

# The North Sea Advisory Council



**NSAC**

## Meeting Report

**Executive Committee Meeting  
The Danish AgriFish Agency  
Nyropsgade 30  
Copenhagen  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**Rapporteur: Tony Hawkins**

**Draft (5)**

### **1 Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 The chairman Niels Wichmann welcomed participants to the meeting. He thanked Jakob Munkhoej Nielsen from the Danish Agriculture & Fisheries Agency for hosting the meeting at their offices in Copenhagen. A *tour de table* followed.
- 1.2 The agenda for the meeting was adopted with the addition of a briefing on the Market Advisory Council, to be presented under Any Other Business.
- 1.3 There were apologies from Caroline Gamblin, Karsten Kristensen, Geert Meun, and Euan Dunn.

### **2 Report of the Last Meeting**

- 2.1 The Rapporteur presented the report of the last ExCom meeting, held in Stockholm on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014. The report was approved.
- 2.2 Lorna Duguid reported on progress of actions from the last meeting:
  - Michael Park and Christine Absil were re-elected as the ExCom vice-chairs.



- The three Working Group Chairs were re-elected (Demersal WG, Barrie Deas; Skagerrak and Kattegat WG, Carl Jesper Hermansen; Spatial Planning WG, Euan Dunn).
- The bid from Loughine Ltd (Dr Tony Hawkins) for rapporteur duties and the bid from Elle Dee (Lorna Duguid) for the Secretariat role were accepted.
- The draft Work Plan for 2015 was agreed and had been passed to the General Assembly for approval.
- The draft Budget for 2014-15 was approved.
- A draft paper on Fishing Opportunities for 2015 was approved and was forwarded to the Commission on the 26<sup>th</sup> September.
- A draft advice paper on a Fishing Plan for the Farne Deepes was not agreed. However, a revised version went forward to the DWG meeting and was approved on the 4<sup>th</sup> February and then submitted to the Commission following submission of the draft *Nephrops* Long Term Management Plan.
- A Focus Group to consider the Landing Obligation had met on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of October to prepare draft advice that had then been considered at the February DWG meeting.
- Members had attended meetings of the Scheveningen Group.
- Funding had been sought for a focus group on the North Sea Stock Surveys. However no EMF funding has been allocated for international projects. National Projects have not yet been launched.
- A meeting of the Pulse Fishing Focus Group had taken place on November 17th.
- The NWWAC is keen to cooperate on joint workshop on sea bass we are working with them to agree a suitable date A response from Commission on sea bass had been non-committal regarding the publication of measures.
- A small balanced group had been proposed for considering the issues arising from the draft advice paper on the Management of Cod. However, it was agreed at the DWG that comments on cod would be incorporated into advice on the Mixed Fishery LTMP.

2.3 David Anderson asked what the difference was between a Focus Group and a Drafting Group. Lorna Duguid replied that all sub-groups were Focus groups, and they met to discuss topics and then draft papers. The group that had met in London to discuss the Landing Obligation had drafted papers on phasing and exemptions and had been forwarded these to the DWG. Niels Wichmann asked Lorna to produce a short paper on the different groups and their functions. The final group for approving documents was always the Executive Committee but sometimes the Commission did look at our draft papers, both through attending meetings and seeing them on the NSAC website.



- 2.4 Jan Willem Wijnstroom asked about the time frame for the sea bass workshop. Also, who would be leading it? A report was required as soon as possible. Lorna Duguid replied that it would be held sometime after the next NWWAC meeting on the 20/21<sup>st</sup> April and the aim was to have the meeting as quickly as possible. Members would be updated on the date of this meeting.

