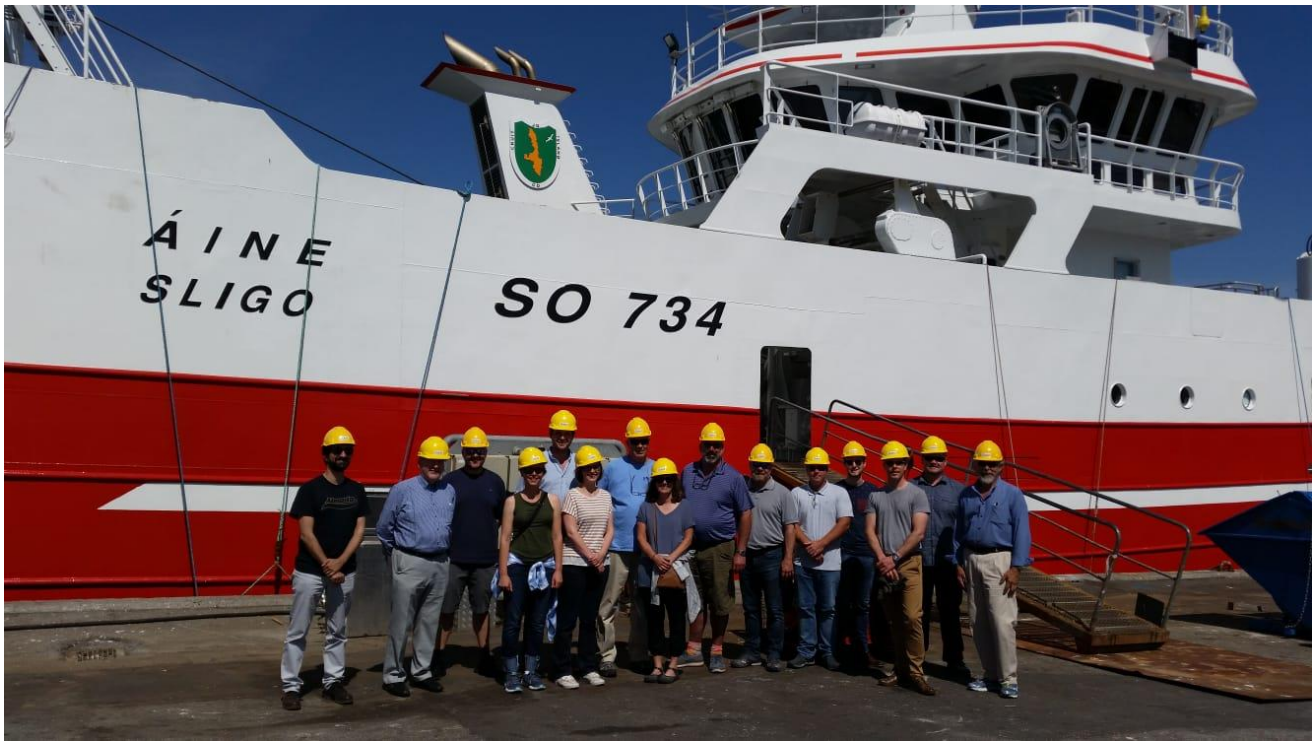

PELAGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Newsletter 2/2018

April-June 2018

Pelagic AC

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PELAC MEETINGS

WESTERN HORSE MACKEREL FOCUS GROUP MEETING (11 APRIL 2018, DEN HAAG)

The Focus Group on Western horse mackerel continued its efforts to develop a recovery plan for the stock. Even though the stock is currently above Blim there is a chance that biomass will further drop, therefore warranting the development of a recovery plan. Previous simulations have indicated that even without fishing it would take 40 years to rebuild the stock to above MSY Btrigger. However, it was not clear how long this would take with a bit of fishing and the group agreed to compare a situation with no fishing to a situation with a bit of fishing to get a better idea of how the stock might develop under different conditions. It was agreed to model different scenarios using different rebuilding targets and to discuss the results at the next Focus Group meeting in May 2018.

