



ICES

International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea

CIEM

Conseil International pour
l'Exploration de la Mer

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ICES meets with stakeholders: Scientists and fishermen working together to improve fisheries management

Marine scientists and fishermen have long since replaced mutual distrust with mutual understanding. The two groups realize that they share a common goal of improving fisheries management and need to work together to achieve this. The need for collaboration was reiterated at the eighth annual meeting of the **International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)** and the Regional Advisory Councils (RAC), representing the stakeholders including the fishing industry, environmental NGOs and other groups with an interest in fisheries.

“The cooperation between the fishing industry and ICES scientists, right from the vessel and fisheries science partnership projects right up to here, where we are engaging with the top of the hierarchy at ICES, shows the distance that we have travelled”, says Barrie Deas from the North Sea RAC.

Deas was referring to how relations have changed in the past decade, when the relationship between fishermen and ICES scientists used to often be confrontational. According to Deas, the annual meeting proves that the two groups today engage in discussions on a wide range of useful topics “from data and fish stocks to involvement in the benchmark meetings, which are a way we can strengthen and improve assessments, through to management plans, and the review of ICES strategic objectives.”

Benoît Guerin from the South Western Waters RAC is pleased to see ICES advice evolving on mixed fisheries aspects to better match the reality experienced by the fishing industry: “Our boats are fishing very different species with different gear, so the whole system of considering the quantity of one species in one area was quite theoretical, as the limitation to one species brought on limitations to others, which does not fit the reality of the fleets. It is very positive to see that ICES wants to strengthen this process of working together to delivering advice that fits much more to the reality of fisheries.”

The collaboration benefits not only fishermen but the scientists as well. “ICES needs this interaction with stakeholders because we want to provide advice that is useful and relevant to their needs. We appreciate their commitment to improving the assessments and the advice”, says ICES Advisory Committee Chair, Jean-Jacques Maguire.

His comments are echoed by Olivier Baudalet from the European Commission: “Scientific advice is increasingly important for the stakeholders as they need to have a good understanding of these issues in order to provide a meaningful advice to the Commission and Member States. In the other way round, scientists can usefully benefit from the experience and views of stakeholders, both fishermen and environmental NGOs. In this regard, the meeting was appreciated by the participants.”

Established by the European Commission, the RACs are stakeholder-led organizations representing the fishing industry, environmental NGOs and other interest groups. ICES hosts meetings with RACs once a year to coordinate work and to provide a forum for a free and frank exchange of ideas concerning future collaborations. Future meetings may also involve stakeholders from non-EU ICES member countries.

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Note to editors

The **International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)** coordinates and promotes marine research in the North Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and Baltic Sea. ICES advises competent authorities (international commissions and governments) on marine policy and management issues related to the impacts of human activities on marine ecosystems and the management of the exploitation of living marine resources. For more information, visit www.ices.dk.

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