### **3 Scheveningen Group Update**

- 3.1 There are three different levels of Scheveningen Group meetings. The High Level Group consists of the directors of fisheries departments within the North Sea Member States. We attend those meetings item-by-item, if invited. We have attempted to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding with that group but they have rejected our overtures. We still aspire to attend the entire meeting. The Technical Group consists of administrators. Again we attend only part of the meeting. The Control Group meets to discuss control issues – we have no direct membership of that, but keep in touch with developments through national representatives.
- 3.2 We had presented our advice on the phasing of the Landing Obligation, arrived at by majority decision (with a minority position described) to the High Level Group. The paper had proposed phasing species-by-species, breaking the clusters of species provided in Article 15 of the basic regulation. The high level group had told us that this approach was not possible. It had to be an approach based on defined fisheries. We had subsequently considered a hybrid approach and had discussed a draft paper setting this out at the last DWG meeting. However, the DWG had concluded that the hybrid approach would only lead to confusion and that we would stand by our original advice supporting a species-by-species approach. That decision had been recorded in a further draft document: with the minority positions appended.
- 3.3 The NSAC position had been described to the High Level Group, when it met with the NSAC in Paris on 17<sup>th</sup> February. It had been surprising at that meeting that the Commission had indicated that the unfinished, unadopted NSAC hybrid paper could provide the basis for a workable approach to implementing the landings obligation. However, the Technical Group was now working on a metier-by-metier approach. It is intended that the Technical Group will now meet every month to consider the options. We will await their proposals and will comment upon them in due course.
- 3.4 Barrie Deas added that the Scheveningen Group at the Copenhagen meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February appeared not to be making much progress on phasing, and on defining the fisheries. An approach based on the various fisheries defined under the cod management plan seemed a likely outcome. Pim Visser wondered about consistency of our approach with the deliberations of the NWW Group. They had put forward a discard plan to be activated in 2016. Barrie replied that attempts were being made by some Member States to achieve coherence, but only time would tell. The NWW group had chosen to



adopt a fisheries approach, and wanted individual fishers to define which fishery they were pursuing. This might be done on a trip-by-trip basis, using the clusters defined in the basic regulation. Defining the fisheries is probably the most important decision to be taken at this stage. We have to follow these developments closely.

- 3.5 Michael Park said that a major consideration is what will be put in place by 2016. Kenn Skau Fischer thought that the Member States within the Scheveningen Group did not seem to have adopted a common approach. They haven't even agreed on what they have agreed! The High Level Group had told us that we cannot break away from the clusters listed in the basic regulation, but in fact this is what some Member States were now suggesting should be done. They are proposing that the cod cluster and the plaice/sole cluster should be broken up. Michael Park added that the NWW technical group had initially reached an overall consensus but now that they were considering things in greater detail all sorts of problems are arising. They may need to refocus.
- 3.6 Pim Visser thought that control and enforcement was the key issue. What had happened at the last meeting of the Control Group in Vigo? Niels Wichmann replied that the Administrative Board of the Control Agency, which meets with the Commission, has only one observer present, representing all the Advisory Councils. He had been that representative but all that they had discussed had been the administration of the Control Agency. There is also an Advisory Board, with representatives from all the Advisory Councils. There had been a seminar on experiences with the Landing Obligation, which had taken place before the Administrative Board meeting, but the Advisory Councils' observer had not been allowed to attend. Another seminar is to take place on the 24/25<sup>th</sup> June to which we will be invited. We can discuss the control issues with them then.
- 3.7 John Anderson suggested that it had been a mistake to present our second advice paper on phasing to the Scheveningen Group, if in fact it had been presented. Barrie Deas replied that this had not been a mistake, as the NSAC had not at any point presented the hybrid paper. The paper was a draft that had been prepared for the DWG meeting. That approach to phasing had subsequently been rejected by the DWG in favour of returning to a species-by-species approach. The Commission had seen our draft, and had suggested to the Scheveningen Group that the hybrid approach discussed in the paper might be worked upon further. Michael Park added that the Commission had used our draft as an example of an approach that might work. Did the Commission think it was appropriate to take up an approach outlined in a draft paper that had later been rejected by the NSAC?
- 3.8 Edgars Goldmanis had not been at the meeting but he thought the Commission had simply presented the paper as a draft that might contain useful ideas. It was not the official position of the Commission. Niels Wichmann said that we



had made it clear to the Scheveningen Group that the paper presented no longer set out the position taken by the NSAC.

- 3.9 Pim Visser wondered whether we could split our website into papers accessible to all, and papers only accessible to members. Niels pointed out that the Commission and Member States were effectively members of the NSAC and we could not hide papers from them. Sam Stone wondered whether we should leave the NSAC logo off papers that had not been approved by the Executive Committee. However, it is already customary however for draft papers to be clearly marked as such, and to include a note stating that the paper is not yet advice from the NSAC. That may be sufficient. Lorna Duguid was asked to look into the various options.
- 3.10 Irene Kingma asked whether there is a drafting group working on the control issues arising from the Landing Obligation. Niels replied that there are different regional Control Groups that are working on the control issues in their regional areas. The Commission has also asked Member States to comment on the earlier control regulation and how it has functioned, with a review to revising it. However, the NSAC does not have any formal links with these control groups. The Landing Obligation will require logbooks to be implemented after each haul in future, whereas under the control regulation they are completed each day. We do have strong grounds for wishing to engage with these control groups.

