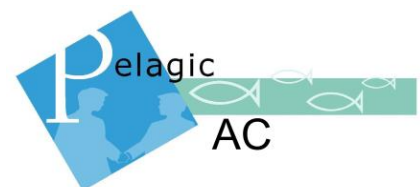




# PELAGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Newsletter 4/2016

October-December 2016



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# PELAC MEETINGS

## **WORKING GROUP I MEETING (5 OCTOBER 2016, THE HAGUE)**

At this meeting the Working Group focussed on the ICES advice for blue whiting, Atlanto-Scandian herring and North Sea horse mackerel which was presented by an ICES ACOM member. In relation to horse mackerel there also was a presentation about the potential usefulness of industry data to develop stock indicators from commercial vessel catch rates. After thorough discussions the Working Group agreed on a number of TAC and other recommendations per stock.

## **WORKING GROUP II MEETING (5 OCTOBER 2016, THE HAGUE)**

Working Group II dealt with the ICES advice for mackerel, Western horse mackerel, Southern horse mackerel and boarfish. Besides discussing the ICES TAC advice for 2017 the meeting also focussed on the ongoing efforts in relation to developing a management plan for Southern horse mackerel. Researchers from Spain and Portugal presented first simulation results of a harvest control rule developed together with stakeholders from the Pelagic AC and the SWWAC. Updates were also provided on the genetic stock ID studies for both horse mackerel and herring in area 6.a as well as in relation to developing a juvenile horse mackerel index from groundfish surveys.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (6 OCTOBER 2016, THE HAGUE)**

Bauke de Vries, student intern at the Pelagic AC, presented an overview of his project which is twofold. On the one hand he will be working on a revision of the terms of reference of the ecosystem focus group to bring more structure and focus into the group by concentrating on a few main priorities. On the other hand he will conduct a literature study on the effects of climate change on the stocks most relevant for the Pelagic AC.

Johan Williams, president of NEAFC, gave a presentation on Coastal States and joint management of pelagic stocks. He reflected on past and present developments and negotiations, especially in regards to mackerel, blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring.

Afterwards the stock advice from Working Group I and II was discussed and approved.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING (6 OCTOBER 2016, THE HAGUE)**

At the General Assembly meeting the final activity report and financial report for 2015-2016 was presented. As in previous years the Pelagic AC successfully implemented its works program as planned and closed its financial year without deficit. The work program and budget for the upcoming year was presented too. Afterwards Jesper Raakjær was elected interim chairman until the next general elections take place in October 2017.

# PELAC MEETINGS

## **WORKSHOP ON THE LANDING OBLIGATION (3 NOVEMBER 2016, BRUSSELS)**

This workshop was a follow-up workshop to the one held in July 2016 in Brussels. EFCA gave a presentation on the gramme size project it initiated in cooperation with several Member States in January 2016 aiming at mapping mackerel gramme sizes spatially and temporally. Unfortunately the data collected in the winter of 2016 were too scattered in time and area to yield any sound results and experts advised to continue sampling in a more concentrated and homogeneous way, which is being done at the moment. Data from processing factories in Scotland and Ireland are also being collected. Refining risk analysis based on where smaller fish are and using it for controlling compliance is one of the goals of this project.

There was a brief recap of the control recommendations issued by the Pelagic AC to the regional groups, which so far have not been taken up. In that regard it was also mentioned that the Management Team of the Pelagic AC has approached the Commission asking it to take on a facilitating role between the Pelagic AC and the regional groups.

During the rest of the meeting potential solutions for problems encountered with the landing obligation were discussed. One issue that became apparent only recently is demersal bycatch, especially hake, in pelagic fisheries for which no quota can be acquired. In such a case using footnotes to cover this bycatch with one's own quota could present a solution that would not increase fishing mortality and at the same time not lead to a conflict with the demersal sector. It was agreed to draft an appropriate recommendation for the attention of the Executive Committee.

Another problem discussed is the possible conflict between the landing obligation and the Animal By-product Regulation. The Commission provided further clarification about the different categories damaged fish could fall under. However, it remained unclear what would happen if authorities decided that (part of) the catch belongs into category 2 while the vessel and/or factory has a licence for human consumption. Further information will be requested from the Commission.

The final major issue discussed was in relation to the limitation on Gross Tonnage (GT) which makes it difficult, if not impossible, to make safety and comfort improvements to new and existing vessels. This limitation also hinders adjustments in relation to storage of previously discarded catch. It was decided, however, that this issue is better dealt with by the focus group on technical measures.

## **FOCUS GROUP ON 6.A HERRING (9 DECEMBER 2016, DUBLIN)**

The Focus Group meeting on 6.a herring focussed on the preliminary results of the genetic analysis and the outcomes of the industry acoustic surveys. There are clear indications in the genetic analysis that there is a North-South divide between the herring stocks. North Sea herring and herring in 6.a North are very similar genetically, but clearly different from herring in 6.a South whereas herring in 6.a South is more similar to herring in the Celtic Sea and Irish Sea.

Analysis of the data from the acoustic surveys is still ongoing. The survey worked well in the North and people are confident that the data are reliable. The morphometric analysis takes a lot of time

## PELAC MEETINGS

and is a bottleneck at the moment. The survey in the South, however, did not cover the entire stock which means that it will not be possible to get a biomass estimate for the southern stock.

In light of this there was a discussion on whether the acoustic surveys should be continued or whether all resources should be put into genetic and morphometric analysis which looks very promising at the moment. It was decided to continue the discussions at the next Focus Group meeting which will take place on 27 February. At that meeting the outline for a rebuilding plan will also be discussed.

# EXTERNAL MEETINGS

## EFCA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (20 SEPTEMBER 2016, VIGO)

PELAC representative: José Beltran

The meeting was chaired by the Executive Director, Mr. Pascal Savouret, and was attended by representatives from the different ACs (except SWWAC).

The ACs informed EFCA about their state of play. The NWWAC informed EFCA about the improved cooperation with the MS Control Expert Group (CEG). It was mentioned that a representative of the CEG attended a NWWAC meeting where a report was presented on "Recommendations on measures to achieve compliance with the Landing Obligation (LO) in demersal fisheries in the NWW". A focus group is about to be established by the NWWAC to analyze the report.

Other aspects outlined by representatives of the ACs were:

- Need for a level playing field among all vessels in EU waters.
- Need for enhancing communication between CEGs and ACs for a successful implementation of the LO.
- Possibility for the ACs to become involved with contributions to the CEGs.
- Improving stakeholder/control agencies consultations before getting inputs to CEGs on a regional framework given the uncertainties so far on rules that are implemented on a "learning by doing" basis.
- Importance of getting balanced and standard criteria applicable to EU fishing vessels.
- Distinguishing scientific observer data and control observer data to avoid a different use than scientific.

EFCA explained that efforts are being carried out to meet the above points at the extend of its mission and involvement in each stage of the design of standardized processes and tools for the control and monitoring of the implementation of the LO. Work is being carried out and will be further developed to meet challenges in 2017 in terms of data collection for risk assessment and management based on scientific and last haul inspections, catch composition to evaluate discard estimations (quantity and quality is considered), strengthening cooperation with MS groups and stakeholders, promotion of compliance through the full use of Joint Deployment Plans (JDPs).

