



PELAGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Newsletter 2/2014

July-September 2014

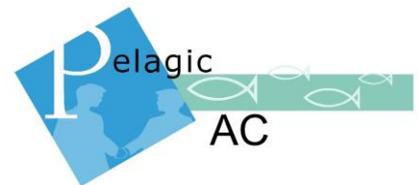


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

PELAC meetings	2
External meetings	4
PELAC advice	6
Scientific projects	7
Miscellaneous	8
Practical information	9
Upcoming meetings	10
Contact information	11

PELAC MEETINGS

WORKING GROUP I AND II MEETING (9 JULY, THE HAGUE)

Like each year in July the Working Groups met to discuss the ICES advice on herring stocks presented by Carmen Fernández from the ICES Advisory Committee as well as other issues, e.g. in relation to the development of management plans. Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn from the Danish Pelagic Producer Organization presented an overview of an EFF project under his leadership which investigated possible (data) contributions from the fishing industry to a new mackerel assessment. Ciaran Kelly from the Marine Institute in Ireland gave a presentation on efforts to revise the management plan for western horse mackerel in order to make it sustainable again. David Miller from IMARES presented evaluations of a multiannual plan for North Sea horse mackerel.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (10 JULY, THE HAGUE)

At the Executive Committee meeting Verena Ohms presented an overview of the expected expenditures throughout 2013-2014 from which it was concluded that all costs could be covered and that there will be no deficit. Another administrative issue requiring attention was in relation to the articles of association which need to be amended in order to officially change the name to “Pelagic Advisory Council”. While all members supported the suggested amendments the question was raised whether a provision on mandatory ExCom seats for EU industry organizations could be included as is the case for national organizations. After the meeting this issue was discussed with the responsible Commission officer who concluded that there was no legal obstacle to include such a provision.

A researcher from the University of Bergen, Maria Tenningen, was invited to present her research on mortality of herring and mackerel after slipping from purse-seines which was considered very relevant in light of the upcoming landing obligation and possible exemptions under the high survival criterion. Her research showed that crowding density and duration seem to be the main factors influencing mortality and that mackerel is generally more sensitive to crowding than herring. She pointed out that her research supports the so-called 7/8 rule implemented in Norwegian legislation which dictates when a school of fish may be released from a purse-seine net.

The Commission presented the so-called policy statement setting out the Commission’s strategy when suggesting fishing opportunities for 2015. The main focus will be achieving MSY by 2015 and under exceptional circumstances by 2020. If available multiannual management plans in line with the MSY objective should be followed. After a brief discussion members were invited to send any comments regarding the policy statement to the secretariat.

The Commission also presented its proposal on a full ban of driftnets which met a lot of resistance from all members. It was concluded that this proposal was not appropriately addressing the problem of illegal driftnet fishing and that a blanket ban on driftnet fisheries was

PELAC MEETINGS

threatening the livelihoods of many small-scale fishermen who use this method in a responsible and sustainable way.

At the end of the meeting Iain MacSween announced that with the start of the new triannual cycle he will retire as chairman of the Pelagic AC. He thanked people for all the good work they have put into the Pelagic AC over the past years and wished them well.

EXTERNAL MEETINGS

VARIOUS MEETINGS OF MEMBER STATE REGIONAL GROUPS OF THE NORTH SEA, THE NORTH WESTERN WATERS AND THE SOUTH WESTERN WATERS

The Working Group chairmen Esben Sverdrup-Jensen and Sean O'Donoghue accompanied by Verena Ohms have participated in several Member State regional group meetings to advocate the document produced by the Pelagic AC on the implementation of the landing obligation. It became clear at these meetings that individual Member States and regional groups differ widely in their opinion on how to implement the landing obligation and the different measures to be determined in a discard plan. The intention to split the management of the widely distributed stocks, such as Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Western horse mackerel and blue whiting, among different Member State groups has caused great concern. Splitting up the stocks according to Member State regions while neglecting their biology can have impacts on stock status and lead to confusing rules for fishermen. The Pelagic AC has therefore strongly advocated the position that the widely distributed pelagic stocks should be dealt with by a Member State subgroup taking into account the nature of the stocks.

