

BS RAC Recommendations for the TACs in the Baltic for 2010

On 6th June 2009, the Demersal Working Group of the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council was presented with the ICES advice for the fishery of the Baltic demersal fish stocks in 2010. The presentation was made by the Vice-chair of the ICES Advisory Committee, Dr. Carl O'Brian.

The Communication from the European Commission on fishing opportunities for 2010 was subsequently presented by Ms. Stephanie Schmidt of the Commission.

Based on discussions following the two presentations, the Demersal Working Group is pleased to propose a unanimous recommendation for the demersal fishery in the Baltic in 2010, to be endorsed by ExCom – as appropriate.

Cod TAC

For cod, there was agreement to recommend setting a TAC in agreement with the management plan that was recently evaluated by ICES as being in accordance with the precautionary approach. The Baltic RAC therefore recommends setting the TAC for cod in 2010 in the Western Baltic (Subdivision 22-24) at 17.700 tonnes, and in the Eastern Baltic (Subdivision 25-32) at 56.800 tonnes.

Effort

Although the management plan stipulates that effort should be reduced in the Eastern Baltic cod fishery, the BS RAC would like to highlight to the Commission that in view of the improving status of the cod stocks, it is pertinent that future effort regulation/fishing days in the plan pays special attention to the small-scale fisheries. Small vessels fishing with static gear or small trawls need to be able to use the available fishing days to the full extent. The BS RAC holds the view that this segment needs special attention with less rigid regulation. A derogation from the effort-regulation for 220 mm mesh also is needed in order to sustain traditional fisheries for turbot and lump-fish. That fishery is mainly conducted by the same segment of the fishing fleet.

For the Eastern cod the TAC proposed matches a fishing mortality that is far below the target mortality, and no reduction in effort should be imposed.

The Demersal Working Group once again discussed the implications of managing cod in the Baltic in two separate units. In particular, in the present situation, where the Eastern stock grossly outnumbers the Western stock, there will be an overlap. It seems appropriate that the management reflects this situation and allows for some quota flexibility – *e.g.* that up to 20 % of a quota can be caught in the neighbouring area.

Plaice

There are no known signs of plaice being under too high pressure in the Baltic, and the Working Group agreed to advise a roll-over of the TAC for 2009.