#### **4 Demersal Working Group Update**

- 4.1 Barrie Deas reported that the Demersal Working Group had met in Copenhagen on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The main item discussed was the implementation of the Landing Obligation. The current position is that the Scheveningen High Level Group is going to ask the Commission for guidance on the breaking of the clusters, and on quota uplift. The DWG will be keeping an eye on developments with respect to these issues. In the meantime the DWG has produced a revision of its advice paper on exemptions to the Landing Obligation for consideration today by the Executive Committee.
- 4.2 A paper has been circulated from the eNGOs on quota distribution and the implementation of Article 17 of the basic regulation. This will be discussed at the DWG at its April meeting. Barrie reported that the UK High Court had recently rejected a legal challenge by Greenpeace to the English quota allocation system. Greenpeace had claimed that the system did not comply with Article 17. However, the High Court had rejected the claim and ruled that the current quota system did meet the requirements of Article 17.
- 4.3 Draft advice had been produced by Danish fishers in response to the Commission's proposals for a new framework for technical measures in the reformed CFP. Their draft advice paper had been discussed by the DWG,



revised, and the revised version commented upon by different parties. The paper was on the table for approval today.

- 4.4. A Mixed Fishery Focus Group had met yesterday to consider a draft advice paper on the Commission's proposals for the development of a Mixed Fishery Plan for the North Sea Demersal Fisheries. Because of increasing cod biomass there is probably no longer a need to treat cod as a special case, as proposed by the original paper. The group had worked on the text and a new draft, incorporating the changes that had been discussed, would be available next week for further comment. It would then be adopted through written procedure.
- 4.5. The Pulse Fishing Focus Group had recently met, and the Brown Shrimp Focus group had been re-established. Both subjects were on the agenda for today. It was also intended that the NSAC would work with the NWWAC on measures for the management of sea bass.

## **5 Technical Measures**

- 5.1 A response by the North Sea Advisory Council to the Commission's proposal for the Development of a New Framework for Technical Measures in the Reformed CFP had been prepared, discussed and then revised. The Executive Committee adopted the revised paper without further change. It would now be submitted to the Commission.

## **6 Implementation of the Landing Obligation**

- 6.1 A paper on the *Implementation of the EU Landings Obligation for the Demersal Fisheries of the North Sea: Exemptions & Other Issues* had been prepared. Comments on the paper had been received following the DWG and a revised version of the paper prepared for adoption. There were some queries with the adoption process of this paper, as Stella Nemecky had asked for written procedure in the last meeting. As the paper was not circulated as agreed (see meeting report 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 - point 5.9), both Samuel Stone and Stella Nemecky wished to submit late comments, making further changes to the paper. They were asked to go through their points.
- 6.2 Samuel Stone wished to insert a minority statement on behalf of the Marine Conservation Society with respect to establishing a minimum benchmark for survivability. The MCS understands that different fisheries will have different factors influencing post capture survival and therefore wide ranging survivability rates, but believes that a minimum standard should be set, which would be the same for all species. The MCS believes this would help make decisions for



high survivability more objective. Michael Andersen responded that the scientific advice from STECF had been that it is not possible simply to select a single percentage survival value and apply this to all species. Stella Nemecky wished to join this minority position. It was agreed that a footnote would be inserted, stating the minority position of the MCS and WWF.

