



Pelagic AC

Working Group II
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Online platform

Louis Braillelaan 80
2719 EK Zoetermeer
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)63 375 6324
E-mail: info@pelagic-ac.org
Website: www.pelagic-ac.org

Participants

Representative

Sean O'Donoghue

Alice Boiffin

Andrés García

Anna Gruszczyńska

Annelie Rosell

Anne-Marie Kats

Annette Hurrelmann

Andrew Campbell

Anton Paulrud

Arnout Langerak

Bent Pallisgaard

Basilio Otero

Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn

Cristina Perdiguero

Eric Roeleveld

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen

Gerard van Balsfoort

Geoffroy Dhellemmes

Goncalo Carvalho

Jean-Christophe Vandeveld

Jerome Jourdain

Jesper Raakjaer

Organisation

Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, Chair

Ministry for Food and Agriculture

ACERGA

Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation

Swedish Pelagic Federation

Pelagic AC

European Commission

Marine Institute

Swedish Pelagic Federation

Rederij Vrolijk

Ministry of Environment and Food

Federación Nacional de Cofradías de Pescadores &
Federación Provincial de Cofradías de Pescadores de Lugo

Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation

Spanish Member State

Jaczon

Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation

Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association

France Pélagique

Sciaena

Pew charitable trusts

Union des Armateurs à la Pêche de France

University of Aalborg



Johanna Ferretti	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
John Ward	Irish Fish Producers Organisation
Jonathan Shrives	European Commission
José Beltran	Organizacion de Productores de Pesqueros de Lugo
Justyna Zajchowska	Pew Charitable Trusts
Laurens van Balsfoort	Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association
Linda Planthof	North Sea Foundation
Lisbet Nielsen	Ministry of Environment and Food
Karin Linderholm	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
Katrina Borrow	Mindfully Wired
Leon Bouts	EFCA
Mads Larsson	AIPCE
Mandy Doddema	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Martin Pastoors	Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association
Monika Sterczewska	European Commission
Patrick Murphy	Irish South and West PO
Rob Banning	Parlevliet and van der Plas
Rob Pronk	Rederij van der Zwan
Sheila O'Neill	National Seafood Centre
Soren Anker Pedersen	European Fishmeal and Fish Oil Producers
Steve Mackinson	Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association
Torcuato Teixeira	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco
Uwe Richter	Deutscher Hochseefischerei-Verband / Seefrostvertrieb GmbH
Wietze Kampen	European Transport Worker's Federation
Wim van der Zwan	Rederij van der Zwan

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

The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting, noting it had been more than a year since the last physical meeting. The Chair hoped in-person meetings would be possible again before the end of the year, potentially at the October meeting.

Ludmilla Sluis provided a short update on using the remote meeting technology for all members, and highlighted the available interpretation in both French and Spanish.

2. Adoption of agenda



The Chair noted that the day has a significant agenda - with plenty to cover. The meeting was scheduled to finish at 17:00 CET.

The agenda was adopted without amend from the members.

3. Follow-up on action items

The Chair provided an update on action items for WGII.

An action to seek a benchmark for herring in 6a, 7b-c was ongoing and the Chair was hopeful that the benchmark would start before the end of 2021.

On inclusion on Irish WHOM logbook data in PFA self-sampling studies - the Chair had decided that this action was to be suspended at this time, for a number of reasons, including the COVID-19 situation and compatibility of data between the Irish fleet and PFA data.

A speaker from the Norwegian tagging project for mackerel had been invited to speak at the PelAC. This had been postponed a number of times, and was now scheduled for the October meeting when it might be possible to host the speaker in-person.

On Celtic sea herring mixing with Irish sea herring – the Chair noted that this is an ongoing issue that the has been pursued at PelAC level, and nationally. This will continue to be considered by PelAC WGII.

The PelAC had conveyed concerns about the removal of stakeholder information from the abbreviated ICES advice sheets. This action point had evolved following discussions at MIACO with ICES: around whether stakeholder information will be included at all in future ICES advice, and how. The PelAC had been active on this and a letter had recently been sent to the Commission on the subject.

