



Ms. Charlina Vitcheva
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Date : 15 February 2021
Our reference : 2021PAC15
Subject : Request to ICES to review EASME genetics sampling report

Dear Ms. Charlina Vitcheva,

The Pelagic Advisory Council would like to formally inquire about the status of the review of the final report for the EASME-funded project '*Herring in Divisions 6.a, 7.b and 7.c: Scientific Assessment of the Identity of the Southern and Northern Stocks through Genetic and Morphometric Analysis*', which concluded in December 2020.

The final report was ratified by EASME in January 2021 and we are aware that a key recommendation of the final project report was that it should undergo peer review by a relevant ICES expert group, e.g. the ICES Stock Identification Methods Working Group (SIMWG), prior to the results and conclusions being incorporated in the assessment and management of 6.a, 7.b and 7.c herring. It is imperative that this review is conducted as soon as possible so that the results of the project can be incorporated into the revised stock assessments that are being developed for the forthcoming benchmark assessments.

Whilst the data from the project will ultimately be published in peer reviewed scientific journals, this will take some time and will also be in an abbreviated form. We believe the report should be reviewed in its entirety as there are many aspects to the work that are relevant to the stock assessment process but may not be compatible with the requirements of submission to scientific journals. Can you please advise if this formal review has been requested from ICES. If it has not, then the Pelagic AC requests that this recommendation is expedited as a matter of urgency.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to be in contact.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jesper Raakjaer', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jesper Raakjaer
Chairman, Pelagic AC