**The North Sea Advisory Council**

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**Agenda 3.1 Paper For Approval**

**Skagerrak & Kattegat Working Group  
2nd February 2018**

**Report of meeting: Skagerrak and Kattegat WG, 2nd October 2017**

Danish Fishermen PO

Axelborg (Axeltorv 3), Copenhagen, Denmark

**Rapporteur: Fredrik Lindberg**

**1 Opening**

Participants were welcomed to the meeting by the chair of the WG Kenn Skau Fisher (10.17).

A *tour de table* followed.

**2 Adoption of agenda**

The agenda for the meeting was adopted as follows from this report.

**3 Minutes from WG-meeting 31st May 2017**

The minutes from the WG-meeting 31st May 2017 was adopted.

**4 Landing Obligation**

*4.1 Discard Plans 2018 and 2019*

The chair Kenn Skau Fischer informed the WG of the status of the Joint Recommendation of the Scheveningen Group – Discard plan for Demersal Fisheries in the North Sea (appendix 1). The implementation through a Commission Regulation is still pending.

He predicted that the plan for 2018 will adopted quite smoothly; the situation for 2019 could, however, be expected to be completely different when all quota species will be included. For 2018 there is still the question of quota uplift for whiting, cod and saithe though the principles for how this is done should have been fixed at the bilateral consultations between EU and Norway last year.

The chair, in his presentation, focused on the exemptions in the proposal from the Scheveningen Group (pp. 12-20) and especially on whiting (4.1.3) and nephrops.

Peter Ronelöv Olsson asked a question addressed to the representatives from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. He asked if the Agency want to see a removal of the exemption for high survivability for nephrops. Malin Wilhelmsson replied that as far as she knows that is not the situation, but she will investigate the matter and return.

*4.2 Choke species in the Skagerrak and Kattegat*

The chair Kenn Skau Fischer presented potential choke problems in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat. He mentioned the work of the NSAC Landing Obligation Focus Group. The Focus Group has produced a paper, which he briefly informed the meeting of (appendix 2). He also mentioned that the Scheveningen Group at present is doing a work on choke problems.

He expressed thoughts on the need for a work-shop on the problem. The problem has several different dimensions. It is not only the small quota species that is likely to cause severe problems, the same applies to *e.g.* cod and saithe.

There was a discussion. Tommy Lang presented his thoughts on flexibility. Fredrik Lindberg pointed out another dimension of the problem, Sweden does not have a quota of Norwegian Pout. Malin Wilhelmsson said that the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management at present is doing a work on choke species trying to identify problems that may arise. Peter Ronelöv Olsson expressed that cod in both the Skagerrak and the Kattegat can be a huge problem. The chair mentioned that the NWWAC has done an impressing work on identifying choke problems.

**5 Removing the TAC for whiting in Divison 3A**

The chair Kenn Skau Fischer said that there are many ways of solving choke problems (see appendix 2). He said that the whiting quota in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat is a low value quota, that there are only a few who wants to fish whiting and that ICES regards the stock as data poor. Against this background he asked the question if there really is need for a whiting TAC in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat?

Michael Andersen said that according to his opinion all quotas that are data poor ought to be repealed. Svend-Erik Andersen agreed with this. Michael continued by saying that there are neither a scientific nor a management need for such quotas. Peter Ronelöv Olsson asked if this really is something that it is realistic to propose? He continued by saying that if the TAC is repealed some fishermen for sure will start targeting whiting and what will then happen? Svend-Erik Andersen said that a prohibition against targeted fishing may be one solution.

Henrike Semmler posed the question if this really is something for this working group to work with? Kenn Skau Fischer replied that the paper from the Focus Group will be decided upon by ExCom on Wednesday and within the list of potential solutions to choke problems one alternative is to repeal a TAC (*cf.* the TAC for dab and flounder in the North Sea). He said that the question is within the scope of the WG. Joergen Dalskov asked how proper reporting and thereby data can be ensured? The chair replied that there are many spices without a TAC and that focus must be on solving choke problems. The WG concluded to come back to the raised question at its next meeting.

**6 Natura 2000 and MSFD initiatives for the Skagerrak and the Kattegat**

Kim Rægaard accounted for the Danish initiatives. He said that an *ad hoc* working group with representatives from Germany, Sweden and Denmark has been established. That group has meet once and a second meeting is planned to take place the 25th October. Thereafter a formal process will be initiated as to the proposals in the Kattegat.

He continued by saying that when it comes to the Swedish prawn fisheries in the waters near Læsø it has been mentioned as a solution to allow fishing with semi pelagic trawl doors, but the information at now indicates that that will not be possible. Peter Ronelöv Olsson asked why and Kim Rægaard answered that they do not have sufficient data yet. Kim Rægaard finished by saying that an initial work has begun in Denmark on the North Sea, the Skagerrak and the Baltic Sea, but no formal decisions are yet taken.

Malin Wilhelmsson and Lena Tingström held a presentation: “Fisheries conservation measures in Swedish MPAs - Natura 2000 and MSFD initiatives for the Skagerrak and the Kattegat” (appendix 3).

There was a discussion. Peter Ronelöv Olsson said that the map indicating where trawling is taking place has the wrong scale and therefor it is misleading. He also heavily criticized the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management for how the process leading up to the proposal has been handled (SFPO were not invited and no one has listened to what HKPO has forwarded).

Tommy Lang said that the proposal indicates a lack of judgement at the Agency and that the proposals from the industry has been quite modest. He said that 45 – 80 per cent of the Kattegat is closed for fishing during the year and that the Agency has not taken that into account is very bad. According to Tommy Lang this indicates that it is now only environmental considerations that are important. He finished by saying that he finds it very remarkable that the Agency has not listened to the fishery at all.