On southern horse mackerel stock components: an action had been carried forward from the October 2020 meeting regarding the generic TAC for horse mackerel, which only deals with *trachurus trachurus*. Text on this issue should have been included in October recommendations as in the previous year, but this would be followed-up on in 2021 at the appropriate time.

Text drafted in the October meeting on TAC recommendations for mackerel had been amended by Justyna Zajchowska, to reflect sustainability language used in previous recommendations by the PelAC. This action was fully complete.

The day's meeting would include a presentation by Andrew Campbell of the Marine Institute, looking at combinations of reference points within the mackerel MSE - the PelAC would consider if a preferred combination was possible to determine, and consider whether this is a useful exercise for the PelAC to pursue.



A recommendation on SHOM had been amended to reflect a request to expedite the evaluation of the MSY deadlines within the management strategy. This item was on the agenda for the day's meeting - a reply from the Commission had been received earlier during the morning, and would be covered under SHOM agenda item. The letter would be circulated to members and added to the PelAC website.

An action to ensure that the 6a, 7b-c herring recommendation on TAC advice should be prefaced with text noting that zero catch advice should be followed was done and went in as the final recommendation issued following the October meeting.

A Control FG meeting had been organised in January 2021 with MEP Clara Aguilera. The Chair said this was a useful meeting, for which an update would be provided during the day's discussions.

A Brexit FG meeting was to be organised before the end of 2020. Having discussed this at the Management Team (MT) level, it was considered better to wait until after the Trade & Cooperation Agreement was finalised between the EU and the UK. A Brexit FG was held on 17th February, jointly Chaired by WGI and WGII. An update would be provided at the PelAC Executive Committee, the following day.

A written request had been sent to Jonathan Shrives at the Commission regarding the data informing de-minimis exemptions under the Discard Plan. Shrives provided a response and this was circulated to all members by email.

Finally, an action to secure an update on the Data Collection Framework was complete – a Commission representative was present at the meeting, to present on a report on the DCF.

4. Pelagic stock updates – Sean O'Donoghue

The Chair explained that the first WGII meeting of the year traditionally looks back at the previous year, examining what has been achieved in terms of the December Council outcomes for pelagic stocks. The Group also looks forwards and plans precise issues to be dealt with during the upcoming calendar year. This year's meeting would follow the same format.

- **North-East Atlantic (NEA) mackerel**

The ICES advice for mackerel in 2021 was an MSY approach, equaling 852.284 tonnes. In October, the PelAC issued a recommendation that this advice should be followed. There had been significant discussions on the issue of data quality, and the use of two surveys covering this stock: the egg survey and the IESSN survey. IESSN shows an upwards trajectory, whereas the egg survey shows a decline in the stock. As a result, PelAC has put in a request to ask ICES for an explanation of the differences between the surveys, and what can be done to rectify this.

The Chair went on to explain that because a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the stock was carried out in 2020, and at that point the three parties of the EU (including the UK), Norway, and the Faroes had an agreement on management for mackerel, the PelAC advised that the Coastal States

should adopt the three-parties management strategy in accordance with ICES advice. In addition, via the Commission, the PelAC requested that ICES review the stock components for NEA mackerel (North Sea, southern and western) and that a review of technical measures should be carried out for the stock.

At the time of the most recent Coastal States meeting, Brexit had not been fully agreed – the only item agreed by the Coastal States was the TAC for the stock, set at 852.284 tonnes.

(At this point an action was taken to add the Coastal States agreement to the PelAC website).

The Chair said that, because of Brexit, fishing nations were in a ‘difficult position’ at the Council of Ministers in December. Under UNCLOS, Coastal States must discuss the arrangements for straddling and highly migratory stocks. In light of that not taking place before the end of the year (the Chair noted it was ongoing at the time of the meeting), a provisional TAC was set – applicable for Q1 up to the end of March 2021. For most species, other than some pelagics, this provisional TAC was set at 25% of Tac levels in 2020. For mackerel, the provisional TAC was set at 65%, and recently amended upwards to 75% of 2020 TAC levels.