- 6.3 The MCS also objected to the proposal to harmonise the MCRS values for *Nephrops* between the Skagerrak/Kattegat and the North Sea at the level of the North Sea. It would make more sense to harmonize both regions MCRS at a length corresponding to the length at maturity. Currently in the North Sea, the MLS is below the length at maturity for male *nephrops*. So harmonization at length at maturity would mean a small increase for North Sea and a reduction for the Skagerrak/Kattegat. Stella Nemecky of the WWF agreed and Jan Willem Wijnstroom of the EAA agreed. Indeed, they would like to set the MCRS for all species at or above the length at which they reached maturity. It was agreed that this would be inserted as a minority position. Jan Willem Wijnstroom also asked that sea bass be added to the list in paragraph 2.6 of species potentially eligible for exemption subject to defined conditions. There was no objection to this.
- 6.4 Christine Absil was concerned that these late comments from the eNGOs had not received full consideration before the meeting. She would like everyone's comments to have been considered earlier. Niels Wichmann said that we would make that point in the report of this meeting. We will also discuss the procedures for agreeing on papers at the next meeting of the NSAC Directors.
- 6.5 Antony Viera also wished to raise points on behalf of Caroline Gamblin of CNPMM. Caroline objected to paragraph 5.2 suggesting the harmonisation of MCRS levels across the North Sea. French fishers thought it was too early to seek changes in designated landing sizes. It was agreed that a footnote would be inserted saying that this proposal was not supported by the CPNMEM.
- 6.6 Caroline also objected to paragraph 3.6, on disproportionate handling costs. Niels Wichmann said that we should keep this paragraph as it was but record Caroline's dissent in the report of the Executive Committee meeting.
- 6.7 Stella Nemecky objected to paragraph 5.2 suggesting the harmonisation of MCRS values across the North Sea at the lowest level of the two sizes.
- 6.8 It was agreed that the Landing Obligation Exemptions paper would now be revised to reflect these discussions, noting the minority positions. It will then be adopted.

## 7 Commission Proposals for a Mixed Fishery Plan



- 7.1 A Focus Group had met yesterday to discuss the draft advice to the Commission on its proposals for a Mixed Fishery Plan for the North Sea demersal fisheries. The Commission had announced that it would be holding another seminar on this subject, and we looked forward to participating. Barrie Deas noted that further scientific work is taking place with respect to different management scenarios. We had heard from Chris Darby on the ICES advice and from Steve Mackinson on the options considered under the GAP2 programme. There was also the DEMARA project taking place in the Celtic Sea, and we have asked the NWWAC to keep us up-to-date on developments within that project. We need to keep a close eye on these scientific developments, as we needed to provide input into the management options being examined by the scientific models.
- 7.2 Jan Willem Wijnstroom asked whether there would be another meeting of the Focus Group. Barrie replied that the next stage would be to revise our initial advice paper and circulate the new draft. The draft would be sent out on the 16<sup>th</sup> March. Comments would be invited before the end of March. The paper will be recirculated on April 3<sup>rd</sup> for approval at the Demersal Working Group meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> April. The Commission's deadline for a response to the consultation paper was the 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The paper sets out our own advice. The Commission's new consultation paper now asks a series of questions on which they are seeking answers. We will need to consider those questions in the light of our advice paper, perhaps through the formation of a small sub-group, and then consider producing a second paper. One important factor to consider will be the involvement of Norway, as ultimately it will have to agree to any TAC proposals coming forward for the North Sea.
- 7.3 Samuel Stone suggested that the discussion of Productivity/Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) in the paper might mention the application of this method to effects on benthic fauna. Michael Andersen and others were against that. They thought we should simply keep our eye on these new scientific developments. The Rapporteur said that PSA was a method of risk analysis that could be applied to many different problems. At this stage it would be sufficient to simply state that fact.

## **8 Nephrops Focus Group Update**

- 8.1 Michael Park reported that the draft *Nephrops* Long Term Management Plan had now been submitted to the Commission, together with a paper discussing a fishing plan for the Farne Deeps. We were now awaiting comments from the Commission and STECF. He thanked everyone who had contributed, over many years to the Plan. In response to a question from Samuel Stone, Michael explained that the Farne Deeps paper was simply providing an example of the application of a fishing plan within the wider context of the Long Term Plan. It



was now for the Commission to consider it as an example of the way forward. When new scientific advice was available for the different Functional Units, and STECF had commented on the ideas we had presented, we might look more closely at the provision of definitive advice for the Farne Deeps.

