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Date: 22 July 2011
Our reference: 1011PRAC107/AC
Subject: Request for optional amendments to the stabilising mechanism in the NS herring LTM plan to be investigated by ICES
CC: Ms Isabelle Viallon (by e-mail)

Dear Ms Evans,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 June 2011 (D673908) in which you reflected upon the Pelagic RAC's suggestion to investigate options for amending the Long Term Management plan for North Sea herring. The Pelagic RAC is very grateful for your offer of support for this investigation and the collaborative iterative process between scientists, managers and stakeholders that ICES has recommended in view of the recent events of substantial increases in SSB. At the Pelagic RAC's WG1 meeting on 30 June this issue was further discussed among the members of the Pelagic RAC and DG Mare and ICES representatives. DG Mare representatives finally concluded that it would be useful if the Pelagic RAC would provide a detailed description of different scenarios to be investigated.

In general, the RAC members are content with the basic framework of the LTM plan and feel that it performs well in a number of important aspects, such as to ensure sustainability in the long term. It should thus be emphasized that it is only the stabilising mechanism incorporated in the HCR that causes the plan to fail to deliver in another important aspect: ensuring maximum yield. Hence, the RAC's main interest at present is to see what type of stabilising mechanism could serve to strike a better balance between these different objectives of the LTM plan.

Below, a list is provided of 'stabiliser options' that the Pelagic RAC would like to see addressed in the investigation. It should be stressed however that the RAC deems it imperative that this further process is undertaken in the joint collaborative nature as recommended by ICES. This would mean that participants in the ICES meetings who will be conducting this investigation should have the liberty to add to these options as they see fit, whether such suggestions are made by ICES scientists, EU or Norwegian stakeholders and/or government representatives or as a product of the group's debate.

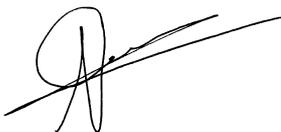
- The present LTM plan as agreed between the EU and Norway. This should be undertaken to have a reference baseline option with which the alternatives can be compared;
- "Benchmarking" the 2012 TAC by setting it based on the plan's target F (F_{MSY}) after which the LTM plan is kept in tact. This option should serve to judge the performance of the current plan, while basically correcting for the implications of

the substantial revision of SSB in 2010, providing useful information for the discussion on the performance of the current plan;

- The present LTM plan without the 15% IAV constraint. (i.e. removal of par. 5 and 6). This option (together with the next three options) will provide renewed insight in how the trade-off between stable and high yield performs in practice given the current dynamics and productivity of the stock;
- The present LTM plan but without the *exception* for the 15% IAV constraint. (i.e. removal of par. 6). This option was investigated when the North East Atlantic mackerel LTM plan was being designed, and finally in fact the option that the Pelagic RAC recommended in the case of the mackerel. Although the dynamics of the herring stock may be very different from the mackerel stock, investigating this option, in our opinion would contribute to an understanding of how the above mentioned trade-off works.
- The present LTM plan with several alternatives for "TAC-stabilisers" (alternative definitions of par. 5):
 - A range of values for the rule (not only 15%) in combination with the choice whether or not to apply the constraint above as well as below the SSB trigger point (e.g. possible application of the rule only above the trigger point).
 - Introducing a different type of TAC-stabiliser similar to what is used for instance in the LTM plan for Icelandic cod or horse mackerel, i.e. to set the TAC as a weighted average of the projected value according to a target F and the previous year's TAC.
- The present LTM plan with a symmetrical rather than an asymmetrical derogation rule to the IAV constraint (new formulation of par. 6) allowing managers to adjust the TAC more than 15% when considered appropriate. In this case, ICES could be requested to come up with possible criteria for defining the 'appropriate circumstances' under which par. 6 should then be invoked.

The Pelagic RAC looks forward to continuing its collaboration with ICES and managers in this process during 2011. It should be noted that the above options by no means should be interpreted as being presented in an order of preference or as a recommendation for future management. We are hopeful that the herewith provided information is of help in formulating the request to ICES and we look forward to engaging in the actual evaluation exercise. Please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Aukje Coers
Pelagic RAC secretariat