Summarising the outcome, the Chair noted that the ICES MSY advice was reflected in the agreed TAC between the Coastal States. Even if the UK and EU don’t sign-off on an agreement, they will have to set autonomous TACs – the Chair said this would also be done in line with ICES advice.

In terms of priorities for NEA mackerel within the PelAC in 2021, the Chair listed the following points. The PelAC would:

- Follow-up on difference between the egg survey and IESSN survey with the Commission and with ICES. If at all possible, see this resolved in 2021, ideally before WG WIDE meeting in August.
- As of 31 December, there is no sharing arrangement for any of the parties with regards to mackerel. This will return for discussion in April/May once bilaterals and trilaterals are finished. The PelAC notes that a revised management plan is required at the Coastal States level, taking into account revised reference points from the mackerel MSE.
- Monitor ongoing work on acoustic surveys: explore whether this is a possibility going forward, as a continuous programme of activity.
- Continue to build on the enthusiasm following the WKRRMAC in Bremehaven in 2019, looking at all assessments and issues around the mackerel assessment - including stakeholders’ perception of it – and work on a number of recommendations based on outcomes from this meeting.
- Complete TAC advice at the October meeting in relation to mackerel.

The Chair asked for comments or suggestions from the floor. Claus Reedt-Sparrevohn interjected, highlighting that he had been involved in research that may be relevant to the PelAC, focused on mackerel egg production and using a ‘bio-energetic model’. He noted that the research indicated that when the stock was very large, there was not sufficient ‘surplus energy’ within the ecosystem to produce the number of eggs that would usually be produced when more food was available, saying

that this may help to explain the discrepancies in results between the two mackerel surveys. The research paper had been submitted for review in January 2021, and was pending acceptance. The Chair thanked Reedtz-Sparrevohn for his input and asked that a presentation on the research paper into mackerel egg production be incorporated into the agenda for the July WGII meeting. This would be confirmed at a later date, dependent on the publication of the research.

Gerard Van Balsfoort took the floor, underscoring that the new situation with the UK being a third country affects many stocks – more than simply mackerel. He felt it may be worthwhile to invite the UK Government to attend a meeting of the PelAC and provide an update on their future plans with regards to surveys and data collection across species. He said it would be useful to know if the UK will continue with the same kind of data collection and analysis for shared stocks, and emphasised that the discussion would have to be held at a ‘purely technical’ level. He said it would be useful to underpin the PelAC’s work, which the Chair agreed with – saying that the suggestion was broader than a specific WGII action, and should be put forwards to the Executive Committee as a joint WGI and WGII recommendation.

Gerard Van Balsfoort remarked that this should be tabled for after the conclusion of the Coastal States negotiations – beyond the end of April. Goncalo Carvalho indicated his support for this joint recommendation and timeline. Carvalho additionally proposed that the PelAC examine the MoU between the UK and ICES in order to see if there are specific references to data collection plans within that document.

Both the submission of the recommendation and the review of the MoU document were taken as actions.

- **Southern horse mackerel**

The TAC advice for southern horse mackerel was based on the ICES MSY approach, and set at 128.627 tonnes. The Chair noted that ‘a lot of time’ had been dedicated to working on this stock, and a joint FG had been held with the SWWAC on the subject. Agreed actions points from this FG were as follows:

- Continued pursuit of development of a management strategy for the stock;
- The PelAC would ask ICES, via the Commission, to establish the reasons for the differences between the MSY advice and the LTMP advice and propose solutions to address these differences;
- The PelAC would request catch options for MSY target dates of 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, asking that the evaluation of these targets be expedited.

The Chair emphasised that a key priority for southern horse mackerel was to address the difference between the advised tonnages within the MSY advice and the LTMP. The PelAC had received a letter from the Commission earlier the same day, in response to its request regarding the evaluation of differing potential MSY target dates within the management plan. The Chair remarked he was surprised at the content of the letter from the Commission, which focused on a ‘difference of opinion between the SWWAC and the PelAC’ saying that the two ACs should join forces and try to resolve this.

