

# Working Group 1 Pelagic RAC

Recommendations, advice  
and decisions for the TAC and  
quota 2007

## 1. Celtic Sea and Division VIIj herring

- TAC 2005: 13,000 t + 1,000 t.
- TAC 2006: 11,050 t + 1,000 t.
  
- Recommendations 2007:
  - Roll over TAC.
  - The Pelagic RAC will provide a proposal for a recovery plan.
  
- TAC 2007: 9.393 t.

## 2. Herring in Division VIa North (west of Scotland)

- TAC 2006: 34,000 t.
- TAC 2007: 34,000 t.
  
- Recommendations 2007:
  - The TAC should be set at 34,000 t.
  - The Management Plan should be adopted and implemented, with the following comments:

## 2. Herring in Division VIa North (west of Scotland)

### 1. Harvest Rule

- The trigger points are accepted. The RAC, however, recommends that it is defined for which year the trigger points apply, and propose that the projection year is chosen.
- The RAC is concerned over the intention to include clause 2e. The assessment of this stock depends heavily on the annual acoustic survey. This type of survey can be technically difficult and it would not be right for the TAC to be automatically reduced by 10% in the event that a scientific forecast is unavailable due to technical problems with the survey.
- In point 3, the RAC proposes to put ICES and STECF on equal terms, i.e. to change the wording from: "STECF" to "ICES and STECF".

## 2. Herring in Division VIa North (west of Scotland)

- 2. *Quota Flexibility*
  - The introduction of an inter-annual flexibility of up to 10% on national quotas is supported.
- 3. *West of Scotland Closure*
  - The removal of the closure of this area is strongly supported.
- 4. *Control and inspection measures*
  - The RAC agrees with the intention of minimizing misreporting. Also, bearing in mind the present situation regarding North Sea Herring, the RAC agrees that special measures should apply. Hence, under the condition that the west of Scotland Closure is removed, the RAC agrees with the proposed specific control and inspection measures.

## 3. Herring Division VIa South and VIIb,c

- TAC 2005: 14,000 t.
- TAC 2006: 15,400 t.
- TAC 2007: 13,860 t.
  
- Recommendations 2007:
  - The RAC urges the Commission to request STECF to draft a management plan that meets the advice from ACFM.
  - The plan should be assessed by ICES and be commented on by the RAC before implementation

### 3. Herring Division VIa South and VIIb,c

- The finalisation of the management plan should await new scientific information to be available shortly from a three year completed international project named WESTHER established under the 5th Framework (Contract QLRT-2001-01056) as a multidisciplinary approach to the identification of herring (*Clupea harengus L.*) stock components west of the British Isles using biological tags and genetic markers.
- In the meantime the TAC for 2007 should be rolled-over at the same level as 2006.

### 4. Herring Subarea IV, Div VIIId and IIIa autumn spawners (north sea herring)

- TAC 2006: 455,000 t.
- TAC 2007: 341,063 t.
- Recommendations 2007:
  - Sufficient effort and resources need to be invested immediately to clarify the causes of the poor survival rate for larvae.
  - The RAC recommends to the Commission and Member States that every effort is made to protect the juvenile herring.
  - In the light of the uncertainties in the scientific advice the majority<sup>[1]</sup> of RAC members support the setting of the 2007 NS herring TAC at a level 20-25% below the 2006 TAC of 455,000 t. This is on the basis that:

[1] All members with the exception of those listed at 2 below.

### 4. Herring Subarea IV, Div VIIId and IIIa autumn spawners (north sea herring)

1. The ICES paper on additional stock projections dated 7 September 2006 gives several new catch options. The final option on page 3 shows the projected effect that a 15% reduction in TAC in each of the next 4 years would have on SSB. Under this scenario the estimated SSB never falls below 1mt, while a larger reduction in the range 20-25% keeps SSB above 1.1 mt, which is well above Blim and maintains a healthy stock size when recruitment is plotted over a 40-year time line.
2. The present recruitment difficulties may well be caused by the so-called "Large Stock Syndrome". A number of scientists have suggested that this hypothesis is worth further consideration. Following this thinking, a massive cut in the 2007 TAC might well exacerbate the recruitment problem rather than solve it.