## 9 Pulse Fishing Focus Group Update

- 9.1 Peter Breckling reported on progress with the Pulse Fishing Focus Group. There had been two meetings, and a WEBEX discussion. Scientists and Dutch Government representatives had been involved in both meetings. There have since been bilateral discussions within the group to clarify particular suggestions. A number of documents had been prepared. Paper 4.4 for this meeting highlights the risks from pulse fishing and reaches some conclusions about these. Future needs for research have also been listed.
- 9.2 The paper points out that the procedures for introducing new fishing gears and technologies are not entirely clear within the EU in relation to general criteria for licensing and allocation of licenses in European waters. Some members of the group had not been happy with the large number of licences issued to Dutch fishers for pulse fishing and had recommended that there should be no further allocation of Dutch licenses in the North Sea until a full evaluation of the research and monitoring programme had been carried out.
- 9.3 Heather Hamilton added that there had not yet been time to discuss “best practice” in relation to public consultation and information gathering on the introduction of new gears, especially in relation to Natura 2000 legislation. In her view the introduction of pulse fishing in a Natura 2000 site would be subject to the rules for “appropriate assessment” under Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive<sup>1</sup>. Samuel Stone also thought that the paper should point out that the introduction of any new gear or fishery needs to be assessed for its effects. Peter Breckling pointed out that this was only a discussion paper, and that dealing with Natura 2000 issues was a controversial issue within the group. Pim Visser said that there does need to be an assessment, as following a court case any new gear is regarded as a “new project” and has to be assessed for its effects under the Natura 2000 legislation. Peter Breckling agreed that Natura 2000 is currently clear on fisheries management issues, but DG Environment is about to modify the methods of assessment and the future position is not yet clear. Heather Hamilton thought that section 4 of the conclusion for the paper did need to be modified to say pulse fishing as any other gear can only be allowed within Natura 2000 MPAs in compliance with the applicable legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the EU Habitats Directive an appropriate assessment is required for new projects/plans to assess possible negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites



- 9.4 Christine Absil was unhappy with the restrictions placed on the issue of Dutch licenses in the North Sea. This still allowed other countries to submit requests for licences but prevented the Dutch from doing so. It was pointed out that other countries like the UK and Belgium might wish to acquire licences for their vessels to fish with pulse gears. Member States can allocate up to 5% of their licences to new gears. However, the Dutch had already allocated 24%, exceeding the normal limit. We could not restrict Member States' rights under existing legislation.
- 9.5 It was agreed that 3 weeks would be allowed for written comments on the pulse fishing paper. Then a WEBEX would be held to discuss and agree a final version of the document. Comments should be submitted to the Secretariat.

## **10 Spatial Planning Working Group Update**

- 10.1 A meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> November had discussed a paper on stakeholder engagement in spatial planning. There had been very close discussions with Forewind on their Dogger Bank proposals. Forewind had now been given planning consent for their wind farm developments. Creyke Beck will be the first stage of development in the Dogger Bank Zone. Creyke Beck A will be located in the southern part of the designated area. Creyke Beck B will be located in the western part of the area, and will be larger. These constitute the largest renewable energy development ever to receive planning consent in the UK.
- 10.2 There is disappointment that the development of a Dogger Bank fisheries management plan has been delayed, and the Working Group was not able to discuss this topic further. Everything has stalled because of differences of opinion between the three Member States (Germany, Denmark and the UK). They may now each produce their own fisheries management plans.
- 10.3 We may need to reflect on the future of the Spatial Planning Working Group and to decide the nature of the advice that the group is required to give to the NSAC. Members are invited to send suggestions to Euan Dunn on issues they would like the group to discuss. There are also opportunities for new members to join this group. Pim Visser pointed out that discussions on the Dogger Bank issues had now calmed down but some new Belgian proposals were coming forward that would need to be discussed by the group.

## **11 Skagerrak & Kattegat Working Group Update**



11.1 The Working Group had met on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Participants had considered the outcome of the EU/Norway negotiations from February, at which the NSAC had been represented. The following issues had then been discussed:

- A long-term management plan was being developed for shrimps, with provision for real-time closures and technical rules
- Some cross-border control problems had been identified. However, Danish and Swedish fishers thought there were few problems and the rules did not need to change
- The implementation of the Landing Obligation is going to be very complicated in the Skagerrak
- There has been an explosion in the numbers of cod in the Kattegat and discarding is taking place
- There is on-going discussion of closed areas in the Kattegat
- There are continuing pollution problems from a Swedish factory in the Kattegat and legal proceedings will commence in June

## 12 ICES Update

12.1 Cristina Morgado presented an update from ICES, including an overview of the plans for 2015. The ICES calendar is now available. Cristina's presentation would also be made available on the NSAC website, with appropriate links. The North Sea Benchmark meeting reports would soon be available for North Sea cod, red mullet and sole. Much of the ICES advice is recurrent. Amongst the non-recurrent advice being considered are:

- DG Environment requests relating to the MSFD
- Fmsy ranges
- By-catch of cetaceans
- Vulnerable marine habitats
- Monitoring of plastic particles

Other developments included:

- Work on data-limited stocks



- Providing Fmsy proxies
- Criteria for frequency of the assessments without compromising quality (there is a big problem with the workload)
- Manual on Landing Obligation survival rates
- New format for ICES advice. Popular advice sheets will be available in the future.