The Chair said that a collaborative approach to the matter had already been established between the two ACs, and that the request to evaluate MSY targets reflected a jointly agreed action. The Chair also highlighted that the Commission's letter detailed that ICES was not in a position to accept any further ad-hoc requests until after May 2021, due to the pressures of the pandemic. The Chair felt that a follow-up FG on the issue was dependent on the request to ICES being answered, so this could not be progressed at the time.

Another priority for southern horse mackerel was to review how the various stock components are covered by the advice - looking beyond *trachurus trachurus*. The PelAC would also provide TAC advice on the stock in 2021.

Two actions were taken: to circulate the letter from DG MARE received on the morning of the 1st March, and to reply to the letter – noting that the issue at hand was about getting information from ICES upon which to continue cooperation with the SWWAC, not the functioning of the cooperation itself. The latter action was subsequently superseded, as detailed below.

Jose Beltran agreed with the proposed actions, re-asserting that the most important thing was to obtain the information, then continue to cooperate with the SWWAC. He added, 'we can see what the data tells us and then re-evaluate the strategy in partnership'.

Jonathan Shrives, DG MARE, intervened. He explained that his colleague Cannelle Beauchesne had transferred to unit C5 within DG MARE, and that he would henceforth be covering the PelAC file. He noted comments on the Commission's letter, and added that ICES 'are overloaded' and would not be taking 'any special requests this year'. If this situation changes, the Commission will inform the ACs.

The Chair highlighted that the Commission had misunderstood the PelAC's request. The PelAC first needed to obtain the evaluation and associated figures from ICES. Upon receipt of this information, the intention had been for the SWWAC and PelAC to meet and discuss the options. The Chair emphasised however that discussions could not take place without the ICES advice.

Shrives commented that the issue lay in asking ICES to do additional work on top of their usual advice drafting process. He noted the PelAC's association with ICES via Colm Lordan, stating that 'this is something we foresee and fund in our annual agreement with ICES'. He suggested that the PelAC required an explanation rather than any additional work. Shrives proposed liaising with ICES to arrange a joint session with the SWWAC and PelAC to this end.

The Chair agreed that a joint session would indeed be helpful. He highlighted an action to invite Colm Lordan from ICES to present at the April or July meeting. The SWWAC would also be invited to attend. The previous suggestion that the PelAC should respond to the Commission's letter regarding the SHOM management plan was superseded by the proposition of securing a dedicated presentation from ICES. Both the SWWAC and PelAC agreed that resolving this issue would help to facilitate a compromise.

- **Western horse mackerel**

The TAC advice for western horse mackerel was based on the ICES MSY approach, and set at 81.376 tonnes. There was no management or rebuilding plan in place. Important points emphasised in the October recommendations were to expedite the evaluation of the rebuilding plan, and to continue to pursue the stock identification genetics project. The TAC was provisional for the first quarter, set at 65%, as per the recommendation in 2020.

In terms of priorities for western horse mackerel within the PelAC in 2021, the Chair listed the following points. The PelAC would:

- Expedite the evaluation of the rebuilding plan, with a deadline of end of April;
- Continue genetic stock identification work;
- Complete 2022 TAC advice at the October meeting in relation to mackerel.

- **Herring in 6a and 7b,c**

ICES issued zero catch advice on this stock, which the PelAC recommended should be followed. The Chair highlighted the progress of the genetics project and the enormous amount of work that has gone into it. The Commission had supported this project over the last three years through EASME. An urgent review of this project, as well as a benchmark in 2021, have been requested.

The scientific sampling programme in 6a North and 6a South 7bc was set to continue (genetic work and acoustic surveys) in accordance with ICES catch scenarios for minimum catch levels needed to provide sufficient data.