### 4. Herring Subarea IV, Div VIIId and IIIa autumn spawners (north sea herring)

3. The Community has introduced enhanced control and enforcement measures which will significantly reduce the possibility of over quota landings from 2006 onwards. In addition, the introduction of the industry supported VIaN herring management plan in 2007 will address misreporting concerns.
4. There is significant scientific uncertainty surrounding the reasons behind recruitment difficulties and also what represents realistic stock reference points. A cut of 47% will have a detrimental effect on those dependent on the fishing industry, while a cut of 20-25% is manageable. A responsible management decision must be taken and a reduction of 20-25% would strike a balance between protecting the condition of the stock and limiting the socio-economic impact.

### 4. Herring Subarea IV, Div VIIId and IIIa autumn spawners (north sea herring)

- The minority<sup>[1]</sup> of RAC members support the setting of the 2007 NS herring TAC at 300,000 t corresponding to a 35% reduction on 2006 according to scenario 3 in the table of options in the 2006 ICES advice. This is on the basis that:
  1. The precautionary principle requires maintaining stock levels above Bpa and F at the agreed level.
  2. By choosing a 35% reduction, F will be kept at the level as agreed in the management plan. The stocks are foreseen to drop slightly below Bpa in the first year, but will recover to above Bpa in 2008.
  3. Before the "Large Stock Syndrome" hypothesis is used as a basis for management decisions, it needs to be validated by ICES.
  4. It is assumed that the pelagic industry is able to manage the socio-economic impacts that result from a TAC reduction of 35%.

[1] Members from Seas at Risk/ North Sea Foundation and WWF.

### 5. Herring in Subdiv 22-24 and Div IIIa (spring spawners)

- TAC 2006 for Baltic Spring Spawners: 95,000 t.
- TAC 2006 for IIIa: 81,600 t.
- Recommendations 2007:
  - The RAC requests that the presentation of the advice from ACFM be two-dimensional: the stock being one, and the management areas the other.
  - The RAC recommends that the model used when forecasting catches in area IIIa be reviewed.
- TAC 2007: 95,000 t
- TAC 2007 for IIIa: 69,000 t

#### 6. Irish Sea herring (Division VIIa)

- TAC 2006: 4,800 t.
- Recommendation 2007:
  - ICES advice is adopted without comment.
- TAC 2007: 4,800 t.

#### 7. Norwegian Spring-Spawning (Atlantoscandian) herring

- TAC 2005: 890,000 t.
- TAC 2006: 967,000 t.
- Recommendations 2007:
  - The Coastal States are encouraged to reach an agreement for 2007 with only one TAC applying. However, should this not prove possible the EU should seek a bilateral agreement with Norway.

#### 7. Norwegian Spring-Spawning (Atlantoscandian) herring

- The TAC should be set at the level of 1,112,000 t representing a 15% increase on 967,000 t (the sum of autonomous allocations from the individual parties in 2006).
- The management plan should be adapted to include:
  - A TAC constraint of +/- 15%.
  - Year-to-year flexibility of +/-10% with a maximum of 2 years.
- TAC 2007: 1,280,000 t. (EU 83,328 t)

#### 8. Northeast Atlantic Mackerel

- TAC 2006: 442,000 t.
- TAC 2007: 500,000 t
- Endorsement 2007:
  - The Coastal State agreement setting the 2007 TAC at 500,000 t is endorsed and the RAC expresses satisfaction that the improved Community control regime has resulted in an increased TAC.

#### 8. Northeast Atlantic Mackerel

- Recommendations 2007:
  - The timing of the Coastal State meeting should be changed in future to allow the RAC time to comment on the scientific advice and make recommendations.
  - The management plan should be reviewed to include:
    - A specification on the actual implementation of rapid recovery.
    - Clarification and prioritisation of the different decision rules.
    - A +/- 15% TAC restraint.
    - Year-to-year flexibility of +/- 10% with a maximum of two years.

#### 8. Northeast Atlantic Mackerel

- Recommendations 2007:
  - The RAC is very concerned about the prospect of the diminution of the 2007 egg survey and urges the Commission to seek re-instatement of the survey to previous levels.
  - A management plan should be developed for the North Sea component.