

2012/2/SSGESST18      **The Workshop on Egg staging, Fecundity and Atresia in Horse mackerel and Mackerel (WKFATHOM)** chaired by Cindy van Damme, The Netherlands, will meet in Hamburg, Germany, 12–16 October 2015 and Bergen, Norway, 9-13 November 2015 to:

- a) Carry out comparative plankton sorting trials on typical survey samples. This should follow the pattern of trial – analysis – retrieval – identification of problem areas;
- b) Carry out a comparative egg staging trial for mackerel and horse mackerel eggs following the pattern used in the 2009 egg staging workshop;
- c) Update a set of standard pictures and descriptions for species identification and egg staging;
- d) Provide a review of any available documentation on identifying eggs to species and define standard protocols;
- e) Carry out inter-calibration work on fecundity determination and harmonize the analysis and interpretation of fecundity samples.

WKFATHOM will report by 10 January 2016 (via SSGIEOM) for the attention of SCICOM, WGMEGS and WGWIDE.

## Supporting Information

Priority	Information quality, used to provide fisheries advice through WGWIDE, will be impaired if this workshop is not conducted.
Scientific justification	<p>Sorting eggs from plankton samples, Identification of eggs to species and the staging of those eggs remains one of the key areas in the execution of the mackerel and horse mackerel egg surveys. As this process is carried out by a number of different operators in many different countries, and then the data combined, it is vital that the process be standardized. WGMHSA and WGMEGS strongly feel that this is best done through the mechanism of sample exchange programmes and regular workshops to compare results. In the context of the triennial egg surveys it would seem appropriate to hold a workshop prior to every survey to standardize approaches and methodologies in the run-up to the surveys. This will have the advantage of training new operators as well as harmonizing the approach of experienced operators. Egg staging workshops were held in 2000, 2003 and 2006 and were very successful in achieving these aims. It is proposed that these be used as a model for the proposed workshop in 2009. It is expected that the workshop will use the proven method of carrying out a set of sorting trials, analysing the results and identifying problems, and then repeating the trials on the basis of the new understanding.</p> <p>The workshop will also be tasked to update a standard manual of descriptions and photographs to assist in the plankton sample handling procedure. This material was assembled into an agreed standard manual at previous workshops.</p> <p>In the context of these surveys, fecundity estimation is very important for conversion of egg production to biomass. Fecundity estimation is carried out using histological methods, and the analysis and interpretation of this material also requires standardization across participating institutes. Standardization of this aspect of the work will be included in the workshop.</p> <p>Goal 1. Understand the physical, chemical, and biological functioning of marine ecosystems.</p> <p>Modernise technologies and sampling designs for collecting, measuring, and enumerating marine organisms, and improve the precision and accuracy of</p>

	resource surveys.
	Goal 4. Advise on the sustainable use of living marine resources and protection of the marine environment.
	Develop quality assurance protocols to enhance confidence in scientific advice.
Resource requirements	None
Participants	Mainly scientists (approximately 20) involved in the surveys .
Secretariat facilities	None.
Financial	No financial implications.
Linkages to advisory committees	ACFM
Linkages to other committees or groups	WGMEGS and GWIDE
Linkages to other organizations	None.