It was decided in 2020 that the morphometrics work on this stock had not been as valuable as originally hoped for the hindcast approach. The PelAC had therefore recommended that this work should be discontinued. The PelAC had also recommended finding solutions to existing problems around utilising historical data for splitting the stocks.

The provisional monitoring TAC agreed at the December Council meeting for the first quarter of 2021 represented 25% of the 2020 monitoring TAC.

Update on herring in 6a and 7b,c focus group

The last FG meeting was held online on 28 September 2020, prior to the October meetings. The PelAC was informed that the EASME genetic project report would be submitted at the end of 2020. A letter had been sent to the Commission to request ICES expedite review of the report by a relevant WG ahead of 2021 benchmark. A further letter had been sent to the Commission re-emphasising the importance of including herring genetics surveys in the DCF.

The next FG meeting is scheduled for 14 April 2021 and will cover a range of important topics, including further possibilities for splitting historic stock data; acoustic surveys in 2021; 6a south survey adjustments; and commercial catch sampling of 6a north herring.

In terms of priorities for herring in 6a and 7b,c within the PelAC in 2021, the Chair listed the following points. The PelAC would:

- Finalise ongoing research on genetics and progress the EASME project through the review process with input from ICES.
 - Continue industry acoustic surveys.
 - Seek, prepare and participate in benchmark 2021.
 - Request advice on the monitoring TAC in 2022
 - Provide TAC advice for the stock in 2022.
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- **Celtic sea herring**

The Chair explained that similarly to herring in 6a and 7b,c, Celtic sea herring has zero catch advice. The provisional monitoring TAC for quarter 1 of 2021, agreed at the December Council meeting, represented 25% of the 2020 monitoring TAC.

The PelAC's priorities for this stock in 2021 included continuing the scientific sampling programme. The Chair also emphasised there was still a need to address the mixing issue with herring in the Irish Sea. Genetics work was ongoing and he hoped further progress could be made in 2021. Other priorities included providing TAC recommendations for 2022, which would be discussed at the July meeting before recommendations are generated in October.

- **Irish sea herring**

The TAC advice for Irish sea herring was based on the ICES MSY approach, and set at ≤ 7.341 tonnes. The PelAC recommended that the ICES advice for the stock be followed. The PelAC also requested that WKIRISH work on the ecosystem approach (EA) is incorporated in future assessments.

In terms of priorities for Irish sea herring, in addition to TAC advice-setting for 2022, the Chair articulated an important change of circumstances with regards to this stock, post-Brexit: noting that the stock essentially falls outside of the PelAC's remit, with only 4% of the stock covered by the EU. He asked the group if they should continue providing advice on this stock given that they will no longer be an influencing factor.

Gerard van Balsfoort commented that he preferred to take the pragmatic approach and discontinue offering advice on Irish sea herring in the interest of saving time. The remaining 4% of the TAC that the PelAC has influence over is owned by Irish stakeholders, but he acknowledged that if the Irish members of the PelAC have an attachment to the stock, they should continue with it. The Chair agreed and called on other Irish members to comment. None were forthcoming.

The Chair proposed a recommendation that the PelAC should maintain a watching brief, rather than produce recommendations. Outcomes would be discussed within WGII, without the need to produce advice.

Gerard van Balsfoort added that since the last CFP reform, if a stock is entirely within a MS waters, the EU can grant management of that stock to the MS. In light of this, the entire management of Irish sea herring may be given to the UK. If this were the case the PelAC wouldn't have a legal reason to advise on the stock.

- **Boarfish**

Based on ICES precautionary approach, catches of Boarfish should be no more than 19.152 tonnes in 2020 and 2021. This recommendation was adopted by the PelAC. In addition, the PelAC had made a number of requests, including a benchmark for the stock by 2021 and boarfish closures as contained within PelAC advice issued on discard plans for the NWW regional MS group.