Benchmarks for 2016 would include:

- Sandeel
- Dab
- Witch
- Whiting
- North Sea saithe
- *Nephrops* in the Skagerrak and Kattegat
- *Nephrops* in the Norwegian Deep

If NSAC representatives wished to attend these benchmark meetings we would need to inform the ICES Secretariat. If anyone has data that they would like to be put forward then it can be sent for consideration at the data compilation workshops that will take place at the end of the year.

12.2 A meeting is planned in April to consider the Landing Obligation Survival Guidelines, setting out advice on the conduct of survival experiments. A manual should be available by the end of the year.

12.3 The new format of ICES advice will address fisheries issues; integrate with ecosystem advice; introduce simplification; seek multiple communication avenues; and achieve greater efficiency. For each ecosystem there will be ecosystem overviews, taking the next steps towards an ecosystem approach to fisheries.

12.4 Jan Willem Wijnstroom asked whether ICES advice on by-catch species would include salmon and sea trout. The answer was no, it would not.



## 13 EDF Discard Reduction Guide

- 13.1 Erik Lindebo of the Environmental Defense Fund introduced a forthcoming publication: the EDF EU Discard Reduction Guide. One of the most pressing and topical issues is how to meet the requirements of the Landing Obligation, which requires fishermen to land, record and account for all catch. The Guide outlines a number of smart quota and selectivity tools to help implement the Landing Obligation. It also features case studies demonstrating the possibility of reducing discarding while maintaining profitability. The Guide is not prescriptive; rather, it discusses different options that can be tailored to the diverse circumstances of fisheries in EU waters.
- 13.2 Examples are given in the Guide of successful actions to reduce discards. One of these is the Pacific Whiting Conservation Project. A combination of both quota and selectivity tools provides a real opportunity to secure improved flexibility, innovation and economic performance, while at the same time enabling industry to meet stringent environmental targets, both at EU and national level. It is essential that these tools are combined with effective monitoring and enforcement to ensure fishermen can achieve full accountability and prove compliance with the rules through fully documented fisheries. The Guide will be available in the near future.
- 13.3 Peter Breckling thought that it seemed to be a worthwhile use of U.S. charitable funds to produce such a guide, but it might not introduce any new ideas to European fishers. Pim Visser believed the Guide would be useful but it seemed to concentrate on regulatory issues, rather than achieving better selectivity. For example, what could be done to separate sole and plaice, which is a major problem? Erik Lindebo would look at this.

## 14 Feedback from Meetings Attended

- 14.1 Pim Visser had attended a meeting on wind farms organised by the North Sea Commission. There had been some discussion of the need for an Advisory Council involving sectors other than fisheries. The North Sea Interreg Programme may have funding for this.
- 14.2 Samuel Stone and Irene Kingma had attended an ICES Workshop on MSFD Descriptor 3, which requires populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish to be within safe biological limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock. Three criteria were being considered:

Under D3 there are 3 criterion which need to be assessed individually and met in order to reach Good Environmental Status by 2020. These are:



- 3.1 Level of pressure of the fishing activity
- 3.2 Reproductive capacity of the stock-
- 3.3 Population age and size distribution

Indicators for the first two of these are already operational: Fmsy for fishing pressure; and MSY Btrigger for reproductive capacity. For 3.3 – age and size distribution, there is no current indicator in use and the primary aim of this workshop was to further consider/review the potential candidates for this criterion.

A number of potential candidates had been put forward at previous workshops, and it was decided that most of these should be tested and evaluated through a series of technical workshops (in a process similar to the process used for benchmarking stocks). A technical workshop is proposed to be held in Lisbon in October (not yet confirmed). This means it is unlikely that indicators will be put in place for at least another 12 months. It is possible that different indicators will be adopted in different regions.

A formal version of the meeting report should be available next week.

- 14.3 Pim Visser said that monitoring programmes for these indicators were supposed to be in place by now, even though the benchmarks had not been decided yet. Irene thought that in some cases the descriptors themselves might provide the indicators. Pim Visser emphasised that the impact of the Directive on the day-to-day activities of fishermen ought to be taken into account. Fishermen have to fish selectively in order avoid catching small fish. Now it was likely that they will have to fish selectively to avoid large fish!

