2015 ACOM and ACOM Expert Group ToR’s

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Advisory Committee

2014/2/ACOM01 The Advisory Committee (ACOM), chaired by Eskild Kirkegaard will work on the following tasks:

a) Meet in plenary in Copenhagen, 1 to 4 December, December 2015 to:
   i) Review directions and guidelines provided by Council, Bureau and client requests for information and advice;
   ii) Review the performance of the advisory function in 2015 and agree on remedial actions as appropriate;
   iii) Review the implementation of the advice plan and agree on actions as appropriate.
   iv) Review progress on Advisory Services in 2015.
   v) Finalise the 2016 workplan.
   vi) Review and update plans regarding further development of the ICES advice including further progress towards integrated assessments in integrated assessment expert groups.
   vii) Review guidelines for the advisory work and amend as appropriate.
   viii) Consider research needs as input to the Scientific Committee and to the European Commission; and provide advice and guidance on future scientific needs and priorities related to the work of ACOM.

b) Work by correspondence (web conferences) according to the workplan, inter alia to adopt advice;

c) Present the advice to ICES advice recipients by the ACOM Chair or his designate.

d) Present the ICES advice to stakeholders by the ACOM Chair or his designate.

e) Hold Consultations at national expense in Copenhagen, Denmark in September 2015 during the ASC Meeting to:
   i) Discuss the 2016 workplan including Terms of Reference, dates and venues for groups reporting to ACOM in 2016;
   ii) Conduct other business related to the functioning of ACOM.

Supporting Information

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<th>Priority:</th>
<th>High.</th>
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**Scientific Justification and relation to Action Plan:** Benchmark workshops will be held to peer review data and assessment methods. Expert groups will analyze the available information, develop draft advice, and audit that the stock annex has been applied. Advice drafting groups will develop the draft advice text for adoption by ACOM.

**Resource Requirements:**

<table>
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<th>Participants:</th>
<th>Chair, Vice-Chairs, and nationally nominated, <em>ex officio</em> members and Chairs of joint ACOM/SCICOM Steering Groups. Chairs of the Expert groups with advisory tasks are invited to the ACOM Consultations in September. The ACOM Chair may invite experts to the September Consultations as appropriate.</th>
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<td>Observers</td>
<td>Recipients of advice, Observers to the advisory process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretariat Facilities:</td>
<td>The ACOM meeting will normally be held at ICES HQ to benefit from WebEx facilities and full Secretariat support</td>
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<td>Financial:</td>
<td>Included in the Secretariat budget</td>
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<td>Linkages to other</td>
<td>SciCom (including Steering Groups) on research needs, Council, Bureau</td>
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MIRIA – Meeting between ICES and Recipients of ICES Advice

2014/2/ACOM02  ICES will invite recipients of ICES advice (Partner Commissions, governments) to meet with the ACOM leadership, chaired by ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard, 15–16 January to:

a) Review the performance of the ICES advisory system in 2014 and discuss issues and concerns arising since the 2014 MIRIA meeting

b) Review progress with coordination of the scientific work in relation to advice on marine management and specifically the coordination of the use of expert resources

c) Review the plan for further development of ICES advice in relation integrated advice (bycatch), MSY-approach, integrated ecosystem assessments and ecosystem overviews and landing obligation/discard ban

b) Discuss policy choices of relevance to ICES advice regarding marine environmental policy, fisheries policy and their integration including MSY, and management/assessment area

c) Discuss the basis for ICES advice in relation to fisheries management plans and agreed environmental policy measures

d) Discuss options regarding the frequency and criteria for updating fish stocks advice

e) Discuss proposal for the format of ICES advice in 2015

f) Provide information on and discuss the Workplan for ICES advice in 2015 including issues of timing, transparency, and quality assurance

g) Any other issues regarding future ICES advice as raised by the advice recipients

MIRIA will report by 1 February 2015 for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

MIACO – Meeting between ICES, Advisory Councils and other Observers

2014/2/ACOM03  ICES will invite the Advisory Councils (ACs) and ICES observer organizations to meet with the ACOM leadership, chaired by ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard, at ICES Headquarters 13–14 January 2015 to:

a) Discuss practical arrangements in 2015 for cooperation between ACs/observers and ICES, including procedures for delivering and discussion of the ICES advice

b) Review progress on following up of action points from the 2014 MIRAC meeting

c) Invite ACs/observers to report on their experience of working with ICES during 2014 and to present their research and advisory needs, and discuss ICES’ experience of participating in RAC meetings in 2014
c) Discuss the plan for further development of ICES advice in relation to integrated advice (bycatch), integrated ecosystem assessments and ecosystem overviews, format of advice, MSY-approach and landing obligation/discard ban;

d) Discuss options for further development of the accessibility of ICES advice.

MIACO will report by xx February 2015 for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

WGCHAIRS – Annual Meeting of Advisory Working Group Chairs

2014/2/ACOM04 The Annual Meeting of the Chairs of Working Groups supporting the Advisory process (WGCHAIRS), chaired by ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard, will meet in Copenhagen, 20–22 January 2015 to:

a) Review the performance of ICES advisory system in 2014;

b) Discuss proposal for the format of ICES advice in 2015;

c) Discuss implementation of the advice plan;

d) Review the expert group work in support of ICES advice in 2015 including reviewing the requests for advice, balance between workload and available resources, the support from the ICES Secretariat and advice on actions to enhance the work as appropriate;

e) Discuss new developments of relevance to ICES advice including the move towards integrated advice and integration of ecosystem aspects in advice. The discussion will be organised as a one day workshop;

f) Update on inputs from the recipients of advice (MIRIA) and stakeholders (MIACO) regarding ICES advice;

g) Review developments in analytic approaches and the basis and framework for advice;

WGCHAIRS will report by xx February 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

Fisheries related Expert Groups

Generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups

2014/2/ACOM05 The following ToRs apply to: AFWG, HAWG, NWWG, NIPAG, WGWISE, WGBAST, WGBFAS, WGNSSK, WGCSE, WGDIEEP, WGBIE, WGEF, WGHANSA and WGNAS.

The working group should focus on:

a) Consider and comment on ecosystem overviews where available

b) For the fisheries considered by the working group consider and comment on:

i) descriptions of ecosystem impacts of fisheries where available

ii) descriptions of developments and recent changes to the fisheries

iii) Mixed fisheries overview, and
iv) emerging issues of relevance for the management of the fisheries.

c) Conduct an assessment to update advice on the stock(s) using the method (analytical, forecast or trends indicators) as described in the stock annex and produce a brief report of the work carried out regarding the stock, summarising where the item is relevant:

i) Input data (including information from the fishing industry and NGO that is pertinent to the assessments and projections);

ii) Where misreporting of catches is significant, provide qualitative and where possible quantitative information and describe the methods used to obtain the information;

iii) For relevant stocks estimate the percentage of the total catch that has been taken in the NEAFC regulatory area by year in the recent three years.

iv) The developments in spawning stock biomass, total stock biomass, fishing mortality, catches (wanted and unwanted landings and discards) using the method described in the stock annex;

v) The state of the stocks against relevant reference points;

vi) Catch options for next year;

vii) Historical performance of the assessment and catch options and brief description of quality issues with these;

d) Produce a first draft of the advice on the fish stocks and fisheries under considerations according to ACOM guidelines.

The working group is furthermore requested to:

e) Propose specific actions to be taken to improve the quality and transmission of the data (including improvements in data collection);

f) Prepare the data calls for the next year update assessment and for the planned data compilation workshops

g) Update, quality check and report relevant data for the stock:

i) Load fisheries data on effort and catches into the INTERCATCH database by fisheries/fleets;

ii) Abundance survey results;

iii) Environmental drivers.

h) Produce an overview of the sampling activities on a national basis based on the INTERCATCH database or, where relevant, the regional database.

i) Identify research needs of relevance for the working group.
AFWG – Arctic Fisheries Working Group

2014/2/ACOM06 The Arctic Fisheries Working Group (AFWG), chaired by Bjarte Bogstad, Norway, will meet in Hamburg, Germany from 23 –29 April 2015 to:

a ) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.

b ) Assess the outcome on the benchmark of WKARCT.

c ) For Barents Sea capelin oversee the process of providing intersessional assessment.

d ) Continue compiling data for anglerfish in Subarea IIa.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 4 April 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

AFWG will report by 13 May 2015 (and 01 October 2015 for Barents Sea capelin) for the attention of ACOM.

HAWG – Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62ºN

2013/2/ACOM07 The Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62ºN (HAWG), chaired by Niels Hintzen, NL, Beatriz Roel, UK, and Lotte Worsøe Clausen, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 10 –19 March 2015, incorporating an extra day for benchmark preparation to:

e ) compile the catch data of North Sea and Western Baltic herring on 10–11 March

f ) address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups 12–19 March

g ) Prepare a list of the features and estimates derived from the existing surveys which are relevant to the interpretation of results and model fitting process and therefore need to be clearly presented in the surveys’ group (WGIPS) report.

h ) The ecosystem approach for assessing and providing advice for the HAWG stocks. Consider data requirements and tools in the light of ICES objectives for integrated advice. Develop an action plan for future implementation.

i ) Examine and where possible change the basis of advice from winter ring to age based advice and stock data for stocks that currently use winter rings.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the Stock Annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 25 February 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

HAWG will report by 2 February 2014 (on sandeel), and by 2 April 2014 (all stocks except sandeel) for the attention of ACOM
NWWG – North-Western Working Group

2014/2/ACOM08 The North-Western Working Group (NWWG), chaired by Rasmus Hedeholm, Greenland*, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 28 April – 5 May, 2015 to:

a ) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting.

For capelin in Iceland-East Greenland-Jan Mayen area, NWWG will agree any changes to the WG type report and the Advice sheet no later than 7 May. An ADG will work by correspondence 11 May. The WEBEX will be 15 May, and the Advice Release date 19 May.

Other material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 14 April 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

NWWG will report for the attention of ACOM by 3 September on redfish and by 19 May 2015 on the rest of the stocks.

WGBAST – Baltic Salmon and Trout Assessment Working Group

2014/2/ACOM09 The Baltic Salmon and Trout Assessment Working Group (WGBAST), chaired by Tapani Pakarinen, Finland, will meet in Rostock, Germany, 23–31 March 2015 to:

a ) Address relevant points in the Generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups;

b ) Define ranges of Fmsy for salmon based on the approach used by WKMSYREF3 and in line with the advice on the same topic issued early 2015 for other fish stocks.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 6 weeks prior to the meeting.

WGBAST will report by 10 April 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

WGNAS – Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon

2014/2/ACOM10 The Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), chaired by Ian Russell, UK, will meet at Moncton, Canada, 17–26 March 2015 to:

a ) Address relevant points in the Generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups for each salmon stock complex;

b ) Address questions posed by NASCO:

1. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic area:

1.1 provide an overview of salmon catches and landings by country, including unreported catches and catch and release, and production of farmed and ranched Atlantic salmon in 2014;
1.2 report on significant new or emerging threats to, or opportunities for, salmon conservation and management;

1.3 provide a review of examples of successes and failures in wild salmon restoration and rehabilitation and develop a classification of activities which could be recommended under various conditions or threats to the persistence of populations;

1.4 provide a compilation of tag releases by country in 2014; and

1.5 identify relevant data deficiencies, monitoring needs and research requirements.

2. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North-East Atlantic Commission area:

2.1 describe the key events of the 2014 fisheries;

2.2 review and report on the development of age-specific stock conservation limits;

2.3 describe the status of the stocks;

2.4 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2015/16-2017/18 fishing seasons, with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding;

2.5 advise on options for taking into account the recent genetic analysis that suggests there was a significant contribution of North American origin stocks to historic mixed-stock fisheries in Faroese waters for the provision of catch advice;

2.6 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice; and

2.7 advise on what data would enhance the development of the catch options.

3. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North American Commission area:

3.1 describe the key events of the 2014 fisheries (including the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon);

3.2 update age-specific stock conservation limits based on new information as available;

3.3 describe the status of the stocks;

3.4 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2015-2018 with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding;

3.5 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice;

3.6 considering the available contemporary data on stock origin of salmon in the Labrador fisheries, estimate the catches by stock origin and describe their spatial and temporal distribution; and

3.7 considering the available contemporary data on stock origin of salmon in the Saint-Pierre et Miquelon fishery, estimate the catches by stock origin and describe their spatial and temporal distribution.

4. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland Commission area:

4.1 describe the key events of the 2014 fisheries;

4.2 describe the status of the stocks,
4.3 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2015-2017 with an assessment of risk relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding;

4.4 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice; and

4.5 considering the available contemporary data on stock origin of salmon in the West Greenland fishery, estimate the catches by stock origin and describe their spatial and temporal distribution.

WGNAS will report by 8 April 2015 for the attention of ACOM

Notes:

1. With regard to question 1.1, for the estimates of unreported catch the information provided should, where possible, indicate the location of the unreported catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Numbers of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries should be provided.

2. With regard to question 1.2, ICES is requested to include reports on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO, including information on any new research into the migration and distribution of salmon at sea and the potential implications of climate change for salmon management.

3. With regards to question 1.3, NASCO is particularly interested in case studies highlighting successes and failures of various restoration efforts employed across the North Atlantic by all Parties/jurisdictions and the metrics used for evaluating success or failure.

4. In the responses to questions 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1, ICES is asked to provide details of catch, gear, effort, composition and origin of the catch and rates of exploitation. For homewater fisheries, the information provided should indicate the location of the catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Information on any other sources of fishing mortality for salmon is also requested.

5. In response to questions 2.4, 3.4 and 4.3, provide a detailed explanation and critical examination of any changes to the models used to provide catch advice and report on any developments in relation to incorporating environmental variables in these models.

6. In response to question 2.5, this should include consideration of the implications of the new genetic results with regard to the factors previously identified by ICES as requiring management decisions for the finalization of the risk framework for the provision of catch advice for the Faroes fishery (i.e. annual or seasonal catch advice, sharing arrangement, choice of management units to consider and specified management objectives).