Carl-Jesper Hermansen said that he finds it remarkable that fishing with hook is not proposed to be banned, since it is that fishing that causes the worst damages on the corals.

Michael Andersen asked what the purpose is with no-take zones. The reply was that it is to protect large fishes and natural food webs.

Peter Ronelöv Olsson asked why the Agency does not regulate the recreational fishery, *e.g.* why is there no prohibition against anchoring in the Bratten area. The reply was that this is a question for the County Council of Västra Götaland and that it is a priority issue for the Agency.

Malin Wilhelmsson and Lena Tingström finally said that they now are analysing the responses from the consultation and that there will be a meeting on this in Gothenburg Friday (2017-10-13). They will thereafter review the proposal before taking the next step in the process. After the 13th the Agency expects a government mandate to continue.

**7 Survival of flatfish when discarded**

Esther Savina from DTU Aqua held an interesting presentation: “Survival assessment of undersized plaice in the bottom otter trawl and Danish seine fisheries in the Skagerrak” (appendix 4).

The chair concluded that the work presented is valuable when it comes to the work on survival of flatfish within the NSAC and the Scheveningen Group implementing the landing obligation (with deadline early spring 2018). The WG will come back to the issue at its next meeting.

**8 Management of cod in the Kattegat**

Margit Eero from DTU Aqua held an interesting presentation: “Cod in the Kattegat” (appendix 5).

There was a discussion as to the definition of Kattegat cod. The current definition is that it is a Kattegat cod if it is not a North Sea cod. However, it may well be that there are some Western Baltic cod (22 -24) in the Kattegat as well. Henrike Semmler said that there ought to be a prohibition against cod fishing during spawning.

When it comes to the areas in the Kattegat permanently closed for fishing nothing new has happened.

**9 Management of Pandalus borealis**

The chair briefly mentioned what occurred during the negotiations between the EU and Norway in Gothenburg (2017-09-5/6). He presented the outcome of the negotiations – Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Technical Measures in Skagerrak (appendix 6). The Working Group will likely start its work early 2018.

Peter Ronelöv Olsson presented the design and main features of the more selective grid for the shrimp fisheries developed by Fiskeriföreningen Norden. The new grid releases ca. 80 per cent of the smallest shrimps and ca. 60 per cent of the raw shrimps whilst the loss of large shrimp is only ca. 10 per cent. He said that it is the intention to invite Fiskeriföreningen Norden to the next meeting of the Working Group so that they can present their experiences.

Peter Ronelöv Olsson informed the meeting that SFPO and HKPO has suggested (in the beginning of April 2017) the Swedish Marine and Water Management Agency to nationally prescribe 45 mm as the minimum allowed mesh size for shrimp fishing (now 35 mm). The Agency has not yet replied. He continued by saying that this is an opportunity for Sweden to show the way forward.

Carl-Jesper Hermansen said that DTU Aqua wants to buy such a grid, but they have not yet received it. Peter Ronelöv Olsson said that the demand for the new grid is high. Carl-Jesper Hermansen continued by saying that Danish Fishermen in their fisheries did not see any reasons for changing the minimum mesh size to 45 mm.

Malin Wilhelmsson said that the Agency believes that the new grid is something very positive. They have discussed the mesh size issue but believes it ought to be a change in the EU-legislation, not only nationally. Peter Ronelöv Olsson replied that the new grid is something that it must continue to be voluntary to use.

**10 TAC and fisheries regulation 2018**

Michael Andersen gave a presentation based on advices from ICES as regards the Skagerrak and the Kattegat.

**11 AORB**

Malin Wilhelmsson provided information about the Agency’s “Information note: Swedish marine spatial planning (MSP) dialogue and representation of fisheries interests (appendix 7).

The chair Kenn Skau Fischer informed the Working Group that Commissioner Karmenu Vella will attend the ExCom meeting on Wednesday and a presentation of the NSAC Skagerrak and Kattegat working group had been presented.

Joergen Dalskov informed the Working Group that there will be an interesting international conference in Vigo in June 2018.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**12 Date, time and place of next meeting**

The Working Group decided that the next meeting shall be in Gothenburg in the beginning of 2018.

**13 Closing**

The chair thanked all participants and closed the meeting (14.47).

**ATTENDANCE**

**Last name First name Organisation**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Andersen | Michael | Danish Fishermen PO |
| Andersen | Svend-Erik | Danish Fishermen PO |
| Andersson | Bertil | Havs- och kustfiskarnas PO (HKPO) |
| Dalskov | Joergen | DTU Aqua |
| Eero | Margit | DTU Aqua |
| Fischer | Kenn | Chair, Danish Fishermen PO |
| Hansen | Jan | Danish Fishermen PO |
| Hermansen | Carl-Jesper | Danish Fishermen PO |
| Lang | Tommy | Havs- och kustfiskarnas PO (HKPO) |
| Lindberg | Fredrik | Rapporteur, Swedish Fishermen’s PO (SFPO) |
| Olsson Ronelöv | Peter | Swedish Fishermen’s PO |
| Pedersen | Claus Hjørne | Danish Fishermen PO |
| Petersen | Jan N | Danish Fishermen PO |
| Rægaard | Kim | Denmark |
| Savina | Esther | DTU Aqua |
| Semmler | Henrike | Oceana |
| Tingström | Lena | Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management |
| Wilhelmsson | Malin | Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management |

1. https://ifomcvigo.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)