WORKING GROUP I MEETING (12 APRIL 2018, DEN HAAG)

The focus of this meeting was the ICES fisheries overviews as well as changes ICES recently made to its advice based on requests received from the European Commission. Especially in regards to multi-annual plans (MAPs) there have been some changes in the type of advice ICES provides:

- Target stocks with F ranges and not shared with third party: Advice to be based on F range.
- Target stocks with no range defined or shared with third party: Advice to be based on agreed management plan, ICES MSY or ICES PA.
- Non-target stocks with TAC and shared with third party: Advice to be based on agreed management plans, ICES MSY or ICES PA.
- Non-target stocks with TAC and not shared with third party: Advice to be based on ICES PA.
- Non-target stocks with no TAC: No advice on fishing opportunities.

ICES furthermore explained that F ranges are evaluated to result in no more than 5% reduction in long-term yield compared with MSY and that the F ranges are precautionary, i.e. there is a less than 5% probability that the stock size will fall below Blim.

ICES also pointed out under what conditions the upper F range would be used:

- if, on the basis of scientific advice or evidence, it is necessary for the achievement of the objectives in the case of mixed fisheries;
- if, on the basis of scientific advice or evidence, it is necessary to avoid serious harm to a stock caused by intra-or inter-species stock dynamics; or
- in order to limit variations in fishing opportunities between consecutive years to not more than 20 %.

Regarding the fisheries overviews ICES explained that they describe the fisheries, give an overview of historical developments, a summary of the stock status, reflect on mixed fisheries, species interaction and ecosystem effects of fisheries. ICES welcomed any comments and input from stakeholders to further improve the fisheries overviews.

PELAC MEETINGS

WORKING GROUP II MEETING (12 APRIL 2018, DEN HAAG)

During Working Group II an update was presented by the Focus Group on Western horse mackerel on the process of developing a rebuilding plan. Furthermore, an update was given on the PFA research project which aims at developing stock indicators using vessel catch rates.

Celtic Sea herring was also discussed. Due to revised reference points the management strategy is no longer considered precautionary by ICES and the stock is now at Blim. It was therefore concluded that a rebuilding plan has to be developed for this stock.

The final issue addressed was the choke mitigation tool.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (12 APRIL 2018, DEN HAAG)

The Executive Committee meeting focused on preparing the next day's BREXIT meeting which was going to deal with the future structure and functioning of the Advisory Councils. The outcomes of the BREXIT questionnaire were presented and there was a brief discussion on potential ways forward. One option could be to combine different ACs into one AC, but the importance to avoid a one size fits all approach was also emphasized.

Subsequently a recommendation from Working Group II regarding choke species was discussed. It was agreed to draft a letter and submit it to the Commission and Member States after the NGOs had a chance to read it.

BREXIT MEETING (13 APRIL 2018, DEN HAAG)

The PELAC organized a meeting with all other relevant ACs to discuss the future structure, composition and functioning of the ACs under a new CFP and especially taking into account BREXIT. The topic was introduced by DG Machado who emphasized the importance of the ACs in EU fisheries management. At the moment the Commission was looking at two very practical issues:

1) The membership of the ACs after BREXIT.
2) The location of the NSAC secretariat.

The Commission was looking for input from the ACs to these and other questions. The Commission also stressed the common basis, i.e. the CFP, which the EU and the UK share. Problems will arise if one of the parties wants to deviate from this common basis in the future. Considering the vast number of shared stocks between the EU and the UK means that very informal agreements, as they are currently in place with Norway, will not be sufficient for the future relationship with the UK.

Another important point is future stakeholder consultation. The Commission said that it would be in the interest of everyone to keep UK stakeholders involved in the future, but the exact mechanism to do so has to be discussed. Whether this would imply creating a new consultative body or adjusting the current ACs is up to debate.

A general presentation on the history of the ACs followed with subsequent discussion on their current functioning and how this could be improved, e.g. through multi-annual budgets. Some people also pointed out that it would be helpful if the Commission provided an annual overview of how the advice of the ACs has been followed up on. This would help ACs understand better how their advice is used.