7. In response to question 4.2, ICES is requested to provide a brief summary of the status of North American and North-East Atlantic salmon stocks. The detailed information on the status of these stocks should be provided in response to questions 2.3 and 3.3.
WGBFAS – Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group

2014/2/ACOM11 The Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group (WGBFAS), chaired by Marie Storr-Paulsen, Denmark, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 14–21 April 2015 to:

a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups
b) Assess the outcome on the benchmark of WKPLE (plaice 21–23 and plaice 24–32) and the outcome of WKSIBCA (cod 22-24 and cod 25-32)
c) Utilize the main result from WGIAB, WGSAM, WGBFAS, SGSPATIAL with main focus on the biological processes and interactions of key species in the Baltic Sea;

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

The ICES data call was send out on the 3 February 2015 including a data submission deadline on the 23 March 2015. A first draft of the assessment should be available at the start of the meeting.

WGBFAS will report by 30 April 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

* Stock ID will be checked at WKPLE, which might result in a revision of the stock areas. WKPLE conclusions will be considered by WGBFAS.

WGBIE- Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and Iberian waters Ecoregion

2014/2/ACOM12 The Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and Iberian waters Ecoregion (WGBIE), chaired by Michel Bertignac (France), will meet in the ICES Secretariat, 4–10 May 2015 to:

a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups
b) Assess the progress on the benchmark preparation of Nephrops;

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. The data to perform the assessment should be available on the 10 April 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

WGBIE will report by 1 June 2015 for the attention of ACOM. The group will report on the ACOM guidelines on reopening procedure of the advice before 14 October and will report on reopened advice before 29 October.

WGCSE – Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion

2014/2/ACOM13 The Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE), chaired by Colm Lordan, Ireland will meet at ICES Headquarters, 12–21 May 2015 to:

a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups
b) Assess the progress on the benchmark preparation of Nephrops in FU14 and FU17, and the benchmark for stocks in Division VIIa (plaice, cod, haddock and whiting);

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories. The assessments must be available for review on the first day of the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.
Data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than the 20 April 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

WGCSE will report by 29 May 2014 for the attention of ACOM. The group will report on the ACOM guidelines on reopening procedure of the advice before 14 October and will report on reopened advice before 29 October. Nephrops survey results, assessment, draft advice and audits should be available by 13 October.

WGNSSK – Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak

The Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak (WGNSSK), chaired by Alexander Kempf, Germany, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 28 April – 7 May 2015 to:

a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups. The Norway pout assessments shall be developed by correspondence;

b) Assess the progress on the benchmark preparations and planning for 2016

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 13 April 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

WGNSSK will report by 20 May 2015, and by 22 September 2015 (Norway pout) for the attention of ACOM. The group will report on the ACOM guidelines on reopening procedure of the advice before 14 October and will report on reopened advice before 29 October.

NIPAG – Joint NAFO/ICES Pandalus Assessment Working Group

The Joint NAFO/ICES Pandalus Assessment Working Group (NIPAG), chaired by Peter Shelton, Canada (ICES) and Brian Healey, Canada (NAFO), will meet in St. John’s, NL, Canada. 9 - 16 September, 2015, to:

a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.

b) Sensitivity of the current assessment to the final year survey data should be explored through a retrospective analysis to determine whether an in-season assessment update (February) would be beneficial.

c) Complete the development and apply the length-based model for SKND shrimp as the basis for providing advice for this stock.

d) Consider shrimp stocks as decided by the NAFO Scientific Council

e) Compile, update, analyse and document time-series of by-catches in the shrimp fishery

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 14 days prior to the starting date.

NIPAG will report by 28 October 2015 on the ICES shrimp stocks for the attention of ACOM.
**WGWIDE – Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks**

2014/2/ACOM16  The *Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks* (WGWIDE), chaired by Katja Enberg, Norway, will meet in AZTI-Pasaia facilities, Spain, 25–31 August, 2015 to:

a ) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups;

b ) Answer the NEAFC special request on options for a revised long-term management strategy on blue whiting;

c ) Answer the EU, Faroe Island and Norwegian special request for advice concerning options for a revised management strategy for mackerel.

d ) Answer the EU special request for advice concerning management strategy for boarfish.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 27 July 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

WGWIDE will report by 7 September, 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**WGHANSA – Working Group on Southern Horse Mackerel Anchovy and Sardine (formerly WGANSA)**

2014/2/ACOM17  The *Working Group on Southern Horse Mackerel, Anchovy and Sardine* (WGHANSA), chaired by Lionel Pawlowski, France, will met at IPMA, Lisbon, Portugal, 24–29 June 2015 to:

a ) address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.

b ) assess the progress on the benchmark preparation of Anchovy in Division IXa.

c ) consider if a fishery in the second semester with catches based on PA advice for SSB in May the same year could have important influences on precautionary considerations in the following year. In particular consider events such as a) a large year class followed by two small year classes, or b) small year class followed by a large yearclass.

d ) consider if a) precautionary considerations based on SSB in May are sufficient for an ICES PA catch option, b) if some other basis should be used for the PA catch option or c) if it would be preferable for ICES to give only advice based on the MP (i.e. not to include the precautionary approach line in the catch options table).

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 25 May 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

The assessments were carried out on the basis of the stock annexes during the meeting (not prior to it) and coordinated as indicated in the table below:

WGHANSA will report by 2 July 2015 for the attention of ACOM.
WGDEEP – Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep-Sea Fisheries Resources

2014/2/ACOM18 The Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep-Sea Fisheries Resources (WGDEEP), chaired by Pascal Lorance, France, and Gudmundur Thordarson, Iceland, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 20–27 March April 2015 to:

a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.

b) Evaluate the harvest control rule for data-limited stocks developed by WKLIFE and further develop methods to provide quantitative advice consistent with the MSY framework for stocks assessed by WGDEEP.

c) Complete the development of Stock Annexes for all the stocks assessed by WGDEEP.

d) Update the description of deep-water fisheries in both the NEAFC and ICES area(s) by compiling data on catch/landings, fishing effort (inside versus outside the EEZs, in spawning areas, areas of local depletion, etc.), and discard statistics at the finest spatial resolution possible by ICES Subarea and Division and NEAFC RA and describe and prepare a first Advice draft of any emerging deep-water fishery with the available data in the NEAFC RA.

e) Continue work on exploratory assessments for deep-water species.

f) Evaluate the stock status of Icelandic stocks for the provision of annual advice in 2015.

g) Evaluate the stock status of all non-EU stocks for the provision of biennial advice in 2015.

h) Prepare for an evaluation of the stock status for the rest of stocks for the provision of a rollover advice on 2015 and a biennial advice in 2016.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex in National Laboratories, prior to the meeting. This will be coordinated as indicated in the table below.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 28 February 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was sent out on 3 February 2015.

WGDEEP will report by 25 April 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

WGEEL – Joint EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eels

Approved by ACOM July 2015

2014/2/ACOM19 The Joint EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eels (WGEEL), chaired by Alan Walker, UK, will work by correspondence with a deadline of 2 October 2015 to:

a) Assess the latest trends in glass and yellow eel indices and produce the first draft of the ICES annual eel advice.

The WGEEL will furthermore meet in Antalya, Turkey, from 24 November to 2 December 2015 to:

b) Progress the development of the whole-stock assessment methods using the latest available data

c) Progress an eel stock annex and make recommendations for further work;
d) Review developments in the standardization of methods for data collection, analysis and assessment and make recommendations for further work;

e) Identify relevant data deficiencies, monitoring needs and research requirements;

f) Report on significant new or emerging threats to, or opportunities for, eel conservation and management;

g) Address the generic EG ToRs from ACOM.

WGEEL will report the December meeting by 17 December 2015 for the attention of ACOM, WGRECORDS, SSGEF and FAO, EIFAAC and GFCM.

Supporting Information

In 2007, the EU published the Regulation EC 1100/2007, establishing measures for the recovery of the eel stock. This introduced new challenges for the Working Group, requiring development of new methodologies for local and regional stock assessments and evaluation of the status of the stock at the international level.

The EU Member States provided their first EMP Progress Reports in 2012 and the WGEEL in 2013 used the biomass and mortality stock indicators reported therein to provide the first attempt at a stock-wide assessment based on biomass and mortality reference points. However, the WGEEL meetings in 2013 highlighted the following main issues:

1. -lack of quality assessment of the assessment methods and reported stock indicators

2. -incomplete reporting by MS of the required stock indicators to the EU in 2012, and to ICES in 2013

3. -lack of stock indicators of countries that are outside the EU but inside the natural range of the European eel (i.e. north African countries)

4. The WGEEL is developing plans and pursuing opportunities to address the first issue, through development of a common approach to local and national stock assessment, and for existing and new national methods to be fully documented and peer-reviewed.

5. It is anticipated that the second and third of these issues will be addressed, at least in part if not in full, ahead of the 2015 meeting of the WGEEL, through the second round of EMP Progress Reporting (June 2015) and ongoing efforts by GFCM and member countries to develop new eel data for the Mediterranean region.

6. The EU Commission will require an annual update on the status of the panmictic eel stock in 2015 to set the results of the national EMP Progress Reports within the context of the international stock.

The EU has requested advice in October 2015 and thus it is needed to have part of the work done by correspondence before the actual meeting of the group.

European eel life history is complex and atypical among aquatic species. The stock is genetically panmictic and data indicate random arrival of adults in the spawning area. The continental eel stock is widely distributed.
and there are strong local and regional differences in population dynamics and local stock structures. Fisheries on all continental life stages take place throughout the distribution area. Local impacts by fisheries vary from almost nil to heavy overexploitation. Other forms of anthropogenic mortality (e.g. hydropower, pumping stations) also impact on eel and vary in distribution and local relevance.

Exploitation that leaves 30% of the virgin spawning-stock biomass is generally considered to be a reasonable target for escapement. The EC Regulation set a limit for silver eel escapement to the sea of at least 40% of the silver eel biomass relative to the best estimate of escapement that would have existed if no anthropogenic influences had impacted the stock.

WGEEL recommended in 2010 that Eel Management Plan reporting must provide the following biomass and anthropogenic mortality data:

- Bpost, the biomass of the escapement in the assessment year;
- B0, the biomass of the escapement in the pristine state. Alternatively, one could specify Blim, the 40% limit of B0, as set in the Eel Regulation;
- Bbest, the estimated potential biomass in the assessment year, assuming no anthropogenic impacts (and without stocking) have occurred and from all potentially available habitats.

- \( \Sigma A \), the estimation of Bbest will require an estimate of A (anthropogenic mortality (e.g. catch, turbines)) for density-independent cases, and a more complex analysis for density-dependent cases.

Most but not all EU Member States reported quantitative estimates of the required stock indicators to the EU in 2012. The reliability and accuracy of these data have not yet been fully evaluated. Furthermore, the stock indicators of all non-European countries that lay within the natural range of the European eel are lacking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements</th>
<th>Sharepoint; Access to national EMP progress reports for 2015 from EU Member States.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>EIFAAC, ICES and GFCM Working Group Participants, Invited Country Administrations, EU representative, Invited specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>Support to organize the logistics of the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>At countries expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to advisory committees</td>
<td>ACOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
<td>WGRECORDS, SCICOM, SSGEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations</td>
<td>FAO EIFAAC, GFCM, EU DG-MARE, EU DG-ENV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF), chaired by Ivone Figueirão, Portugal, and Jim Ellis, UK, will meet in Lisbon, Portugal, from 17–23 June 2015 to:

a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.

b) Update the description of elasmobranch fisheries for deep-water, pelagic and demersal species in the ICES area and compile landings, effort and discard statistics by ICES Subarea and Division, and catch data by NEAFC area. Describe and prepare a first Advice draft of any emerging elasmobranch fishery with the available data on catch/landings, fishing effort and discard statistics at the finest spatial resolution possible in the NEAFC RA and ICES area(s).

c) Continue to work towards the FMSY Framework for the stocks listed in the table below;

d) Evaluate the stock status for the provision of quadrennial advice due in 2015 for the following widely-distributed shark stocks: (i) Portuguese dogfish; (ii) Leavescale gulper shark; (iii) Kitefin shark; (iv) Porbeagle, and the following species that are on the prohibited species list: (v) angel shark, (vi) basking shark

e) Evaluate the stock status for the provision of biennial advice due in 2015 for (i) skate stocks in the North Sea ecoregion; (ii) skate stocks in the Azores and MAR; (iii) catsharks (Scyliorhinidae) in the Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast ecoregions; (iv) smooth-hounds in the Northeast Atlantic and (v) tope in the Northeast Atlantic.

f) Conduct exploratory analyses and collate relevant data in preparation for the evaluation of other stocks (spurdog and skates in the Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast ecoregions) in preparation for more detailed biennial assessment in 2016.

g) Consider the stock ID of R. naevus stock (rjn-678abd) using the survey information as well as published studies to decide whether VI, VII and VIIIabd is the correct stock area or if some part(s) (VI and/or VIIafg) should be considered as a separate stock unit.

h) Review, update and standardise Stock Annexes for elasmobranchs where necessary.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the Group no later than 2 June 2015 according to the Data call 2015, which was send out on 3 February 2015.

