult to understand and therefore considered it impossible to judge the proposal. However, in his understanding the basis of the document is the economic situation of the fleet in Galicia arguing for higher quotas without taking into account scientific assessments of the stock. If the authors really want to discuss the proposal they should present it at a Pelagic AC meeting.

The chairman concluded that rather than spending time discussing the proposal now, the authors may present it at the next meeting if they want to. He also understood from the FREMSS proposal and the scheduled meeting by the SWWAC that the SWWAC is dealing with a management plan for Southern horse mackerel despite this stock being exclusively in the remit of the Pelagic AC.

José Beltran remarked that he has been emphasizing many times towards the SWWAC that they should contact the Pelagic AC in case they want to work on any of the pelagic species. He was tired of repeating the same thing over and over again. He has invited representatives of the SWWAC to join the Pelagic AC meetings several times, but so far none has taken up the offer and he did not know why.

Verena Ohms added that she has been in contact with the Executive Secretary of the SWWAC and he seemed very surprised about his members' actions as well and did not know why some of the SWWAC members have scheduled a meeting to discuss the FREMSS proposal.

Goncalo Carvalho who did not attend the SWWAC saw an opportunity for collaboration given that Portugal is not a member of the Pelagic AC, but of the SWWAC.

However, Verena Ohms pointed out that both the Portuguese fishing industry and the Portuguese administration are already involved in the development of the Pelagic AC management plan for Southern horse mackerel even though Portugal is not a member of the Pelagic AC.

12. End of meeting

The chairman closed the meeting at 17:00 hrs.

Action items

General

- Send letter to ICES regarding the scope of the MIACO meeting (Sean O'Donoghue, Ian Gatt, Secretariat)
- Arrange stakeholder meeting prior to WGWIDE (Secretariat)
- Check with Reine Johansson whether the BSAC will support the letter on WKMSYREF (Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn)
- Discuss at MIACO meeting how to best reflect stakeholder knowledge in ICES advice (ICES, stakeholders)

Specific

Vla, VIIbc herring

- Arrange meeting in Scotland with the support of the Marine lab possibly on 10 September with relevant scientists /stakeholders/administrations to discuss next steps such as acoustic surveys and genetic analysis, to consider a rebuilding draft and the fishery for next year. (Sean O'Donoghue, Ian Gatt, Secretariat)

Celtic Sea herring

- Submit revised management strategy to Commission (Secretariat)
- Submit request for new 2015 forecast based on benchmark to Commission and if warranted advise an in-year TAC revision (Secretariat)

Northeast Atlantic mackerel

- Discuss MCRS in the North Sea and Western waters (Sean O'Donoghue, Martin Pastoors, Stella Nemecky)
- Finalize draft management strategy (Sean O'Donoghue, Secretariat)

Boarfish

- Submit revised management strategy to Commission

Western horse mackerel

- Look at recruitment dynamics of other horse mackerel stocks (Martin Pastoors)
- Circulate results of additional runs with catch in 2016 set to 0 and 50.000 tonnes (José de Oliveira, Andy Campbell, Martin Pastoors)
- Calculate TAC in 2016 based on ICES F_{msy} (José de Oliveira, Martin Pastoors, Claus Sparrevohn)
- Include area VIIIc in draft management strategy (Sean O'Donoghue)
- Check feasibility of retrospective analysis of acoustic surveys in Spanish waters (Andres Uriatre)
- Provide a report on the use of existing acoustic data (Ciaran O'Donnell)
- Provide coordination plan of acoustic surveys to get appropriate coverage (Ciaran O'Donnell)
- Find ways of utilizing industry acoustic data and ground fish surveys by IFREMER and CEFAS and MI and CPR data Cefas (Sean O'Donoghue, Martin Pastoors, MI & Cefas)
- Expand mackerel and horse mackerel egg survey to improve data situation (Sean O'Donoghue, Gerard van Balsfoort, Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn, Ian Gatt, scientists)
- Request benchmark to be carried out in 2017 at the latest (Sean O'Donoghue, Verena Ohms)
- Request meeting between ICES and stakeholders prior to WG WIDE (Sean O'Donoghue, Verena Ohms)
- Write section on the calculation of B_{lim} (José de Oliveira)
- Continue to work on developing the draft management strategy over the next six to nine months and arrange face to face meeting (Sean O'Donoghue, Verena Ohms, Group)

Southern horse mackerel

- Invite Manuela Azevedo and Gersom Costas to present work on reference points (José Beltran, Secretariat)