EFCA explained the JDP's state of play. The LO is complicated. Cooperation with regional groups like Baltfish, Scheveningen, NWW, SWW, Adriatic is ongoing and an inter-regional seminar had been organized in Crete.

The aim for 2017 is to further improve data collection and coordinating the implementation of the LO including through risk analysis. There will be campaigns focusing on mackerel and blue whiting. Indicators of compliance will be developed to assure a certain level of compliance by priorities. EFCA also plans workshops with the industry and training activities and assistance for MS. An e-learning platform is being developed for MS, Commission and EFCA. EFCA will furthermore provide assistance to the Commission on third country missions, e.g. in relation to analysis of catch certificates and assistance documents (e.g. from China, Mauritius, Solomon Islands and Thailand).

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In regards to IUU fishing EFCA informed the meeting on the assistance given to the Commission and MS to eradicate IUU fishing through workshops, training programs and missions in third countries. Further information on the core curriculum can be found on the EFCA bookshop website.

EFCA also reported that there is an increasing cooperation with other agencies, i.e. EMSA and Frontex, preparing for the creation of a European Coastguard Function. This cooperation includes sharing information, surveillance services, capacity building and coordinated operations (Regulation (EU) 1627/2016).

At the end of the meeting it was pointed out that the NWWAC will be representing all ACs in the Administrative Board from 2 March 2017 onwards, the alternate being the SWWAC.

### **CLIMEFISH DECISION SUPPORT FRAMEWORK KICK-OFF EVENT (27 SEPTEMBER 2016, VIGO)**

PELAC representative: Verena Ohms

Climefish is an EU research project under Horizon 2020 that aims at ensuring that the increase in seafood production comes in areas and for species where there is a potential for sustainable growth, given the expected developments in climate. To reach this overall goal Climefish has eight specific objectives.

1. To investigate the effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture at European and regional scale, and to collect and harmonize relevant data which will be made available in the H2020 Open Research Data Pilot.
2. To develop novel forecasting models to simulate and analyse changes in distribution and production in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
3. To identify risks and opportunities based on analysis of market and non-market costs and benefits of affected ecosystem services; propose potential mitigation strategies.
4. To develop early warning methodologies for these risks, including a traffic-light system.
5. In co-creation with stakeholders, develop case-specific Management Plans that mitigate risks and utilize opportunities associated with anticipated effects of climate change on aquatic production, based on ecosystem and results-based management approaches.
6. In co-creation with stakeholders, develop guidelines, good practice recommendations and a voluntary European standard outlining how to develop this type of Management Plans in the future.
7. In co-creation with stakeholders, develop the ClimeFish Decision Support Framework. This contains the ClimeFish Decision Support System and other decision support resources, such as models, datasets, sample runs and guidelines.
8. To provide training and dissemination for industry, policy makers, scientists and other stakeholders; to ensure active utilization of the developed tools and guidelines beyond the



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project lifetime in close collaboration with the European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT).

During the Decision Support Framework Kick-off event stakeholders were asked about their biggest concerns in relation to climate change. Stakeholders involved in marine fisheries were mostly concerned about species distribution shifts and as a result the potential mismatch between quota and species availability, but also about the impact of climate change on stock assessments, the speed of change and how to recognize early warning signs. Other issues mentioned were international quota negotiations, an increase in severe weather events and market opportunities for new species. The aquaculture sector was mostly concerned with temperature induced metabolic changes, changes in local weather conditions and the effects of increased parasite infections on production. Changes in currents and hence feed availability can lead to reduced growth rates and lower quality products. Red tides are also becoming increasingly problematic.

Afterwards the different case studies were briefly introduced, including knowledge gaps. The case study relevant for the Pelagic AC is the one in the Northeast Atlantic which will deal with species such as herring, mackerel, blue whiting and capelin. The uncertainty of the assessment for these stocks and the large fluctuations in scientific advice were emphasized by the case study leader.

It was also discussed how the decision support software could look like. The idea of the software is to simulate the effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture production, as well as socio-economic indicators in both marine and fresh water systems across Europe. It was pointed out by stakeholders that the decision support software should be flexible and dynamic and that it will require further input from stakeholders throughout the project. It should be a tailor-made tool for gathering both aquaculture and fisheries needs and it should be discussed how new parameters, e.g. extreme weather events, could be included in the software.

For more information please visit: <http://climefish.eu/>

### **MAREFRAME EAFM WORKSHOP (4 OCTOBER 2016, COPENHAGEN)**

PELAC representatives: Søren Anker Pedersen, Stella Nemecky, Verena Ohms

A workshop was organized by MareFrame at ICES to review the current advisory process and discuss possible changes in two specific areas, namely scoping and regionalization. Scoping means defining the problems to be addressed and is one of the core elements for involving stakeholders in the advisory process. Regionalization focusses on addressing problems at the right scale and involving stakeholders at the relevant scale, i.e. the ecoregion when it comes to EAFM.

Seven concrete recommendations were identified by workshop participants to improve fisheries advice:

1. Scoping exercises demand a more flexible and inclusive approach (e.g. integrating natural, economic and social science from the outset). They would benefit from an open attitude towards advances –accepting that a progress is a progress- instead of focusing (and getting stuck) in the fact that we have not reached the target.



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2. Issues that are relevant for the stakeholders should be identified in an on-going process, not as a one-time scoping exercise. By linking scoping to a work plan which includes issues to prioritize, the work load elsewhere should be alleviated. The process also needs to tackle model concerns avoiding the “one size fits all”; namely regarding data understanding (how far people trust the models) and data linked issues (trust issues and stakeholders buy-in). Knowledge brokerage/translation actions may facilitate the dialogue.
3. Implementation: EAF advice is an element to structure dialogue in the policy realm (e.g. towards the new reform of the CFP) rather than a basis for immediate decisions (e.g. quota allocation). Other players beyond the scientific advisory bodies should lead this debate.
4. The operational functioning – including opportunities for stakeholder participation and transparency - of the High Level Groups would benefit from a minimum set of standards, supported by a secretariat to ensure consistency. Present best-practices can be easily identified and transposed. It is recommended to avoid redundancy in scientific advice and ensure independence from decision makers, using the independent advisory system that is already available.
5. Regional scoping processes encourage interaction among actors and facilitate the provision of advice at the right scale, allowing for tailor-made management.
6. The Advisory Councils (ACs) could advance their transparency policies by adopting standards in terms of communication and representation.
7. Regionalization consistent with the EAFM involves not only regional but also sub-regional and supra-regional approaches. There are specific topics that benefit from an integrated approach rather than an artificial sub-division at regional levels.

### **SCOPING WORKSHOP FOR A MULTIANNUAL PLAN FOR SMALL PELAGICS AND INDUSTRIAL FISHERIES IN THE NORTH SEA (7-8 NOVEMBER 2016, BRUSSELS)**

PELAC representatives: Anne-Mette Bæk Jespersen, Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, Irene Kingma, Steven Mackinson

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) foresees the adoption of multi-annual plans as a priority tool to restore and maintain the exploitation of stocks at levels consistent with the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), to provide the elements to facilitate the implementation of the landing obligation and to enable regionalisation for technical measures.