WGEF will report by 03 August 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

The ICES/NAFO Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals (WGHARP) chaired by Mike Hammill, Canada, will meet in venue, date, 2015 to (ToRs to be updated).
WGMIXFISH—ADVICE – Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice

2014/2/ACOM## The Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice (WGMIXFISH-ADVICE), chaired by Paul Dolder, UK, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 25–29 May

a ) Carry out mixed demersal fisheries projections for the North Sea taking into account the single species advice for cod, haddock, whiting, saithe, plaice, sole, turbot, Nephrops norvegicus, sole VIIId and plaice VIIId that is produced by WGNSSK in 2015, and the management measures in place for 2016;

b ) Carry out mixed demersal fisheries projections for the Celtic Sea taking into account the single species advice for cod, haddock, whiting and sole 7fg that is produced by WGCSE in 2015, and the management measures in place for 2016; and further develop advice for the region. In particular, it should consider how advice released for Nephrops norvegicus issued in October could be taken into account in mixed fisheries projections;

c ) Carry out mixed fisheries projections for the Iberian waters taking into account the single species advice for hake, four-spot megrim megrim and white anglerfish that is produced by WGBIE in 2015, and the management measures in place for 2016; and further develop advice for the region. In particular, how advice for Horse mackerel produced by WGHANSA meeting in 2015 can be incorporated into the mixed fishery forecasts;

Produce a draft mixed-fisheries section for the ICES advisory report 2015 that includes a dissemination of the fleet and fisheries data and forecasts for the North Sea, [and where possible the Celtic Sea and Iberian waters];

WGMIXFISH will report by 5 June 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

Supporting Information

| Priority: | The work is essential to ICES to progress in the development of its capacity to provide advice on multispecies fisheries. Such advice is necessary to fulfil the requirements stipulated in the MoUs between ICES and its client commissions. |
| Scientific justification and relation to action plan: | The issue of providing advice for mixed fisheries remains an important one for ICES. The Afrafe project, which started on 1 April 2007 and finished on 31 March 2009 developed further methodologies for mixed fisheries forecasts. The work under this project included the development and testing of the Fcube approach to modelling and forecasts. In 2008, SGMIXMAN produced an outline of a possible advisory format that included mixed fisheries forecasts. Subsequently, WKMIXFISH was tasked with investigating the application of this to North Sea advice for 2010. AGMIXNS further developed the approach when it met in November 2009 and produced a draft template for mixed fisheries advice. WGMIXFISH has continued this work since 2010. |
| Resource requirements: | No specific resource requirements, beyond the need for members to prepare for and participate in the meeting. |
| Participants: | Experts with qualifications regarding mixed fisheries aspects, fisheries management and modelling based on limited and uncertain data. |
| Secretariat facilities: | Meeting facilities, production of report. |
| Financial: | None |
| Linkages to advisory committee: | ACOM |
Linkages to other committees or groups:
SCI COM through the WGMG. Strong link to STECF.

Linkages to other organizations:
This work serves as a mechanism in fulfilment of the MoU with EC and fisheries commissions. It is also linked with STECF work on mixed fisheries.

WGMIXFISH-METH - Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice Methodology

2014/2/ACOM23 The Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice Methodology (WGMIXFISH-METH), chaired by Paul Dolder, UK, will meet in London, UK, 19-23 October 2015 to:

a. Review progress on mixed fisheries methodologies and consider how they might be taken forward and incorporated into the advisory process. In particular, focus should be given to the following priorities:
   - Short term catch forecasting methods, including methods to incorporate data-poor stocks taking account of uncertainties;
   - Incorporation of advice on protected, endangered and threatened (PET) species into mixed fisheries advice;
   - Incorporation of Fmsy ranges into forecasting procedure to provide advice which minimises incompatibility between management advice for multiple stocks exploited in mixed fisheries. This may be developed through robust medium term Management Strategy Evaluation approaches,
   - Application of methodology to other ICES regions, fisheries and stocks.

WGMIXFISH-METH will report by 23 November 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

Supporting Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority:</th>
<th>The work is essential for ICES to progress in the development of its capacity to provide advice on multi-species fisheries. Such advice is necessary to fulfil the requirements stipulated in the MoUs between ICES and its client commissions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification and relation to action plan:</td>
<td>The issue of providing advice for mixed fisheries remains an important one for ICES. However, in practice all recent advice in this area has resulted from the work and analyses done by sub-groups of STECF rather than ICES. The Aframe project, which started on 1 April 2007 and finished on 31 March 2009 developed further methodologies for mixed fisheries forecasts. The work under this project included the development and testing of the Fcube approach to modelling and forecasts. In 2008, SGMIXMAN produced an outline of a possible advisory format that included mixed fisheries forecasts. Subsequently, WKMIXFISH was tasked with investigating the application of this to North Sea advice for 2010. AGMIXNS further developed the approach when it met in November 2009 and produced a draft template for mixed fisheries advice. WGMIXFISH has continued this work in 2010 to 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource requirements:</td>
<td>No specific resource requirements, beyond the need for members to prepare for and participate in the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>Experts with qualifications regarding mixed fisheries aspects, fisheries management and modelling based on limited and uncertain data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities:</td>
<td>Meeting facilities, production of report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linkages to advisory committee:</td>
<td>ACOM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Linkages to other committees or groups: SCICOM through the WGMG. Strong link to STECF.

Linkages to other organizations: This work serves as a mechanism in fulfilment of the MoU with EC and fisheries commissions. It is also linked with STECF work on mixed fisheries.

WGScallop – Scallop Assessment Working Group

2014/ACOM24 The Scallop Assessment Working Group (WGScallop), chaired by Kevin Stokesbury, USA, will meet 5-9 October 2015, in Trinity, Jersey, UK, to:

a. develop recommendation on whether there are sufficient data and appropriate methods for defined assessment areas to produce stock assessments.
b. develop recommendation for stock assessment methodologies for data limited and data rich situations.
c. further investigate and quantify benefits of MPA’s and/or rotational areas from the perspective of the scallop fishery.
d. develop a recommendation to examine a global project at the European level.
e. complete and finalize the 3 year report, self-evaluation.

WGScallop will report by 6 November 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

Supporting Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority: Essential</th>
<th>Scientific justification: The original ToR’s for this working group were:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Distribution of</td>
<td>1. Distribution of fishing effort and landings for scallop inshore and offsho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fishing effort and</td>
<td>offshore waters, and explore the development of a common data base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>landings for scallop</td>
<td>2. Identification of stock assessment and management units</td>
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<tr>
<td>inshore and offshore</td>
<td>3. Biological parameters</td>
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<tr>
<td>waters, and explore</td>
<td>4. Stock assessment methods and evaluation of indicators of stock status and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the development of</td>
<td>identification of reference points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a common data base.</td>
<td>5. Data provision and feasibility of obtaining data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identification of</td>
<td>6. Efficacy of scallop fisheries management measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stock assessment and</td>
<td>7. Impact of scallop harvesting on habitat and habitat recovery rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management units</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Biological</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parameters</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Stock assessment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>methods and evaluation of</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>indicators of stock status</td>
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<tr>
<td>and identification of</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>reference points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Data provision and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>feasibility of obtaining</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>data</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Efficacy of scallop</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>fisheries management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>measures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Impact of scallop</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>harvesting on habitat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and habitat recovery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>rates</td>
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</table>

Over the past two meetings the Group has discussed and compiled information on these ToRs. In the upcoming meeting the group will finalize the analysis by addressing the above ToRs.

The proposal to initiate a WG on scallops is justified on the basis of the national and international importance of this fishery in a number of countries in north west Europe and North America. There is currently no common scientific or assessment forum for discussion and development of common assessment methods for scallops. The qualitative descriptors for determining good environmental status (Directive 2008 EU) we are concentrating on are:

**Descriptor 1**: Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions.

**Descriptor 3**: Populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within safe biological limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock.

**Descriptor 6**: Sea-floor integrity is at a level that ensures that the structure and functions of the ecosystems are safeguarded and benthic ecosystems, in particular, are not adversely affected.
The focus of the 3 year working group is to providing scientific advice on scallops, defining a common approach to the assessment of stocks. In the 2013 meeting the workshop examined ICES areas: IIa, IVa, IVb, V, Vla, Vla and IVb, VIIa, VIIb, VIIc, VIIg, and VIII. Scallop species and biological stocks were identified in each of the ICES areas. The group developed a working Matrix with points for each of the ToR compiling the existing information on surveys, available data and stock assessment approaches; several key factors emerged. All research groups rely heavily on aging methods and proportion by year class is a fundamental data set. Many of the other factors varied between research groups.

In 2014, the group began to develop a common data base of fisheries landing effort for ICES areas. Expanding on the 2013 work the group collected information on estimations of $F$, $F_{MAX}$, von Bertalanffy growth parameters by stock/ICES rectangle, and the existing stock assessments from 2004 to 2014, including the unit of measure. $F_{MAX}$ was not a good proxy for $F_{MSY}$ for King or Queen scallops due to flat topped YPR curves, at current selection patterns. There was no evidence of a stock recruitment relationship. There was evidence of connectivity between beds and work is underway on examining these processes through the study of environmental conditions and genetics. MPA’s appear to be a useful tool for improving overall scallop productivity, reducing fishing effort, negative impact on the sea floor and improving habitat condition. However, MPA’s need to be carefully chosen considering adult population densities, current structure, presences of predators and/or competitors. Rapid declines may occur within protected populations; possibly due to environmental/climatic conditions.

Recent declines in scallop recruitment in the Eastern English Channel have occurred and appear to be linked to environmental conditions, particularly average SST between May and July and the Atlantic low. Habitat studies on the effects of dredging are underway and suggest recovery from impact in 0.5 to 5 years depending on the dynamic environmental condition of the area. However, this is very dependent on what the habitat is, i.e. if it is ground that has been historically fished.

In this meeting the group will compile the information from the previous two meetings, add additional information and address the three descriptors in a final report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements:</th>
<th>None.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>Oliver Tully, Ireland (Marine Institute), Lee Murray, Isle of Man (Bangor University), Ewen Bell, England (CEFAS), Helen Dobby, Scotland (Marine Scotland Science), Eric Foucher, France (IFREMER), Spyros Fifas, France (IFREMER), Gwladys Lambert, Wales (Bangor University), Kevin Stokesbury, United States (University of Massachusetts), Brad Harris, United States (Alaska Pacific University), Heather Moore, Northern Ireland (AFBI), David Palmer (CEFAS), Lynda Blackadder Scotland (Marine Scotland Science), Jonas Jónasson, Iceland (HAFRO), Carrie McMinn, Northern Ireland (AFBI), Sarah Clarke, Ireland (Marine Institute), Isobel Bloor, Isle of Man (Bangor University), Bryce Beukers-Stewart England (University of York), Strand Øivind, Norway (IMR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities:</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial:</td>
<td>No financial implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to advisory committees:</td>
<td>ACOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups:</td>
<td>There are no obvious direct linkages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations:</td>
<td>There are no obvious direct linkages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ecosystem related Expert Groups

WGECO – Working Group on the Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities

2014/2/ACOM25 The Working Group on the Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities (WGECO), chaired by Anna Rindorf, Denmark, will meet in ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark 8–15 April 2015 to:

a) Develop and assess indicators of Good Environmental Status of the benthic community;

b) Develop indicators of scavengers, examine their relation to discard amounts and evaluate the potential effect of a landing obligation on the benthic ecosystem;

c) Evaluate the ecological consequences of restoring stocks to MSY levels and the degree to which fisheries are “balanced;”

d) Review, develop and assess indicators of Good Environmental Status of Distribution in the context of MSFD and management response;

e) Identify data weaknesses in the data available to address WGECO ToRs and recommend priority areas for data collection and model development.

WGECO will report by 24 April to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

Supporting Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Scientific justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>The current activities of this Group will lead ICES into issues related to the ecosystem affects of fisheries, especially with regard to the application of the Precautionary Approach. Consequently, these activities are considered to have a very high priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term of Reference a)</td>
<td>WGECO considers that the development and assessment of indicators of Good Environmental Status of the benthic community is a key area of development in relation to the MSFD. With this ToR, WGECO will follow and review the progress in international projects working on this topic and work towards the development of operational objectives and indicators for the benthic community as well as an improved understanding of benthic foodweb dynamics. In 2015, WGECO will specifically review the effect of trawling on benthic community composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term of Reference b)</td>
<td>The implementation of a landing obligation is likely to result in major changes to the impact of fishing on particularly benthic scavenging species. The magnitude of both direct and indirect effects are unknown at present and further work is needed in order to provide advice on the direction and magnitude of change as a result of the landing obligation. WGECO considers that this ToR should be accompanied by a similar ToR for WGBIRD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term of Reference c)</td>
<td>Determining the ecological consequences of restoring stocks to MSY levels and the degree to which fisheries are “balanced” ideally requires a large metadataset to ensure that analyses are based on all available data. To ensure that such data are available to WGECO, the group will issue a data call in January 2015 to obtain the data necessary to (i) examine time-trends in stocks that are rebuilding and dependent stocks: their prey and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
predators; compare these trends with predictions from qualitative analyses or LeMans or other quantitative multispecies models and (ii) establish the distribution of total catch among size classes (catch size spectrum), species (catch species dominance curves) and functional groups. The data call will request two types of data: 1. Stock assessment output for all stocks assessed in an area: F and SSB estimates tabulated in a consistent way. There is a trade-off between the number of stocks included and the length of the time-series. (i) needs at least 10 years, whereas (ii) might be shorter especially if it allows to include more discard estimates. (ii) may be more a snapshot that could be compared across areas. 2. (ii) may also be adressed based on catch data = landings + discard estimates. Landings are available from public databases; discard estimates for TAC-species are going to be available in the discard atlases being prepared as input to the regional discard management plans; issue is discard estimates for non-TAC species.

Term of Reference d)

Distributional indicators have obtained little attention in ICES since the end of WGFE. WGECO considers this an important area of research in connection with the MSFD and proposes that the work should be continued in cooperation with e.g. SGSPATIAL. The work in 2015 will include reviewing of existing indicators, intial identification of development needs and evaluation of the possible response of distributional indicators to management.

Term of Reference e)

WGECO considers that it is often of use to other groups to receive clear guidelines on priority areas of data collection or model development. Therefore, this should be a standing ToR of WGECO with resulting advice to other groups given based on the progress made in the particular year.

Resource requirements

The research programmes which provide the main input to this group are already underway, and resources are already committed. The additional resource required to undertake additional activities in the framework of this group is negligible.

Participants

The Group is normally attended by some 20–25 members and guests.

Secretariat facilities

None.

Financial

No financial implications.

Linkages to other committees or groups

There is a very close working relationship with the groups of the Fisheries Technology Committee, WGBIRD, BEWG, WGBIODIV and WGSAM.