Subsequently the results of the "BREXIT questionnaire" were presented which can be found here. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the survey forms a good indication of peoples' initial thoughts and intend.

During the general discussion different viewpoints emerged. Some ACs emphasized that it makes sense to involve UK stakeholders in the ACs, but that the same goes for Norway and Iceland which are big suppliers to the EU. Others said that there must not be a one size fits all approach, but that it was important to come up with an inclusive model to enable UK and possibly other third country stakeholders to participate in the ACs. Yet others said that it is necessary to distinguish between the transition phase and the future. During the transition phase the Commission strives for continuity whereas the future will also depend on stakeholders' desires.

The current discussion evolved very much around the question how UK stakeholders can contribute to the advisory process in the UK. Another question, however, concerned the advisory process in the UK and whether the UK will seek input from non-UK stakeholders.

Given the different needs of the individual ACs it was agreed that each AC would put forward a model that would suit its own needs at the next joint meeting.

WESTERN HORSE MACKEREL FOCUS GROUP MEETING (30 MAY 2018, SCHIPHOL)

The Focus Group on Western horse mackerel met to discuss the progress made on developing a rebuilding plan for the stock. The main item discussed was the possibility to have a Canadian consultancy (Landmark Fisheries Research) provide support for developing a rebuilding strategy. One of the people from Landmark has been involved as a reviewer in the benchmark on North Sea and Western Baltic herring and has a lot of experience with developing rebuilding plans. It was decided to schedule a WebEx meeting with Landmark to discuss the possibilities.

Afterwards a presentation was provided by Andrew Campbell on the 2014 Management Strategy Evaluation and an update on the current situation.

All detailed meeting minutes can be downloaded from the PELAC website:
http://www.pelagic-ac.org/2018

EXTERNAL MEETINGS

ADG BALTIC SEA (8-11 MAY 2018, COPENHAGEN)

PELAC representatives: Ian Gatt, Gerard van Balsfoort, Søren Anker Pedersen

Herring subdivisions 20-24, spring spawners (Skagerrak, Kattegat, and western Baltic)

A very frank debate regarding the quality of the advice, and what particular advice route to follow ensued at the beginning of the meeting. The stock had been benchmarked in 2018 with a multi-fleet model adopted for the new assessment. This meant that the historic perception of SSB and recruitment had been revised downwards and Blim has been revised upwards from 90,000 tonnes to 120,000 tonnes. In turn, that shows the stock to have been below Blim since over a decade.

HAWG had proposed a zero TAC advice, however after much debate the ADG chose to use the MSY approach (F0.1). The headline TAC advice states that catches should be no more than 12,776 tonnes and a recovery plan be developed for this stock. The advice applies to the catch of western Baltic spring spawners (WBSS) in subdivisions 20-24 and the eastern part of Subarea 4. Although there is an agreed EU Baltic Sea multi-annual plan (MAP) in place, being updated in 2018, ICES uses the MSY approach as this is a shared stock with Norway. Norway has not signed up to the Baltic MAP. Catch options relating to the MAP are set out in the advice. If this advice is followed it will result in a significant 63% TAC decrease.

The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) reached the lowest point in the time-series in 2011 but has remained below MSY Btrigger in following years. Fishing mortality has fluctuated between Fmsy and Fpa since 2011. The stock remains in a low production period, and recruitment was at a record low in 2015 and 2016.

When the SSB is below Blim, the ICES MSY approach stipulates that measures should be taken so that SSB can be brought above Blim by 2020. The stock is considered to be in a poor state with declining recruitment, but it's acknowledged that both a zero catch and fishing at F0.1 will rebuild the stock above Blim by 2021.

Under issues relevant to the advice the new reference points are noted. The basis for changing the reference points is the extension of the time-series where consistently low recruitment at a low SSB has been observed since 2006. Blim is changed from 90,000 tonnes to 120,000 tonnes and MSY Btrigger changes from 110,000 tonnes to 150,000 tonnes.