On the 7-8th November the European Commission hosted a scoping workshop in Brussels to initiate discussion on a possible plan for small pelagic and industrial species in the North Sea (Union waters of ICES Divisions Ha, Ilia and Subarea IV). Emma Hatfield (DGMARE) and Ilona Jespena (Head of Fisheries conservation and control Baltic and North Sea, DGMARE) were convenors. Around 30 participants attended, including scientists from Member States and JRC, industry representatives, PELAC representatives and policy managers from various Member States.

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Opening the meeting, the Commission reiterated the purpose to reach a shared understanding of the biological issues that might require alternative thinking on the need for, and content of, a management plan. Including for example, which areas, which species, biological reference points and the kind of management strategies.

Seven scientific presentations were given to help catalyse discussions. Specific examples of management were given for capelin in the Barents sea and anchovy in the bay of Biscay. An interesting aspect in the Barents sea is that cod has priority over capelin in management, even though not explicitly stated. This is reflected in a recently agreed multistep harvest control rule (HCR) on cod, which captures the fact that management actions in the cod fishery take consideration of the status of the capelin stock. The Biscay examples showed the incremental development of HCRs through discussion with stakeholders and performance in relation to risks on falling below Blim and stability of catches.

Biological and ecosystem interactions affecting the distribution and abundance of small pelagics were presented as well. The main predators of forage fish in the North Sea are Cod, hake, whiting, saithe, and haddock (at least on sandeels); the primary species identified in the North Sea demersal multi-annual plan. The point was made that because forage fish don't live in isolation, neither should plans for their management. At the very least, it would be important to assess the impact of the demersal management plan on stocks and fisheries in a pelagic management plan and vice versa. Environmental factors affect the variability in abundance and distribution of small pelagics and reference points for their management, and so the duration of plans and their frequency of review ought to consider such changes. Consideration of the ecosystem approach requires considering impacts on species that depend on forage fish as food and might be vulnerable to changes in their abundance. Defining 'Indicator reference values' that can be used to affect harvest control rules on target small pelagics could be a way to operationalise the ecosystem approach.

The pros and cons of management strategies based on  $F_{msy}$  or escapement strategies, and options for ranges around them, were presented too. There are benefits and drawbacks associated with all of the options, and the need for safeguarding spawning biomass is not easily balanced with optimising fishing opportunities and adapting to changes in productivity that may affect biological reference points. Stakeholder input on the criteria for assessing the performance of alternative strategies is important. The North Sea AC's presentation raised a number of very pertinent points in relation to the degree that industry are actually involved in thinking about the plan.

The presentations were used to set the scene for group discussions on the following questions:

1. Which species should be included? Should it be limited to small pelagic species only? Does it make sense to look at this just from a North Sea perspective?
2. Is the approach set by the Baltic, and now North Sea, MAPs appropriate for these species?
3. How can we manage inter-annual variability? Would we need a strategy for each individual species in the plan and how would that be incorporated?
4. How would ecosystem considerations be incorporated?

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5. To what extent should multi-species interactions be incorporated?
6. If so, what criteria should be used to decide on priorities?
7. What trade-offs are we willing to accept in terms of yield, stability and risk?

The Commission report of the workshop will be distributed when available.

### **DATA EVALUATION WORKSHOP FOR WIDELY DISTRIBUTED STOCKS (15-18 NOVEMBER 2016, COPENHAGEN)**

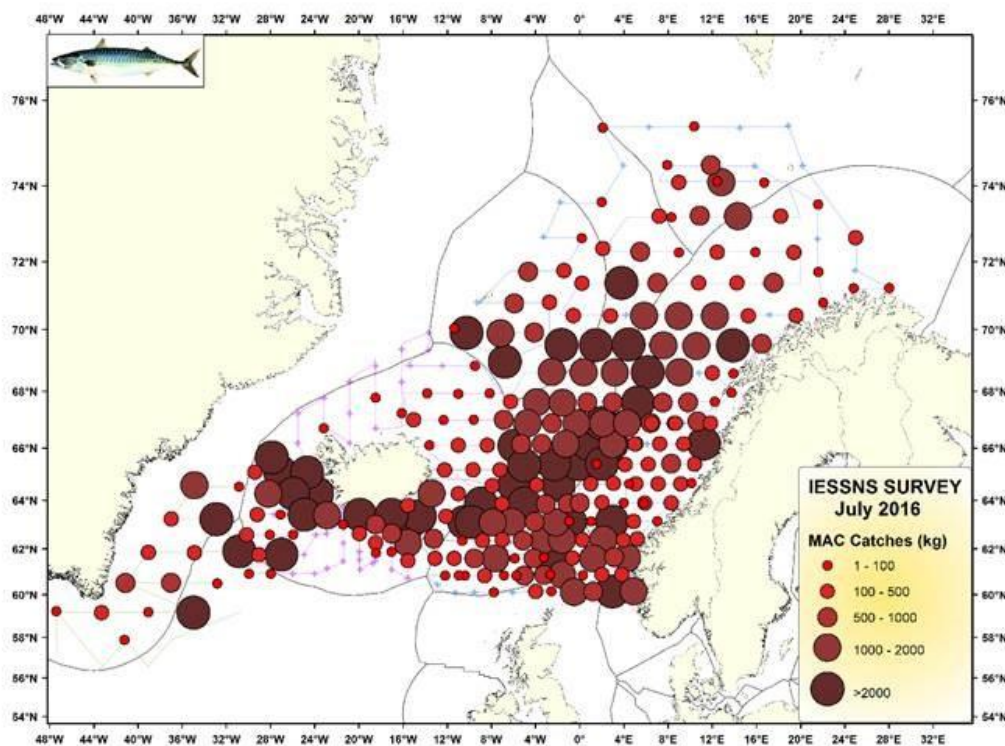
PELAC representative: Steven Mackinson

A data workshop was held from 15-18 November 2016 in Copenhagen. The data workshop constitutes the preparation for the WKWIDE benchmark workshop for Northeast Atlantic mackerel and Western and North Sea horse mackerel, that will be held from 30 January until 3 February 2017. There were 15 participants in the data workshop. Main activities were the presentation and discussion of the available data that could be used in the benchmark in 2017.

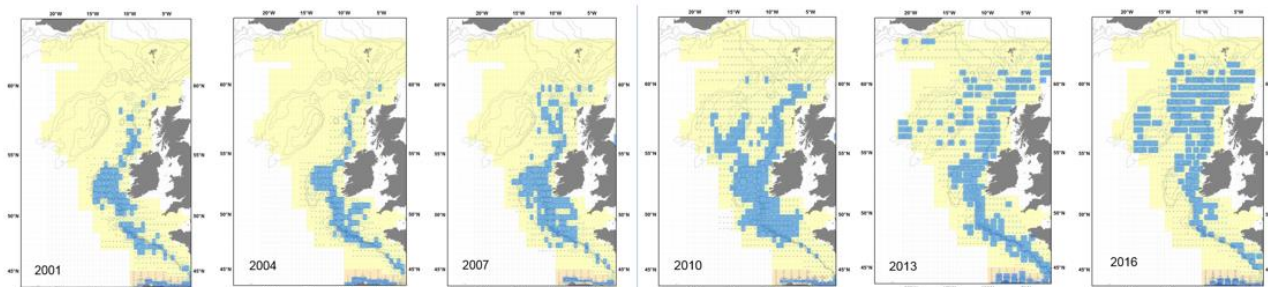
#### **Northeast Atlantic mackerel**

- The previous benchmark focussed on changing the assessment model from ICA to SAM. No new models or intermodal comparisons will be presented this time, so the focus will be on the data required for parameterising SAM and understanding its behaviour.
- The Joint Norway, Faroe, Iceland summer IESSNS survey: shows mackerel distribution extending North and Westward, but a slightly odd distribution in 2015 showed a reduced abundance index. 2016 distribution shown below. Changes in the spatial pattern and abundance indices from the surveys and outputs from the StoX model were discussed. There is an opportunity for industry to provide information from northern North Sea and Western British Isles where information is lacking.

