

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels,

Ms Verena Ohms
Pelagic RAC Secretariat
Treubstraat 17
PO Box 72
2280 AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Dear Ms Ohms,

Thank you for your letter of 12 June 2012 enclosing the Pelagic RAC's recommendation on a new harvest control rule for the management of blue whiting.

Possible revisions to the blue whiting management plan were discussed by the Coastal States in London on 13 – 14 June. At that meeting, the Commission noted that the other Coastal States were unconvinced about the need to change the existing Plan, especially with regard to the introduction of TAC stability mechanisms. It was therefore very opportune that your letter arrived in time for your recommendation to be put on the agenda. I believe that it was the rigorous preparatory work and degree of consensus in the industry that persuaded the Coastal States to agree to the attached request to ICES to evaluate your recommendation, as well as the other options.

On the basis of the ICES evaluation, the Coastal States will take a decision in the Autumn on whether or not to modify the Plan. If the ICES evaluation is positive in relation to the advantages of a TAC stability mechanism for this stock, the Commission will advocate to other Coastal States to follow such a model.

I believe this is a good example of stakeholder participation in the decision making process, and I thank the Pelagic RAC for its constructive contribution.

Yours sincerely,

Lowri EVANS

Enc: Request to ICES

**REQUEST FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE FAROE ISLANDS, ICELAND
AND NORWAY TO ICES ON EVALUATING THE HARVEST CONTROL RULE
ELEMENT OF THE LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
BLUE WHITING IN THE NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC**

In accordance with point 7 of the Agreed record of Fisheries Consultations between Iceland, the European Union, the Faroe Islands and Norway on the management of blue whiting in the North-East Atlantic, signed on 11 October 2011, it was agreed to conduct a review of the long-term management plan.

1. In order to facilitate discussions between Coastal States on possible modifications to the long-term management plan for blue whiting, ICES is requested, by 1 October 2012, to re-evaluate the reference points B_{lim} , B_{pa} and F_{msy} for the stock and to conduct an evaluation of the harvest control rule under the existing management plan.
2. ICES is also requested to evaluate the following approach shown in Fig 1.

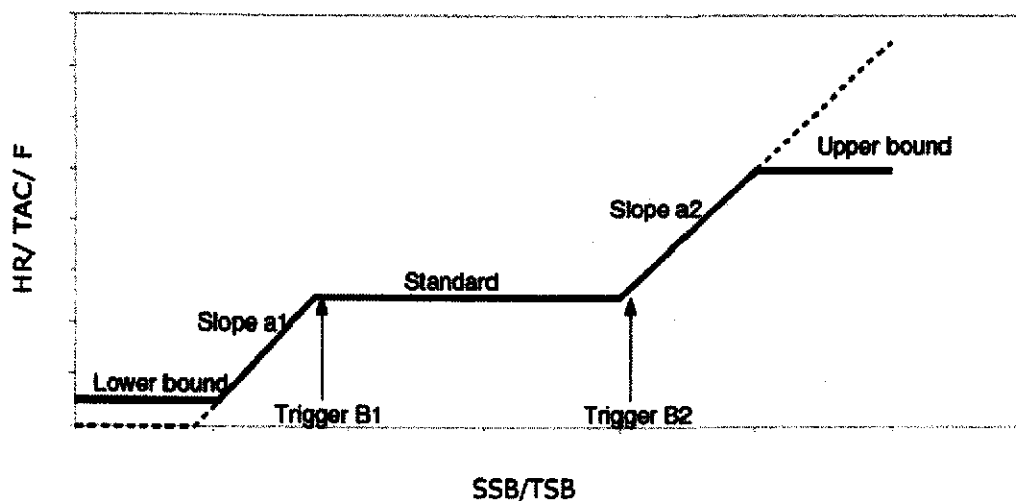


Figure 1. General outline of the new harvest rule examined, with different parameters indicated.

The harvest rule fixes a TAC, harvest rate or fishing mortality, the level of which depend on the estimated biomass, as follows:

- A lower bound below Trigger B1;
- A linear sliding scale with slope a1 below Trigger B1;
- A standard level applied between Trigger B1 and Trigger B2;
- A linear sliding scale with slope a2 above Trigger B2; and
- An upper bound at higher stock sizes.

ICES is asked to evaluate appropriate values for each of the parameters identified above in relation to stability, and maximum sustainable yield on a long-term basis.