The reduction in catches over the past years have not resulted in an increased SSB – this is due to poor recruitment. ICES therefore recommends that a joint EU/Norway recovery plan be developed that incorporates measures to facilitate stock recovery in the short term.

North Sea herring

The headline 2019 TAC advice of catches no more than 299,502 tonnes, including 290,645 tonnes for the A fleet, is based on the MSY approach. Norway had contacted ICES to make this request as they believed the management strategy would be reviewed following the 2018 stock benchmark. For the A fleet this represents a 41% TAC decrease in relation to the 2017 ICES advice. ICES also continues to advise that activities that have a negative impact on herring spawning grounds should not occur.

ICES assesses the SSB to have fluctuated between 1.5 and 2.6 m tonnes between 1998 and 2017. Recruitment has been low since 2002 with two recent year classes being assessed as the lowest over the last 30 years. 2017 appears to be more promising in terms of recruitment. In recent years the SSB has been maintained at a much higher level due to higher recruitment with the 2013 years class being particularly strong. The substantially lower 2019 TAC advice is largely driven by the weak 2014 year class. The 2019 B fleet TAC advice is greatly increased due to the high 2017 recruitment.

Natural mortality was updated at the benchmark and is believed this will provide a more consistent approach in future assessments. In general the assessment is thought to be of good quality. New survey indices were added and the assessment methodology updated, resulting in a more precise assessment with reduced bias. One issue has been the reduced coverage of the larval survey which has had a negative impact on tracking spawning components.

The management decision that allows the transfer of 3a herring to the North Sea reduces the pressure on the western Baltic stock, but has a negative impact on the North Sea stock.

The revised reference points from the benchmark exercise were used in the assessment. Of note, the MSY Btrigger value has reduced from 1.5 m tonnes to 1.4 m tonnes. Fmsy has reduced from 0.33 to 0.26, in effect back to where it was two years ago. Blim remains unchanged but the Bpa value has reduced from 1 m tonnes to 900,000 tonnes. Flim has reduced from 0.39 to 0.34 and Fpa reduced from 0.34 to 0.30.

SCHEVENINGEN HIGH LEVEL GROUP MEETING (23 MAY 2018, BONN)

PELAC representative: Esben Sverdrup-Jensen

Opening statements

There were no specific questions from the Scheveningen group for the ACs, they were informed that new exemptions for plaice, skates and rays, turbot (first 3 temporary exemptions with conditions) and nephrops would be proposed.

All regional groups have made overviews of the choke species in their areas for the Commission. The Scheveningen group will share their overview with the ACs, substantial overlap with NSAC April advise.

The AC representatives gave an overview of the work done stressing again that due to the very late receival of the joint recommendation of the Scheveningen group it was not possible for the AC to give a response to it. It was agreed that as the drafting process on the joint recommendation had now concluded and further exchanges would not be needed.

ACs gave an overview of theirr current drafting work and emphasized that they would like to have further discussion on:

- Application of footnotes
- Alignment with North Sea MAP

- Calculation of deminimis
- TAC removal and the conditions that should apply
- Any actions that need to be taken for the temporary exemption
- Application of inter species flexibility

The Pelagic AC added to this that for them the 2% de-minimis of pelagic bycatch in demersal fisheries was an issue as for some species (e.g. North Sea horse mackerel) that could actually be a significant portion of the TAC that would have to be deducted somewhere. It was stressed that the lack of data on bycatches of pelagics in the demersal fleet was of great concern to the Pelagic AC, and that the application of a 2% de-minimis provision could lead to substantial negative consequences for TAC-setting for pelagic stocks. It must be made clear how de-minimis is calculated and implemented in the demersal fleet.

Discussion

There was a discussion on how de-minimis is to be calculated and there were a variety of opinions in the room. The chair of the meeting announced that they were planning a meeting for the 25th of September in Hamburg to discuss calculating of uplifts and de-minimis with ICES scientists (the date coincides with the ICES conference so many scientists will be in Hamburg).

Application of footnotes need to be discussed with the Commission before the December Council to see how they would be deducted from the advice of the TAC. Meeting is planned.

