

"Mapping science into management: The CFP connection."

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The geographical area used for management of fish stocks does not necessarily match the spatial distribution of a stock defined as a biological entity. In the Northeast Atlantic, the areas covered by total allowable catch (TAC) limits can span more than one stock; a single stock can be managed under several TACs, and TAC areas can extend beyond the spatial boundaries of the stock. For example, the stock of northern hake is distributed over ICES subareas 4, 6, 7 and Divisions 3a, 8abd but is managed under 4 TAC areas. In contrast, a single TAC is set for North Sea Nephrops that is based on four separate scientific assessments. While the TAC area for cod in subarea 7b,c,e-k extends southwards to include areas 8 and 9 where no cod are present. This study explores the link between biological entities, based on the ICES stock definitions, and management units, based on TAC areas. Starting from the assumption that TACs should be informed by scientific advice, we explore how many TACs are informed by scientific assessments of the status of the stocks, the nature of the link and its effect on the status of the stocks. We assess whether a full correspondence between biological stocks and management units improves the probability of management objectives being achieved. In the Mediterranean area management units are largely based on administrative definitions, which conditioned the definition of biological entities, forcing the match between the two but disregarding biological stock boundaries.

Keywords: CFP, management, scientific advice, policy decision, management units, biological entity.

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