



## Pelagic AC

Executive Committee  
8<sup>th</sup> July 2021  
10:00 – 13:00 hrs CET  
Online platform

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

### Participants

Representative	Organisation	Country
<b>ExCom members</b>		
Jesper Raakjaer, Chair	University of Aalborg	Denmark
Anton Paulrud	Swedish Pelagic Federation	Sweden
Esben Sverdrup-Jensen	Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation	Denmark
Gerard van Balsfoort	Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association	Netherlands
José Beltran	Organizacion de Productores de Pesqueros de Lugo	Spain
Linda Planthof	North Sea Foundation	Netherlands
Mads Larsson	AIPCE	Denmark
Sean O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation	Ireland
Stavroula Kremmydiotou	European Bureau for Conservation and Development	Belgium
Stella Nemecky	WWF	Germany
Uwe Richter	Deutscher Hochseefischerei-Verband / Seefrostvertrieb GmbH	Germany
Wietze Kampen	European Transport Workers' Federation	International
<b>Observers</b>		
Anne-Marie Kats	Pelagic AC	Netherlands
Joost Paardekooper	European Commission	International

Justyna Zajchowska	Pew charitable trusts	International
Katrina Borrow	Mindfully Wired	UK
Laurens van Balsfoort	Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association	Netherlands
Martin Pastoors	Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association	Netherlands
Mo Mathies	NWWAC	Ireland
Rob Banning	Parlevliet and van der Plas	Netherlands
Roos Strating	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	Netherlands
Sheila O'Neill	National Seafood Centre	Ireland
Solene Prevalet	Fonds Régional d'organisation du marché du poisson	France

## 1. Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed participants to the Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting at 10:06 CET. He shared the agenda on the screen and asked members to provide comments.

He notified members that Commission representatives were unavailable to present the Commission consultation on fishing opportunities for 2022, but said the agenda item would be retained in order to facilitate a discussion on this point. The agenda was then adopted without amend.

## 2. Action items

The Chair provided an update on the status of past action items.

An action to establish a Rules of Procedure FG was complete.

The drafting of proposals for filling vacant ExCom seats and for including the social dimension of the CFP within the PelAC, were both ongoing. Further to this, an action to secure a presentation from Annette Hurrellman, STECF, on social data collection and analysis had been progressed and she was due to present at the October meeting.

Consideration of inclusion of the PelAC on the CIBBRiNA LIFE Bycatch Project Advisory Board was ongoing as the Board was yet to be established. A project meeting would take place on the 9th September 2021, and the Secretariat would attend this on behalf of the PelAC to gather further information.

The PelAC multi-AC letter on stakeholder engagement had been through an expedited procedure for sign-off and submitted to the Commission, and this action was therefore complete.

A WGI action to liaise with the SATURN project to ascertain the level of engagement required to be part of the stakeholder group was ongoing, as the project was still at an early stage.

WGII actions to contact the Commission regarding the WHOM rebuilding plan, as well as a SHOM FG action to send a revised iteration of the SHOM FG LTMS directly on to the Commission following FG discussions (in order for the LTMS to be assessed by WGHANSA) were complete.

Finally, the new Executive Director of EFCA had been contacted and would be invited to attend future PelAC meetings.

### **3. Work program 2021-2022**

Executive Secretary to the PelAC, Anne-Marie Kats, presented the PelAC work plan for the forthcoming year. She highlighted that there would be a formal Inter-AC meeting on the 15th July, at which the Commission would present a new method for funding ACs. As this is anticipated to be a 'lump sum' payment, Kats speculated that this may be the last time an 'advance' budget is prepared.

Covering key items in the work plan, Kats listed activities pertaining to Brexit and the functioning of Advisory Councils. This includes ongoing work within the PelAC Brexit FG and a new Rules of Procedure FG. In the latter, work is underway to amend and adapt RoP and PelAC Statutes to reflect how the AC will work with UK stakeholders in future.

The Landing Obligation will remain a key topic. The PelAC will monitor choke situations and their impacts, work with Regional Groups on Discard Plans - providing recommendations where warranted - and continue to work with EFCA around issues of compliance and control.

The PelAC will continue to work more broadly on issues of control, providing advice based on 2019 recommendations. Whilst the Control FG is currently dormant, the PelAC currently holds the rotating AC seat on the EFCA Administrative Board, and this is an opportunity to continue to advocate based on the PelAC position around key issues.

