



PELAGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Newsletter 1/2018

January-March 2018

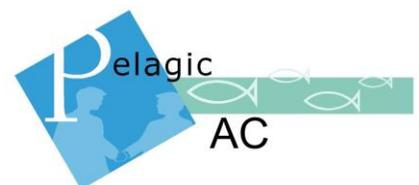


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PELAC MEETINGS

ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE REGIONAL GROUPS (30 JANUARY 2018, SCHIPHOL)

At the end of January the Management Team arranged the first annual meeting with the regional groups. Unfortunately, the SWW group cancelled its participation in the last minute and both the NWW and NS group only sent one representative. One of the main objectives of the meeting was to share work programs and time tables to clarify expectations. However, it was mostly the Pelagic AC informing the regional groups than vice versa. It became clear in the meeting that the regional groups will mostly deal with the landing obligation with a much stronger focus on demersal stocks than pelagic stocks. The value of the choke mitigation tool was emphasized by all parties and the regional groups promised to fully involve the Pelagic AC in their discussions and to send meeting invitations well in advance. Often the Pelagic AC is only allowed to participate for 30 to 60 minutes in a meeting of the regional groups and the Management Team pointed out that travelling an entire day for such a short meeting does not always justify the physical attendance of Pelagic AC representatives. It was therefore suggested exploring options of remotely connecting to the meetings. There also has been some discussion on UK membership in the regional groups, but nothing was clear at this stage.

6A HERRING FOCUS GROUP MEETING (7 FEBRUARY 2018, SCHIPHOL)

The 6a herring focus group revised its rebuilding plan in accordance with comments received from ICES. Furthermore, an update was provided on the herring genetics project which is going well and shows a clear separation between herring from 6a North compared to 6a South.

The EASME project started recently. Within that project a morphometric baseline will be established. Subsequently the results will be compared to the genetic analysis and if there is agreement between both methods, it will be possible to retrospectively split past samples. Ultimately the aim is to drop the morphometric analysis, because it is very labor intensive and not a great method, but for retrospective analysis it could be useful.

The industry acoustic surveys have again been carried out successfully and the results are currently being analyzed. Based on the outcomes some small adjustments might be made to the next surveys which will be carried out in the second half of 2018.

WESTERN HORSE MACKEREL FOCUS GROUP MEETING (7 FEBRUARY 2018, SCHIPHOL)

The focus group discussed the new assessment model and some people cautioned that the new model will likely shift around a bit before providing a stable assessment. The genetics project is ongoing. The past year has mostly focused on collecting more samples, but currently the focus is on marker development which is expected to be finalized relatively soon. The PFA is continuing research on catch histories of PFA vessels and more details will be provided at the Working Group II meeting in April. The focus group furthermore concluded that it was necessary to develop a rebuilding for the stock as soon as possible since people expected the stock to fall below B_{lim} this year.

PELAC MEETINGS

WORKING GROUP I MEETING (1 MARCH 2018, DEN HAAG)

The main focus of the meeting was an evaluation of 2017 and setting priorities for 2018. The most important priorities will be to discuss the ICES fisheries advice and provide input on its usefulness and format as well as finalizing a new management strategy for blue whiting, if possible in collaboration with Norwegian stakeholders. It will also be important to continue the research projects on North Sea horse mackerel, i.e. in relation to genetics and historical catch rates and to engage with the demersal sector to try to reduce bycatch.

WORKING GROUP II MEETING (1 MARCH 2018, DEN HAAG)

Working Group II also focused on an evaluation of 2017 and identified priorities for 2018. One of the main priorities for all stocks is to provide TAC advice for 2019. For Western horse mackerel and Celtic Sea herring it will furthermore be necessary to develop a rebuilding plan. For herring in 6a and 7b,c a revised recovery plan was approved to be endorsed by the Executive Committee. Other priorities included the continuation of various research initiatives, e.g. in relation to genetics and acoustic surveys as well as a follow-up of the choke mitigation tool.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (1 MARCH 2018, DEN HAAG)

The Executive Committee approved the mid-term report. It was furthermore agreed to amend the rules of procedure to fix the annual Member States and membership fees at the current amounts. Any future changes to these amounts will require a 2/3 majority by the Executive Committee and have to be made at least one year prior before coming into effect. The Executive Committee also approved the revised rebuilding plan for herring in 6a and 7b,c as well as a letter to the Commission emphasizing the importance of the choke mitigation tool and the necessity to find solutions for choke situations.