Commission on Footnotes on the pelagic species: footnotes are historically grown, used to stand alone TACs for Denmark, but were deleted and instead added to the general TAC for industrial fisheries. These are relative stability TACs. Recently there were footnotes added to deal with LO issues, STECF has stated they would need a complete overview of discards to calculate the effect of the footnotes on the TAC.

On interspecies flexibility DEFRA referred to a guideline document the Scheveningen group had done on this that should be reviewed. It is still very unclear how Interspecies flexibility could be applied and more review is needed.

Final questions

North Sea AC: status of the plaice exemption?

Answer: Conditionality needs to be better explained for the proposal to go through. Should not be misunderstood as a get out of jail free card but actually be conditional on improvements.

North Sea AC: Next date of the Scheveningen Technical group?

Answer: Still unclear as this should be timed to coincide with STECF review of join recommendation.

MISCELLANEOUS

JOINT WORKSHOP WITH THE MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL- PART I (30 APRIL – 4 MAY 2018, GLOUCESTER)

Members of the Management Team and fishermen from Ireland, Scotland and Denmark visited the United States for a joint workshop with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to discuss issues of common concern, enable cross-systems learning and share best practices.

The following is a preliminary summary of overarching themes, ideas, areas of concern, and key points that emerged during workshop presentations and discussion. The points below represent the perspectives of individuals who participated in the workshop and are not intended to reflect the viewpoints of all participants or of the respective Councils.

General

- Intercontinental exchange of ideas shows commonalities and differences, opportunities to learn in each case. Gear experiences are an example of commonalities. US ahead on ecosystems, EU ahead on experience with wind/MPAs, need to look at what's gone right and wrong in these cases, so we don't repeat mistakes.
- Need to better integrate industry into research with the assessment folks so have an impact on the assessment. - Improvements in North Sea since early 2000s. Pelagic AC was heavily involved in science from beginning, asked to become observers at first. Other sectors (demersal) starting to get more involved.
- Utilizing part of quota to encourage research by industry can help bring industry into process and improve the science. It's not clear how it can work in the current US quota system and need to make sure projects are actually going to help (be integrated into assessments).
- The concept of embedding center economists to deepen socioeconomic understanding
- EU focuses more on operational practicality vs US more on theory and subjective measures (i.e. the happiness meter). Makes it more difficult for US fishermen to navigate process and increases role of politics.
- Need to include maximizing Optimum Yield in EAFM and general management discussions. E.g. Atlantic Herring and Haddock. Neither fully harvested, but bycatch cap on haddock limits Atlantic herring fishing. Current approach is not pragmatic.
- Fishery participants need to present a united front
- Councils never select status-quo – there are likely times when no action is best but there is a predisposal to always do something.

Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management

- Don't forget it's a wicked problem – no easy answers, don't get paralyzed.
- Need to evaluate impacts of leaving forage in the water – what are they eating? How are they impacting other species?

MISCELLANEOUS

- Still lots of uncertainty about what EAFM means for fishermen and other stakeholders – it's defined differently by each group. - Have to clearly describe the goals and objectives of any particular EAFM endeavor – MAFMC's Guidance Document and Risk Assessment is heading in that direction. - Not clear about how things are going to be operationalized/tracked/measured
- Perceived as a danger by fishery in terms of only leading to reduced catches. If EAFM increases perception of uncertainty catch buffers will increase. - Initial results of EAFM have only meant quota cuts (Atlantic herring, forage discussion on MAFMC's EAFM Guidance Document). - Need a discussion about when EAFM could lead to quota increases.
- Ensure implementation of EAFM, whatever that becomes, is rooted in data and tested.
- Need to organize and communicate the research questions that are currently being pursued by EAFM, and need to integrate stakeholders into deciding what happens next.
- Marine mammals role in EAFM (???)
- Need to account for different approaches by neighboring management entities.
- Next steps/first steps - Re: wicked problem traps, evaluate/coordinate each Council's research needs. - How can/when EAFM can lead to higher quotas.