Multi-annual management strategies remain central to the PelAC's work. A special focus will be on 6a, 7b-c herring, with a benchmark for this stock taking place imminently. Work and conversations will continue around long-term management strategies for western horse mackerel and southern horse mackerel, as well as around North Sea herring and blue whiting. A workshop on long-term management strategy (LTMS) is planned for October 2021.

As with every year, the PelAC will develop targeted TAC advice and provide advice on emerging legislation.

Kats highlighted the work of the Ecosystem FG, which has a busy and important agenda within the PelAC, under the Chairmanship of Goncalo Carvalho. Anne-Marie Kats highlighted several of the key themes -

including deep-sea mining, climate change and underwater noise impacts. The FG will develop advice on an issue-by-issue basis, and will consider practical advice for building an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management into policy.

On regionalisation, the PelAC will continue to work to build well-functioning relationships with Member State Regional Groups.

The PelAC will continue to collaborate with the scientific community, participate in ICES workshops and ADGs, and continue to engage with ICES on quality assurance processes and the incorporation of stakeholder views into formal advice.

Kats shared a table showing planned activities and dates for the upcoming year. She noted the PelAC will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely, and consider meeting format in this regard - including options for 'hybrid' events, allowing some people to join online. The Secretariat was also considering arranging for one of the PelAC's four annual meetings to be held fully online.

The floor was open to questions and comments. Sean O'Donoghue remarked that he felt it was of utmost importance that events could return to being held in-person as soon as possible. He moved on to comment on the 'chaos' of mackerel stock management at the Coastal States level. He characterised the management of the stock as 'irresponsible' and said the PelAC should be engaged in processes to support the development and agreement of a long-term management plan between the Coastal States.

The Chair commented that the PelAC would consider holding their February PelAC meetings online in future, not key meetings such as the July or October sessions. He echoed O'Donoghue's sentiments regarding the value of in-person meetings.

Responding to O'Donoghue's comments on the mackerel issue, Anne-Marie Kats asked how this could be incorporated into the work plan. She suggested it could be a key discussion point for the October meeting, to formulate advice and a way forward on the stock.

Jose Beltran took the floor. He thanked Kats for her presentation. He agreed that there was uncertainty around when meetings could be held in person, and agreed with the two previous interventions regarding the importance of working together. He suggested that the April meeting might be the best option for holding future meetings online. He underscored the importance of the LTMS workshop, scheduled for October. He lamented the unilateral decision-making of Coastal States with regards to the mackerel stock.

Anne-Marie Kats thanked everyone for their input and confirmed that the October meeting should be held in-person, provided there were no further issues with the Delta variant of COVID-19. On mackerel, she noted that Joost Pardekooper - Chief fisheries negotiator for the European Union - was present at the meeting and may be able to advise on possible future action in this regard.

#### **4. Budget**

Anne-Marie Kats shared the proposed budget for 2021-2022. She highlighted that the contracting budget covered items such as the PelAC Performance Review, and additional Secretariat support for FGs in the coming year. She added that there is increased flexibility in amending the budget, and shifting funds between categories, in comparison to previous years. Kats announced that every member had paid their contributions, with no cancellations for the new term. A new member would be joining WGII - Pescagalicia-Aperga-Obarco. All Member States had either paid or provided assurance that payment was incoming.

#### **5. Performance Review**

A ToR for the PelAC performance review had been drafted and circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Anne-Marie Kats shared key components of this ToR document on the screen and invited members to comment.

The aim was to contract a consultant to carry out the review in July 2021, with a view to presenting results in October.

#### **6. Update on EU-UK negotiations**

Joose Pardekooper, EU Commission, took the floor to provide an update on the state of play of negotiations between the EU and the UK. The TAC and quota negotiations have been finalised, and this will be transposed into a fourth amendment to the TAC Regulation, providing certainty on quota for the remainder of the year. This will provide certainty on a number of topics, including special conditions, footnotes and sea bass. An agreed approach has been achieved on fishing for non-quota species.

He highlighted that a number of actions to be taken in the context of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries have been agreed - both short-term and long-term.

Pardekooper noted that all parties are already looking ahead to starting negotiations for 2022. Planning for the timing of these negotiations was not yet certain.

