

The North Sea Regional Advisory Council



Gill Net Focus Group Draft Record of Meeting February 6th, 2007, London, UK

Rapporteur: D.J.T. Berends

Draft Record

1. Apologies/Welcome/Purpose of the meeting

- 1.1 Derk Jan Berends, Chair of NSRAC's Gill Net Focus Group, welcomes everyone especially Dr. Mike Pawson (CEFAS) who joins in as an expert on Gillnetting. This meeting is the first of its kind inside the NSRAC. The chair is pleased to find a lot of fishermen as representatives of different Gillnet industries around the table. Purpose of this meeting is to analyse the Gillnetting industry of the North Sea in order to detect bottlenecks and find opportunities for the fishermen to achieve a sustainable business.

2. Background Papers & Discussion

- 2.1 For this meeting two papers were distributed by the secretary: "Gill Netting" (Mike Pawson) and "Discussion Paper – Gillnetting within the 12-Miles Zone of the North Sea Member States" (NSRAC DWG). Both papers are regarded as useful by the FG. The latter paper is used as a guide to the meeting.

The Danish industry asks the chair why specifically has been chosen to discuss Gill Netting inside the 12-Miles Zone of Member States. Most incidents between Gill Netters and other fishermen, both recreational and professional, seem to take place inside this 12-Miles Zone.

The UK industry brings in remarks on the paper that are taken on board as additions to the Discussion Paper. See attachment. This leads to discussions on different subjects summarized in the following sub paragraphs.

- 2.2 Methods: Local conditions and traditions decide what method of Gill Netting is being used. Some nets lie flat most of the time because of strong currents whilst others seem to fish mostly vertically. More knowledge is needed on the different local fisheries before proper work can be done by the FG.

- 2.3 Ghost Nets: The Industry in general claims that the majority of the nets used are made of material that will roll and collect debris as soon as they get discarded. Therefore they will stop fishing. Mike Pawson offers to provide a paper on this matter "The Catching Capacity of lost static fishing gears: Introduction (M.G. Pawson)". See attachment.
- 2.4 By-catch of cetaceans and other sea mammals: The industry in general believes that this takes place on a small scale only. Seas at Risk refers to the survey that has been undertaken by IMARES last year concluding that over 50% of the stranded porpoises in the Netherlands can be attributed to drowning in fishnets. The Dutch industry is not satisfied with this outcome and has undertaken an alternative survey including knowledge and experience of fishermen of all kind of fisheries. Further investigation is needed.
- 2.5 Recreational Gill Netting: There's a lack of knowledge on recreational fishing with Gill Nets. Before starting a proper discussion on this fishery more knowledge is needed. Mike Pawson offers to provide a paper on this matter "The definition and legal position of marine recreational fishing in Europe (M.G. Pawson)". See attachment.
- 2.6 Acoustic deterrents (Pingers): The Danish industry is satisfied with these devices to prevent by-catch of dolphins and harbour porpoises. A report on this subject will be provided by Michael Andersen. But the French industry believe that these deterrents do not fit all situations. Dinner bell effects can be noticed in some situations.
- 2.7 Predation of seals: seems to be a problem in some areas but estimations on this problem are hard to make as seals often do not leave a note behind. It's been a part of the fishing industry even since. The Danish representatives suggest investigation on the effects of huge seal populations on fish stocks.
- 2.8 Interaction with recreational fishermen: Recreational fishermen are afraid of an increase of inshore fisheries, as more tend to switch to new species that have not been properly assessed. Therefore they call for a non-netting zone of 1 mile along the coastline of Member states; the Golden Mile. This should also prevent incidents taken place between Gill Netters and Beach Anglers (Gear-conflict). By clearing the 1 Mile of nets Salmonides and other migratory fish have free movement to enter streams and waterways to complete their lifecycle. Industry representatives on the other hand reply that recreational fishermen should limit themselves in landing fish in great numbers. And they feel that if a non-netting zone is going to be erected no angling should take place in that Zone. A Code of Conduct between Sea Anglers and Gill Netters should solve gear problems locally. The Golden Mile is not agreed upon as industry and NGO's are not willing to accept that.
- 2.9 Interaction with trawlers: Gear conflicts seem to take place in all areas. Codes of conducts on marking of gear and zoning are ways to prevent problems but they generally are not sustainable. Conflicts lie in wait.

- 2.10 Catch window: NGO's suggest a minimum and maximum landing size for specific stocks like Cod. The industry predicts that this will lead to more discarding which they consider undesirable. No agreement can be made.
- 2.11 Impact assessment: The UK industry feel that a Impact Assessment for the North Sea should be made on all matters related to Gill Netting. Mike Pawson offers to help in establishing such an assessment. Mike Pawson offers to hand in a paper of the métier concept to describe fill-netting fisheries. See attachment. Both information of fishermen and national administrations is needed. Some Member states will cause problems. It's agreed that the Demersal WG will be asked to adopt this proposal of such an Impact Assessment.
- 2.12 Discussion points: Three points are added to the five existing discussion points in the paper. Change of MLS and mesh regulation is needed (VI), Investigation of benefits of Gill Netting (socio economic assessment) (VII) and Limiting of Fishing effort in Gill Netting (VIII). Next meeting points III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII will be discussed in detail. Ed Reker, Mike Pawson, Michel Couchon: maximizing amount of nets. Nils Wichman: no further limitations.

3. Action Points

Subject	What	Who	When
Ghost nets	Paper	Mike Pawson	Next meeting
Recreational Gill Netting	Paper	Mike Pawson	Next meeting
Impact assessment	Adoption of proposal	DWG	April 2007
Métier concept paper	Paper	Mike Pawson	Next meeting
(Effect of pingers on) by-catch	Report	Michael Anderson	Next meeting

4. In Attendance

Participants

Derk Jan Berends	(Chair/Rapporteur)
Mike Pawson	CEFAS
Michael Andersen	Danmarks Fiskeriforening
Nils Wichman	Danmarks Fiskeriforening
Kurt Madsen	Danmarks Fiskeriforening
Rems Cramer	Dutch Fisheries Organisation
Ed Reker	Dutch Fisheries Organisation
Nigel Proctor	EAA
Jan Willem Wijnstroom	EAA
Christien Absil	Seas at Risk
Michel Coujon	CNPMEM
John Nichols	Southern North Sea Inshore Fishermen Association
Peter J. Caunter	Southern North Sea Inshore Fishermen Association
Barrie Deas	NFFO