

## **The North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC)**

### **WG Skagerrak and Kattegat (4<sup>th</sup> meeting)**

#### **Minutes**

**June 7 2007, Fiskets Hus, Fiskhamnsgatan 33, Göteborg, Sweden**

#### **Attending members:**

Svend Erik Andersen (chairman, DF), Fredrik Lindberg (rapporteur, SFR), Arne Johannessen (DF), Henrik Svenberg (SFR), Bengt-Olof Eliasson (SFR) and Kenneth Gustafsson (SFR)

#### **Commission:**

Ernesto Peñas Lado, Head of Unit Fish A1 (Fisheries conservation)

#### **Attending observers:**

Birgitte Riber Rasmussen (Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries), Bent Pallisgaard (Danish Directorate of Fisheries), Bo Andersen (DFU), Lothar Fischer (Deutscher Fischerei Verband), Görgen Andersson (Co-management initiative for sustainable fisheries in Halland), Alf-Åke Börjesson (Co-management initiative for sustainable fisheries in Halland), Karin Linderholm (Swedish Board of Fisheries), Mia Dahlström (Swedish Board of Fisheries), Katja Ringdahl (Swedish Institute of Marine Research) and Johan Lövgren (Swedish Institute of Marine Research)

### **1. Opening and introduction**

The WG meeting was opened by the chairman Svend Erik Andersen with introduction of participants.

The chairman informed the WG that Niels Wichmann unfortunately was not able to attend today's meeting.

### **2. Adoption of agenda**

The WG adopted the agenda for the meeting as follows from these minutes.

### **3. Minutes from the WG meeting, April 13 2007**

Fredrik Lindberg presented for the attending participants the minutes from the last WG meeting, April 13 in Copenhagen.

### **4. Letter to the Commission from the WG, May 3 2007**

Henrik Svenberg presented the letter, that in accordance with what was decided at the WG meeting, April 13 in Copenhagen, was sent to the Commission, May 3.

In essence the letter from the WG pointed at the two yet unsolved questions of outmost importance for the way forward: how much kW per Member State and how that amount of kW shall be distributed over the fishing year?

### **5. Response from the Commission June 6 2007**

Henrik Svenberg presented the response from the Commission of June 6, to the letter from the WG of May 3.

It was noted that answers to the two main questions were still lacking. However, it was noted that, as it said in the response, that the Commission is extremely interested in discussing any proposals and suggestions from the RAC meetings, and specifically those that allow for the effort scheme to be in place by 1 January 2008.

### **6. Swedish effort data**

Johan Lövgren presented the latest effort data from Sweden.

### **7. Danish effort data**

Bo Andersen presented the latest effort data from Denmark.

### **8. Swedish effort trial**

Johan Lövgren presented the latest of relevance from the Swedish effort trial in the Kattegat.

The main conclusion from the trial is that the clear trend is that the catchability of cod in the Kattegat has increased.

### **9. ACFM advice on Cod, Kattegat**

Katja Ringdahl presented, the yet not official, advice from ACFM on cod, Kattegat.

## **10. The Skagerrak**

As to what was decided in Copenhagen April 13, it was agreed that Niels Wichmann and Henrik Svenberg will present the decision of the WG – to propose to the Executive Committee to decide to ask the Commission to request ICES for a separate assessment on cod, Skagerrak – at the meeting of the Executive Committee in Vienna, June 14 – 15.

Another item discussed was the trilateral agreement that Denmark and Sweden have with Norway, that Norway now has presented views on reviewing. Information as to held meetings between the Commission and Denmark and Sweden was given the WG.

It was concluded that the opinion of the WG is that the agreement shall persist.

## **11. Continuation of discussion on the way forward to an effort management scheme for the Kattegat**

Ernesto Peñas Lado started by thanking the WG for the invitation. He said initially that the Commission shares the interest of the WG in bringing the discussion forward. Bearing in mind the experiences from last year, he said, it is now time to move forward in a constructive way so that an effort management scheme for the Kattegat can be in place for 2008. Furthermore, he said that it is important to give the scheme a chance due to mainly two reasons: it is a RAC-proposal and it is important to try alternative to the existing order. As to the time schedule, he stated that the Commission will discuss more with the concerned Member States, and that it will be decided, probably in September, whether the system will have a go or not. As to the question from the WG concerning level of effort, he said that the question is raised to soon in the process. Now it is time to lay down the structure for the scheme, and latter on it is for the Council of Ministers to decide on what effort to be used in the scheme on proposal from the Commission. Additionally he said that now is the time for the WG to give input on the structure of the scheme.

