

The North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC)



WG Skagerrak and Kattegat (3rd meeting)

Minutes

April 13 2007, HC Andersens Boulevard 37, Copenhagen, Denmark

Attending members:

Svend Erik Andersen (chairman, DFF), Fredrik Lindberg (rapporteur, SFR), Niels Wichmann (DFF), Henrik Svenberg (SFR), Bengt-Olof Eliasson (SFR), Sonny Front (SFR), Kenneth Gustafsson (SFR) and Christoph Mathiesen (WWF)

Attending observers:

Anders Rune Bjerrum (Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries), Steen Christensen (Danish Institute for Fisheries Research), Görgen Andersson (Co-management initiative for sustainable fisheries in Halland), Mia Dahlström (Swedish National Board of Fisheries), Katja Ringdahl (Swedish Institute of Marine Research) and Daniel Valentinsson (Swedish Institute of Marine Research)

1. Opening and introduction

The WG meeting was opened by the chairman Svend Erik Andersen with introduction of members and observers.

2. Adoption of agenda

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

3. General discussion on the way forward to an effort management scheme for the Kattegat

A brief summary of what has happened so far during the process on the way towards an effort management scheme for the Kattegat was given the WG.

The WG was informed that the invitation for the meeting this day was sent out directly to the members and observers of the group as well as stated on the website of the NSRAC.

As to information from the office of the NSRAC in Aberdeen, the WG was of the opinion that improvements have to take place as to the forwarding of e-mails. The background for that opinion of the WG was the late arrival of the latest non-paper, on a fishing effort management scheme for the Kattegat, of December 4, 2006, that the WG received in February 2007, even though it was sent to the NSRAC from the Commission in mid December 2006; and the late arrival of a letter from the former Director General of GD Fish, Jörgen Holmqvist concerning a meeting on the topic the third week in January 2007, that the WG received at the same time as the said non-paper.

Since Peter Breckling, representing the German industry, could not attend the WG-meeting, Niels Wichmann, who had been in contact with him, informed the WG of the German positions. Since the Germans only have two direct quotas in the Kattegat and some in the Skagerrak/Kattegat, and since they only have a few vessels, which are fishing a few weeks of the year in the Kattegat, for mainly nephrops, sole and plaice, their position is that they would like to go on with the present regulation. However, the Germans are not against that Denmark and Sweden try to manage an effort management scheme for the Kattegat. Furthermore the Germans have a critical position as to kW-days, they do prefer days at sea.

Niels Wichmann and Steen Christensen informed the WG what was discussed, of relevance for the WG, at the STECF-meeting in Lisbon October 2006. It was e.g. expressed that the STECF-meeting noted rather than took a standpoint as to the effort management proposal. Steen Christensen expressed that nothing in the background material from STECF indicates that the proposal not can be realized.

Niels Wichmann informed the WG what was discussed at the meeting on the technical regulation for the effort management scheme for the Kattegat that the Commission arranged in Brussels 12 February, 2007 and which was attended by himself, Henrik Svenberg and Fredrik Lindberg.

The WG discussed the scheme in relation to the relevant key aspects, especially the cod recovery plan. Only 7 % of the catches from the Kattegat in value amounts to cod catches. From this the WG discussed whether it is correct to regulate 100 % out from the 7 %, and whether it is probable that the fishing for nephrops and sole in the Kattegat will be redirected at cod instead when the effort management scheme comes to place – the answer to these two questions was an obvious no.

It was agreed that two of the main questions to be answered by the Commission are: i) what effort the Commission is willing to propose; and ii) how that effort should be distributed over the quarters of the year.

Svend Erik Andersen and Niels Wichman presented for the WG how the Danish FKA-reform has affected the Danish fish-fishery and how the FKA-system is built up and functioning.

Henrik Svenberg mentioned the obvious fact that the NSRAC-proposal on an effort management scheme now is larger than any member state's interests. He also commented upon the Commission's recent communication as to discards and expressed that the most concrete proposal to this day without doubt is the NSRAC proposal.

4. Non-paper of 4 December, 2006 – A Fishing Effort Management Scheme for the Kattegat

The WG penetrated in detail the latest non-paper from the Commission.¹

As to fishing effort (p. 3) the WG was unanimous that “fishing capacity” is kW-days and nothing else.

Regarding fishing gear (p. 4) the WG discussed whether the prawn fisheries, with 35 mm mesh size, should be included or not. The WG’s opinion as to pelagic fishery is the same as previous, i.e. it should not be included.

