

European Commission
Directorate-General Fisheries
c/o Mr Fokion Fotiadis
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Date: 15 September 2008
Our reference: PRAC0848/AC
Subject: P-RAC response to horse mackerel non-paper and recommendation on sprat.

Dear Mr Fotiadis,

Thank you for giving the Pelagic RAC the opportunity to comment on the non-paper on the review of the TAC allocations for horse mackerel. Following earlier recommendations from the Pelagic RAC, we wish to express our support for the Commission's initiative to align the areas. The Pelagic RAC has decided, however, to refrain from commenting on the methodology, because it regards this as being a political issue, which should be left to the Member States to resolve.

In addition, the Pelagic RAC would like to express its unanimous view on establishing fishing opportunities for sprat. The Pelagic RAC feels that it is very difficult for fishermen to deal with a reduction mid-year, especially in Member States where the TAC is managed with an ITQ system. It proposes that the stock is dealt with in a similar way as is done for Norway pout and sandeel. The Pelagic RAC therefore:

- Accepts that the TAC is amended according to the ICES advice, but;
- notes that it is unfortunate that this meant a reduction mid-year and;
- requests that the methodology for setting this TAC is changed to avoid recurrence of this problem.

If you have any questions, please contact the secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Aukje Coers', written over a horizontal line.

Aukje Coers
Pelagic RAC secretariat

c.c. Isabelle Viallon (by e-mail)