Bycatch Issues

- Gear solutions seems unlikely but worth having ongoing discussions with industry.
- Fleet communications are used informally in EU and formally in Herring/Mackerel and seem to be effective. Need to have good incentives to participate.
- Not having information on impacts of bycatch on any species of concern makes evidence-based decisions difficult.
- Restricting the fleet based on uncertain estimates does not encourage participation.
- Be careful about assuming something that works in one place is going to work everywhere – need fishery groundtruthing.
- US seems to have a high degree of management/enforcement relative to small quotas.
- Need to make sure rules don't work counter to reducing bycatch. Current rules are forcing fishery to not be able to avoid bycatch
- SBRM creates a problematic feedback loop – low discards = low coverage = concern by public about what bycatch is and high uncertainty about bycatch relative to low bycatch caps.

Acoustics

- Unstructured data dumps are not going to be useful.
- Need further discussions about how you could utilize industry acoustic platforms/data.

- Large potential for value for pelagic fisheries. For either creating an index (long term) or for biomass scaling (short term).

Assessments

- Butterfish and Mackerel are examples of how to include industry in the assessment process. Start with discussions with stakeholders early on before the data and modeling meetings. Otherwise fishermen come into the process to late.
- Dependent on personalities – leadership can break down barriers to openness.
- Key opportunity for more EU/US collaboration & progress. Need to find more ways to actually get data that is collected into assessments. - Database of successes.

Other Issues to watch, discuss more in future

- Wind and other competing ocean uses (marine spatial planning) - Aquaculture – larger in EU than East Coast. EU has separate Advisory Council, limited ability of Pelagic AC to comment on other (Aquaculture) issues. - Sand Extraction - Deep Sea Mining - Wave/tidal power. - Marine Protected Areas & effort shifts - Marine Portal (pros and cons, limited data included, can used in multiple ways)
- Danger for fisheries to be overwhelmed by other interests in marine spatial planning processes.
- Sustainability Certification Issues
- Existing fishery restrictions (time/area)
- Uses of ITQs – bycatch, catch
- Seismic issues and impacts on fisheries

MISCELLANEOUS

JOINT WORKSHOP WITH THE MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL- PART II (4-8 JUNE 2018, HIRTSHALS)

Jesper Raakjær opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He referred to the origins of this joint meeting which can be traced back to the MareFrame research project on how to overcome barriers to adopting an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management (EAFM).

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen presented the week's program and the main topics of discussion.

The role of the ICES advice in EU fisheries management, Eskild Kirkegaard, ICES

Questions and comments:

The presentation triggered questions about reference points, the way they are calculated and the data used for that. In particular, the way CPUE are used in the EU -mostly as quality check for the assessment and by the industry as real-time management- and the standardization process were talked about. There was interest in trying to compare EU and US reference points. Giving advice for 2 or 3 consecutive years was raised.

- What is Blim in relation with ½ of Bmsy?

  Blim is defined as the biomass below which recruitment becomes impaired. When there is no stock-recruitment relationship Blim is defined as the lowest observed biomass.

  ICES does not use Bmsy, because Bmsy does not exist. Stocks fluctuate naturally around a range. Even if a stock is fished at Fmsy, there will be fluctuations.

- What is the risk policy in the EU?

  Long-term simulations based on collected data show that the stock has a chance of less than 5% of falling below Blim given a particular fishing mortality.

- Does ICES try to give advice for 2 to 3 years to smooth the fluctuations?

  ICES advised its clients that they should ask for multiannual advice. This would give more stability and stop the fluctuations that are sometimes more the reflection of a change of the data/surveys than of the actual stock biomass. A 2 or 3 years advice does not have to be the same for the 3 years, it can be a trend. But there is political pressure to annually negotiate TACs. Sometimes, the EU even asks for bi-annual advice when surveys are carried out late in the year.

- Do you use, and if yes, how do you use CPUE? In the US, CPUE is popular but how to take into account differences between e.g. old and new vessels?

CPUE data are standardized, according to several techniques. It needs to take into account the age and size of vessels and also the skipper's experience. The same applies to survey indices from different research vessels.