Linkages to other organizations


2014/2/ACOM26 The Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME), chaired by Begoña Santos* (Spain) and Graham Pierce* (UK), will meet in London, UK, 9–12 February 2015:

a) Review and report on any new information on population abundance, population/stock structure and management frameworks for marine mammals;
b) Compile a matrix of threats to the predominant cetacean species in each of the MSFD regional seas. Consider ways in which this information could be incorporated into the ICES advice;

c) Review North Atlantic information on negative and positive ecological interactions between grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*) populations;

d) Update the database for seals, and review its usefulness in meeting the needs of Member States under EU’s MSFD;

e) Review and evaluate multispecies models that incorporate marine mammal consumption to assess marine mammal impacts on fishery resources, and make recommendations for improvements in input data and assumptions for the North Atlantic.

f) Produce four short paragraphs for the ICES Ecosystem Overviews on the state of sea mammal populations, one paragraph for each of the following ICES ecoregions: Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay & the Iberian coast and Baltic Sea.

WGMME will report by 4 April 2014 for to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

### Supporting Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Scientific justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ToR a)   | This may contribute to the work required for the MoU between the European Commission and ICES to “provide new information regarding the impact of fisheries on other components of the ecosystem including small cetaceans and other marine mammals…” and to aid Member Countries in “scientific and technical developments in the support of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, such as by designing marine monitoring and assessment programmes, identifying research needs and methodologies advice.”
| ToR b)   | There will be an attempt to integrate cetacean bycatch issues into fish stock advice in 2015. This work is needed to support that and put bycatch into the context of other pressures on cetacean populations. The ASCOBANS threat matrix and individual MS evaluations under the MSFD and Habitats Directive should prove useful sources of information.
| ToR c)   | There is increasing evidence of possible interactions between these species, particularly as the population of grey seals in the ICES area increases (while in some areas harbour seal populations are decreasing).
| ToR d)   | A standing requirement to keep the new seal database up to date and to ensure its usefulness.
| ToR e)   | Seal depredation is included in some models.
| ToR f)   | This is needed to help in the refresh of the Ecosystem overviews. Details of the Ecoregion boundaries may be found on the ICES website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>The Group is normally attended by 10-20 members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>None apart from the usual support in completing and publishing the report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>No financial implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to advisory committees</td>
<td>The work of WGMME may support development of the ecosystem overviews and the new format of fisheries advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linkages to other committees
WGBYC – Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species

The Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC), chaired by Marjorie C. Lyssikatos*, USA, will meet 2–6 February 2015 in Copenhagen, Denmark at ICES Headquarters, to:

a) Review and summarise annual national reports submitted to the European Commission under Regulation 812/2004 and other published documents and collate bycatch estimates of protected species (birds, mammals, reptiles, and fish) in EU waters.

b) Evaluate and report on trends in bycatch estimates of protected species from six years of MS reporting. Determine efficacy of trend analysis prior to 2015 meeting;

c) Evaluate the impacts of bycatch on each relevant species and where possible at a population level, furthering the approach adopted by WKREV812 to assess likely conservation level threats;

d) Collate and review information from National 812 reports and elsewhere relating to the implementation of bycatch mitigation measures and ongoing bycatch mitigation trials, compile recent results and coordinate further work on protected species bycatch mitigation;

e) Continue, in cooperation with the ICES Data Centre, to develop the database on bycatch monitoring and relevant fishing effort in European waters;

f) Continue to develop, improve and coordinate methods for bycatch monitoring and assessment.

g) Further consider monitoring and research requirements to determine levels of bycatch in the context of European legislation (e.g. MSFD and other regional convention (OSPAR) targets.

WGBYC will report by 27 February 2015 for to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

Supporting Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification and relation to action plan: a) This is essential for answering part of the European Commission MoU request to “provide any new information regarding the impact of fisheries on marine mammals, seabirds…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b, c) This may also help in providing advice, if it is possible to distinguish any trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) ICES Member Countries are required to reduce levels of bycatch under several pieces of legislation; the response to this ToR will help meet that aim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) The database allows a more efficient response to future advice requests in this area and will provide an audit trail for information used in the Group’s reports. In addition, working with PGCCDBS and WGCATCH will ensure more effective cross-ICES work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Bycatch monitoring and assessment is fundamental to the work of the group; any improvements in methods will help the group and other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26
The European Commission has decided not to amend Res. 812/2004 and to integrate monitoring of protected and endangered species into the new DCF (DCMAP). It is essential to cooperate with the scientists who design observer schemes and protocols for the monitoring of catch and discards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements:</th>
<th>None beyond usual Secretariat facilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>13–21 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities:</td>
<td>Secretariat support with meeting organisation and final editing of report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial:</td>
<td>No financial implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups:</td>
<td>WGFTFB, WGMME, JWGBIRD, WGF, PGCCDBS, WGCATCH, SCICOM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations:</td>
<td>NAMMCO, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, GFCM, EC, IWC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WGDEC – ICES/NAFO Joint Working Group on Deep-water Ecology**

2014/2/ACOM28 The Working Group on Deep-water Ecology (WGDEC), chaired by Neil Golding, UK will meet in Horta, Azores, Portugal, 16–20 February 2015 to:

a) Provide all available new information on distribution of VMEs in the North Atlantic with a view to advising on any new closures to bottom fisheries or revision of existing closures to bottom fisheries (NEAFC standing request: this may be updated in November 2014). In addition, provide new information on location of habitats sensitive to particular fishing activities (i.e. vulnerable marine ecosystems, VMEs) within EU waters (EC request);

b) In order that advice on closures can be more clearly presented and interpreted, continue the development of a system of weighting the reliability and significance of VME indicator records and consider ways of combining the geographic locations of VMEs through development of a standardised method for recommending closed area boundaries;

c) Maintain the ICES database on VMEs;

d) In light of two deep-sea mining exploration licences that have been granted by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) along the mid-Atlantic Ridge, review the sensitivity of vulnerable deep-water habitats to these activities and make recommendations for their protection;

e) Review new evidence of ecosystem functioning of VME indicators in the North Atlantic arising from the CORALFISH project and recent scientific literature.

WGDEC will report by 6 March 2015 for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

**Supporting Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority:</th>
<th>High as a Joint group with NAFO and is essential for providing information to help answer external requests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification and relation to action plan:</td>
<td>a) This information and maps are required to meet part of the European Commission MoU request to “provide any new information regarding the impact of fisheries on …. sensitive habitats” and the NEAFC request “to continue to provide all available new information on distribution of vulnerable habitats in the NEAFC Convention Area and fisheries activities in and in the vicinity of such habitats.” The location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of newly discovered/mapped sensitive habitats is critical to these requests. It is essential that ICES/WG chair asks its Member Countries etc. to supply as much relevant information as they may have by one month in advance of the WGDEC meeting;

b) This is an important development of the VME database. Records within the VME database originate from a number of different sources; from specific targeted habitat mapping surveys with a high degree of spatial accuracy through to bycatch records from towed gear/longlining. Through developing a weighting system for these records, the information underpinning any new recommendations on closures, or modifications to existing closures, can be assessed and weighted based on reliability and significance. A clear method of setting boundaries around groups of records would be of considerable help in providing justification for such boundaries;

c) There is a requirement to update the ICES VME database to include new information on the distribution of VMEs (including VME indicator species) submitted under ToR (a);

d) ICES has not considered the effects of deep sea mining on VMEs previously. This may be of interest in comparing with the effects of bottom-fishing activities;

e) This will provide a useful review of a developing area of science.

Resource requirements: The usual helpful support from the Secretariat will be appreciated.

Participants: The Group is normally attended by some 15-20 members and guests.

Secretariat facilities: None, apart from the Sharepoint site

Financial: No financial implications.

Linkages to ACOM and its expert groups
ACOM is parent group. WGDEEP is related, but no explicit overlap in work this year.

Linkages to SCICOM and its expert groups
No direct linkages, though the work of BEWG is related

Linkages to other organisations:
OSPAR, NEAFC

JWGBIRD – Joint ICES/OSPAR group on seabirds

2014/2/ACOM29

2014/2/ACOM30 The Joint ICES/OSPAR Working Group on Seabirds (JWGBIRD), chaired by Ian Mitchell (UK) and XX will meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, xx–xx XX 2015, to work on ToRs and generate deliverables as listed below:

a) Test the operation of OSPAR MSFD common indicators: B1 – marine bird abundance and B3 – marine bird breeding success. A project issued by OSPAR, will produce an assessment for these indicators in the Greater North Sea and Celtic Seas. JWGBIRD will review the outputs of the project and provide recommendations on the future operation of these indicators by Contracting Parties. The reporting will follow a format pre-defined by OSPAR via ICG-COBAM and will ensure access to the underlying data used to produce the assessment. The report will include:

1) Recommendations for gap-filling for monitoring of breeding seabirds, breeding waterbirds and non-breeding shorebirds and seabird breeding success in each sub-region;
2) Arrangements for data-handling, storage and analysis of data bearing in mind that products produced as a result of the meetings should be made available and accessible, in the appropriate format, to OSPAR.

b) Design a protocol (or protocols) for assessing the effects on seabirds of the new CFP Landings Obligations. Data collated under ToR a) could be used in the protocol, which could include the following:

1) Sensitivity scoring of species to reduction in food from discards (and offal)
2) Pre- and post-Obligations comparison of abundance and breeding success of those species scored as most sensitive.
3) Meta-analysis of diet studies of seabird species thought to depend largely on discards to seek species-specific, temporal and regional differences in such dependencies, to be able to predict where birds might be most affected.
4) An inventory of the seabird colonies which may be vulnerable to the changed availability of discards to ‘generalist piscivores’ and studies into appropriate remedial action.

c) Review utility and accuracy of habitat preference models for identifying suitable marine protected areas for seabirds.

d) Summarise evidence in support of Area-restricted Search as a Foraging strategy.

e) Scope-out work required to compile an inventory of threats and measures concerning non-native predators at seabird colonies on offshore islands.

f) Review studies on the impact of fishing for seabird prey species on seabird demographics and consider how impacts may be included in ICES advice on fish stock management.

JWGBIRD will report on the activities of 2014 by 11 December 2015 to ACOM, SCICOM and OSPAR1.

Supporting information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Scientific justification</th>
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</table>
| The ToRs are listed in order of priority. OSPAR Contracting Parties are expecting the group to deliver ToR (a) related to the operation of two MSFD Common Indicators. The new CFP Landings Obligations and their effects on discards and knock-on impacts on seabirds are high profile within the fishing industry, within marine conservation and with the European Public. Therefore, ToRs (i.e. b) related to the impacts of the changing fisheries practices have high priority. Recent work by WGSE regarding behavioural ecology of seabirds, habitat models in relation to conservation policy will be continued (ToRs c & d). ToRs e) & f) are concerned with potentially manageable pressures on seabirds: fishing as a competitor for prey, and predation by invasive non-native mammals will both help to define future work areas for the group.

| Scientific justification | a) ICES has played a key role in supporting the development of regional indicators of bird population status in the Greater North Sea since the inception of EcoQOs in 2001. In 2013, OSPAR adopted a first set of common indicators to support the implementation of the EU MSFD including two common indicators for marine birds. This joint OSPAR/ICES working group was formed in order e.g. to take forward the further development and testing of these indicators. This task under the ToR will be to review the assessments and report including recommendations on the future operation of these indicators by Contracting Parties. |

1 A provisional report of the outcomes of JWG Bird as regards ToR a) should be made available to OSPAR ICG-COBAM (3) 2014 in December 2014.
a) The new CFP Landings Obligations will come into force for pelagic fisheries in 2015, for Baltic fisheries by 2015 and 2017 (depending on the fishery), for key demersal species (cod, hake, sole) in North Atlantic waters by 2016 and for all other commercial species in all waters by 2017. With some derogations, fishers will be obliged to land all commercial species they catch and will not be allowed to discard these species. The Landings Obligation is often referred to as the ‘discard ban’. This ToR is aimed at developing a protocol that could be used to assess the impact of the Landings Obligations on seabirds through potential changes in their food supply.

b) In 2013, WGSE started a review of the utility and accuracy of habitat preference models for identifying suitable marine protected areas for seabirds. They reviewed Local Enhancement and its impact on conservation issues and the use of “Habitat Models” to predict seabird hotspots. The group should continue this work, with the goal of producing a publishable review.

c) The group will review and summarise evidence in support of Area-restricted Search as a foraging strategy. They will use mainly tracking data to assess to what extent they use new searches as opposed to memory to find food. The goal is to produce a publishable review.

d) In addition to fisheries impacts, the other potentially manageable pressure from seabirds is from predation by non-native mammals that invade previously predator free islands. The scale of the ongoing impact or potential impact from non-native mammals is unknown. The group will possibly develop a ToR for JWGBird in 2015, by scoping-out the work required to compile an inventory of threats and measures concerning non-native predators at seabird colonies on offshore islands. The work will also inform EU Member States on whether they should be further developing the OSPAR MSFD candidate indicator M4 - Non-native/invasive mammal presence on island seabird colonies.

e) Determining a causal link between fishing activities and apparent shortages of prey for seabirds has proved difficult to obtain. But could seabird demographic data (e.g. on breeding population size, breeding success), which is currently collected, be used to inform management of fish stocks, so that fishing does not have a detrimental impacts on the food supply of seabirds? The group will review studies on the impact of fishing for seabird prey species on seabird demographics and consider how impacts may be included in ICES advice on fish stock management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements</th>
<th>The research programmes which provide the main input to this group are already underway, and resources are already committed. The additional resource required to undertake additional activities in the framework of this group is negligible.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>About 15 participants are expected in the newly merged group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>Two rooms in ICES HQ at the time of the meeting and the usual helpful Secretariat support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>No financial implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to ACOM and groups under ACOM</td>
<td>This is an ACOM group. Its outputs may inform the work of other groups working on integrated ecosystem assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
<td>There is a close working relationship with all the groups of SSGEPI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations</td>
<td>OSPAR (in particular ICG-COBAM and BDC) and potentially HELCOM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environment related Expert Groups

Regional database

SC–RDB – Steering Committee for the Regional Database FishFrame

ToRs to be provided after SC–RDB 2014 meeting (November 2014)

2014/2/ACOM30
Benchmark ToRs for 2015

WKARCT – Benchmark Workshop Arctic Stocks

2014/2/ACOM31 A Benchmark Workshop on Arctic Stocks (WKARCT), chaired by Jeremy Collie, USA, and ICES Chair Bjarte Bogstad, Norway, and attended by invited external experts Martin Dorn, USA, and Jonathan Jeroba, USA, will be established and work by correspondence and during meeting 4–6 November 2014 in Murmansk, Russia for data compilation and at ICES Headquarters for a Benchmark meeting 26–30 January 2015 back to back with WKICE to:

a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:

i. Stock identity and migration issues;
ii. Life-history data;
iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data;
iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook

b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology

If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;

c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice (section 1.2), and WKMSYREF3.

d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;

e) As part of the evaluation:

i) Conduct correspondence work on data compilation and hold a webex meeting on 29 October. Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation work consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;

ii) Following the DC correspondence work, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stocks</th>
<th>Stock leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cod-arct</td>
<td>Yuri Kovalev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cod-coas</td>
<td>Asgeir Aglen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Benchmark Workshop will report by 1 March 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**WKICE – Benchmark Workshop on Icelandic Stocks**

2014/2/ACOM32 A Benchmark Workshop on Icelandic Stocks (WKICE), chaired by Pamela Mace, New Zealand, and ICES Chair Gudmundur Thordarsen, Iceland, and attended by invited external experts Paul Spencer, US, and Hans Lassen, Denmark, will be established and work 25–26 November 2014 in Reykjavik, Iceland for data compilation and at ICES Headquarters for a Benchmark meeting 26–30 January 2015 back to back with WKARCT to:

a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
   i. Stock identity and migration issues;
   ii. Life-history data;
   iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data;
   iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook

b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology

If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;

c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME 2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice (section 1.2), and WKMSYREF3.

d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;

e) As part of the evaluation:
   i) Conduct a 3 day data compilation workshop (DCWK). Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation workshop consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;
   ii) Following the DCWK, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting

f) For Iceland cod evaluate the management plan in relation to the PA and MSY approaches;
The Benchmark Workshop will report by 1 March 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

WKNSEA – Benchmark Workshop for North Sea Stocks
2014/2/ACOM33  A Benchmark Workshop for North Sea Stocks (WKNSEA), chaired by External Chair Matthew Dunn, New Zealand and ICES Chair Alexander Kempf, Germany, and attended by invited external experts Carmen Fernandez, Spain, Kevin Piner, USA, and Matthew Dunn, New Zealand, will be established and will meet at ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark 10–13 November 2014 for a data compilation meeting and at ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark for a Benchmark meeting 2–6 February 2015 to:

a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
   i. Stock identity and migration issues;
   ii. Life history data;
   iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery independent data;
   iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook

b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology

If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;

c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice (section 1.2), and WKMSYREF3.

d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;

e) As part of the evaluation:
   i) Conduct a 3 day data compilation workshop (DCWK). Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stocks</th>
<th>Stock leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cod-iceg</td>
<td>Einar Hjörleifsson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod-in/offgrl</td>
<td>Anja Retzel and Rasmus Hedeholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap-icel</td>
<td>Asta Gudmundsdottir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ii) Following the DCWK, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

The Benchmark Workshop will report by 1 April 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stocks</th>
<th>Stock leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cod-347d</td>
<td>Jose De Oliveira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mur-347d</td>
<td>Youen Vermard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sol-nsea</td>
<td>Miller, David</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WKPLE - Benchmark Workshop on Plaice**

2014/2/ACOM34  A **Benchmark Workshop on Plaice** (WKPLE), chaired by External Chair Vladlena Gertseva, USA and ICES Chair Jesper Boje, Denmark, and attended by invited external experts Jim Ianelli, USA and Terrance Quinn, USA will be established and will meet at ICES HQ for a data compilation meeting 15–17 December 2014 and at ICES HQ, Denmark for a Benchmark meeting 23–27 February 2015 to:

a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:

   i. Stock identity and migration issues;
   
   ii. Life history data;
   
   iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery independent data;
   
   iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook

b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology

If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;

c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice (section 1.2), WKMSYREF3.

d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;

e) As part of the evaluation:

   i) Conduct a 3 day data compilation workshop (DCWK). Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation workshop consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;
ii) Following the DCWK, produce working documents to be reviewed during the
Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

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<tr>
<th>Stocks</th>
<th>Stock leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ple-ech</td>
<td>Marie Savina-Rolland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ple-skag</td>
<td>Clara Ulrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ple-2123</td>
<td>Henrik Degel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ple-24–32</td>
<td>Sven Stötera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Benchmark Workshop will report by 1 April 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**WKWEST – Benchmark Workshop on West of Scotland herring**

2014/2/ACOM35 A **Benchmark Workshop on West of Scotland herring** (WKWEST), chaired by External Chair Steven Cadrin, USA and ICES Chair Richard Nash, Norway, and attended by invited external experts Gary Melvin, Canada and Timothy Miller, USA will be established and will meet in Dublin 18–20 November 2014 for a data compilation meeting and in Dublin, Ireland for a Benchmark meeting 2–6 February 2015 to:

a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
   i. Stock identity and migration issues;
   ii. Life-history data;
   iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data;
   iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook

b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology.

If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;

c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice (section 1.2), WKMSYREF3.

d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;

e) Compile and review available fleet and fisheries data for fisheries in the Celtic Sea (VIIfg);

f) Produce a mixed fisheries annex for the Celtic Sea region (VIIfg);

g) As part of the evaluation:
i) Conduct a 3 day data compilation workshop (DCWK). Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation workshop consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;

ii) Following the DCWK, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting

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<tr>
<th>Stocks</th>
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<tr>
<td>her-vian</td>
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<td>her-irlw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Her-irls</td>
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The Benchmark Workshop will report by 06 March 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**WKBALTCOD – Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Cod Stocks**

2014/2/ACOM36 A **Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Cod Stocks** (WKBALTCOD), chaired by External Chair Jean-Jacques Maguire, Canada and ICES Chair Marie Storr-Paulsen, and attended by invited external experts Verena Trenkel, France and Meaghan Bryan, USA, will be established and will meet in Rostock, Germany for a Benchmark meeting 2–6 March 2015 to:

a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
   a. Conclusions s and recommendations from WKSIBCA 2014;
   b. Stock identity and migration issues;
   c. Life history data;
   d. Fishery-dependent and fishery independent data;
   e. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook

b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology

c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2 results, the introduction to the ICES advice (section 1.2), and WKMSYREF3.

d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;

e) Compile and review available fleet and fisheries data for fisheries in the Baltic Sea;

iii)
The Benchmark Workshop will report by 1 April 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**IBPWCFlat – InterBenchmark Protocol of West of Channel Flatfish**

2014/2/ACOM37  The InterBenchmark Protocol of West of Channel Flatfish (IBPWCFlat), chaired by Hans Gerritsen, Ireland, and with Andrew Rosenberg, US and Joanne Morgan, Canada, as external reviewers will be established and will meet by correspondence from January to March 2015 to:

a) Evaluate the parameterisation and tuning index configuration of the Western Channel sole XSA assessment to ensure that the assessment is robust to changes in tuning information resulting from the termination of the UK-WEC-BTS survey.;

b) Evaluate the parameterisation and tuning index configuration of the Western Channel plaice XSA assessment to ensure that the assessment is robust to changes in tuning information resulting from the termination of the UK-WEC-BTS survey.;

c) Describe the resulting data analysis procedure and assessment methodology in the stock annex;

d) Review and agree on the resulting stock annex

IBPWCFlat will report by 1st April 2015 for the attention of the ACOM and WGCSE.

**Supporting information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>High. Will improve basis for advice for sol-VIIe &amp; ple-VIIe.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Scientific justification | Term of Reference a) & b)  
Termination of the UK-WEC-BTS survey in 2013 is likely to impact the perception of stock status and the ICES management procedure for Western Channel plaice. The UK-WEC-BTS survey currently provides the longest available time-series of fishery-independent abundance information for inclusion in the assessment, but this time-series will not be extended after 2013. Consequently, understanding how the loss of information from the UK-WEC-BTS survey can be most effectively mediated in the Western Channel plaice & sole assessments is essential to minimise disruption to ICES advice for these stock. Furthermore, the impacts of including replacement fishery-independent abundance information from the QI-SWBeam survey on stock status estimates should be examined. |
| Resource requirements | - |
| Participants      | Scientist and stakeholders involve with this stock / fishery |
| Secretariat facilities | None. |
| Financial         | No financial implications. |
| Linkages to other committees or groups | WGCSE |
| Linkages to other organizations | - |
IBPWSRound – InterBenchmark Protocol of West of Scotland Roundfish

2014/2/ACOM38 The InterBenchmark Protocol of West of Scotland Roundfish (IBPWSRound), chaired by Helen Dobby, UK, and with Peter Shelton, Canada and Elizabeth Babcock, US as external reviewers, will be established and will meet by correspondence from January to March 2015 to:

a) Improve estimates of misreported landings for West of Scotland cod through analysis of eLogbook & VMS data.
b) Consider the inclusion of new survey indices (UKS-WIBTS-Q1, UKS-WIBTS-Q4) into current TSA stock assessment for West of Scotland cod and whiting.
c) Investigate possibility of using combined UKS & IR Q4 survey through comparative analysis of survey indices;
d) Evaluate survey catchability parameter settings in current TSA assessment of West of Scotland whiting;
e) Re-examine and update (if necessary) limit & precautionary F and SSB reference points and propose potential MSY reference points for West of Scotland whiting;
f) Describe the resulting data analysis procedure and assessment methodology in the stock annex;
g) Review and agree on the resulting stock annex

IBPWSRound will report by 1st April 2015 for the attention of the ACOM and WGCSE.

Supporting information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>High. Will improve basis for advice for cod-scow &amp; whi-scow.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Scientific justification | Term of Reference a)
Scottish landings are adjusted for area mis-reporting (into the North Sea) on the basis of data obtained from Marine Scotland Compliance. The data are not disaggregated by fleet and improved estimates may be obtained by considering eLogbook & VMS data.
Term of Reference b) & c)
Scottish groundfish surveys of VIa were redesigned in 2011 and the data since then have been treated as a new survey time series. As a consequence the cod-scow stock assessment contains no fishery independent data for 2011 onwards and whi-scow only a single index which does not cover the whole stock distribution. There is a need to consider the inclusion of the new survey data series.
Term of Reference d)
The current TSA assessment is allowed to interpret the mismatch between catch and survey data as a trend in survey catchability. This may lead to underestimation of stock size. There is a need to consider the appropriateness of this assumption & evaluate sensitivity of the assessment results.
Term of Reference e)
Reference points for West of Scotland whiting have not been updated since the benchmark when the natural mortality values were revised. In addition, MSY reference points have never been agreed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Scientist and stakeholders involve with this stock / fishery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>No financial implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
<td>WGCSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IBPTurbot – Inter-Benchmark Protocol for turbot in the North Sea
Approved by ACOM in August 2014
2014/2/ACOM65 Inter-Benchmark Protocol for turbot in the North Sea (IBPTurbot), chaired by Jan Jaap Poos and David Miller, the Netherlands will meet by correspondence 1–30 September 2014, to:

a) Explore the inclusion of total catch in the objective function of the assessment model.

b) Test methods using time varying growth parameters.

c) Test the inclusion of a plus group in the assessment as this is likely to become problematic as F decreases (at current high F levels the absence of a plus group has not had a significant impact on model results).

d) Explore time-series state-space models such as SAM or TSA, which can also account for missing data but are not reliant on ad hoc decisions about the number of knots.

e) Calculate Blim and Fmsy (ensuring that the probability of SSB < Blim is <5% in the long term)

f) Describe the choice of preferred method and settings for data analysis and assessment in a concise report; Include recommendations on progress to be made in cases where work is not yet finalized;

g) Describe the resulting data analysis procedure and assessment methodology in the stock annex;

h) Review and agree on the resulting stock annex.

IBPTurbot will report by no later than 30th September for the attention of ACOM and WGNSSK.

IBPNeph– InterBenchmark Protocol of Nephrops
2014/2/ACOM39 The Inter-Benchmark Protocol of Nephrops in FU 14 and 17 (IBPNeph formerly IBPNep17), chaired by Colm Lordan, Ireland, and with Ewen Bell, UK, Helen Dobby, UK and Jordan P. Feeings, Denmark as external reviewers will be established and will meet by correspondence from June to September 2015 to:

a) Revise the area of the Nephrops grounds used for the stock based on recent multibeam, VMS and UWTV data.

b) Review current stock parameters (i.e. L/W, growth, maturity, M, discard survival) and raising procedures and revise if appropriate.

c) Re-examine and update (if necessary) Fmsy proxies and MSY B_{trigger} for Nephrops in FU 14 and 17.

d) Describe the resulting data analysis procedure and assessment methodology in the stock annex;

e) Review and agree on the resulting stock annex

IBPNeph will report by 10th October 2015 for the attention of the ACOM and WGCSE.
Supporting information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification</td>
<td>WGCSE recommend this stock be benchmark in 2015 by IBP. This stock was benchmarked in 2009. <em>WKNEPH</em> 2009 suggested several areas to be addressed before the next Benchmark. For this stock the inputs to the SCA analysis need further investigation given that growth and natural mortality parameters are assumed from the Irish Sea and the fit to the SCA analysis might be improved. Also investigations to define an appropriate $B_{tagger}$ for this stock also needs analysis. The next benchmark should also look at integrating UWTV estimates for Galway Bay and Slyne head <em>Nephrops</em> as well as the accuracy of the ground boundary for the main Aran ground.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Resource requirements | - |
| Participants | Scientist and stakeholders involve with this stock / fishery |
| Secretariat facilities | None. |
| Financial | No financial implications. |
| Linkages to advisory committees | ACOM |
| Linkages to other committees or groups | WGCSE |
| Linkages to other organizations | - |

New Expert Groups and other 2015 meetings (except Data related EGs)

**WKMEDS – Workshop on Methods for Estimating Discard Survival**

Resolution was adopted in 2013 but has been updated. Dates for 2015 meeting to be inserted after November meeting

2013/2/ACOM54 The Workshop on Methods for Estimating Discard Survival (WKMEDS), chaired by Mike Breen (Norway) and Thomas Catchpole (UK), will be established and will meet at ICES HQ, Copenhagen 17–21 February and 24–28 November, 2014 and in London, UK 20-24 April 2015 and in another subsequent workshop in 2016 to:

a) Develop guidelines and where possible identify best practice for undertaking discard survival studies (using the framework detailed in the report of STECF Expert Working Group EWG 13-16) (2014 Workshop);

b) Identify approaches for measuring and reducing, or accounting for, the uncertainty associated with mortality estimates;

c) Critically review current estimates of discard mortality, with reference to the guidelines detailed in 1, and collate existing validated mortality estimates;

d) Conduct a meta-analysis, using the data detailed in 3, to improve the understanding of the explanatory variables associated with discard mortality and identifying potential mitigation measures; and

e) Based on ToR a) to d) a CRR should be developed for SCICOM consideration.

WKMEDS1 will report by 14 April 2014 for the attention of WGFTFB, ACOM and SCICOM
WKMEDS2 will report in December 2014 for the attention of WGFTFB, ACOM and SCICOM

WKMEDS3 will report by 13 May 2015 for the attention of WGFTFB, ACOM and SCICOM

* An additional meeting is required in 2014 to address key issues that could not be covered in the first meeting, due to workload and the lack of availability of suitable expertise.

**Supporting information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>The European Commission has requested that an Expert Group to Develop Methods for Estimating Discard Survival is established to address the urgent need for guidance on methods. Consequently, these activities are considered to have a very high priority.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource requirements</td>
<td>Production of Working Group Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>It is anticipated the group will be attended by approximately 20 members and guests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>Share point site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Financial | Support for travel experiences and per diem for 3 non-European experts to attend the WG meetings.  
Support for travel expenses for WG members to attend the WG meeting.  
Support for travel expenses for WG members to attend the RACs |
| Linkages to ACOM and groups under ACOM | This group will report directly to ACOM. The work of this group will enable the collection of standardised discard mortality survival data for a number of European fisheries, and therefore will provide supporting information for the advisory groups.  
The guidelines on discard survival assessment will be reviewed by ACOM. |
| Linkages to other committees or groups | The activities of this group will be coordinated by SCICOM, through SSGESST. It will work closely with WGFTFB, and will develop links with other WGs and advisory groups utilising data from discard survival assessments. |
| Linkages to other organizations | The guidelines on survival assessments produced by this group will be of interest to various Regional Advisory Councils, as well as institutes and organisations conducting discard survival assessments in support of the Landing Obligation of the new EU Common Fisheries Policy. |

**WKHERTAC – Workshop to evaluate the TAC calculation for herring in IIIa and management plan for herring in the North Sea**

2014/2/ACOM40 The Workshop to evaluate the TAC calculation for herring in IIIa management plan for herring in the North Sea (WKHERTAC), chaired Lotte Worsøe Clausen, Denmark, will meet at the ICES Secretariat, 13–16 January 2015 to:

a) Evaluate the outcome of implementing the TAC calculation strategy* on the stock of Western Baltic Spring Spawning herring for the next five years, with particular reference to:

i. the probability of the fishing mortality being at or below $F_{MSY}$ year-on-year;

ii. future yields on a five year basis; and
iii. the probability of the spawning biomass falling below $B_{ms}$ and $B_{trigger};$

Assuming that:

- 50% of the ICES MSY advised catch for WBSS will be allocated to SD 22–24.
- The flexibility provision whereby up to 50% of the IIIa TAC can be fished in the North Sea will apply, and that all of the catch that could be taken in the North Sea under this provision will actually be taken in the North Sea.
- the WBSS TAC will be fixed according to the ICES MSY approach (linear reduction of $F$) when the stock is below MSY-$B_{trigger}$
- the +/-15% TAC constraint applies only to the TAC for the mixed NSAS/WBSS in IIIa, not to the WBSS TAC in SD 22–24.

b) Draft advice on whether the aforementioned strategy is consistent with ICES precautionary approach in the next five years.

c) Evaluate if the NSAS plan would be precautionary, assuming an inter-annual quota flexibility of +/- 10% in all simulations (see details in the request 140910b_Herring)

d) Evaluate if the $B_{trigger}$ value of 1500 kilotonnes is optimal or if adjustments to it should be considered.

WKHERTAC will report by 23 January, 2015 for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

**Supporting information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>The activities of this Workshop are in response to a joint request from the EC and Norway. Based on the request it is agreed with the EC and Norway that advice will be delivered 24 November 2014. WKHERTAC will develop the analytic basis for the response to the request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification</td>
<td>The research programmes that provide the main input to this group are already underway, and resources are already committed. The additional resource required to undertake additional activities in the framework of this group is negligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>It is expected that the Workshop will be attended by 9 experts, 2 external reviewers, and stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>Baltic Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>The EC and Norway will cover travel and per diem for 9 experts attending the Workshop. Two external experts will attend all meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
<td>HAWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations</td>
<td>EC and Norway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Considering the method of calculating the TAC for herring in the Skagerrak and Kattegat (C fleet) is set as a sum of two components:

a) A fixed percentage of the TAC for NSAS in the North Sea (A fleet) that results from the application of the EU-Norway management plan; and

b) A fixed percentage of the ICES MSY advice for the WBSS total catch.
These percentages are fixed at 5.7% and 41% respectively, based on the average catch composition of NSAS and WBSS by the C fleet. The TAC is therefore given by the following formula:

\[ TAC \text{ Skagerrak and Kattegat} = (TACNSAS \times 5.7\%) + (WBSS ICES MSY advice \times 41\%) \]

If the TAC resulting from the application of this formula results in a TAC that is less than 85% or greater than 115% of the TAC in the previous year, the TAC in IIIa will be fixed at a level that is respectively 85% or 115% of the TAC in the previous year.

**WKFAS – Workshop on Fisheries Advice Section**

2014/2/ACOM41 The Workshop on fisheries advice section (WKFAS), chaired by Eskild Kirkegaard, ACOM Chair, will meet in ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, 9–13 February 2015 to:

a) Develop proposal for fisheries advice by all ICES ecoregion with focus on information and issues that are important to the development and implementation of management plans under fishery policy specifications related to the current situation and a 5-10 year time scale.

b) The proposals should address the following items
   a. Definition of the fisheries
   b. Mixed fisheries advice
   c. Ecosystem impact(s) of fisheries
   d. Emerging issues

**Supporting information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>The activities of this Workshop are in response to an ACOM initiative to reformat the advice into three advisory products: single stock, fisheries and ecosystem advice. The new format will be implemented in 2015, therefore the workshop is of high priority. This activity is linked with the ICES Implementation Plan.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource requirements</td>
<td>Production of format for fisheries advice that aligns with other ICES advice products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>It is expected that the Workshop will be attended by 15 experts, including those with expertise in mixed fisheries and multispecies advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>No financial implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to ACOM and groups under ACOM</td>
<td>This group will report directly to ACOM. The work of this group will enable the production of fisheries advice for all ICES areas. The proposals from this group will be reviewed by the respective regional stock assessment groups prior to their adoption into ICES advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
<td>The proposal for fisheries advice produced by this workshop will be relevant to advisory clients regarding the impacts of fisheries on ecosystems and to those clients developing fisheries management plans. It will also be of interest to stakeholders including the various Advisory Councils.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WKSHARKS – Workshop to compile and refine catch and landings of elasmobranchs

2013/2/ACOM42 The Workshop to compile and refine catch and landings of elasmobranchs (WKSHARKS), chaired by Maurice Clarke, Ireland will meet in Lisbon, Portugal or XXX, from the 4 days in late 2015 or early 2016, to:

a) collate the landings data for sharks, rays, skates and dogfishes, at the highest spatial resolution and at least per ICES Division, as well as year and Member State.

b) compile an agreed landings dataset for each stock considered by ICES WGEF.

c) agree a standard exchange format for submission and upload of landing data to WGEF.

d) establish, in cooperation with the ICES Secretariat, a database for holding landings data in future, guaranteeing quality control and consistency over time.

e) develop a standard operating procedure for stock coordinators.

WKSHARK will report by XX 2015 for the attention of ICES WGEF and ACOM.

Supporting information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority:</th>
<th>High, because problems occurred with the landings data in provision of advice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification and relation to action plan:</td>
<td>a) The increasing availability of landings by species rather than generic categories requires a workshop to refine and collate data at a spatial resolution that can allow amalgamation at the appropriate spatial stock specific scale. This is not currently possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) An agreed set of landings data needs to be compiled for each stock, with full documentation of decisions made on allocations. Currently the knowledge of allocations and other decisions is not documented and requires communication directly with both stock coordinators and national data providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) There is currently no standard exchange format, and one is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) For quality control purposes, a database is required to ensure that landings data are stored and accessible for assessment and advice purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Stock coordinators will benefit from having an agreed standard operating procedure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements:</th>
<th>No specific resource requirements, beyond the need for members to prepare for and participate in the meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>Experts with knowledge of Elasmobranch fisheries, stock coordinators from ICES WGEF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities:</td>
<td>Meeting facilities, production of report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups:</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations:</td>
<td>Liaise with ICCAT to achieve consistency of pelagic shark landings data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Workshop on Age Estimation of Baltic Cod (WKAEBCod), chaired by Karin Hüsey, Denmark, will be established and will meet in XX, XXX, XXX 2015 to:

- Review existing methods to derive age information;
- Test the applicability of different methods to the eastern Baltic cod case;
- Design a protocol for future proceedings.

WKAEBCod will report by DATE for the attention of the ACOM and SCICOM.

Supporting Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>This work is considered with high priority to support decision on age data for the two Baltic cod stocks assessment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification</td>
<td>Term of Reference a) The aim of the workshop is to review existing methods of deriving age compositions based on other approaches than traditional age reading, test the applicability of these approaches and to design a protocol for optimal procedures of Eastern Baltic cod. Term of Reference b) The trace element composition of otoliths has for some years served as tool to infer stock identity and migration patterns in anadromous fish species. Recently, targeted experiments have suggested a close coupling between elemental concentrations and specific life-history events. Longitudinal analysis of elemental concentrations (from nucleus to the edge of otolith) will therefore provide information of fish migration, habitat occupation, growth and spawning periodicity. Other methods to derive growth estimates and age structures are based on tag-recapture programmes with concurrent marking of otolith and fish and length-frequency analysis. The usefulness of these approaches for the eastern Baltic cod stock will also be explored.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resource requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Expert on age estimation. It is desireable that an external expert on age estimation/ validation and the use of ages information in stock assessment attend the meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat facilities</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>No financial implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to ACOM</td>
<td>ACOM, WGBFAS, SSGIEOM, WGDATA, WGBIOP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
<td>SCICOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WKWDB 2015–01 Workshop to develop the RDB data format for design based sampling and estimation with particular emphasis on population data.

2014/2/ACOM44 A workshop to develop the RDB data format for design based estimation (WKWDB 2015-01) with particular emphasis on population data will be
established and chaired by Kirsten Birch Hakansson (Denmark) and Liz Clarke (Scotland) will meet in Sete (France) (tbc) 26 to 30 October 2015 to:

a) Review a revised CL and CE format, developed intersessionally. The intersessional development will focus on existing issues raised at previous meetings (RCMs, SC-RDB, etc.) and take estimation requirements into account. Develop the format for a summary table for reporting, at a domain level, population and sampling frame data not currently included in the CL and CE tables required for estimation;

b) Review the sampling data exchange format developed at WKRDB 2014-01 in the light of any new information arising from the development of estimation procedures;

c) Populate the exchange formats developed above with real data. Confirm the suitability of these data formats for representing the information required for design based estimation (to be done in R), for example with the "survey" package, using the real data in these exchange formats.

WKRDB2015-1 will report by 5 December 2015 for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

**Supporting Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>The workshop will be used to facilitate the development of the RDB which is an essential tool for the regional coordination of sampling programmes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Scientific justification | The data formats inherited by the RDB are those developed for FISHFRAME. They consist of the CS data structure for commercial sampling data and CL and CE data structures for commercial landings and effort data respectively. While these data exchange formats meet most of the requirements for recording sampling data, and generating catch estimates, they are limited in important aspects. Therefore revision of these data format is required to accommodate:  
1. The recording of data from the full range of sampling situations encountered across the regions served by the RDB.  
2. The recording of appropriate data, and linkages, required for design based stratified sampling and estimation.  
3. The recording of data in raw form, as opposed to derived estimates  
This workshop will build on the changes to the data formats identified in WKRDB 2014-01 (Oct 2014) and SC-RDB 2014-02 (Nov 2014) and look to consolidate the work on design based estimation of WKPICS 2 (Nov 2012), WKPICS 3 (Nov 2013), WKRDB 2014-01 and WGCATCH 2014. WKRDB 2014-01 made substantial progress in the development of the sampling data format but did not consider the log-book and sales-note data in any detail. Furthermore, to use the new formats in estimation requires the population of all required fields which was only carried out for one country at WKRDB 2014-01. This workshop will therefore concentrate both on the format of the log-book and sales-note data required for estimation, and the use of data in these formats for design-based estimation in R. |
Resource requirements

This workshop will be based on the experience gained from the population of the exchange formats with real data prior to the workshop.

For evaluation of the CE, CL and summary table in ToR-a) an overview of primary sampling units and their stratification alongside domains of interest will be required from the participants. A template for these will be sent out prior to the meeting.

Knowledge of the RDB exchange format will be required and R would be highly advantageous.

