



Ms Lowri Evans
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Date: 10 December 2014
Our reference: 1415/PAC 61
Subject: Herring spawning grounds
CC: Evangelia Georgitsi (by email)

Dear Ms Evans,

Thank you very much for the Commission's reply to the Pelagic AC's recommendations on fishing opportunities in 2015.

Suggesting TAC levels for the stocks in the remit of the Pelagic AC was only one aspect of this recommendation. Another aspect, which has not been addressed in the Commission's reply, was in relation to herring spawning grounds. In recent years the ICES advice for herring stocks underlines that bottom-disturbing activities should not occur on herring spawning grounds. At the same time, however, ICES does not provide any information on the location of herring spawning grounds therefore making this advice impossible to follow. With increasing competition for ocean space from e.g. the renewable energy sector, tourism and shipping, fishing becomes more and more restricted. In order to optimise the sustainable use of the oceans, pressing issues such as the location of herring spawning grounds must receive priority attention from stakeholders, policy makers and scientists. The Pelagic AC has repeatedly expressed its willingness to collaborate with ICES scientists and help identify the location of herring spawning grounds, but limited funding and manpower have made such collaboration unfeasible. Nevertheless, a first meeting under the auspices of the ICES Working Group on Maritime Systems (WGMARS) on 3 December 2014 has managed to bring together relevant stakeholders from fisheries and dredging companies as well as ICES scientists to start a collaborative mapping exercise. One of the conclusions of this meeting, however, was that funding is the main limitation to carry this work further. Therefore the Pelagic AC again calls upon the Commission to provide guidance for receiving funding in order to carry out the necessary work for mapping herring spawning grounds along the EU coasts. This request is in direct relation to another letter sent to the Commission on directly accessing EMFF funding (reference 1415 PAC56) under Article 86.2 (a) of the EMFF which states that the following types of operations shall be eligible: "*studies and pilot projects needed for the implementation and development of the*





CFP, including those on alternative types of sustainable fishing and aquaculture management techniques, including within Advisory Councils;"

We are therefore looking forward to receiving detailed information on how ACs can directly access EMFF funding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Gatt".

Ian Gatt
Chairman of the Pelagic AC