All detailed meeting minutes can be downloaded from the PELAC website:
<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/2018>

EXTERNAL MEETINGS

ICES/ACs AND MIACO MEETING (18-19 JANUARY 2018, COPENHAGEN)

PELAC representatives: Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, Sean O'Donoghue

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen and Sean O Donoghue attended the MIACO and ICES/ACs meetings on behalf of the Pelagic AC in Copenhagen on the 18th and 19th January 2108. The ICES/ACs meeting was in the morning of the 18th and the MIACO meeting in the afternoon of the 18th and up to lunchtime on the 19th. In advance of the meeting the Pelagic AC had supplied a list of items to be addressed at both meetings by the Pelagic AC representatives. Each of these items is listed below with the responses from ICES.

After the ICES/ACs meeting the Pelagic AC indicated that it was prepared to chair the next meeting in January 2019 and to do the preparatory work for the meeting.

One item worth noting from the MIACO meeting is that the ICES secretariat will set up a ICES Stakeholder/Observer Forum on the SharePoint, where news related to advice releases, updates, workshops, etc. will be posted. It will also contain relevant links to work plan, scheduled benchmarks, and so forth. The forum is still in the making and ICES welcomes ideas for contents once the forum is up and running.

List of issues addressed by Pelagic AC representatives at MIACO and ACs meetings 2018

Process

- Discuss that stakeholders should have the right to withdraw their information if it is going to be changed in the advice sheets. ICES said they revert to the Pelagic AC on this issue which was fully explained by the Pelagic AC representatives at the meeting.
- Follow-up on quality control process within ICES, especially in light of the revision of the ASH advice. ICES outlined a detailed list of actions to address the lack of quality systems which if implemented should address this issued. The Pelagic AC noted that ICES had made considerable progress on this issue since last year.
- Discuss how ICES could contribute to the development of long-term management strategies. The Pelagic AC representatives reiterated again their request to have access to the ICES expertise in the development of long-term management strategies. The point was noted by ICES.
- Publication dates of the advice (could the advice be published a week earlier?). ICES agreed to examine this but pointed out that it may be very difficult to do in practice given the logistics involved in providing the advice.
- Resource allocation for surveys and data processing/modelling. ICES do not themselves fund surveys but are dependent on member countries research vessels and scientists to carry out the surveys and a lot of data processing/modelling.

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Content

- Ask ICES to add a column in the catch advice table that shows a comparison with the ICES advice from the previous year. ICES has agreed to do this.
- Provide an overview of the approach ICES uses when calculating F_{msy} per stock. This overview was provided by ICES during the meeting and a presentation is on the SharePoint.
- Level of information provided in the advice sheets: e.g. ICES still provides advice according to the management strategy for North Sea herring. However, the reference points have changed and the strategy still contains the old reference points. This is not clearly enough communicated. Point noted by ICES.
- Provide more clarity on the difference of wanted and unwanted catch. This clarity was provided at the meeting.
- Explain differences between ICES and STECF discard data. ICES accepted that there was a difference between the ICES and STECF discard data and undertook to try to resolve this issue.
- STECF discard data are disaggregated by area; could ICES discard data also be disaggregated? Similar to last point ICES undertook to look into the feasibility of doing this.
- Language inconsistencies in the ICES advice:
 - In the advice for North Sea horse mackerel ICES uses “Landings corresponding to catch advice”
 - Whereas in the advice for boarfish ICES uses “Wanted catch corresponding to catch advice”ICES undertook to avoid any inconsistencies in language.

EFCA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (28 FEBRUARY 2018, BRUSSELS)

PELAC representative: José Beltran

The ECFA Advisory Board consists of representatives of the Advisory Councils and EFCA. The meeting started with each Advisory Council providing an update on the state of play. The most relevant issues from a PELAC point of view were in relation to the management strategy for southern horse mackerel which is currently being assessed by ICES, the revision of the fisheries control system and the PELAC advocating for a stronger role of EFCA, choke situations arising in 2019 when the landing obligation enters into full force and the gramme size project.