In terms of priorities for boarfish within the PelAC in 2021, the Chair listed the following points. The PelAC would:

- Request benchmark in 2021
- Continue to develop an assessment model
- See proposed closures implemented within Community legislation, which could be reiterated in the Discard Plans for 2022
- TAC advice for 2022

5. Control FG update – Sean O'Donoghue

The Chair provided an update following the latest Control FG meeting on 12 January 2021. MEP Clara Aguilera had attended and spoke to the group regarding the PelAC's recommendations on the Control Regulation (CR), and provided an update on the revision of the regulation. The timeline for the progression of CR was discussed and the PelAC learned that a vote was planned at the end of January 2021. This took place on 5 February 2021 in the end, and a number of compromises and at least 1,000 amendments were resolved.

The Control FG also discussed a wide range of follow-up actions on the EFCA mackerel summary report. Since the meeting, the PelAC has received a reply to the FOI request issues, asking for the detailed data behind the report. This request had been denied by the European Union. Additionally, negative responses had been received from all three regional MS groups in relation to this request. To progress the issue, the intention is to follow-up on an action item whereby the PelAC Management Team will meet with the EFCA Board to discuss the specific mackerel deployment, the summary report, and the issue of transparency more broadly – particularly in relation to future deployments.

The Control FG was now on hold until the finalisation of the Control Regulation. Information from Clara Aguilera indicated that trilogues could take place in Autumn, and may or may not be concluded within the year.

The Control FG had also approved Jose Beltran as the PelAC representative on the EFCA Administrative Board for 2021-2022. This was then additionally approved by WGII participants and would be put

forwards to the Executive Committee the following day for final approval. Stella Nemecky had requested information about the possibility of attending EFCA meetings as an observer. An action had been taken to explore this with EFCA contacts.

6. Data Collection Framework Report – Annette Hurrelmann

The Chair introduced Annette Hurrelmann from the Commission to report on the implementation and functioning of the Data Collection Framework regulation (DCF). Under article 23 of this regulation, the Commission is required to present a report on the functioning and implementation of this regulation to the European Parliament and the Councils. She explained that she would present this report, outline the system of data collection, and highlight the future challenges and changes foreseen.

Hurrelmann went on to explain that data collection in the EU is a decentralized system, involving coordination between the following main players:

- Member States, who are responsible for the collecting, storing and maintaining data
- Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) groups within sea basins, ensuring a harmonised approach to data collection methodologies
- End users of the scientific data – reflecting the fact the DCF is an 'end-user-driven-system', responding to the data needs as expressed by research institutes and bodies such as STECF
- The European Commission, which sets out harmonised requirements and ensures the quality of the data delivery.

In terms of tools and activities under the DCF, there are four important activities.

Firstly, EU MAP for Data Collection is the delegated and implementing legislation that goes alongside the regulation, setting out detailed requirements for MS, and the list of mandatory scientific surveys. This EU MAP is currently in the process of being revised and the new MAP will enter into force from 1 January 2022. The intention is to build in improvements in data collection that are based on developing political priorities and developed by MS under various pilot studies. This will be in relation to improved data on incidental catches of protected species, on recreational fisheries, and an updated list of scientific surveys. The new MAP has undergone consultation with various stakeholders, MS, and STECF.

Secondly, MS plan their work for the DCF in multi-annual work programmes, and report on this in annual reports. MS Work Plans and Annual Reports are important tools for the Commission, allowing them to follow-up on performance and address potential issues.

Thirdly, pilot studies in various areas can be used to improve methodologies and approaches. There have also been a series of regional grants, EMFF direct management money, and other financing of such studies, leading to improvements in regional coordination of data collection.



Lastly, Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) have strengthened considerably in recent times, providing a regional approach to implementation. They provide recommendations, interact with each other, and interact with end users.

On financing data collection, Hurrelmann referenced regional grants launched in January that focus on bringing forward the work of RCGs, for example in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

She concluded by stating that the DCF is now a well-established regulatory regime. The next step will be further operationalising of regional work plans. She thanked the PelAC for inviting her to speak and opened the floor to comments and questions.

