



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels, 15 JAN. 2013
A2/OB D(2012) 48098

Pelagic RAC
Ms Ohms
Treubstraat 17
POBox 72
NL-2280
AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Subject: Advice from the Pelagic RAC on blue whiting, boarfish and North Sea horse mackerel and Western horse mackerel

Your reference: Letter from V. Ohms dated 15 October (1213PRAC07)

Dear Ms Ohms,

Thank you for the advice from the Pelagic RAC on blue whiting, boarfish and North Sea horse mackerel and Western horse mackerel. You will find below our response. For the sake of clarity, we will follow the structure of your advice.

Blue whiting

The December Council adopted a provisional Union quota of 110 845 tonnes, pending the resumption of Coastal State and Norway discussions early this year, so the TAC is not yet established. We have noted your recommendation to apply the harvest control rule in the current Management Plan to establish the TAC for 2013 to 643 000 tonnes. We would have thought that the option of maintaining current fishing mortality at the 2011 level, which would have given a TAC of 484 000 tonnes, would have responded better to your stated preference for stability in the blue whiting TAC levels from year to year. However, we recognise that ICES did not deliver the advice requested by the Coastal States.

Boarfish

The Commission followed the approach of the Pelagic RAC in its fishing opportunities proposal, that is to say, to follow the ICES advice of a rollover TAC of 82 000 tonnes and request for immediate evaluation of the management plan proposed, including a stability factor. The Council accepted the proposed TAC and a statement has been issued to the minutes, whereby the request to ICES to evaluate the RAC plan will be made

immediately. The statement also says that, if warranted in the light of the evaluation, the TAC may be revised in-year.

Furthermore, we take into consideration the interest of the Pelagic RAC to include boarfish in the Data Collection Framework, which is going to be revised in near future.

North Sea horse mackerel

We have agreed to your proposal on a gradual reduction of the TAC in the coming three years.

It results in the following TACs for 2013: 37 950 tonnes. The Council approved this TAC and set the Union fishing opportunities at 34 045 tonnes.

We agree also that if a management plan is developed before 2015 (and considered precautionary by ICES), the management plan will supersede the recommendation set out above.

Western horse mackerel

ICES provided analytical advice based on its MSY framework with a lower figure compared to the one obtained when the Pelagic RAC's management plan applies (126 000 tonnes vs 183 000 tonnes). This notwithstanding, the Commission proposed for 2013 a TAC according to the plan, as we did last year. The Council approved this TAC, noting the Commission's will to follow the RAC request to have the plan evaluated by ICES and to propose a revision of the TAC in-year if the outcome of this evaluation so warrants.

I thank you for your continued interest and constructive input. Should you have any question on this advice, you can contact Olivier Baudelet, coordinator of the RACs (olivier.baudelet@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.68.70).

Yours sincerely,



Lowri Evans

Copies: F. Candela Castillo, P. Hopkins, F. Schutyser, J. Spencer, A. Thomson, O. Baudelet (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries)