

Development of an industry acoustic survey for 6a-7bc herring.

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Abstract

During the 2015 ICES benchmark workshop on herring west of the British Isles, the assessments of 6a-north herring and 6a-south/7bc herring were merged into a combined assessment. This was because both the summer acoustic survey and the commercial catches targets mixed aggregations of herring from the two stocks and the data cannot be fully separated to individual stock level at the present time. Following on from the benchmark and the resulting combined assessment, the scientific advice for the combined stocks was for a zero TAC in 2016. Fishermen at the same time reported the presence of substantial spawning aggregations in both stocks and their perception of the state of these herring stocks are in contrast to the scientific assessment.

An industry acoustic survey for 6a-7bc herring was proposed by the fishing industry in close collaboration with researchers, under the auspices of the Pelagic Advisory Council. The aim of the survey is to improve on the knowledge of the state of herring stocks west of the British Isles through a dedicated acoustic survey on known spawning aggregations of these herring stocks. The survey is expected to take place in September 2016 (6a-north) and December 2016 (6a-south) and will collect acoustic information and catch samples that will be used for ageing, genetic analyses, morphometrics and otolith microstructure. Here we will present on the survey design and on the preliminary outcomes for the September survey. The role and benefits of industry-science collaborations for the assessments of fisheries resources will be discussed.

Keywords: industry acoustic survey; herring, west of Scotland

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