## **15 NSAC Participation in Research Projects**

### **GAP 2**

- 15.1 Michael Park had attended a meeting in Barcelona, where different work groups had been formed, some of them including fishers and fishery managers. Everyone agreed that fishers needed to be at the heart of participation in fisheries management. The meeting had been useful and participants had been enthusiastic but it was now necessary to build on that enthusiasm and use it to bring about change. The GAP2 project was now almost complete. There would not be a GAP 3 project. .

### **MAREFRAME**



15.2 Lorna Duguid had attended the annual meeting of MAREFRAME in Aberdeen. The project was trying to develop an ecosystem approach to managing fisheries. The project was still at an early stage and although much reference had been made to involving stakeholders there were no fishers present. We do need to become involved in this project, perhaps through John Pope who leads the North Sea component. We would be inviting John to attend the next Demersal Working Group meeting.

### **MYFISH**

15.4 Anna Rindorf of DTU Aqua (Denmark) is the project scientific coordinator of the MYFISH project, which is addressing MSY problems. They had been working on MSY ranges rather than points for the North Sea, and were also very active in considering the multi-annual plan for the North Sea. A project meeting is being held in Majorca in 2 weeks time and a symposium is planned for Athens in October. The project was grateful to the NSAC for its support

### **DISCARDLESS**

15.5 Clara Ulrich gave an update on the DISCARDLESS project, which provided scientific support for the Landing Obligation. The MINIDISC project was aimed at reducing discards in Danish fisheries. Fourteen vessels were involved in the study. The data were currently being processed. Some fishers had been switching mesh sizes to avoid discards while others were seeking high creativity solutions. Each vessel had its own strategy. Work will continue until the end of June. The full DISCARDLESS programme was developing strategies for the gradual elimination of discards in European fisheries. It had started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March with 31 partners in 12 different countries. The project aims to develop new science, but is also collecting and sharing knowledge developed locally/nationally. Discards Mitigation Strategies (DMS) are being developed, compared and disseminated. Marine Scotland Science (Coby Needle) is coordinating a meeting in Bilbao on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and anyone interested in attending should put their names forward.

15.6 Simon Collins pointed out that in 90% of fisheries the actual quotas were out of phase with the abundance of fish. This was the central problem leading to discarding, and yet the DISCARDLESS project was not addressing this. Clara replied that the project was considering where science could make a difference. Several people from the NSAC did want to attend the meeting, which coincided with a NWWAC meeting in Bilbao.



## **16 Finance Reports**

16.1 Lorna Duguid commented on the reports. The budget was overspent in some areas but the overspend will cancel out over the financial year. Some additional expenses had been incurred on Internet connections. The audited accounts for the previous year had been circulated and submitted to the Commission. On the deficit, there were two outstanding payments to be made and then the deficit would be cleared.

## **17 Membership**

17.1 An application from BLUEFISH to join the NSAC General Assembly had been accepted by the Member States members. The application was approved by the Executive Committee.. A problem had been encountered over the European Transport Workers Federation, where membership had been redefined by the EC; they had to be transferred from the “others” group to the Fishing Industry group. We now had one member too many in the latter group. The European Association of Fishing Ports and Auctions had not paid their membership fees nor attended recent meetings, and it was agreed that they would be withdrawn from the membership.

## **18 Next Meeting of the ExCom**

18.1 The next meeting of the ExCom will take place on the 19<sup>th</sup> June in Edinburgh.

## **19 Any Other Business**

19.1 Guus Pastoor provided information on the setting up of the new Market Advisory Council (to be set up at the same time as a new Aquaculture Advisory Council). The Council would focus on all aspects of marketing seafood across Europe. An application was currently going forward to the Commission, but there were challenges in obtaining the requisite 60:40 representation ratio on the Council. A stakeholder meeting will be held within the next 2 months. Anyone interested in joining the Council should contact AIPCE (the European Fish Processors Association).

19.2 Lorna Duguid emphasised the importance of registering for NSAC meetings in good time. In future participation will be closed 4 working days before the meeting to ensure that there is space for all those wishing to attend.



- 19.3 Pim Visser, on behalf of Euan Dunn said that there was a need for rules and criteria on reporting from NSAC members representing the NSAC at external meetings. Niels Wichmann said that this topic had been discussed at the Directors meeting held that morning and it had been agreed that a template would be prepared.
- 19.4 The meeting closed at 3.30 pm with the Chairman thanking the interpreters for their work.



