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Date: 15 January 2014
Our reference: 1314/PRAC33
Subject: Boarfish TAC in the quota regulation 2014
CC: Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, Ms Martine Aussems (by email)

Dear Ms Evans,

With this letter the Pelagic RAC would like to draw attention to the fact that the 2014 TAC for boarfish in the Northeast Atlantic is still listed as a precautionary TAC although ICES has changed its assessment method and therefore no longer provides advice based on the data limited approach. Contrary, boarfish has since September 2013 been considered a category 1 stock with a full analytical assessment. This new analytical assessment method was a product of the ICES WG WIDE expert meeting in 2013 and is documented in the ICES WG WIDE report 2013¹. The assessment was subsequently, during the advice drafting and reviewing process, accepted as being in accordance with both the MSY and PA principles.

The boarfish assessment is now to be considered an analytical category 1 assessment as emphasized by the presence of a forecast in the outlook table, which is in accordance with ICES' own definitions: *"Stocks with quantitative assessments. This type of stock can be considered in two sub categories a) stocks with several year classes contributing to the fishery that includes stocks with full analytical assessments and forecasts as well as stocks with quantitative assessments based on production models..."* (ICES, General Context of ICES advice, June 2013). This has furthermore been confirmed in a document prepared by ICES for the MIRAC meeting 2014 providing an overview of all stocks and their appropriate categories in 2012 and 2013 under the DLS framework (see annex I "ICES target categories").

The Pelagic RAC therefore hopes that the Commission agrees that this significant and successful work completed by the ICES experts on improving the biological catch advice for Northeast Atlantic boarfish should be acknowledged, and that the TAC from 2014 therefore should be considered an analytical TAC. Communicating clearly using unambiguous definitions is of the utmost importance when many players from different fields, e.g. science, NGOs, policy and industry are involved to reduce as much as possible misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Consequently, the Pelagic RAC would like to kindly ask the Commission to rectify the TAC and quota regulation accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Ohms'.

Verena Ohms
Executive Secretary Pelagic RAC

¹ICES. 2013. *Report of the Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE)*, 27 August - 2 September 2013, ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2013/ACOM:15.950 pp.