Participants

This workshop will be looking to utilise the knowledge of individuals with experience of fish and shellfish sampling from all regions and in all types of fisheries, in conjunction with data providers with experience of the generation of catch estimates. The WK will encourage participants from all regions and countries providing data to ICES and or populating the RDB.

Secretariat facilities

None.

Financial

No financial implications.

Linkages to other committees or groups

The outcomes will be relevant to the SC-RDB, facilitate the work of the RCMs and be of particular interest to WGCATCH and PGDATA.

Linkages to other organizations

Bodies within the EU and Member States involved in commercial fisheries sampling and data provision.

WKEELCITES – Workshop on Eel and CITES

2014/2/ACOM45 The Workshop on Eel and CITES (WKEELCITES) will meet 10–12 March 2015 in ICES, Copenhagen, Denmark, chaired by Alan Walker, UK, to work on response to request from the EU. The work will be to:

a) Answer the EU special request to ICES on CITES criteria and conditions for a Non-Detriment Finding regarding Anguilla Anguilla.

WKEELCITES will report by 25 March 2015 for the attention of the Advisory Committee and WGEEL.

Supporting Information

Priority: Very high

Scientific justification and relation to action To answer the request from the EU plan:

Resource requirements:

Core eel experts and CITES experts

Participants:

2 external experts will be invited to attend the Workshop as reviewers

Secretariat facilities: Meeting facilities

Financial:

Travel and per diem will be covered for reviewers and 7 core experts

Linkages to other committees or groups: WGEEL

Linkages to other organizations: CITES
WKGMSFDD3-II Workshop on guidance for the review of MSFD Decision Descriptor 3 - commercial fish and shellfish II

Approved by ACOM January 2015

2015/2/ACOM46 The Workshop on guidance for the review of MSFD Decision Descriptor 3 - commercial fish and shellfish II (WKGMSFDD3-II), chaired by Gerjan Piet, The Netherlands, with vice-chairs Alain Biseau, France, Manuela Azevedo, Portugal, Celia Vassilopoulou, Greece, and Cristina Ribeiro, JRC, will meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, 10-12 February 2015 to:

a) Provide further input to the MSFD review D3 manual following on from the initial ICES/JRC workshop and template (see scientific justification below).

b) Consolidate and address relevant scientific comments and requests for clarification received from WGGES and DG ENV on the earlier version of the MSFD review D3 manual.

c) Comment on implications for the MSFD review D3 manual in light of the DGENV cross-cutting workshop (held in January 2015).

WKGMSFDD3-II will report by 27 February 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

Supporting information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>High. This workshop is part of an advice process to respond to an MoU request to ICES from DGENV to review the descriptors for the MSFD 2010/477 Decision.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Scientific justification | The 2010 Decision of the MSFD raised many challenges. Many of these are concerned with the scientific interpretation of the ideas and concepts of the Decision. This workshop will focus on the scientific challenges for D3- commercial fish and shellfish with a view to clarify the text and make the Decision more understandable. Recent relevant ICES Advice should be taken into account in the review. The present Criterion 3.3 is challenging because there is uncertainty about interpretation & implementation. There is a scientific debate on relevant indicators and reference points. Instead of deleting Criterion 3.3, a new approach is suggested focusing on three properties; Criterion 3.3 should be revised:  
• Size distribution of species,  
• Selectivity pattern of the fishery exploiting the species  
• Genetic effects of exploitation on the species. Validation is needed for existing indicators and a few new proposed indicators. |
| Resource requirements | None |
| Participants | Experts with expertise in MSFD implementations or scientific issues regarding the descriptor are encouraged to participate. Each country can send 1–2 participants. If nominations exceed the meeting space available ICES reserves the right to reject participants. This will be done based on the experts’ relevant qualifications for the Workshop and geographical coverage. National participants join the workshop at national expense. The Workshop will be open to stakeholders, dependent on... |
availability of space. The WK will be open to secretariat members of RSCs. The vice chairs are nominated to provide a geographic and expertise spread of relevant researchers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secretariat facilities</th>
<th>Secretariat support and meeting room</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
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<th>Linkages to advisory committees</th>
<th>Direct link to ACOM.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
<td>Direct link to the CSGMSFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkages to other organizations</td>
<td>Links to DGENV and the EU GES/MSCG</td>
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</table>

**WKGMSFDD4-II Workshop on guidance for the review of MSFD decision descriptor 4 – foodwebs II**

*Approved by ACOM January 2015*

2015/2/ACOM47 The **Workshop on guidance for the review of MSFD decision descriptor 4 – foodwebs II** (WKGMSFDD4-II), chaired by Anna Rindorf, Denmark, with vice-chairs Leonie Dransfeld, Ireland, Gavin Fay, USA, Marie Nordström, Finland, Ian Mitchell, UK, and Joana Patricio, JRC, will meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, 24-25 February 2015 to:

a) Provide further input to the MSFD review D4 manual following on from the initial ICES/JRC workshop and template (see scientific justification below).

b) Consolidate and address relevant scientific comments and requests for clarification received from WG GES and DG ENV on the earlier version of the MSFD review D4 manual.

c) Comment on implications for the MSFD review D4 manual in light of the DGENV cross-cutting workshop (held in January 2015).

WKGMSFDD4-II will report by 27 February 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**Supporting information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>High. This workshop is part of an advice process to respond to an MoU request to ICES from DGENV to review the descriptors for the MSFD 2010/477 Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification</td>
<td>The 2010 Decision of the MSFD raised many challenges. Many of these are concerned with the scientific interpretation of the ideas and concepts of the Decision. This workshop will focus on the scientific challenges for D4- foodwebs with a view to clarify the text and make the Decision more understandable. Recent relevant ICES Advice should be taken into account in the review. How do we determine GES bounds? Methodological standards for defining GES should describe a state within prescribed bounds, movement beyond those bounds should be seen as leaving GES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource requirements</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Experts with expertise in MSFD implementations or scientific issues regarding the descriptor are encouraged to participate. Each country can send 1–2 participants. If nominations exceed the meeting space available ICES reserves the right to reject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Workshop will be open to stakeholders, dependent on availability of space. The WK will be open to secretariat members of RSCs. The vice chairs are nominated to provide a geographic and expertise spread of relevant researchers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Linkages to advisory committees</td>
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<td>Linkages to other committees or groups</td>
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<td>Linkages to other organizations</td>
<td>Links to DGENV and the EU GES/MSCG</td>
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**WKGMSFDD6-II Workshop on guidance for the review of MSFD decision descriptor 6 – seafloor integrity II**

*Approved by ACOM January 2015*

2015/2/ACOM48 The Workshop on guidance for the review of MSFD decision descriptor 6 – seafloor integrity II (WKGMSFDD6-II), chaired by Steven Degraer, Belgium, with vice-chairs Silvana Birchenough, UK, Laurent Guérin, France, Georg Martin, Estonia, Jochen Krause, Germany, and Fernando Tempera, JRC, will meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, 16-19 February 2015 to:

a) Provide further input to the MSFD review D6 manual following on from the initial ICES/JRC workshop and template (see scientific justification below).

b) Consolidate and address relevant scientific comments and requests for clarification received from WG GES and DG ENV on the earlier version of the MSFD review D6 manual.

c) Comment on implications for the MSFD review D6 manual in light of the DGENV cross-cutting workshop (held in January 2015).

WKGMSFDD6-II will report by 27 February 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**Supporting information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>This workshop is part of an advice process to respond to an MoU request to ICES from DGENV to review the descriptors for the MSFD 2010/477 Decision</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific justification</td>
<td>The 2010 Decision of the MSFD raised many challenges. Many of these are concerned with the scientific interpretation of the ideas and concepts of the Decision. This workshop will focus on the scientific challenges for D6- seafloor integrity with a view to clarify the text and make the Decision more understandable. Recent relevant ICES Advice should be taken into account in the review. The workshop should address matters that arose from the previous workshop, namely: How do we prioritize functions to be assessed under the criterion? How do we determine GES boundaries for seafloor integrity? How can the suggested revision be tangibly</td>
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</table>
implemented?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource requirements</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Participants

Experts with expertise in MSFD implementations or scientific issues regarding the descriptor are encouraged to participate. Each country can send 1–2 participants. If nominations exceed the meeting space available ICES reserves the right to reject participants. This will be done based on the experts' relevant qualifications for the Workshop and geographical coverage. National participants join the workshop at national expense. The Workshop will be open to stakeholders, dependent on availability of space. The WK will be open to secretariat members of RSCs. The vice chairs are nominated to provide a geographic and expertise spread of relevant researchers.

Secretariat facilities

Secretariat support and meeting room

Financial

No financial implications.

Linkages to advisory committees

Direct link to ACOM.

Linkages to other committees or groups

Direct link to the CSGMSFD

Linkages to other organizations

Links to DGENV and the EU GES/MSCG

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**WKVME – Workshop on the Vulnerable Marine Systems Database**

*Approved by ACOM June 2015*

The Workshop on the Vulnerable Marine Systems Database (WKVME), chaired by Neil Golding, England, will meet in Peterborough, UK, 10–11 December 2015 to:

a) Review the VME database with key data providers, focusing in particular on the VME indicator/VME habitat fields and finalise the database for use by WGDEC 2016.

b) Ingest the new data on VMEs resulting from the VME data call, undertake quality checks and finalise this new data for use by WGDEC 2016.

c) Undertake some development work on the ICES VME data portal (as outlined in Section 5 of the WGDEC report) in order to make the VME database visible online using a 0.05 degree grid.

The workshop will report by 31 December 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

**Supporting Information**

Priority

The VME database is a core product of WGDEC and underpins many of its recommendations with respect to standing requests from NEAFC and the EU for new information on VMEs. WGDEC 2015 identified some improvements that could be made to the VME database to improve its utility, especially in light of developments with a methodology to weight the significance and reliability of VME records. There is insufficient time during the WGDEC meetings to undertake work on this core product, so a dedicated workshop is proposed to address these improvements ahead of WGDEC 2016.

With an ever increasing volume of data being incorporated into the VME database, and a dedicated VME data call being proposed in 2015, this work should be considered high priority.
Within the VME database, many of the records have an entry both in the ‘VME indicator’ field and also the ‘VME habitat type’. Clearer database guidance was agreed at WGDEC 2015 to address this, stating that only one of these fields should be completed. Distinguishing between these two records is essential in order for the VME indicator weighting system (ToR (b) at WGDEC 2015) to work effectively. Further work is required to review the records in the VME database alongside representatives from the ICES member countries (who have submitted the data and are familiar with it) and finalise the database ahead of WGDEC 2016.

A dedicated VME data call is proposed for 2015. The data call would invite ICES member countries to submit new data on occurrences of VME indicators or VME habitat types. The data call is planned to run from June 2015 through to early July 2015 (dates to be confirmed). The workshop will allow assimilation of the VME data provided under this data call into the VME database, completion of data quality checks and ensure the new dataset is finalised for WGDEC 2016.

Further development of the ICES VME Data Portal was discussed and agreed at WGDEC 2015. The VME data portal is a tool to disseminate data on the distribution, abundance and quality of habitats and species considered to be indicators of VMEs across the North Atlantic. Part of the development work planned at this workshop will see all VME indicator data being gridded using a 0.05 degree grid (an identical grid to that used in ToR (b)), and presented via a map displayed on the web portal. This map will thus show the distribution of all VME indicator records being considered by WGDEC in a publically accessible form.

JNCC has offered to host the workshop at its headquarters in Peterborough, UK.

There was broad support for holding this workshop by members of WGDEC 2015. Key participants will be members of WGDEC who have submitted a significant number of records to the VME database such as Francis Neat (MSS, UK), Pal Buhl Mortensen (Norway), Lenaick Menoit (France). Database support will also be required from the ICES Data Centre.

Meeting room facilities at the JNCC (Peterborough) and support with finalising of the report.

No financial implications.

ACOM

There are potential linkages between the VME data call and other data calls undertaken by ICES member countries (for example, the OSPAR data call for information on threatened and declining habitats and species coordinated by the JNCC). Discussions between the ICES Data Centre and JNCC will ensure that duplication of effort is avoided.
The Second InterBenchmark Protocol of Western English Channel Flatfish (IBPWCFlat2), chaired by Hans Gerritsen, Ireland, and with Joanne Morgan, Canada, and Ghislain Chouinard, Canada as external reviewers will be established and will meet by correspondence from June to September 2015 to:

a) Reconstruct and review the catch and weight at age data for plaice in Division VIIe, considering the conclusion of WKPLAICE (ICES, 2015) to revise the migration patterns between Divisions VIIe and VIIId;
b) Review the catch and weight at age data for sole in Division VIIe;
c) Evaluate the appropriateness of the raising procedures used to calculate the indices derived from the UK FSP and QISWBeam surveys and provide updated time-series if applicable;
d) Estimate and provide the basis for a suitable time-series of effort data for the UK commercial beam trawl and otter trawl fleets in VIIe to account for the recent change in e-logbook effort recording;
e) Update the assessment model to incorporate the revised data sets and conduct the assessment of the sole and plaice stocks in Division VIIe;
f) If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method should be proposed;
g) Propose / revise reference points using the guidelines and process outlined in WKMSYREF3 (i.e. using EqSim/PlotMSY) for plaice and sole in Division VIIe;
h) Agree on a protocol to conduct a forecast for plaice and sole in Division VIIe;
i) Develop recommendations for future improvements of the assessment methodology and data collection;
j) Update the stock annexes as appropriate.

IBPWCFlat2 will report by the 30th September 2015 for the attention of the ACOM and WGCSE. ToRs a) to d) will be conducted in June and July. Remaining ToRs will be addressed in September. Experts will provide a working document to the reviewers by 21st September.

IBPMegrim – Inter-Benchmark Workshop on Megrim (Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis) in Divisions VIIb–k and VIIIa,b,d (West and Southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay)

Approved by ACOM June 2015

An Inter-Benchmark Workshop on Megrim (Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis) in Divisions VIIb–k and VIIIa,b,d (West and Southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay)(IBPMegrim), chaired by Santiago Cerviño (IEO, Spain) and reviewed by Ernesto Jardim (JRC) and Cóilín Minto, Ireland, will be established and meet by correspondence from July to September, 2015 to improve the data inputs and model in an effort to move this stock from an ICES category 3 assessment to a category 1 assessment.