On the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF), Pardekooper explained that the first meeting of the Umbrella Partnership Council had taken place, where it had been agreed that the SCF would be one of the first Specialised Committees to meet - a date has been set for the 20th July. He emphasised that the meeting of the SCF would not be for further negotiations, but would focus around work planning, such as tasks around consultations, science, and taking stock of where 'we should be' when it comes to stock advice, for example skates and rays. One clear priority in this regard is the identification of a mechanism for quota-swapping. Another point is working on guidelines for special stocks.

Where agreement isn't achieved through negotiations, the provisional TAC is set at the level of scientific advice from ICES. 'Special stocks' are those for which provisional TACs will not be based strictly on the top-line advice, such as for zero-catch stocks where a monitoring TAC may be in place.

The SCF will meet quite frequently, which is in stark contrast to other Specialised Committees.

Pardekooper said the EU was working hard with the UK on licensing measures, notifications and responses. Discussions are also ongoing with regard to control, with both parties comparing notes on their current state of play. These issues are being dealt with 'under the radar' to facilitate smooth functioning between different areas of policy.

He flagged the date within the TCA for finalising annual TAC and quota negotiations as 10th December 2021. He underscored the challenge in 'synchronising' across the various streams of negotiation, and also the time-period taken within 2021 to achieve an agreement: from 1st January until 11th June. He said the majority of technical issues were resolved within 8-10 weeks, with just a few political issues causing the delay on finalising the process. He anticipated and hoped that future negotiations would not take as long as the first round.

Sean O'Donoghue took the floor. He commented it was 'quite annoying to say the least' that despite a bilateral agreement for TACs being in place between the EU and the UK, the EU cannot yet specify the EU half of the TAC for some stocks, due to the need to factor in the Landing Obligation. He highlighted recent PelAC attempts to ensure that stakeholder-driven LTMS take place as the top-line advice - which had not been successful. He asked if LTMS, rather than top-line MSY advice, would be a basis for provisional TACs in future, in the circumstance that there was a failure to reach agreement again. Finally, he asked how Pardekooper foresaw interactions between the SCF and Advisory Councils.

Pardekooper said the EU did have calculations for the EU share of the TAC, to incorporate the LO and associated exemptions. However, discussions with Member States were required, and are ongoing, around some of this methodology. In principle, he said there should be 'no surprises' in the EU share of the TAC.

On TAC negotiations, he said all measures would be taken to ensure that an agreement could be reached. On the 'special stocks' referenced earlier in his presentation, he provided the example of Celtic Sea cod - a 'zero TAC' stock whereby a small allowance of catch is required to prevent chokes in a number of demersal fisheries. In terms of other 'special stocks' allowances, he said there is some discretion for the two parties to determine which stocks qualify in this regard. There is no detailed information on this process, but some broad guidelines are being developed, and this is foreseen to include the provisions of multi-annual plans.

On the SCF, he said this was part of 'fixing a modality for cooperation and working together', providing a forum for discussion and agreement on management issues of shared interest. The EU has recently

received signals that the UK is viewing the SCF in this way - as a body for collaboration. He spoke of a range of key areas the SCF would work on, including discussions around Multi-Annual Plans in the post-Brexit context. He noted that work on non-quota species would be a priority for the UK, as this has high political importance on their side.

Sean O'Donoghue further clarified the PelAC's recent correspondence with the Commission regarding rebuilding plans and LTMS. He asked how this issue would be dealt with, specifically with the UK. Pardekooper responded that there had been a similar situation with Norway, whereby ICES had declined to put an agreed LTMS in the top-line advice. The Commission is in formal discussions with ICES about this, as the UK did transpose MAPs for Western Waters and the North Sea into their legislation. However, ICES have not chosen to follow this as part of ICES' scientific independence. The Chair felt it was important for the PelAC to liaise with the UK, Norway, and ICES to work together on the basis for stock advice. On horse mackerel, the Chair noted the stock as a 'peculiar one'. He appreciated that on all these details there is work to be done, but did not like to speculate the way forward. Nevertheless, he said the PelAC is fortunate to have the added-value of the industry in that regard, and would like to remain a reliable partner.

Linda Planthof asked to what extent are certain conditions 'prescribed' for what constitutes a 'special stock'.