What is done depends very much on the specific case. In many cases, ICES does not usually use CPUE, especially when the fish shows schooling behavior as CPUE data is then more inconsistent.

An exception is the industrial fishery for sandeel where CPUE has been standardized to a certain vessel size.

For the main stocks fishery-independent data are being used.

On industry vessels CPUE data are collected and standardized. Another problem of CPUE is that there are less vessels now than before which has an impact on the data.

CPUE data can be useful as a quality check for the assessment (if not used in the assessment).

Fishing effort definition can also be problematic. With VMS, the quality of data is a lot better. When VMS data is available, the vessel speed is used to know whether or not it is fishing.

The role of fisheries scientists working for the pelagic industry, Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn, Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation

Questions and comments:

The way industry scientists work was of great interest to the participants. Specifically when taking part in scientific expert groups and the reaction this triggers from other scientists. Claus Reedtz-Sparrevohn explained that they were very much accepted as scientists and were respecting a code of conduct while attending ICES meetings. The acceptance by other scientist was linked to the understanding that the industry can bring a lot of knowledge to the table.

The difference in the way eNGOs operate in the EU and US was also highlighted. The use of the court of justice is a lot more common in the US where stakeholders often sue NOAA's decisions. This can result in policy decisions made much more in relation to the risk of being sued than in relation with the best available practices.

Other comments were about public relations of NGOs, the US management strategy evaluation and the impossibility to achieve Bmsy for all stocks simultaneously.

- Are industry scientists allowed to participate in expert groups, and other scientific meetings?

Industry scientists can join expert groups when they are appointed by the national governments as their experts. Other meetings, e.g. Advice Drafting Groups and Benchmarks are open for observers and anyone with a legitimate interest can attend those meetings.

- Has industry science been taken into account when making decisions?

  Yes, e.g. 6a herring industry surveys.

- How much does popular opinion override science in the EU political decisions? This is very much happening in the US.

  In general people in the EU accept the advice produced by ICES which is now also being used by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

- NOAA is often sued by eNGOs and (to a lesser extent) by fishers. Some people in the US have the impression that NOAA is therefore more likely to side with those people who would otherwise sue them instead of following the best available science and practices.
- The way fishermen are seen by the public seems to differ between the EU and the US. In the US, fishermen are generally viewed quite negatively. This might be the result of PR campaigns against commercial fisheries.
- The terminology in the US is such that overfishing is only caused by the industry being greedy. Environmental conditions and poor recruitment are never mentioned.
- Management strategy evaluations in the US receive inputs from a large diversity of stakeholders. Some fishermen found that the consultation was too broad, giving the floor to people who weren't really concerned with the subject. In the EU it is mainly the Industry and the scientists who are giving inputs.
- The US federal goal of having all stocks individually at Bmsy is impossible to reach.

Presentation on marine spatial planning in the EU (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) – Heinrik S. Lund, Danish Producers Organization

Questions and comments:

The participants showed interest in the way windfarm compensation is paid to fishermen in Denmark and to the overall way that areas are chosen for installing the windfarms.

- How is compensation for fisheries closures due to windfarms calculated in Denmark?

It depends on the fishery going on before. Usually it's a one-off payment. For some windfarms the money goes to the producers organization, because the fishermen fishing 10 years ago are not the same as today.

There is no compensation for static gears.

Advisory Councils on their route toward EAFM in the EU, Paulina Ramirez, Aalborg University

Questions and comments:

The questions and remarks were mainly focused on the Baltic Sea multiannual multi species plan. There was interest in trying to compare this approach with some US approaches to ecosystem based fisheries management. The need for flexibility for fishermen and the risk of prioritizing some species against others were brought up. Globally, the definition of EAFM remains somewhat unclear. Some participants pointed out that a lot of the actions undertaken because of EAFM would have been carried out anyway, e. g. developing multiannual plans and addressing issues like density-dependency. The EAFM is just a concept that receives meaning through practical applications.

- Did the Baltic Sea multiannual plan lead to increased flexibility for fisheries in the Baltic?