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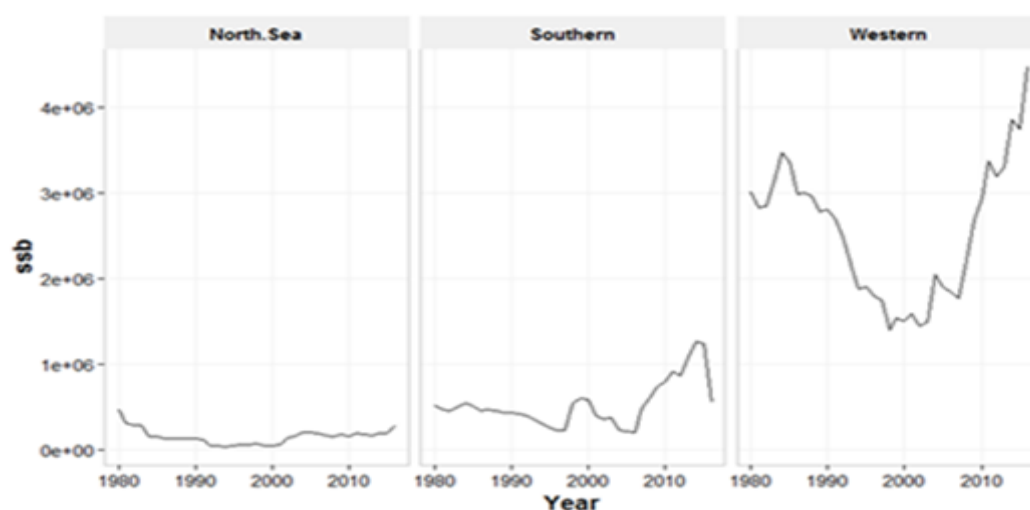


- A group looked at consequences of identifying a core area for the index and extending the index to include all ages from 2 to 11 (currently 6 to 11). A working paper will be produced for the benchmark.
- Tagging data: new tagging data from RFID now available. Many more observations than before because factories in Iceland, Scotland and Denmark also installed scanners for identification. Some technical issues still to be resolved prior to the benchmark. No clear signal yet from the tagging data.
- Egg survey: new presentation of distribution of egg survey abundance has been presented. Clearly shows change in distribution of spawning mackerel in 2016 compared to e.g. 2013 and earlier years. Ideas have been explored on new setup for upcoming benchmark. An error was found in egg survey data. The correction resulted in a downward revision of TEAP and biomass estimates, accounting for 38% decrease TEAP from 2013 and 33% decrease in SSB.



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- The assumption of fixed natural mortality for mackerel of all ages over time is being re-evaluated using sources of information from multi-species models. Impact may be evaluated in January.
- Recruitment index: no new work presented, but some updates foreseen prior to benchmark.
- Information on components: the North Sea component of mackerel has been generating the same type of advice for many years. We have put together information on the abundance of this component (based on the relative distributions in the egg surveys). Also information on the catch of the component will become available.



### Western horse mackerel

- Egg survey: egg survey data available (but not really presented during WKWIDE).
- Acoustic data: looking into the useability for horse mackerel acoustic data from Bay of Biscay and Spanish acoustic surveys
- Using groundfish survey for abundance estimation: work by Andy Campbell on combining groundfish survey data from many different surveys. Looks promising for generating a recruitment index and possibly an adult stock number index.
- Exploration of commercial catch rates: the PFA catch rate analysis has been presented. Positive reception but needs attention to changes in catchability (new gear, reconstructions etc). More effort needed in modelling CPUE.
- Assessment methodology: possibly a new model to be applied, so that new survey information can be taken in. However, not sure if those models can handle the specifics of the egg survey data as it is applied for horse mackerel (as indeterminate spawner).

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## North Sea horse mackerel

- Using groundfish surveys for abundance estimation: still needs to be done. Ambition to apply similar methods as used by Andy Campbell for western horse mackerel.
- Exploration of commercial catch rates: same as above.
- Discards: discards in the channel will likely be included in the assessment.
- Stock structure: we will report on progress, but no real conclusions to be expected in the short term.

## WKFISHDISH (22-25 NOVEMBER 2016, COPENHAGEN)

PELAC representatives: Bauke de Vries, Stella Nemecky

Co-chairs: Thomas Brunel, Alan Baudron, Jose Fernandes

ICES professional: Mark Dickey-Collas

Info on workshop and participants:

<http://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WKFISHDISH.aspx>

The meeting started with the actual request of the European Commission to ICES. The Commission wishes to be informed on distributional shifts in fish stocks that may have taken place since 1985 in relation to TAC management areas. ICES is requested to:

- Assess the proportion of each principal commercial species of fish that is distributed within each TAC management area established for that species, from research vessel survey and additional information.

Workshop on Fish Distribution Shifts is requested to:

- Identify any significant long-term trends in distributional changes between TAC management areas and between stocks of the same species.
- Where appropriate, identify likely drivers for such changes.
- Where appropriate, advise on likely future trends.

## Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. Consider the findings of the analysis of the shifts in fish distribution relative to TAC management unit for 19 stocks carried out by the ICES Secretariat.
2. Where shifts in distribution have been detected, published studies and information will be used to identify likely drivers for such change (new analysis will not occur). Drivers to be considered will include changes in fishing patterns, environmental variability (including climate change and ocean basin wide processes).



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3. Comments will also be provided on the implications of the distribution shifts and the likelihood of further change.

A scope of 19 species is used during this workshop: Anchovy, Anglerfish, Blue Whiting, Cod, Common Sole, Greenland Halibut, Haddock, Hake, Herring, Horse Mackerel, Mackerel, Megrin, Norway Pout, Plaice, Pollack, Saithe, Sprat, Spurdog and Whiting.

Day one dealt with ToR 1. The ICES results of the analyses were presented and handed out. Jørgen Nørrevang Jensen presented the presence-absence method and the reason of importance for this workshop. Presence/absence is a way to decide how many of the ICES rectangles are occupied by a certain species. Nothing about biomass, only presence and absence of a species in a certain area. The data came from bottom trawl surveys, for each TAC area one survey was used and second quarter data was excluded. Some of the data constraints are: data coverage in time and space is limited and varies through time (stable last 15 years) which can give an incomplete picture, several species have distributions that extend beyond the covered area in the research, catchability can vary between species and location (fish is present but is hard to catch), in the past surveys were not carried out in the same quarter of the year and a northward movement of species might not be detected due to the limited area covered by the surveys.

The obtained time series were analysed with the Mann-Kendall test for monotonic trends. This resulted in maps which can be found at the ICES FishMap (<http://www.ices.dk/marine-data/maps/Pages/ICES-FishMap.aspx> ) Also there were given R-Plots for the probability of occurrence of every of the 19 species in TAC areas divided by North and South to compare them in time and see where the consequences are the highest. The results have been discussed and used to identify species with distribution changes. Later on that day the datasheet was uploaded with only data from the last 15 years (consequent data).

