



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Brussels, 23.04.2009 D 04466
D(2009)

Mr Hugo Andersson
NSRAC Secretariat
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen AB16 5GB
United Kingdom

Subject: Category 6 Stocks

Dear Mr. Andersson

I refer to the NSRAC's advice concerning the management of fish stocks without catch option tables (according to your letter of 25 March).

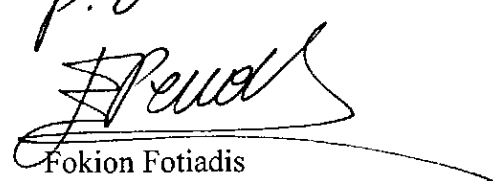
As you know, a meeting was held on this topic on 13 February at which NSRAC representatives assisted. Based on the outcome of that meeting, a request for advice from ICES was drafted (see Annex). At this stage, the Commission will take no further action on this topic until ICES have responded to that request. I expect this to be in mid-June 2009.

I appreciate the comments you have sent me. Your greatest concern is concerning the use of information other than formal stock assessments in determining the state of fish stocks. I believe that concern has been catered for because we have asked ICES to use any representative stock abundance information in order to signal changes in TAC levels. The availability of information of varying quality is therefore catered for. ICES, in this case, will be the arbiters of data quality.

My services were also aware of the difficulties in estimating F_{msy} . As you will see from the request, we are asking ICES to use appropriate proxies on a case-by-case basis. I think that is the right body to address the issue.

We shall surely return to this topic when ICES have provided their advice. Meanwhile, I thank you and your members for your positive comments on our initiative.

Yours sincerely

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ANNEX : DRAFT REQUEST TO ICES

For those stocks, excluding naturally short-lived species, where it is not possible to provide an advice based on a catch forecast in relation to precautionary limits, ICES is requested to:

- a) Advise on a TAC corresponding to the application of the rule in Annex;
- b) Evaluate the consequences of implementing the rule in Annex with respect to the precautionary approach and compatibility with maximum sustainable yield;
- c) If necessary, advise on an alternative rule and the corresponding TACs that would improve compatibility with the precautionary approach, with maximum sustainable yield, or with improved stability of TACs. This could be provided on a case-by-case basis.

Annex

1. Where there is evidence that a stock is overfished with respect to the fishing mortality that will deliver maximum sustainable yield, a reduction in TAC as needed to reach Fmsy, but no greater than 15% would apply.
2. Where there is evidence that a stock is underfished with respect to the fishing mortality that will deliver maximum sustainable yield, an increase as needed to reach Fmsy, but no greater than 15%, would apply.
3. The considerations in paragraphs 1 and 2 override subsequent paragraphs.
4. Where abundance information either indicates no change in stock abundance, is not available or does not adequately reflect changes in stock abundance, an unchanged TAC would apply.
5. Where ICES considers that representative stock abundance information exists the following rule applies:
 1. If the average estimated abundance in the last two years exceeds the average estimated abundance in the three preceding years by 20% or more, a 15% increase in TAC applies.
 2. If the average estimated abundance in the last two years is 20% or more lower than the average estimated abundance in the three preceding years, a 15% decrease in TAC applies.

Where TACs have not been restrictive, and a reduction is required according to paragraph 1 or paragraph 5.2, ICES shall advise on an appropriate level of TAC reduction necessary to achieve the intended reduction in catches.

ICES shall decide on an appropriate Fmsy proxy in each case.