The Chair asked a question on pilot studies. Hurrelmann responded by stating that pilot studies are a very important part of the work of MS in the current period, because they address various different topics and areas for improvement in data collection. The priority now is developing a work stream to obtain information from MS on what has been done in these pilot studies, and what the results are. The Chair interjected that some of those studies would be very useful to the PelAC. He asked if it would be possible to obtain a presentation on the outcomes of these pilot studies at a future meeting. The Chair added that the PelAC would like to be consulted on these subjects and be kept informed, as accurate and reliable data is essential to the PelAC's role.

The Chair referenced a specific request made by the PelAC on the inclusion of genetic data and sampling within the DCF MAP. He acknowledged the PelAC has been quite successful in terms of genetics projects, but funding has become an issue – as studies had predominantly been funded by the industry to-date. If genetics data were part of the DCF it would make a significant difference to this cost burden on the sector. He asked if it was too late to incorporate new elements into the DCF MAP for 2021-2023, and whether the PelAC could still have an input on this at this stage. Hurrelmann responded that she would have to come back to the group on specific timings in this regard. She clarified that work on data collection methodologies takes place at the MS and RCG level, where these processes are streamlined and unified. It is important for RCGs to be aware of the studies and pilot projects being carried out in order to target methodologies to data collection needs. The EU MAP is a flexible system, allowing for a continuous development of the methodologies and there is a constant possibility to feed in new information.

The Chair asked how the PelAC can get in touch with the RCGs. Hurrelmann agreed to brainstorm this with her team after the meeting. She highlighted that an important event held annually is a series of several meetings with MS representatives and correspondents for data collection, which is always a good occasion to also share information. This could be a possibility. The Chair requested a response from Hurrelmann following her brainstorming session.

Two action items were noted. Firstly, to obtain updates on pilot studies and their outcomes. Secondly, to provide an answer regarding potential PelAC engagement in the DCF.

Hurrelmann said she would be happy to keep up a regular dialogue to help improve the flow of information between the RCGs and ACs. She agreed to give an update on pilot studies, although



couldn't provide an exact time. The analysis of the pilot studies was in the planning stage but on the agenda for this year.

7. MSE advice for NEA mackerel – Andrew Campbell

Andrew Campbell of the Marine Institute presented a range of options in terms of MSE advice for NEA mackerel.

The MSE was conducted in 2020 following a request from the EU, Norway, and the Faroe Islands. It was based on a 'full feedback' approach.

He outlined the ICES MSY rule and explained that the design of the Management Strategy is somewhat simpler than the former. An evaluation is performed by forward simulating 1,000 stocks by 40 years, testing different decisions. A range of important decisions / assumptions are included within this modelling.

Simulations test different combinations of F_{target} and $B_{trigger}$, to see which combinations produce a precautionary outcome, and the variations between those outcomes. The MSE also tested combinations of these parameters with the addition of TAC stabilisers - in this case, limiting increased in TAC to 25% and decreases to 20%.

The outputs of the modelling were presented in a variety of ways - focusing on risk to the stock, overall stock size, realised fishing mortality, frequency of management actions and TAC stability in terms of percentage change. Campbell shared the outcomes of the modelling when examined through each of these lenses, and then concluded that for the biggest long-term yields, the F_{target} should be set between 0.27 and 0.30 of the stock, with the $B_{trigger}$ set at 3Mt and 4.5Mt. However, he highlighted that marginally lower F targets have only marginally lower yields, but produce a greater spawning stock biomass in the long-term, and show greater stability overall.

The Chair thanked Andrew and opened the floor to comments on trade-offs.

Goncalo Carvalho felt this should feed into broader conversation on rebuilding, but said that overall the PelAC takes a greater interest in stability, over a marginally higher catch. He commented that this type of analysis was very useful and thanked Campbell for his work and the presentation. From an NGO perspective, as humanity moves into a period of greater environmental uncertainty, he proposed that precautionary scenarios should be the priority. With an ecosystem approach in mind, long-term predictability should be the focus. Stella Nemecky said she fully supported taking an ecosystem based management approach.