ICES WORKSHOP ON MSFD DESCRIPTOR 4: FOOD WEBS (26-27 AUGUST, COPENHAGEN)

ICES has been asked to review the 2010 Commission Decision on criteria and methodological standards on Good Environmental Status (GES) of marine waters. Therefore a number of workshops was organized, the first one dealing with descriptor 4 (D4): food webs. Verena Ohms participated as observer in this workshop during which it was proposed to change the original D4 criteria to better differentiate between biodiversity and food web aspects which until now have overlapped considerably. The proposed new criteria are *4.1 food web structure*, i.e. the abundance and biomass of trophic guilds and the size distribution within trophic guilds and *4.2 food web function*, i.e. productivity of trophic guilds. These criteria are believed to be more in line with natural attributes of food webs and give trophic levels equal weight rather than being biased towards top predators. Trophic guilds are the unit of importance in food webs rather than taxonomic groups and species composition is not important unless changes in species composition result in changes of food web function or structure. There also was a discussion on resilience and whether this should be included as a criterion GES. Resilience is interpreted as the ability of a system to return to its original state after perturbation. However, food webs are changing constantly to adapt to outside drivers and resilience cannot be appraised for previously unobserved states. Overall understanding of resilience is poor and it was therefore decided not to have this as a separate criterion. The pros and cons of common indicators were also discussed and it was concluded that while common indicators could be used at regional or sub-regional level Member States should not be forced to use common indicators. Instead they should be given the flexibility to divide labor and implement their own indicators, especially given the effort that many Member States have already put into this. However, there should be a minimum requirement of monitoring at least three different trophic guilds ranging as widely as

EXTERNAL MEETINGS

possible from primary producers to top predators and across several taxonomic groups. Furthermore it was pointed out that D4 indicators should serve as surveillance indicators to monitor the health of the system. To this end chosen indicators will be set as a range of natural variability and changes will be tracked. However, an indicator moving outside known boundaries does not automatically mean that GES is not reached anymore, e.g. in the case of rebuilding predatory fish stocks. Also, management action can only be taken when there is a clear pressure-state relationship. If such a relationship cannot be identified this can have implications for target setting and the ability to reach GES and it will have to be evaluated whether indicators are still relevant or need to be adjusted. Examples for D4 indicators are biomass of regionally trophic guilds, primary production and seabird breeding success. Finally concerns were raised regarding the lack of data for lower trophic levels and benthos and it was advised that the implementation of sampling programs for these groups should become a priority.

TWINNING PROJECT EU-TURKEY (15 SEPTEMBER, THE HAGUE)

The Dutch Agricultural-Economic Institute (LEI) is currently carrying out a twinning project with Turkey in the area of fishery organizations. Therefore Verena Ohms had been invited to give a presentation on the role of the Pelagic Advisory Council in European fisheries management. Interested members can request a copy of the presentation from the secretariat.

RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL ON A FULL BAN OF DRIFT NET FISHERIES

The Commission proposal to ban all driftnet fisheries in the EU met a lot of resistance from the Pelagic AC. Members felt strongly that a blanket ban would not solve the problems of illegal driftnet activities and would be contrary to the objectives of the new CFP which praises regionalization as one of its main pillars allowing for tailor-made management solutions. Instead the proposed blanket ban would significantly harm small-scale driftnet fishermen, many of whom are MSC certified and fish responsibly with minimal impact on the environment. The Pelagic AC argued that rather than banning all driftnet fisheries the Commission should ensure adequate control and greatly penalize illegal driftnet activities and lack of compliance.

RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING FISHING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2015

In this year's policy statement the Commission emphasized the significance of multiannual management plans which should provide a robust and lasting management framework. This statement was very much welcomed by the Pelagic AC whose past and current efforts successfully focused on developing management plans for the stocks in its remit. Therefore the Pelagic AC also urged the Commission to base its TAC proposal for Celtic Sea and South of Ireland herring on the available management plan. At the same time the Pelagic AC supported following MSY in cases where no management plan was available. In terms of management simplification the Commission stated that the added value of effort limitations in addition to TACs shall be examined. However, the Pelagic AC considers effort regimes totally inappropriate in pelagic fisheries and the Commission should rather ensure that TACs are fully adhered to. It was also noted by the Pelagic AC that the policy statement did not provide the necessary detail on many measures proposed and a more nuanced description of the state of the pelagic stocks would have been desirable.