Presentation of significance of migration by Collin Millar. During his presentation, Collin explained how to read the different models and the maths which come with the models that show the centre of a stock distribution and the possible change of these centres throughout the years.

After a coffee break everybody who attended the workshop was assigned to one of the species. Every species had to be reviewed on whether there is a shift in distribution. This was done with the information and data provided by ICES and scientific articles. Everyone gave a short presentation about his or her findings during the workshop.

Brian MacKenzie gave a presentation about the paper Biogeographic Changes in Fish Diversity driven by Changes in Climate and Exploitation. In this paper the authors found that the average sea bottom temperature in Skagerrak and Kattegat is rising. And between 1994 and 2014 the species richness has increased with  $\pm 33\%$ . If the temperature and species richness data are joined, a correlation between the two can be seen. How they are related exactly remains unknown but it seems that the warmer the sea bottom of this area gets, the more species occur. The authors also conclude that sea bottom temperature is an important determinant of species richness, probably interacting with fishing and that the increase in fish species richness can be attributed to an influx of fish species with southern latitudinal affinity.



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A concern was raised that the occurrence of species is not only about migration or distribution shifts due to climate change and other factors, but also on taking into account a certain species in the surveys (or not). A bias in data or lack in data can give strange patterns when not interpreted correctly. There were some answers to that concern but no definitive solution to this problem was given.

Thomas Brunel explained the controlling factors in migration. These have to be taken into account when writing the synthesis per species. Spatial distribution of a species can have several drivers such as: geographical attachment (random distribution vs. site attachment), environmental conditions, density dependent habitat selection (proportional, constant, basin), spatial dependency (interactions between individuals), demographic structure (distribution depending on size, age, sex etc), species interaction and memory (distribution is also a result of populations history: natal homing, social learning, habit formation).

After this presentation every participant was working on the review of the species until the end of the workshop. Work was interspersed with presentations on the 19 stocks (species syntheses) that were finished. After these presentations the group decided what the so called 'big movers were'. The 'big movers' are species which have shown a distribution shift in recent years. The complete report with details on all the 19 stocks will be released on the 9th of December 2016. Two extra presentations were given by José Fernandes and Martin Pastoors. A short summary of these presentations is given below the summaries of the big mover species.

### **Anchovy**

From the ICES analyses and supporting scientific articles a northward shift can be found from the 1990's onwards.

### **Anglerfish**

At a regional level within the North Sea, the relative distribution has changed. This is affecting TAC management areas in the North Sea region 4.a & 4.b.

### **Blue Whiting**

ICES analyses show a large occurrence increase in the northern North Sea and west of Scotland. Published evidence suggests that the migration routes are heavily influenced by the changing environmental conditions (e.g. change in strength of North Atlantic Current).

### **Cod**

Both published evidence and ICES analyses suggest a northward shift of cod. There are significant relative changes between adjacent TAC management areas.

### **Hake**

Published evidence shows an expansion of the distribution from the western shelf into the North Sea TAC management areas (implications on management are expected)

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### **Herring**

Published evidence and ICES analyses showed different trends in occurrence between areas 7b and 7g and significant relative changes between adjacent TAC management areas in Skagerrak-Kattegat and the Baltic Sea. Additionally, changes in the migration and distribution of Norwegian spring spawning herring in summer, affecting the proportion in the EEZ of the different coastal states.

### **Mackerel**

Published evidence indicates changes in distribution with major management implications in the Northeast Atlantic.

### **Megrim**

ICES analyses, published evidence and observed changes suggest a regional change in occurrence in the Celtic Sea and the Bay of Biscay. Similarly, the relative distribution has directionally changed at a regional level in these areas and the North Sea.

### **Plaice**

ICES analyses and published data suggest an increased occurrence in the North- and Baltic Sea, with significant relative changes between adjacent TAC management areas.

### **Horse Mackerel**

Although Horse Mackerel is not considered a big mover, the species clearly showed changes in distribution. Current management measures have already accounted for these shifts in distribution, therefore it is expected that the shift in distribution of Horse Mackerel will not result in future issues in e.g. management.

José Fernandes gave a presentation on 'North East Atlantic pelagic species distribution change under climate change'. This presentation (and the accompanying study and paper) focused on four species: Blue whiting, Herring, Mackerel and Sprat. It was a predicting study based on survey data and literature. It was found that Blue Whiting, Herring and Mackerel will probably increase in abundance in the northern areas, and sprat will decrease in the southern areas of the Northeast Atlantic.

Martin Pastoors' presentation about match-mismatch in advice and management raised a lot of questions. Data of the industry is not used to estimate the amount of fish etc. and stock and TAC areas are not always aligned. His conclusions were: catch data provide useful information on spatial distributions and changes in spatial distribution, a database on advice and management (under development) to align management and assessment areas is necessary and knowledge on quota & special conditions that capture changes in spatial distribution is needed.

Before and after this workshop, a lot of work was already done. To get a complete vision on the work of WKFISHDISH and to see the final conclusions, it is recommended to read the report on WKFISHDISH which is released on the 9th of December 2016 (if all goes according to plan).

# EXTERNAL MEETINGS

## **STAKEHOLDER MEETING ON SOUTHERN HORSE MACKEREL (24 NOVEMBER 2016, LISBON)**

PELAC representatives: José Beltran, Verena Ohms

A stakeholder meeting dealing with the development of a management strategy for Southern horse mackerel took place in Lisbon on 24 November 2016. During the meeting the results received to a questionnaire inventoring stakeholder preferences for managing the stock were discussed. Unfortunately only three responses have been received and it was decided to remind people again about the importance of filling in the questionnaire. Based on the responses received it seemed that there might be a minor increase in fishing mortality next year due to the “sardine crisis”. However, the stock is exploited well below the agreed TAC and  $F_{msy}$ . Therefore an increase in fishing mortality is not expected to negatively affect the stock.

It was also discussed whether fishing mortality should be increased to  $F_{msy}$  and on which time scale. Stakeholders had a preference for increasing fishing mortality gradually to  $F_{msy}$ . However, some also pointed out that it might be wise not to increase fishing mortality too much for market reasons, because otherwise the market might not be able to absorb all the fish.

In terms of the kind of management strategy to be developed stakeholders were divided. Some preferred a management strategy based on  $F_{msy}$ , others preferred setting the TAC based on the mean catch of the previous 2-3 years. In all cases, however, people wanted to have a 15% symmetrical TAC constraint.

After some discussion it was agreed that the management strategy should apply only for *Trachurus trachurus*, not *Trachurus* spp. At the moment the TAC is set for *Trachurus* spp, because in the past it was not possible to differentiate between the different *Trachurus* species. However, this is no longer a problem and the assessment only takes into account *Trachurus trachurus*.

In terms of timing it was pointed out that it would be wise to await the results of the benchmark before running any simulations. Depending on the outcome of the benchmark biological reference points might change and the simulations should be run with the latest information on reference points.