The Chair commented on the conclusions on TAC modifiers, which seemed to suggest limited impact on long-term yields. He asked how limited these conclusions were? Campbell answered generally less than 1%.



Gerard van Balsfoort said he remembered Andrew presenting this in the past and it was not the first time the PelAC has had to make a decision between stability and high shorter-term yields. The difference here was not that huge, but still surprising. He felt the decision was not as stark as it could be. He voiced concern that the MSE is ripe for the Coastal States to start discussing, but it could well be that they don't come to this, this year - due to the ongoing complexities of Brexit. He felt the PelAC should start formulating its own way forward on this subject regardless.

Patrick Murphy echoed this, stating it was 'difficult to have this type of modelling if people who have access to the fishery don't follow it'.

The Chair added that 'we are in a bit of turmoil now with the Coastal States negotiations'. He wondered if there could be an opportunity to look at the various options within the MSE across different time-frames. He queried how identifying a target range that is favourable to the PelAC could be progressed.

Gerard van Balsfoort replied that it was 'all a matter of principle'. The PelAC can only advise to select an option in the green area for precautionary approaches.

The Chair asked Campbell if there were short-term projections in the report, to which he confirmed there were.

The Chair said he wished to explore the short, medium, and long-term implications for the various harvest control rule combinations in the MSE, possibly at the July meeting, in order to consider whether the PelAC should draft a recommendation or leave this issue up to fisheries managers. This was taken as an action for a future meeting. The Chair specifically requested that Campbell perform a short- and medium-term analysis, as well as long-term, and present the three options side by side.

The Chair thanked the speakers, participants, and interpreters for attending and closed the meeting.

Action items

Action #	What	Who
1	Joint WGI & WGII Recommendation: Seek opportunity to meet with UK Government to discuss the UK's future plans for data collection and analysis (after conclusion of Coastal States negotiations). Examine MoU between UK and ICES to identify any salient details in this regard.	Management Team, Secretariat
2	Pursue agreed priorities for each of the stocks discussed within the WGII meeting (ongoing across the year).	Chair
3	On NEA mackerel: Follow-up on difference between the egg survey and IESSN survey with the Commission and with ICES. If at all possible, see this resolved in 2021, ideally before WGWIDE meeting in August.	Chair, Secretariat
4	On NEA mackerel: Continue to build on the enthusiasm following the WKRRMAC in Breda in 2019, looking at all assessments and issues around the mackerel assessment - including	Chair, Secretariat



	stakeholders' perception of it – and work on a number of recommendations based on outcomes from this meeting.	
5	On NEA mackerel: Arrange for presentation of research paper into mackerel egg production at July WGII meeting, as put forward by Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn.	Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn, Secretariat
6	On SHOM: Secure ICES presentation on the differences between the SHOM management plan tonnages and MSY tonnages. SWWAC to be invited to attend. (April or July meeting). The suggestions that the PelAC should reply to Commission letter regarding SHOM management plan was superseded by the proposition of securing a dedicated presentation from ICES. Circulate the letter from DG MARE on this (received 1st March) to members.	Secretariat, Colm Lordan
7	On SHOM: Request catch options for MSY target dates of 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, asking that the evaluation of these targets be expedited.	Chair, Secretariat
8	On Western Horse mackerel: Expedite the evaluation of the rebuilding plan, with a deadline of end of April.	Chair, Secretariat
9	On Data Collection Framework: Commission to supply results of pilot studies and information on how the PelAC can engage with Regional Coordination Groups.	Annette Hurrelmann
10	On mackerel MSE: Andrew Campbell to present short, medium and long-term options side-by-side, PelAC to determine if a specific recommendation on reference point combinations will be made. (July meeting).	Andrew Campbell
11	NEA Mackerel: examine ICES-UK MoU to see if there are answers on this point.	Secretariat
12	Correct tonnage amount on slides for Irish Sea herring and circulate to members. (Upload to website).	Secretariat
13	Add the Coastal States mackerel agreement to the PelAC website.	Secretariat