All Pelagic AC advice can be downloaded from the website:

<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/recommendations>

SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS

GAP 2

David Miller from IMARES has been contracted to perform management strategy evaluations for the case study on Western Baltic spring spawning herring in which the Pelagic AC is heavily involved. Together with stakeholders from the Baltic Sea AC important aspects of stock mixing with the North Sea herring stock, TAC uptake by the different fleets and stability mechanisms have been identified and will be addressed during the simulations. The results are expected to be available in December and will be presented at a GAP2 case study meeting.

STUDENT INTERN

As of 1 September the Pelagic AC secretariat is being supported by a new student intern, Marie Benatre, from Agrocampus Ouest, a French Grand École. During her 5 months internship Marie will work together with Spanish and Portuguese stakeholders, scientists and civil servants to accelerate the process of developing a multiannual management plan for southern horse mackerel. Via this newsletter she likes to introduce herself:



Born in the small city of La Celle Saint Cloud, in Parisian suburbs, I have always been interested in science since college, more especially in biology, even though literary subjects appealed to me a lot. Thus, I tried to choose the orientation that could allow me to study those subjects as much as possible, while living my two others passions: writing and cinema. Once I obtained my scientific Baccalauréat examination (Major in Biology) with high honours, I started two years in the classe préparatoire aux grandes écoles (class preparing the students for a national competitive entrance examination) at the lycée Hoche (Versailles), on BCPST subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geology); at the end of those years, I was admitted to the A-Bio competitive examination, and had the pleasure to join Agrocampus Ouest-Rennes, a Grande École located in Brittany and offering degree programs in Food and Life Sciences.

Currently starting my second year with an internship at the Pelagic AC, I plan to major next year in Fishery and Aquatic Sciences, and to be more exact, the specific option which is called, GPECC (Gestion des Pêches et des Ecosystèmes Continentaux et Côtiers: management of fishing and coastal and continental ecosystems. It involves a combination of Economics, Legislation and Town and Country planning, and results in a scientific support submitted to professional and decision-making structures). This is why this internship truly represents a big opportunity for me: I can discover this sector, its set of problems and its actors, while working for the setting-up of a sustainable use of the seas, which in my point of view is one of the major current issues.

If you have a question or like to contact Marie please feel free to send her an email:

m.benatre@pelagic-ac.org

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 the secretariat as soon as possible.

NEW EMAIL- AND WEB ADDRESS

In line with changing the foundation's name to "Pelagic Advisory Council" the email- and web addresses have changed as well. The Pelagic AC's website can now be found under: www.pelagic-ac.org

To send an email please use one of the following email addresses in the future:

info@pelagic-ac.org, l.meer@pelagic-ac.org or v.ohms@pelagic-ac.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WORKING GROUP I AND II MEETING (1 OCTOBER, THE HAGUE)

The next Working Group I and II meeting will mainly focus on the widely distributed stocks including Northeast Atlantic mackerel, western horse mackerel and blue whiting. John Simmonds from the ICES Advisory Committee will present the ICES advice for fishing opportunities in 2015.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (2 OCTOBER, THE HAGUE)

During this year's General Assembly meeting a new Executive Committee and new chairmen will be elected. The nomination period is now closed and a list of candidates has been distributed to all members. The final decision will be taken by majority vote during the meeting. Next to other administrative issues such as approving last year's accounts and the new budget and work program there will be a presentation on genetic stock identification of salmon. The Executive Committee shall subsequently discuss recommendations on fishing opportunities in 2015 as put forward by the Working Groups.

FOCUS GROUP MEETING ON SOUTHERN HORSE MACKEREL (9 OCTOBER, MADRID)

On 9 October a meeting will be hosted by the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries to accelerate the process of developing a multiannual management plan for southern horse mackerel. The meeting will be facilitated by Marie Benatre and Verena Ohms and bring together stakeholders from Spain and Portugal with scientists from the Spanish Oceanographic Institute and the Portuguese Marine and Atmospheric Institute.

For more information please visit the Pelagic AC website: www.pelagic-ac.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pelagic Advisory Council

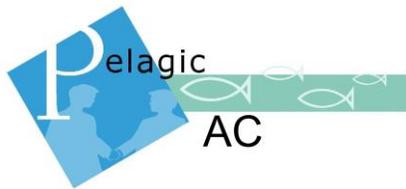
PO Box 72, 2280 AB Rijswijk

The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0)70 336 9624

Email: info@pelagic-ac.org

www.pelagic-ac.org



The Pelagic Advisory Council receives Union financial assistance as a body pursuing an aim of general European interest. This newsletter reflects only the author's view and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.