Henrik Svenberg expressed the view that the lack of information as to what effort to be used in the scheme means problem in so to say clearing the road for it amongst the fishermen in Sweden. Svend Erik Andersen expressed the same view as to the Danish fishermen. Moreover Henrik Svenberg pointed to the importance of at least having some months at hand in preparing the system as from a national administration's view. He said that it would be preferable if the October Council took the decision as regards the system (and not the December Council) based on a Commission proposal adopted in September.

Ernesto Peñas Lado agreed that it is a good idea to let the October Council decide on the scheme. He also informed the WG that Norway, as contrary to what was the situation last year, has been informed all along the process and meetings have been held with representatives for Norway. As to simplifying he said that it is in the Commissions interest to do so as much as possible. He also said that the situation in the Kattegat is such that it is only one species that needs special attention – cod.

Svend Erik Andersen expressed his view as to protection of cod as it should be sufficient to restrict effort the first quarter.

Lothar Fischer stressed that since Germany has only small quotas in the Kattegat they have serious doubts of taking part in an effort management scheme. Ernesto Peñas Lado said that there are at least two ways of handling this. The first implies that the German quotas remain and the second that a special effort system is created for MS with quotas below a certain threshold as e.g. Germany, as is comparable to similar regulations within the Community legislation.

Hereafter the proposals in the Commissions non-paper of December 4, 2006 was discussed in detail as well as the question of real time closure (RTC).

Regarding table I in the non-paper, it was the opinion of the WG that the gear groups found in 2.3.1.a.i and 2.3.1.a.ii can be deleted. In conjunction herewith it was also discussed how the sufficient protection of cod shall be assured – less days the first quarter and different number of days for different gear types or rather a combination hereof is the solution hereto according to the WG. Ernesto Peñas Lado expressed that the Commission is pro simplification, to reduce complexity, as long as possible.

The WG was of the opinion that no changes shall be made as to the minimum landing sizes found in table II.

Ernesto Peñas Lado explained the thoughts behind the perhaps not so clear wording in p. 6.6 in the non-paper – integration of effort system. It was discussed how the situation is as to vessels fishing the whole year in the Kattegat and those that only do so occasionally. Johan Lövgren stated that in Sweden approximately 25 – 30 vessels out of 80 fish all the year in the Kattegat. It was the opinion of the WG that flexibility in this regard is necessary.

It was the opinion of the WG that the length unit in p. 7 should be 10 m instead of 8 m. As to management periods, it was concluded that it is enough to have two such periods – quarter 1 and quarter 2 – 4, instead of having four. As to p. 9 – notification of fishing gear – it was clear that more flexibility is needed than what follows from the wording in the non-paper.

Ernesto Peñas Lado stated that the one-net rule found in p. 10.3 is necessary from a control perspective and that p. 13.1 is an import priority for the Commission. The more that is done to reduce discards the better, he said. However, it is not realistic to introduce a total discard ban from the start, since that would create logistical problems unsolvable. The time frame for the scheme is intended to be five years starting 2008 subject to revision, though with the intention to minimize changes. The intention is to have an adaptive approach.

Svend Erik Andersen said concerning RTC that it can be one component to add if it can be guaranteed that it can function swiftly. In that respect, he said, it may be of value to have predefined areas already from the start.

The WG expressed the opinion, explicitly regarding monitoring, RTC and revision, that a close cooperation between the NSRAC's WG for the Skagerrak and the Kattegat, Member States authorities and the Commission should be set up for swift decision-making. Ernesto Peñas Lado expressed support for this view.

Regarding appendix 1 in the non-paper it was clear that the WG is of the opinion that the wording of it shall be so open and wide that it is possible to allow for improvements as to e.g. selectivity.

Furthermore a discussion took place on how to separate the quotas common for the Kattegat and the Skagerrak. The solution hereto is simply to split the quotas into one Kattegat component and one Skagerrak component, based on recent fishery, and then calculate the Skagerrak quota by plainly subtracting the Kattegat share from the total.

Regarding p. 6.1 it was again agreed that the opinion of the WG is that the effort shall be 100 per cent of the total effort deployed in 2005. The reasons here for are expressed in the minutes from the Copenhagen meeting, April 13 2007. It was concluded that this is the most difficult political decision for the December Council to decide upon and that the acceptance for the view of the WG depends on the level of cod protection in the scheme.

It was concluded that the WG shall put together a new paper with the views of the group to the Commission as soon as possible (to be adopted at the next WG meeting).

## **12. Next meeting**

The WG decided that the next meeting will take place in Copenhagen, preferably the last week of June.

## **13. Closing**

The chairman of the WG Svend Erik Andersen thanked the attendants, especially Ernesto Peñas Lado, for the constructive meeting and declared it closed.

Gothenburg, June 7 2007

Svend Erik Andersen  
Chairman

Fredrik Lindberg  
Rapporteur