## **INTER AC MEETING (5 DECEMBER 2016, BRUSSELS)**

PELAC representatives: Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, Gerard van Balsfoort, Verena Ohms

### **1. Introduction by the Director General of DG MARE**

The Director General (DG) welcomed the participants and in particular the representatives of the three new ACs for Aquaculture, Markets and the Black Sea. He said that the role of the ACs is fundamental for implementing the CFP and that both Commission and MS benefit from the knowledge and experience provided by the ACs. The ACs are the Commission’s main consultative bodies by ensuring representation of all relevant stakeholders and the DG thanked the ACs for their timely and relevant advice.

# EXTERNAL MEETINGS

He was aware that the co-existence of two, often competing, interest groups can be very challenging making the input from the ACs even more valuable since this input presents both viewpoints. He was also aware that the classification of an organization to one of the interest groups is often not straightforward. In such a case the General Assembly has to take a decision based on objective criteria. The Commission cannot intervene in this regard. However, the Commission looked into the issue and will present a proposal to overcome the current difficulties as experienced by the SWWAC and was looking forward to receiving feedback on the proposal. He emphasized that it had to be ensured that the majority does not decide on the representation of the minority to ensure a balanced, well-considered stakeholder advice.

Another aspect to be addressed at today's meeting was regionalization. Under the new CFP MS have to ensure that joint recommendations are part of a regional process that reflect the outcomes of consultation with ACs. Initial experience with the process indicates that different MS regional groups apply different consultation measures in different ACs. Lately some ACs voiced concerns about the consultation process and the DG emphasized that the Commission takes these concerns very seriously. Although it is up to the MS to determine how the ACs should be consulted, it is necessary that the consultation of the ACs is meaningful. Even though some of the ACs are disappointed by the consultation process the DG urged the ACs to continue giving advice to the MS regional groups.

The chair of the LDAC wanted to know how article 50, once triggered by the UK, will affect the ACs.

The DG replied that the question was very valid, but at this stage he was not in a position to provide an answer.

The chair of the NSAC said that it has set-up a BREXIT Working Group to follow BREXIT as it develops. Within that timeframe it will try to come up with structures that reach beyond BREXIT. Even after BREXIT the ICES advice will be the same and the resources will still be shared. Therefore, the NSAC considered it important to have such structures available.

## **2. Functioning of the Advisory Councils**

The Commission gave a presentation on three main issues: the setting up of new ACs, the representation in each interest group and additional compensation to small-scale fishermen.

### New ACs

The first three of the four new ACs have been set-up. The only one that is still missing is the AC for outermost regions.

### Representation

Regarding representation in the different interest groups the Commission pointed out that any disagreement should in principle be resolved by each AC in line with the EU rules in place and eventually through a decision of the General Assembly. However, the Commission has analyzed the situation and drafted a proposal on a way forward. It was important to first clarify what a delegated act can and cannot do.

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What delegated acts cannot do:

- Depart from provisions in the CFP, in particular:
  - o Alter the composition of the ACs
  - o Change the ratio of 60/40
  - o Introduce interest groups other than the “sector” and the “other” interest group

What delegated acts can do:

- Supplement the CFP, in particular:
  - o Ensure that each of the groups is correctly represented in the Executive Committee
  - o Prevent the majority from deciding on the representation of the minority

Therefore, the Commission proposed to amend the provisions of the delegated act on the functioning of the ACs in regards to appointment of the Executive Committee. It was suggested to specify that any appointment to the Executive Committee must be in line with the nomination proposal of the interest group concerned. Concretely, it was suggested to amend Article 4.3 of the delegated act to:

*“Upon proposal of the interest group concerned, the General Assembly shall appoint an Executive Committee of up to 25 members...”*

This would mean that the 60% group only decides on the Executive Committee members representing the 60% group whereas the 40% group only decides on the Executive Committee members representing the 40% group.

The Commission was also willing to consider other proposals that would improve clarity and provide consensus, provided that such proposals are compatible with the provisions of the CFP. The deadline to provide input is the 15th of December 2016.

The chair of the Market AC pointed out that even when adopting the Commission proposal some ACs could still face issues. Banks or other financial institutions could be interested in joining the Market AC. However, they are not NGOs, but also would not fit into the sector group. According to the Commission’s proposal it would be up to the 40% interest group to decide if banks fit into that group or not.

The Commission clarified that banks cannot apply for AC membership. Instead it would have to be an association representing banks with a legitimate interest in the CFP which in turn would have to be verified by the MS concerned. If the MS agrees on admission to the AC then that sort of association would likely fit into the 40% group.

One of the representatives of the SWWAC wanted to know whether there is a list of actions an AC can or cannot take if certain rules are not respected. He said that the current problem in the SWWAC could also spread to other ACs and he thought that a broad solution was needed including guidelines on how to interpret the delegated act. He said that the Commission proposal might appear to be a good approach, but he would appreciate a more ambitious proposal. He also pointed out that the

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

Commission proposal only refers to the Executive Committee, not the General Assembly and he thought that the problem would not be solved if admission to the General Assembly is flexible.

The chair of the SWWAC clarified the procedure followed by the SWWAC upon receiving applications from three different associations that wanted to join the SWWAC's Executive Committee. Given that both the secretariat and the SWWAC members wanted to make a good decision the SWWAC asked for advice from the Commission. The Commission, however, said that it could not take the decision for the AC and that it was up to the General Assembly to decide on the application of these groups. Therefore, the SWWAC secretariat analyzed the composition and regulations underpinning the three associations and, once completed, presented the information to the General Assembly which was the most democratic way to follow. The General Assembly subsequently decided that the associations could be included in the 40% group. Looking at the Commission's proposal the chair of the SWWAC agreed with it, but also would like to go a bit further. He said that some sort of objective criteria is needed that does not give rise to any doubt. Agreeing on such a criterion would benefit all ACs. Based on the experience in the SWWAC it seems clear that some fishermen can also be members of NGOs and only if the Commission decides that this is not possible can the SWWAC act accordingly. Until then it is up to the General Assembly to decide.

The chair of the LDAC thought that the Commission proposal was a push in the right direction, but that it also raised some questions. The sad part of the issue is that it can poison the ACs' work. He wanted to know what would happen if an organization applied for membership, but was rejected both by the 60% group and the 40% group. Until now the 60/40 composition was only applied to the Executive Committee. However, if each group will nominate its own candidates it will be necessary to determine beforehand if an organization belongs into the 60% group or the 40% group. What worried him most was that the Commission's proposal could lead to different outcomes in different ACs, e.g. an organization could end up in the 60% group in the SWWAC, but in the 40% group in the NWWAC. This did not seem legal to him. Within the LDAC it has therefore been decided that the categorization of an association into the 60% or 40% group has to be made before admission.

Another LDAC representative wanted to know why the Commission did not provide further criteria on how to decide whether a member represents a sector group or another interest group.

The Commission explained that it followed an open door policy and wanted to enable every legitimate stakeholder to be represented on the ACs. As long as this open door policy was followed it was impossible to mathematically guarantee a 60/40 composition. Nevertheless, ACs were encouraged to try to ensure a balanced representation. The Commission agreed that its proposal will require to decide beforehand which organization belongs to which group. However, most ACs have been functioning for more than ten years by now and there have been hardly any cases in which the ACs disagreed on the categorization. When the problem arose in the SWWAC the Commission provided different criteria that could be used. However, depending on which criteria someone chooses the outcomes can be different. If the ACs can come up with a criterion that all ACs agree on in both the 60 and the 40% groups, then this can be considered. Another option would be to delegate the issue to the MS, but the Commission doubted that all ACs would agree on that.