The IBPMegrim is conditional of data available to ICES. A data call will be issued with a deadline beginning of July. The main activities to be undertaken are:

a) Compile the historic series of discard data, with special focus on French data that was not available in the previous benchmark;
b) Improve assessment model settings:
i) Update the assessment model script to incorporate the additional data requested by the data call;
ii) Fit the model with the new data and parametrization, as required;
iii) Review the model script for the projections as some inconsistencies were detected at WGBIE 2015;
iv) If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method,) should be put forward;
v) Develop recommendations for future improvements of the assessment methodology and data collection;
vi) Propose possible reference points using the guidelines and process outlined in WKMSYREF3;
vii) Update the stock annex as appropriate.

The work will be conducted by correspondence. Working documents should be provided to the reviewers by 04 September. The Inter-Benchmark Workshop will report by 30 September 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stock</th>
<th>Name, Institute</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meg-78ab</td>
<td>Ane Iriondo, AZTI</td>
<td>Stock coordinator and stock assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leire Ibaibarriaga, AZTI</td>
<td>Model development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joël Vigneau and Anne-Sophie Cornou, IFREMER</td>
<td>Data providers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WKLIFE V – ICES Workshop on the Development of Quantitative Assessment Methodologies based on Life-history traits, exploitation characteristics, and other relevant parameters for data-limited stocks (WKLIFE V)**

*Approved by ACOM August 2015*

2015/2/ACOM51 The Workshop on the Development of Quantitative Assessment Methodologies based on Life-history traits, exploitation characteristics, and other relevant parameters for data-limited stocks (WKLIFE V), chaired by Carl O’Brien (UK) and Manuela Azevedo (Portugal) will meet in Lisbon, Portugal, 5–9 October 2015 to identify and develop operational methods for the provision of plausible MSY proxies for all ICES category 3 and 4 stocks. This work falls within ICES work-to-date in providing advice on FMSY ranges for category 1 stocks and is seated within the ICES precautionary approach.

a) To develop and test methods to estimate reference point proxies, for FMSY and MSYBtrigger as well as precautionary reference points, using the data available and expert judgement.
b) To develop methods that facilitate the classification of stocks in relation to the estimated proxies.
c) Methods should be applicable to the full range of ICES stocks, including crustaceans, molluscs, flatfish, deep-sea fish, elasmobranches and round fish.
d) Methods should capitalize on available data and information resources including length data, survey data, and statistical models for estimating the maximum sustainable yield.

e) For those stocks or species where this is not possible, describe the current difficulties to the provision of reference point proxies and detail a roadmap to deliver such values as a matter of priority.

WKLIFE will report to ACOM no later than 23 October 2015.

Data call
An ICES data call will be issued with a deadline of early September 2015 to support this work.

Background
The Commission is preparing long-term management plans for western EU waters (ICES subareas V to X). According to Art. 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy a multiannual plan shall include quantifiable targets, a time frame to reach the targets and safeguards to ensure that the quantifiable targets are met. The intent is that WKLIFE V will develop operational methods for setting reference point proxies for stocks in categories 3 and 4. These methods will then be implemented by ICES scientists with expert knowledge of the stocks and fisheries in WKProxy.

The F<sub>MSY</sub> proxy corresponds to the exploitation rate that will provide maximum long-term yield. The MSY<sub>Bigger</sub> proxy corresponds to the stock size that triggers a cautious response (i.e. advice on a reduced fishing mortality relative to the F<sub>MSY</sub> proxy to allow the stock to rebuild.) In this context, a stock in a “desirable status” is being exploited at or below the F<sub>MSY</sub> proxy with a stock size equal to or larger than MSYB<sub>Bigger</sub> proxy. In turn, stocks are in an “undesirable state” if they are either exploited above the F<sub>MSY</sub> proxy or have a stock size smaller than the MSYB<sub>Bigger</sub> proxy.

WKMSYREF4 – ICES Workshop to consider FMSY ranges for stocks in ICES categories 1 and 2 in Western Waters

Approved by ACOM August 2015

2015/2/ACOM52 The ICES Workshop to develop F<sub>MSY</sub> ranges and precautionary reference points for selected stocks in ICES categories 1 and 2 in Western Waters (see detailed list of stocks below) (WKMSYREF4), co-chaired by John Simonds, UK, and Michel Bertignac, France, will meet at IFREMER, in Plouzane, France 13-16 October, 2015 to establish F<sub>MSY</sub> ranges for these stocks that are compatible with obtaining no less than 95% of the estimated maximum sustainable yield and which are considered precautionary in implementation. This is the fourth workshop in a series of workshops developing principals and methods for estimating F<sub>MSY</sub> ranges. The specific ToRs for this workshop are:

a) Collate necessary data and information for the stocks listed below prior to the workshop.
b) Using ICES agreed procedures estimate precautionary reference points, Fpa and Bpa, for the stocks listed below. If other stocks during the 2015 advisory process are "upgraded" to category 1 or 2, they should also be considered;

c) Estimate values of FMSY and MSY $B_{\text{trigger}}$ and FMSY ranges for each of the stocks listed below such that management following advice based on these FMSY ranges will be precautionary and yield are no less than 95% of MSY. For stocks where an appropriate MSE methodology has already been developed, with careful consideration of the uncertainties involved for the stock, the MSE software should be the preferred one to be used for the calculation of reference points. For stocks where such an MSE does not exist, or is not suitable, use the methods agreed at WKMSYREF3 for age-based assessments and develop comparable methods for length-based assessments.

d) Update if necessary additional guidelines and where appropriate indicate suitable software for the estimation of FMSY ranges for category 1 stocks with length based assessments.

WKMSYREF4 will report to ACOM no later than 06 November 2015.

Background
The Commission is preparing long-term management plans for western EU waters (ICES subareas V to X). According to Art. 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy a multiannual plan shall include quantifiable targets, a time frame to reach the targets and safeguards to ensure that the quantifiable targets are met.

ICES is requested to provide plausible values around FMSY (range for $F_{\text{MSY}}$) for the stocks (see list below) inhabiting western EU waters (including those straddling western EU waters and adjacent waters).

The plausible values around FMSY should be based on the stock biology, fishery characteristics and environmental conditions.

ICES is also requested to advise on safeguard values, i.e. reference points that are associated to stock situations to avoid, such as stock sizes below which there is a known risk of very slow or no recovery.

Data Availability
Before September 17th, data for all relevant stocks should be uploaded in a ready-to-use format to the ICES SharePoint. Responsible persons are appointed once participation is confirmed.

ICES is requested to provide plausible values around FMSY (range for $F_{\text{MSY}}$) for the following stocks inhabiting western EU waters (including those straddling western EU waters and adjacent waters).

Stocks to be considered by the workshop
Black-bellied anglerfish (Lophius budegassa) in Divisions VIIIc and IXa
White-bellied anglerfish (*Lophius piscatorius*) in Divisions VIIIc and IXa
Blue ling (*Molva dypterygia*) in Subdivision Vb, and Subareas VI and VII
Cod in Divisions VIIe-k (Celtic Sea cod)
Cod in Division VIIa (Irish Sea)
Cod in Division VIa (West of Scotland)
European sea bass in Divisions IVbc, VIIa, and VIIId–h (Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea)
Greenland halibut in Subareas V, VI, XII and XIV
Haddock in Divisions VIIb,c,e-k
Haddock in Division VIb (Rockall)
Hake in Division IIIa, Subareas IV, VI and VII and Divisions VIIIa,b,d (Northern stock)
Hake in Division VIIIc and IXa (Southern stock)
Megrim (*Lepidorhombus* spp.) in Divisions IVa and VIa
Four-spot megrim (*Lepidorhombus boscii*) in Divisions VIIIc and IXa
Megrim (*Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis*) in Divisions VIIIc and IXa
*Nephrops* in Division VIa (North Minch, FU 11)
*Nephrops* in Division VIa (South Minch, FU 12)
*Nephrops* in Division VIa (Firth of Clyde + Sound of Jura, FU 13)
*Nephrops* in Division VIIa (Irish Sea East, FU 14)
*Nephrops* in Division VIIa (Irish Sea West, FU 15)
*Nephrops* in Division VIIb,c,j,k (Porcupine Bank, FU 16)
*Nephrops* in Division VIIb (Aran Grounds, FU 17)
*Nephrops* in Division VIIa,g,j (South East and West of IRL, FU 19)
*Nephrops* in the Smalls (FU 22)
Plaice in Division VIIe (Western Channel)
Sole in Divisions VIIIa,b (Bay of Biscay)
Sole in Divisions VIIf, g (Celtic Sea)
Sole (*Solea solea*) in Division VIIe (Western Channel)
Sole in Division VIIa (Irish Sea)
Whiting in Division VIIe-k
Whiting in Division VIa (West of Scotland)

**WKProxy – ICES Workshop to consider MSY proxies for stocks in ICES category 3 and 4 stocks in Western Waters**

*Approved by ACOM August 2015*

2015/2/ACOM53 The ICES Workshop to develop MSY and precautionary reference point proxies for selected stocks in ICES categories 3 and 4 in Western Waters (see detailed list of stocks below) (WKProxy), co-chaired by Alain Biseau, France and Carl O’Brien, UK, will meet at venue to be confirmed 3-6 November, 2015 to establish MSY and precautionary reference point proxies for selected category 3 and 4 stocks. The proxies should fall within the ICES MSY and precautionary frameworks.

The specific ToRs for this workshop are:
a) Collate necessary data and information for the stocks listed below prior to the workshop.

b) Using methods provided by WKLIFE V along with available data and expert judgement, propose precautionary and MSY proxies for each of the stocks listed below.

c) Ascertain whether it is possible to define a "desirable" state of the stock assimilate to the state producing MSY, i.e. a state of the stock believed to produce high yields for a long period without a risk of stock depletion.

i) On similar basis, to explore whether it is possible to determine an "undesirable" state of the stock assimilate to a state where there is a risk of very slow or no recovery towards "desirable" levels.

d) Assess the current situation of the stock relative to the "desirable" and "undesirable" states.

e) If necessary, update the guidelines provided by WKLIFE V.

f) During the spring 2015 advisory process, if additional stocks are categorized as category 3 or 4, they should also be considered.

WKProxy will report to ACOM by 12 November 2015.

Background

The Commission is preparing long term management plans for western EU waters (ICES subareas V to X). According to Art. 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy a multiannual plan shall include quantifiable targets, a time frame to reach the targets and safeguards to ensure that the quantifiable targets are met.

Stocks for which analytical assessments are or can be made available are included in a different request (see WKMSYRef4). The present request concerns stocks for which TACs are currently set but on which FMSY cannot be determined on the basis of analytical (age-based or length-based) assessments.

ICES is requested to provide plausible precautionary and MSY proxies using a “desirable” state of the stock for the following stocks inhabiting western EU waters (including those straddling western EU waters and adjacent waters). ICES will work to estimate proxies for FMSY and MSY_trigger based on the data available and expert judgement and to classify the stocks in relation to the estimated proxies. The FMSY proxy corresponds to the exploitation rate that will provide maximum long-term yield. The MSY_trigger proxy corresponds to the stock size that triggers a cautious response (i.e. advice on a reduced fishing mortality relative to the Fmsy proxy to allow the stock to rebuild.) In this context, a stock in a “desirable status” is being exploited at or below the Fmsy proxy with a stock size equal to or larger than MSY_trigger proxy. In turn, stocks are in an “undesirable state” if they are either exploited above the FMSY proxy or have a stock size smaller than the MSY_trigger proxy.

Stocks to be considered by the workshop

Anglerfish (Lophius budegassa) in Divisions VIIb-k and VIIIa,b,d
Anglerfish (*Lophius piscatorius* and *L. budegassa*) in Division IIIa and Subareas IV and VI

Anglerfish (*Lophius piscatorius*) in Divisions VIIb-k and VIIIa,b,d

European sea bass in Divisions VIIIa,b (Bay of Biscay)

Greater silver smelt (*Argentina silus*) in Division Va and XIV (Iceland Grounds)

Greater silver smelt (*Argentina silus*) in Division Vlb and Subareas VII, VIII, IX, X and XII (other areas)

Greater silver smelt (*Argentina silus*) in Subareas I, II, IV and Division IIIa

Greater silver smelt (*Argentina silus*) in Divisions Vb and VIa (Faroe Islands and West of Scotland)

Haddock in Division VIIa (Irish Sea)

Ling in (*Molva molva*) Divisions IIIa and IVa, and in Subareas VI, VII, VIII, IX, XII, and XIV (other areas)

Megrim (*Lepidorhombus spp.*) in ICES Division Vlb (Rockall)

Megrim (*Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis*) in Divisions VIIb-k and VIIIa,b,d

*Nephrops* in the FU 20 (Labadie) and FU 21 (Jones and Cockburn)

*Nephrops* in Divisions VIIIa,b (Bay of Biscay, FU 23, 24)

*Nephrops* in North Galicia (FU 25)

*Nephrops* in West Galicia and North Portugal (FU 26-27)

*Nephrops* in South-West and South Portugal (FU 28-29)

*Nephrops* in Gulf of Cadiz (FU 30)

*Nephrops* in the Cantabrian Sea (FU 31)

Plaice in Divisions VIIh-k (Southwest of Ireland)

Plaice in Divisions VIIi,g (Celtic Sea)

Plaice in Division VIIa (Irish Sea)

Pollack in Subareas VI and VII (Celtic Sea and West of Scotland)

Sole in Divisions VIIh-k (Southwest of Ireland)

Tusk (*Brosme brosme*) in Divisions IIIa, Vb, VIa, and XIIb, and Subareas IV, VII, VIII, and IX (other areas)

Tusk (*Brosme brosme*) in Division Vlb (Rockall)

Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) in Division VIIa (Irish Sea)