In regards to the gramme size project EFCA explained that there are hardly any inspections at sea and that only few data are received from the factories. The results of the project were therefore very discouraging and the industry has been asked to be more pro-active in providing data. The NWW

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regional group is re-considering its position on the project and re-assessing the validity of the approach.

Afterwards EFCA's 2017 annual report was presented which covered a number of different issues, e.g. EFCA's 5-year independent external evaluation 2012-2016, joint deployment plans (JDPs) data 2016 and 2017 inspection figures, information on infringements etc. EFCA's work program and budget for 2018 was also presented.

VARIOUS MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL GROUPS

Members of the Management Team have attended several meetings of the regional groups to convey the PELAC's message on the implementation of the landing obligation. This includes the use of the choke mitigation tool and potential mitigation measures. Other issues have also been raised, e.g. in relation to the boarfish closures as foreseen in the management strategy developed by the PELAC. Collaboration with the regional groups remains a challenge with invitations being sent very late and a strong focus on demersal fisheries, while neglecting pelagic fisheries.

STUDENT INTERN GUILLAUME CARRUEL



As a Master student in fisheries and coastal ecosystems management, I was thrilled to obtain an internship at the Pelagic AC. Indeed, in the future I would like to work on fisheries policy at a European or international level. My previous work includes experience in the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization where I focused on vessels and member state compliance with conservation measures. During my 6 months at the Pelagic AC, I will again focus on a matter that goes beyond national EEZs with the highly migratory pelagic stocks. Under the supervision of Verena Ohms, I will write my Master's thesis on the potential consequences of Brexit for the pelagic fisheries.

This is a crucial point for the future of the management of these stocks. The first part of my job will be to make clear the importance of what is at stake by presenting the current state of these fisheries. I will then try to address the high uncertainties presented by Brexit by considering several different exit scenarios and their economic consequences.

For this work, I will use geographical catch data from the JRC, economical data from the EUMOFA, other scientific data from ICES and various information from the EU member states and the European Commission.

The ultimate goal of this report is to help the Pelagic AC anticipate probable changes that will occur by the end of 2020. With the high level of uncertainty, the significant diversity of areas affected, and the extent of expectations, understanding and measuring what is at stake for the pelagic fisheries is critical. It is therefore important to conduct work on the consequences of Brexit for the fish stocks in the remit of the Pelagic AC. This could be addressed in numerous different ways from a legal to an economic standpoint. This study will focus on a practical approach with a particular attention on catches and catch opportunities.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS

Please remember that the secretariat has to receive your reimbursement claims within one month after the corresponding meeting by post or email including copies of all receipts. Reimbursement sheets received after the deadline will not be taken into account. If you cannot meet the deadline, please inform us as soon as possible. To find out more about reimbursement rules please consult the PELAC's "Rules of procedure" or contact the secretariat.

<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/media/pdf/Rules%20of%20Procedure%20Pelagic%20AC%20-%202014%20November.pdf>

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WORKING GROUP I AND II MEETING AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (12 APRIL 2018, DEN HAAG)

The next PELAC meetings will take place on 12 April 2018. The main focus of these meetings will be the ICES fisheries advice, the implementation of the landing obligation and progress made on various research projects as well as several rebuilding plans.

During the Executive Committee meeting the future structure and functioning of the ACs will be discussed in the light of reforming the CFP and BREXIT. The results of these discussions will also feed into the Joint AC meeting the following day.

MEETING ON THE FUTURE FUNCTIONING OF THE ACS (13 APRIL 2018, DEN HAAG)

On behalf of all ACs affected by BREXIT the PELAC has offered to arrange a joint AC meeting to discuss the future structure and functioning of the ACs. To keep the group large enough to be legitimate, yet small enough to be effective, seats have been limited to 3 representatives per AC as well as a few Commission and Member State representatives.

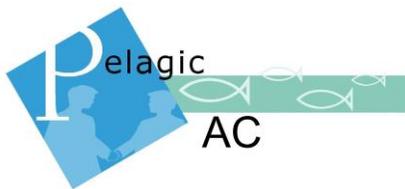
All meeting documents are accessible here:

<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/pracmeetings/upcomingmeetings>

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