



Ms Lowri Evans  
European Commission  
Directorate General - Mare  
Office J-99; 0/07  
B-1049 BRUSSELS  
Belgium

Pelagic RAC  
Treubstraat 17  
PO Box 72  
2280 AB Rijswijk  
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)70 336 9624  
Fax: +31 (0)70 399 3004  
E-mail: [info@pelagic-rac.org](mailto:info@pelagic-rac.org)  
<http://www.pelagic-rac.org>

Date: 15 October 2012  
Our reference: 1213PRAC08  
Subject: Fishing opportunities 2013 for Atlanto-Scandian herring and mackerel  
CC: Olivier Baudelet (by e-mail)

Dear Ms Evans,

At its latest Working Group I meeting on 4 October 2012 the Pelagic RAC discussed the recently published ICES advice on fishing opportunities in 2013 regarding Northeast Atlantic mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring and agreed on a number of recommendations regarding these two stocks. Subsequently the formulated recommendations were adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee during its meeting on 5 October 2012.

Please find the detailed recommendations attached in the annex and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Ohms', written in a cursive style.

Ms Verena Ohms  
Pelagic RAC Secretariat

## **Annex I: Recommendation on fishing opportunities in 2013 for Northeast Atlantic mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring.**

### Northeast Atlantic mackerel

Given the lack of an agreement on a management plan regarding this stock the Pelagic RAC does not advise on a specific TAC number. However, it is of uttermost importance that the Commission seeks an acceptable agreement with the Coastal States guaranteeing a sustainable exploitation of the stock in the future. Furthermore the Pelagic RAC is concerned that landings data are highly questionable which could have a distorting impact on the assessment of this stock. Therefore it is recommended that a comprehensive inspection team will be established together with Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands to operate across borders to ensure that landings are recorded in a true and reliable manner. In addition the Pelagic RAC has identified a number of issues contributing to the uncertainty of the stock assessment as well as the divergent stock perception between scientists and fishermen, which must be resolved in the future. Next to the above mentioned dubiety of landings data, there is significant uncertainty regarding catch data as well. Faroese vessels catch less than what they have allocated to themselves. However, this is not taken into account in the ICES stock assessment. The Pelagic RAC is also convinced that the uncertainty related to the triennial egg survey could negatively influence stock perception and that new ways have to be found to improve the assessment of this stock. A step that may be in the right direction is the Ecosystem survey in the Nordic Seas in July-August 2012 (IESSNS) which, however, has not been used as input for the stock assessment because some of the methodology needs to be peer-reviewed first. It is of concern to the Pelagic RAC that this information is not brought to use.

In summary the Pelagic RAC recommends that:

- The Commission will utilize every possibility to come to an acceptable agreement with the Coastal States.
- A comprehensive international inspection team will be established to ensure true and reliable recording of landings.
- New methods will be explored to improve data collection in order to overcome uncertainties in the stock assessment.

### Atlanto-Scandian herring (Norwegian spring spawning herring)

The Pelagic RAC advises to follow the agreed management plan for this stock and to set the TAC in 2013 to 619,000 tons accordingly. Moreover it is recommended that in case an international inspection team will be established this team will also deal with Atlanto-Scandian herring to guarantee the reliable and trustworthy recording of landings.

In summary the Pelagic RAC recommends that:

- The TAC is set to 619,000 tons in 2013.
- A comprehensive international inspection team is established to ensure true and reliable recording of landings.