Pardekooper responded that there is no list of special stocks. The TCA lists categories of stocks: zero catch, vulnerable stock within a mixed fishery, other stocks which the parties consider require special treatment (this a UK addition). This provides discretion to the parties to identify a special stock. It is 'the opposite of written in stone' and depends on the advice issued by ICES on the specific stocks.

## **7. Brexit FG outcomes - Sean O'Donoghue**

Sean O'Donoghue, one of the two Co-Chairs of the Brexit FG, updated members on a proposal from the group. A specific action taken at the second meeting of the FG earlier in the year had been to explore a potential expansion of the PelAC remit, to include additional pelagic stocks, currently sitting under the remit of other advisory councils, these include:

- Sprat (in the North Sea, Kattegat/Skagerrak and English Channel)
- Norway pout (in the North Sea, Kattegat/Skagerrak)
- Greater silver smelt
- Sandeel

Whilst examining other changes in AC practice resulting from Brexit, it was agreed within the FG that it would make sense to bring the above pelagic stocks under one umbrella, in the PelAC. The Chair clarified that the request presented to ExCom was for approval to proceed with seeking consent from the other ACs for this shift of remit.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen took the floor to endorse O'Donoghue's summary of the recommendation. He highlighted the PelAC's expertise and active approach to developing management strategies for stocks under its remit, and reiterated the fact that many of these stocks are not receiving focused attention where they currently sit.

No objections were raised and the Chair indicated that the proposal was adopted.

Sean O'Donoghue provided some further Brexit-related updates to the ExCom. He explained that the FG had agreed to pursue a 'Northeast Atlantic pelagic forum' in combination with the LDAC. The modalities for this forum were not yet established, but discussions are ongoing. This touched on a wider agreed point from the Brexit FG - to find avenues for working collaboratively with other ACs where possible on issues pertaining to Brexit, to streamline approaches and make use of knowledge and resources.

Jose Beltran intervened stating that he felt it made intuitive sense to bring pelagic fisheries under the PelAC remit. On chub mackerel, he highlighted that this stock was already covered by the PelAC but there isn't formal advice for the stock. He therefore queried whether it was practical to dedicate time and resources to working on this. He said it was important to evaluate and assess the value of working on each of the stocks on a case-by-case basis.

Sean O'Donoghue clarified that the discussions to be held with other ACs didn't include chub mackerel, as this is already within the remit of the PelAC.

## **8. General elections in October 2021**

Jesper Raakjaer highlighted that Chairs elections would be taking place in October 2021, and that application procedures would be opened via the PelAC website. He encouraged any members interested in running for the position of Chair to contact the Secretariat with an application, in good time ahead of the Autumn General Assembly meeting.

Anne-Marie Kats confirmed that the Secretariat would email members during the following week to highlight procedures and seek applications.

## **9. Rules of Procedure FG update - Anne-Marie Kats**

Anne-Marie Kats took the floor. She explained that the RoP FG had met for the first time in June. The group had looked at the PelAC RoP and identified outdated elements, as well as elements that were more appropriate for inclusion in the PelAC Statutes. The NWWAC had recently been through a similar procedure, and this was serving as a basis for the same work in the PelAC.

The scope of the group is more extensive than anticipated, so work will continue over the summer and a proposal will be presented at the ExCom meeting in October.

#### **10. Discussion agenda items: Inter-AC meeting (15th July 2021)**

The Chair invited members to send comments on potential agenda items for the upcoming Inter-AC meeting to the Secretariat via email.

Under this agenda item, it was noted that the Commission would be presenting its Consultation on Fishing Opportunities at the Inter-AC meeting. Sean O'Donoghue noted that the PelAC's response to this consultation had previously been included in the October advice, and he proposed this should be the way forward in 2021.

In terms of key points to raise under this topic, he said the usefulness of fishing opportunities in 2022 should be questioned at the Inter-AC, given that the economic impact of Brexit is not incorporated into this information. In addition, the STECF fleet report and inclusion of a pelagic chapter should be raised.

The second agenda item that will be covered at the Inter-AC meeting was the draft revision of the Delegated Act on functioning of the ACs. The Chair said the PelAC would provide comments on this draft proposal, either in the October meeting, or through a written procedure.