## Action Points

Action	Responsible
1. A short paper will be prepared on the different NSAC groups and their functions (2.3)	Secretariat
2. Members will be informed in due course on the date and location of a proposed meeting with the NWWAC on sea bass (2.4)	Secretariat
3. The NSAC will look at the different options for marking papers to make it clear that they are drafts and not final NSAC advice (3.9)	Secretariat
4. A paper from the eNGOs on quota distribution and the implementation of Article 17 of the basic regulation will be discussed by the DWG at its April meeting (4.2)	eNGOs Secretariat
5. The revised paper from the NSAC commenting on the Commission's proposal for the Development of a New Framework for Technical Measures in the Reformed CFP was adopted without further change. It will now be submitted to the Commission (5.1)	Secretariat
6. The draft NSAC paper on Implementation of the EU Landings Obligation for the Demersal Fisheries of the North Sea: Exemptions & Other Issues, will be revised to include minority positions as footnotes. The paper was adopted and will now be submitted to the Commission (6.3; 6.5; 6.7).	Rapporteur Secretariat
7. Procedures for agreeing papers in writing will be discussed at the next meeting of NSAC Directors (6.4)	Secretariat Directors
8. The draft advice paper on a mixed fishery plan for the North Sea demersal fisheries will be sent out on the 16 <sup>th</sup> March for comment before the end of March. The paper will be recirculated on April 3 <sup>rd</sup> for approval at the Demersal Working Group meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> April (7.2).	Rapporteur Members Secretariat
9. The Commission's new consultation paper on a mixed fishery plan now asks a series of questions. Those questions will be considered separately by a small group, and a second advice paper developed if necessary (7.2).	Chairman Secretariat
10. Three weeks will be allowed for written comments on the draft NSAC Pulse Fishing Paper. Then a WEBEX will be held to discuss and agree a final version of the document. Comments should be submitted to the Secretariat (9.5)	Members Secretariat
11. Members are invited to send suggestions to Euan Dunn on	Members



issues they would like the Spatial Planning Working Group to discuss. New members may submit requests to join this group (10.3).	Euan Dunn
12. NSAC representatives wishing to attend the ICES benchmark meetings will need to inform ICES through the NSAC Secretariat. (12.1)	Members Secretariat
13. Eric Lindebo of EDF will look at sources of advice on separating sole from plaice (13.3).	Eric Lindebo
14. The NSAC will be inviting John Pope from the MAREFRAME Project to attend the next Demersal Working Group meeting (15.2)	Secretariat
15. Anyone interested in attending the DISCARDLESS meeting to be held in Bilbao on April 22 <sup>nd</sup> should put their names forward through the NSAC Secretariat (15.5).	Members Secretariat
16. The European Association of Fishing Ports and Auctions membership of the NSAC would be withdrawn. (17.1).	Secretariat

### Attendance

Surname	First Name	Organisation
Absil	Christine	Seas at Risk
Andersen	Michael	Danish Fishermen
Andersen	Svend Erik	Danish Fishermen
Anderson	David	AFPO
Anderson	John	SFO
Bentsen	Siri	Danish AgriFish Agency
Breckling	Peter	Deutscher Fischerei-Verband
Brouckaert	Emiel	Rederscentrale CV
Collins	Simon	SFF
Dachicourt	Bruno	ETWF
Deas	Barrie	NFFO



Doeksen	Anne	Seas at Risk
Duguid	Lorna	NSAC
Fischer	Kenn Skau	Danish Fishermen
Goldmanis	Edgars	European Commission
Hamilton	Heather	Client Earth
Hawkins	Tony	NSAC
Kingma	Irene	Dutch Elasmobranch Society
Lindberg	Fredrik	Swedish Fishermen's Federation
Lindebo	Erik	EDF
Locker	Arnold	NFFO
Morgado	Cristina	ICES
Nemecky	Stella	WWF
Nielsen	Jakob Munkhoej	Danish Ministry
Norlenius	Jan	Swedish Fishermen's Federation
Park	Michael	SFF
Pastoor	Guus	AIPCE/CEP
Pederson	Søren Anker	Marine Ingredients Denmark
Rindorf	Anna	DTU Aqua
Stavnes	Camilla Løvaas	North Sea Commission
Stride	Frank	SFO
Stone	Samuel	MCS
Ulrich	Clara	DTU Aqua
Viera	Antony	CNPMEM



Visser	Pim	VisNed
Wichmann	Niels	Chairman and Danish Fishermen
Wijnstroom	Jan Willem	European Anglers' Alliance