# EXTERNAL MEETINGS

The Commission concluded that it will meet the MS on the 15th of December to present the proposal on amending the delegated act. If ACs wanted to provide further comments they would have to do so before the 15th of December. At this stage and after discussing the issue internally the Commission considered this the most suitable way forward.

## Additional compensation to small-scale fishermen

Recently several ACs received requests for additional compensation and asked the Commission to provide guidance in this regard. The Commission explained that the scope of this provision is very narrow. Additional compensation can only be paid to fishermen representing small-scale fleet organizations and each case has to be duly justified.

There are different possibilities to determine the amount of such additional compensation. One possibility would be in the form of a 50% increase of the per diem and accommodation allowance.

Other methods are not excluded, but:

- They have to rely on official and publicly available data
- They must ensure equity and
- They must be approved by the Commission in advance

## **3. The role of the Advisory Councils under the new CFP (regionalization)**

The different ACs reported on their experience with regionalization. While the NWWAC and NSAC were relatively positive the LDAC and especially the Pelagic AC could not share this positive experience. The Pelagic AC has provided not only a discard plan of which very little was taken up by the MS, but also recommendations on control and enforcement as well as on amendments to the pelagic discard plans in the North Sea and North Western Waters. Neither of the MS groups, however, even responded to these recommendations. This lack of dialogue was very worrying to the Pelagic AC.

The SWWAC said that cooperation with the MS has been positive in 2014 and 2015, but less so in 2016. The work and discussions always started a little late in 2016, because the MS in the SWW seem to wait what happens in the NWW and NS. This was very unfortunate. Furthermore, having a rotating chairmanship of the regional groups requires a lot of adaptation every time another country takes over chairmanship

In regards to BALTFISH the chair of the BSAC said that the consultation standard of the regional group is acceptable, but nothing more. He was pleased, however, that Denmark announced that it would discuss the BALTFISH work program for 2017/2018 in more detail with the BSAC. This was the first time a country has said that.

The Commission concluded that there is a general sense that there is room for improvement in regards to regionalization. Problems are more severe for the Pelagic AC and the LDAC, because neither of these ACs has a specific regional group. Therefore, more work is needed to alert the



## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

different regional groups and individual MS that there are 2 ACs which are working very hard to provide recommendations and the Commission was happy to try to help these ACs more.

Following some remarks by the MEDAC in regards to data the Commission clarified that it does not rely on the ACs for data, but instead asks ICES and STECF for data. Often the Commission receives recommendations out of the blue which lack the necessary underpinning. The Commission takes these recommendations seriously, but if they are underpinned by the necessary data, then they are more robust and easier to follow. The Commission also pointed out that there are a lot of meetings with ICES on how to improve data and the Commission considered it relevant for all ACs to attend some of those meetings.

Following a question by the MEDAC on whether the Commission has foreseen an external evaluation on the functioning of the ACs, the Commission responded that such an evaluation is on its radar, but for now the Commission tried to avoid audits to allow the new ACs to work out their methods and procedures. However, it was likely that such an evaluation and audit will be carried out within the next 2-3 years.

Regarding the advice provided by the ACs the Commission concluded that it is usually very timely and while all ACs do their best to provide unanimous advice, it is also interesting for the Commission to look at the majority-minority positions if no unanimous advice can be reached. The Commission encouraged the ACs to continue their work and offered help where there is room for improvements.

#### **4. Update on technical measures and multi-annual plans**

##### Technical Measures proposal

The Commission summarized that its Technical Measures proposal is based on a very extensive stakeholder consultation and the idea of getting rid of the current very complex matrix of regulations. Instead the Commission tried to simplify the regulation and to include regionalization. The new approach is less prescriptive and more results-based, i.e. is focusing more on results rather than inputs. In general MS seem happy with the type of architecture proposed by the Commission.

However, there are also some outstanding issues which cause quite some discussion, especially in regards to identifying baseline measures. Some MS want to move details that have been included in the annexes back into the main part of the proposal. One of the ideas of the Commission was to introduce targets and objectives, e.g. in relation to catches below minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) for which the Commission suggested a limit of 5% at stock level. This would provide some flexibility and acknowledge that there are fleets which will have some juvenile bycatch. However, this idea has been rejected by the MS.

If the goal is to move to a results-based approach, then some kind of metric is needed to measure results. This is one of the main outstanding issues and the Commission is keen on exploring how to solve this.

##### Multi-annual plans

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The Commission said that a multi-annual plan for small pelagics in the Adriatic is well advanced and it was expected to be finalized by the end of January.

In regards to industrial and small pelagic species in the North Sea there had been a scoping meeting at the beginning of November. One of the main questions that remains to be answered is whether there should be a separate plan for industrial and small pelagics and whether such a plan should be confined to Union stocks and whether there should be a combined plan for the NS and NWW.

### 5. AOB

The chair of the LDAC re-iterated his comment in regards to BREXIT. He was aware that the issue was very complicated, but he wanted to know what will happen to UK members once article 50 has been triggered. Can the ACs ask UK members to leave in that case?

### MAREFRAME ANNUAL MEETING (13-15 DECEMBER 2016, PALERMO)

PELAC representatives: Bauke de Vries, Verena Ohms

“MareFrame is an EC-funded RTD project which seeks to remove the barriers preventing more widespread use of the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. This entails development of new tools and technologies, development and extension of ecosystem models and assessment methods, and development of a decision support framework that can highlight alternatives and consequences. The vision of MareFrame is to significantly increase the use of ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management (EAFM) when providing advice relating to European fish stocks.”

MareFrame is an international consortium of 28 partners from 14 different countries with scientists from natural and social sciences. Through nine Work Packages several objectives are obtained. The outcomes of the Work Packages are used in the Case studies and feedback from these Case studies are used to work further on the Work Packages.

#### Work Packages

1. Co-creation and pathways for Implementation
2. Select and apply analytical methods
3. Data Management
4. Ecosystem models and assessment models
5. Apply new methods in case studies
6. Develop a decision support framework
7. Synthesis and training development
8. Dissemination and training actions

# EXTERNAL MEETINGS

## 9. Management

### Case Studies

- Northern and Western Waters – Iceland Waters
- Northern Waters – West of Scotland
- South Western Waters – Iberian Waters
- Mediterranean – Strait of Sicily
- New Zealand – Chatham Rise
- Black Sea
- Baltic Sea
- North Sea

The meeting started with a warning and a call for deliverables from the management team. A lot of the work packages are behind schedule when it comes to delivering the outcomes. For 2017 all the case studies will organize meetings with their stakeholders and some of the case studies will need (technical) support for these meetings.

In March there will be a draft management plan but the name management plan is hard to explain (because the document will be an advice on the existing management plans). It is proposed to change the name in something that conveys the content better, but this is not possible. The EC has stated in their documents that the name is Management Plan (it was also in the proposal of the project) and therefore it cannot be changed. The name is causing confusion and it is decided that every case study will explain shortly how the term management plan needs to be interpreted.