  To some extent it did provide more flexibility, but it remained questionable whether this was due to EAFM or the management system itself, e.g. transfers between stocks, different allocations per Member States etc. The plan also increased complexity. The Baltic was a relatively simple place to start the process due to the limited number of stocks. However, the amount of stakeholders in the Baltic is enormous and there are tensions between different stakeholder groups.

- How does the multiannual multi species management plan works in the Baltic? Is each species managed individually within one plan?

  Traditionally, ICES provided single species advice, but recently started to move forward towards multi species management. The problem with this kind of advice is that it enters a "grey zone" where some species are prioritized over others. The trade-offs required under an EAFM could lead to science that is politicized.

- Even without EAFM a lot of the work would have been undertaken anyway, because everyone knows and agrees that things like spawning grounds and climate change are important. EAFM is just a framework, a name that we give to issues that have always been important for fisheries. Applying EAFM in practice might help clarify what it actually means.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Some US representatives are skeptical about ecosystem models in the US that include more than 50 species. It was also pointed out that under EAFM yield maximization does no longer receive sufficient attention. Instead the main focus is now on predator-prey logic.
- EAFM requires a greater need for more flexibility when managing the stocks. Without flexible management, EAFM is unachievable.
- ICES now advises on MSY ranges which give politicians some more flexibility when deciding on the precise settings of a multiannual multi species plan to balance things out a bit more.

Industry survey of Western herring, Steven Mackinson, Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association

Questions and comments:

People wanted to know how the amount of the monitoring TAC was determined. US fishermen were interested in this as they foresee the need for such quota in their chub mackerel fishery. The way industry surveys are conducted in Europe was found very interesting and encouraging.

- The size of the monitoring TAC is to be linked to the number of samples needed. This was calculated by ICES. Most of the quota is given to the boats participating in the survey as a form of payment.
- The most important aspect of this work is that the fishermen's' efforts and knowledge are incorporated into the scientific advice.

Genome sequencing and its practical application for fisheries management, Dorte Bekkevold, DUT Aqua

Questions and comments:

Having devices the size of a smart phone to analyze DNA in the future sparked a lot of interest. The opportunities this can create are immense and could lead to even more scientific contributions from the industry.

MISCELLANEOUS

The biology, assessment and recent dynamics of Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Thomas Brunel, Wageningen Marine Research, Netherlands

Questions and comments:

US stakeholders were impressed by the large scale of the scientific surveys conducted for this stock. The use of sonar on industry vessels was discussed as a potential way to bring new data to the assessment, but does not seem fit for purpose yet.

Gear trials in Skagerrak- A new pelagic grid, Hans Nilsson, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Questions and comments:

Developing a flexible grid in a collaborative effort between fishermen and scientists was perceived as a valuable way to build trust and to solve an urgent bycatch issue. People were impressed at how successful the grid was in reducing bycatch while not much of the target species was lost.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS

Please remember that the secretariat has to receive your reimbursement claims within one month after the corresponding meeting by post or email including copies of all receipts. Reimbursement sheets received after the deadline will not be taken into account. If you cannot meet the deadline, please inform us as soon as possible. To find out more about reimbursement rules please consult the PELAC's "Rules of procedure" or contact the secretariat.

http://www.pelagic-ac.org/media/pdf/Rules%20of%20Procedure%20Pelagic%20AC%20-%202014%20November.pdf

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WORKING GROUP I AND II MEETING AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (5-6 JULY 2018, COPENHAGEN)

The next PELAC meetings will take place on 5 and 6 July 2018 in Copenhagen. Like every year in July the main focus will be on the ICES herring advice. We will also discuss the Commission's legislative proposals for the revision of the control regulation and the EMFF as well as the Commission's "policy statement".

For more information please visit our website:

http://www.pelagic-ac.org/pracmeetings/upcomingmeetings

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pelagic Advisory Council

Louis Braillelaan 80
2719 EK Zoetermeer
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)6 3375 6324
Email: info@pelagic-ac.org
www.pelagic-ac.org

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