On the subject of maximum levels of fishing effort (p. 6), it was the WG’s unanimous opinion that the Commission now has to define and propose a number in %; the view was that the so to say large questions, e.g. this one as to level of fishing effort, of X % effort of year Y, has to be solved before the other, so to say smaller, issues is discussed and solved. Niels Wichmann and Svend Erik Andersen expressed their opinion that the effort could be 100 % of the total effort deployed in 2005. The reason for this view was expressed as mainly that the fleet has decreased during a series of years and the effects of the cod recovery plan. The WG concluded that it is of outmost importance to know which level the Commission is intending to propose. Henrik Svenberg agreed that 100 % of 2005 is an appropriate starting point for discussions, whilst Steen Christensen argued that some decrease is necessary.

As regards table I, mentioned in p. 6.2, the view of the WG was that there should be a distinct incentive to use selective gears. It was agreed that there is no longer any need for the gear group 2.3.1.a.ii. The WG discussed whether it is possible to design a so to say lower trawl for the nephrop fishing. It was agreed that flexibility between the gear groups must be possible; this could e.g. be constructed as a system with a % factor on each gear group.

Concerning p. 6.5 the group’s opinion was that this creates a problem in that the present effort is based on time at sea. In this aspect there is a need for a basis of calculation.

In p. 7.1 it is expressed 8 m, according to the WG it should here instead say 10 m.

As to management periods (p. 8) there is, according to the WG, only a need for two periods: i) the first quarter, and ii) the second – fourth quarter. However, in theory a division to four periods can function as a guarantee for fishing during the whole year. The earlier thoughts on counting one day in quarter 1 as 2-5 days was again discussed, as well as the appropriateness of inserting an upper limit for the days to be used quarter 1.² The WG called attention to the fact that discussions between the Commission and the WG in this aspect must come to place.

As to notification of fishing gear (p. 9) the WG concluded that the text in the non-paper is not acceptable as it is not flexible in its approach.

Regarding discards (p. 13.2) a discussion from market aspects took place. It was agreed that the opinion of the WG is that no minimum landing sizes shall be changed. However, the WG is of the view that in the future all discards shall be prohibited.

¹ The points used correspond to the numbering in the non-paper of 4 December, 2006.

² The Swedish trial fishery that has taken place in the Kattegat was said, by the representatives of the Swedish Institute of Marine Research, to underline this conclusion.

As to what is said in p. 14, special permit, and the following, the opinion of the WG is that the control authorities in Denmark and Sweden have to thoroughly discuss how this shall be constructed to function satisfyingly.

Regarding logbooks, VMS and AIS the WG concluded that it is not inappropriate to prescribe that electronic logbook, VMS and AIS shall be used. However, these are questions of details that have to be dealt with when the so to say large questions have been solved. Concerning p. 19 the WG's opinion is that these questions have to be dealt with by the national control authorities.

The WG decided that a letter to the Commission shall be sent by the NSRAC, containing the so to say large questions that have to be dealt with before it is appropriate to in detail discuss the so to say smaller questions of a more technical character.

5. Non-paper - Technical measures for the north east Atlantic and the North Sea (proposal to replace Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 of 30 March 1998 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms³)

Henrik Svenberg described the process that follows from the Commissions working plan.

The WG concluded that it is appropriate to send a signal to the Executive Committee of the NSRAC that the WG would like to discuss this together with the trilateral Skagerrak Agreement of 1966 with the Commission. The WG's opinion is that it is not yet the time to fully harmonize the regulatory framework for the North Sea with what is for the Skagerrak and the Kattegat.

6. The Skagerrak

A discussion took place whether it is possible to assess the Skagerrak cod stock separately.

Since the cod stock in the Skagerrak is in a good and healthy condition, according to the WG's view, it decided to propose to the Executive Committee of the NSRAC to decide to ask the Commission to ask ICES to do so.

7. The creation of a reference fleet for the Skagerrak and the Kattegat

Sten Christensen presented the WG thoughts on how to create a reference fleet for the Skagerrak and the Kattegat. These thoughts were said to originate from a meeting held between the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research and the Danish Fishermen's Association. The purpose with it is to collect more information, e.g. from logbooks, to be able to supply better data into the assessment machinery.

Henrik Svenberg said that these thoughts have full support from the Swedish Fishermen's Federation.

³ OJ 1998 L 318/63.

8. Next meeting

The WG decided that the next meeting will take place in Gothenburg, preferably before the end of May. At the meeting the intention is to discuss the so to say large questions with one more representatives from the Commission.

9. Closing

The chairman of the WG Svend Erik Andersen thanked the attendants for the constructive meeting and declared it closed.

Copenhagen, April 13 2007

Svend Erik Andersen
Chairman

Fredrik Lindberg
Rapporteur