#### **11. Recommendations from WGI**

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen took the floor to present recommendations from WGI for approval at ExCom. The two points carried forward for ExCom information were: firstly, the PelAC would invite a representative from the trilateral working group between the EU, UK, and Norway to provide updates around work on herring stocks, and; secondly, to re-establish the blue whiting FG and convene this ahead of ADGWIDE, between 13th-17th September.

The Chair acknowledged the update and both processes were given assent to commence.

There were no recommendations for approval from WGII.

#### **12. Update on GIS-based multi-AC interactive map - Mo Mathies, NWWAC**

Mo Mathies, NWWAC Executive Secretary, took the floor to provide a brief update on an interactive map under development in the NWWAC. By means of background, she shared a map showing the regions covered by the Advisory Councils, which was last updated in 2016. The NWWAC Brexit FG had determined that a more detailed version of the map, covering the NWWAC's area, would be valuable, alongside a fisheries management chart. The map contains a significant amount of detail, but in discussions around the map's development, the group had determined that a more innovative approach could be taken in

terms of delivering a digital interactive version. Mathies highlighted examples of other interactive maps produced by BIM and the Geofish project, where users can select filters and features for what they wish to see on the map. On the Geofish project site, some of the information is only accessible via a member log-in.

Mathies said the NWWAC was open to considering other similar examples if any PelAC members have suggestions.

The NWWAC is interested in commissioning a scoping study to determine what ‘members actually want’ from an interactive map project of this nature, and the AC has issued an invitation to quote for this work.

The NWWAC is interested in collaborating with other ACs on this work, if the map could prove a valuable tool to more than one AC. It could ultimately accommodate 11 different ACs. A number of key queries still need to be answered in this regard, in terms of internal structure of the site, languages to be used, costs and maintenance.

Regarding the anticipated outcomes of the scoping study, the NWWAC anticipates that this should: provide a definite list of criteria for inclusion in GIS based application based on NWWAC members’ responses; provide a clear overview of data availability (sources, formats etc.), needs for additional data conversion and collaboration opportunities with existing web GIS providers; offer potential for linkages for other Advisory Councils to be included; and give an estimate of ultimate project development cost and project maintenance cost.

The Chair thanked Mo Mathies for her presentation and opened the floor to questions. Sean O’Donoghue intervened to support the PelAC’s potential involvement in the project. The Chair noted that the project was of interest, and there may be budget to contribute. The PelAC would await the outcomes of the scoping study, and the PelAC and NWWAC Secretariats would stay in contact on this.

### **13. AOB**

Anne-Marie Kats introduced a brief item on an ICES workshop on stakeholder engagement in advice-generating processes: WKSHOES. She noted this had been removed as a ‘main’ agenda item, and included under AOB as the PelAC had not been permitted to participate in the workshop, which was an internal ICES session. As a result, a full update was not possible. The Secretariat would continue to identify opportunities to engage on stakeholder information being incorporated into advice processes.

A second item under AOB was the inclusion of a ‘pelagic chapter’ in the STECF economic performance of the fleet report. This item had been addressed previously by the PelAC, and a chapter had been included as a one-off in a previous report. However, the PelAC wanted to see this become a standard chapter within the report, on a recurrent basis. This request will be conveyed to STECF.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting and wished members a good summer break. The meeting concluded.

#### 14. Action Items

Action #	What	Who
1	Brexit FG Chairs and Secretariat to pursue formal discussions with other ACs (NSAC, NWWAC, SWWAC) regarding the expansion of the PelAC's remit to cover pelagic stocks within their listed stocks of interest.	Brexit FG Chairs, Secretariat
2	Secretariat to contact PelAC members with procedural details for applying to vacant Chair positions: WGs and ExCom.	Secretariat
3	Prepare response to Commission consultation on fishing opportunities, and incorporate this into the PelAC's October advice.	Secretariat
4	Develop a response to the amended Delegated Act (on Advisory Councils) circulated by the Commission - either via written procedure or via the October meetings.	Secretariat
5	Await the outcomes of the NWWAC scoping study on an interactive, web-based portal on fisheries management information and then consider whether to contribute to, or participate in the project.	Executive Committee members
6	PelAC to convey a request to STECF that the pelagic chapter in the annual fleet economics report become a recurrent feature.	Secretariat