Decision support Framework prototype has to be tested with decision-makers in Brussels. This can be done in two ways and the group is asked for their opinion. A) Use an anonymous case study, using data to illustrate selected issues. Or b) use a showcase case study (applicable in current policy context). It is stated very clearly that, no matter what option is chosen, everything in the model has to work perfectly and is informative. The models have to be linked to the real world as much as possible. This is to make the EC understand how their money is spent in this project. Option A is preferred by the participants but it is still unclear how this will be carried out.

Another issue with a mix up in names is raised. People should refer to the Decision Support Framework and not the Decision Support System. This causes a mix up with the tools (both indicate a computerized process (which is only the case with the tools). Also, the management team asks the case study leaders kindly to update their management tools on the website. Lastly, evaluations and deliverables etc. need to be published on the website(s).

Multi Criteria Analyses (MCA) in WP7 entails four different criteria: environmental (20%), business economics (30%), national economics (30%) and social (20%). Views and allocation of percentages on the criteria can differ throughout Europe. This depends on how the percentages were obtained (stakeholders vs. economist vs. biologist). A comparison was made between the current

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

management plans (status quo/SQ) and fishing on FMSY and how this will affect the stock size of certain fish stocks. Based on the MCA and data from Iceland it can be decided if a scenario is good or bad for society. For all the criteria it seemed that SQ/current management plans will be preferred above the MSY approach because the SQ is better for all the criteria while MSY is considered the best option in relation to economy. It is not clear how this will be implemented into all the case studies and which data will be used to determine the percentages and the precise criteria.

The following question was submitted to the case study leaders: if you were totally new to the project how would you change things, what would you do differently and what are/were barriers?

The following responses were received:

- Lack of social science and economists (expertise in general in the project and in case studies).
- Gap between the goals of the stakeholders and the goals or objectives of the MareFrame project.
- Co-creation needs to be implemented or used earlier in the process (for example in the data gathering analysis. Somewhere between real life and the creation of the models).
- The institutional structures of the regions are not always comparable, so writing a same sort of document is difficult. It is also difficult to organise stakeholders in certain regions because they are very fragmented.
- CFP is single stock management, MareFrame focusses on EAFM. This results in a mismatch on advice in the 'management plan' for each case study.
- More stakeholders and a wider group of stakeholders should be involved in the case studies but also in MareFrame as a whole.
- Knowledge on EAFM is generally poor, this results in difficulties in attracting stakeholders. They do not know what people are exactly talking about so why would they join.
- It is important to keep in mind that in the last few years, the industry hired high profile scientists. Especially in pelagic fisheries the stakeholders must not be underestimated. Some of the people who used to chair ICES Working Groups on multi-species models are now working for the fishing industry. So, the knowledge is with the companies but not necessarily with the individual stakeholders (who are asked to join).
- It is hard to keep stakeholders committed, the demand on them is very high, but they get very little in return (=stakeholder fatigue)
- Besides stakeholder fatigue there is something like decision-maker fatigue. Decision makers are only willing to spend a certain amount of time on all the different projects they have to attend to. So only involve them if it is really needed and you have to show them something which is worthy.

From all the case studies in European waters there are three that are well on schedule (Northern and Western Waters – Iceland Waters, Northern Waters – West of Scotland and South Western

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

Waters – Iberian Waters), two case studies are a bit behind schedule but presumably before the end of 2016 on schedule (Baltic Sea and North Sea). The Black Sea and the Mediterranean are behind or even far behind schedule. It is decided to adjust the expectations from the Black Sea due to political- and scientific reasons and a lack of data.

The New Zealand case study is a bit behind the schedule (like Baltic and North Sea). But it is manageable. New Zealand is included in this project to see how the outcomes of the project and the project as a whole will function in an area with completely different laws, regulations and policies compared to the EU.

For the Work Packages WP1, 3, 4 & 6 will deliver on time. WP2 & 7 should be on time and WP5 will probably be too late (this depends on the results of the case studies).

The most important case study for the Pelagic AC is the North Sea. “The objective of the North Sea case study is to develop a North Sea multi-species fish system that could help clarify the stakeholder’s general concerns of: needing to achieve FMSY, meeting the Landing Obligation, avoid the risk of incompatible regulations by providing an interactive tool that would allow stakeholders to explore the trade-offs (as far as possible) between any plausible management measure. Pelagic fisheries might additionally be considered as a segment to study in greater detail.”

To do so the North Sea case study leader (John Pope) came with a completely new model. The Green model. This model has four modules: multi species model, ecosystem, fleet behaviour and social & economics. It has proved very helpful in the last year in setting up and adapting DSF scenarios, for producing deliverables in various forms, for routine comparison of ecosystem models and for detailed understanding of differences between models. Besides that, stakeholders want to see the trade-offs and this is very easy and simple to show with the Green model.

It is a unique model within MareFrame. Also outside the project people are very interested in the outcomes and use of the Green model. To make the decision process on trade-offs acceptable, it was suggested to remove issues with no consensus or heavy constraints. This is called the potato way of thinking (cut of the bits stakeholders do not like, just like peeling potatoes).

High- and lowlights of the last year are leading to the conclusions that stakeholders need to convert to takeholders and have to lead somehow in the process.

Next steps among other things will be: encourage stakeholders, include trophic level data for D2,5, include le Mans, Schaeffer, EWE in model comparison, develop Content Management System and publish the obtained data in relation to the WP’s and export the knowledge.

It is proposed to make a multi model-model in which the different models of all the case studies will be compared. There are question marks with this model for example, what is the applicability of the model in a broader context? How can trade-offs be shown more clearly? This is eventually what the stakeholders want to see. Lastly it is stated that adding more criteria (which was proposed) is a bad idea.

A member of the External Advisory Group commented on the presentation of the North Sea Case Study:

## EXTERNAL MEETINGS

- We are very good in making models that look like they are reality, but we have to keep in mind that reality is a completely different thing. Do not pretend that any model comes close to reality.
- It is unclear if multispecies models for the long-term are actually better than single species models. Such a conclusion about issues in clarity needs to be in the final reports. Different answers are not necessarily better answers in this respect.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### **FOCUS GROUP ON TECHNICAL MEASURES REGULATION**

The focus group dealing with the revision of the Technical Measures Regulation has started to continue its work and meets regularly through WebEx. A set of recommendations is hoped to be available by late January 2017.

### **FOCUS GROUP ON CONTROL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANDING OBLIGATION**

This focus group is currently dealing with a request received from the Scheveningen Group to advise on a possible revision of the pelagic discard plan in the North Sea. The conclusions will be presented at the PELAC meeting on 28 February 2017.

The focus group has also provided a recommendation on the use of footnotes to mitigate demersal bycatch problems in pelagic fisheries which was unanimously endorsed by the Executive Committee. The recommendation can be accessed here:

<http://www.pelagic-ac.org/media/pdf/1617%20PAC24%20footnotes.pdf>

If you want to get involved in any of the focus groups please contact the secretariat.



## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### **WORKING GROUP I AND II MEETING AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (28 FEBRUARY 2017, THE HAGUE)**

The next PELAC meeting will take place on 28 February 2017 in The Hague dealing with an evaluation of 2016 and a number of ongoing matters in relation to regionalization, the implementation of the landing obligation, the development of multi-annual management plans and technical measures.

For more information and to access meeting documents please visit:

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

## 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 Pelagic AC's "Rules of procedure" or contact the secretariat.

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

The Pelagic AC Secretariat wishes you a happy, healthy  
and successful 2017!



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