**The North Sea Advisory Council**

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**Skagerrak and Kattegat Working Group**

**Danish Fishermen PO**

**Axelborg, Axeltorv 3**

**Copenhagen, Denmark**

**31st May 2018**

**Rapporteur: Fredrik Lindberg**

**REPORT OF MEETING (for approval)**

**1 Opening**

1.1 Participants were welcomed to the meeting by the chair Kenn Skau Fischer (09.14). A *tour de table* followed. Apologies had been received from Kim Rægaard (Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and Tommy Lang (HKPO).

**2 Adoption of agenda**

2.1 The agenda for the meeting was adopted, with no new items included.

**3 Minutes from WG-meeting**

3.1 The draft report of the last meeting, held in Gothenburg the 2nd February 2018, had been circulated. It was approved with one amendment: “She also said that the state of the stock is not known according to ICES” at the end of subparagraph 2 under para 4.

**4 Actions from the last meeting**

4.1 The Chair Kenn Skau Fischer went through the Action Points:

1. The whiting group established at the last meeting has had one meeting in order to make a proposal (not yet finalized).
2. Work aimed at making a proposal for a management plan for plaice in the Kattegat and sole in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat has started and is now ongoing.
3. Negotiations between EU and Norway have taken place in Skagen (24th and 25th April) and in Gothenburg (23rd and 24th May).
4. Discussions on selectivity in the Pandalus fisheries has been going on. The Swedish Norden-grid will be presented for the WG at its next meeting.
5. Work and discussions regarding N2000 and MSFD is ongoing.

**5 Landing Obligation – state of play and 2019**

5.1 Initially the chair informed the meeting of the phasing in of the landing obligation in 2019 (complete landing obligation of all quota species) and the ongoing work within the NSAC’s Landing Obligation Focus Group.

5.2 There was a discussion on compliance. Rumours have circulated that compliance is insufficient. Peter Ronelöv Olsson said that fishermen now seem to fully understand and fully accept the landing obligation. He also said that compliance is good and that it is a fact that the fishermen want to do it the right way. The chair said that awareness is much greater now, but that there is grave concern for 2019 and the full implementation of the landing obligation. He also said that there is a serious risk that all small quotas (*e.g.* skates, rays and ling) will become a huge problem causing an early stop in 2019. The question of choke species in the mixed fisheries is still of great concern.

5.3 There was a discussion about the upcoming Joint Recommendation for 2019 from the Scheveningen group (Discard Plan for Demersal Fisheries in the North Sea). It was common understanding within the WG that there are many and serious problems that must be solved. In this context Peter Ronelöv Olsson asked if anyone knew the reason for the Scheveningen group working with an exception for neprophs in the Pandalus fisheries. TAC-setting and choke species was another question for discussion. Bart Adriaenssens confirmed that the input from the NSAC has been valuable for the Scheveningen group and its work.

5.4 Michael Andersen circulated a not yet complete proposal: “Whiting in IIIA”. The proposal was discussed. In the discussion Peter Ronelöv Olsson expressed a need for stronger writing to prevent the possibility of a targeted whiting fishery. Henrike Semmler said that an incentive for selecting away whiting must be one component, regardless of whether there is a quota for whiting or not. The chair said that no fisherman wants to catch whiting, but that it is not possible to avoid. Michael Andersen will continue working on a proposal and he will circulate a draft proposal to the whiting group as soon as possible.

5.5 Erlend Grimsrud asked a question as to the allocation of the quota top-up for cod in the Skagerrak that was answered.

**6 Management of cod in the Kattegat**

6.1 The chair introduced this paragraph by saying that it appears as there’s not as much cod this year as last and that a quota reduction for 2019 is much likely. Peter Ronelöv Olsson said that he believes the reason is the climate and that the cod probably is standing deeper.

6.2 As to Kattegat cod nothing has really happened. It appears as there is no political will to do anything with this stock even though there is a serious need for an improved management – the current situation may be similar to misuse of a resource. Michael Andersen said that there is ongoing work in the scientific community, but there are no results to be expected in the near time. Sweden and Denmark also seem to be far away from each other when it comes to Kattegat cod. The political conditions were discussed.

6.3 On proposal from the chair it was agreed to send a constructive letter to the responsible ministers in both Sweden and Denmark urging for a better management of the cod stock in the Kattegat.

**7 Management plan for plaice in the Kattegat and sole in the Kattegat and the Skagerrak**

7.1 The chair Kenn Skau Fischer informed that Michael Andersson has begun work on a proposal for a management plan for plaice in the Kattegat and sole in the Kattegat and the Skagerrak. He said that the main aim is to propose a plan that gives a sustainable management of the stocks.

7.2 Michael Andersen said that the sole situation is in fact quite complicated. The stock now seems to be moving south and there is also a serious time problem in that the data which forms the basis for quota setting most often is outdated when used, causing large problems, especially so since the sole situation can alternate quite fast. This lack of a functioning management is causing the economically important fisheries large problems. As to plaice it is one stock, but within two management areas (the Kattegat and the Baltic Sea) and this may complicate things.

7.3 There was a discussion and it was agreed to mention this ongoing work on sole and plaice in the letter to the responsible ministers in Sweden and Denmark.

**8 Management of *Pandalus borealis* in the Skagerrak**

8.1 The chair informed the WG of the outcome of the fisheries consultations between EU and Norway in Skagen the 24th and the 25th April.

8.2 EU and Norway established a preliminary TAC for *Pandalus borealis* in December 2017 for 2018 of 10 475 tonnes. In the light of the new advice from ICES on Pandalus from the 26th March EU and Norway agreed in Skagen to establish a TAC for 2018 of 8 900 tonnes. It was also agreed that there should be no inter-annual quota flexibility from 2019 to 2018. A joint long-term management strategy for Pandalus in the Skagerrak, the Kattegat and the Norwegian Deep was also agreed.

8.3 There was a discussion on the Pandalus stock and the fisheries.

**9 EU – Norway, work in 2018 on harmonisation of technical measures in the Skagerrak**

9.1 The chair Kenn Skau Fischer said that when it comes to harmonisation of technical measures in the Skagerrak it is mostly related to the Pandalus fishery. There will be forthcoming consultations on technical measures in the Skagerrak. It’s mostly about a joint regulation on RTC (aiming at protecting juvenile Pandalus) and there will be a another meeting on this in Göteborg in September.

9.2 Erlend Grimsrud said that Norway is harmonizing its rules for the fishery in the Skagerrak with the North Sea regulations. He also said that he will keep the WG informed in this respect.

9.3 Bart Adriaenssens said that it’s quite a difficult situation harmonizing technical rules. There is a proposal for reducing the minimum mesh size for Danish anchor seine and as there is only a limited fishery in NEZ with Danish anchor seine he did not think that Norway would object to a lowering of the mesh size. The chair said that when it comes to that fishery one has to look over a larger period of time and that this type of fisheries was more frequent earlier on. The proposal does not include fly-shooting as this type of fishery was not included in the scientific work that lays the basis for the discussion. Erlend Grimsrud said that the Norwegian industry is not against such a lowering of the allowed mesh size.

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

10.1 The chair started by describing the state of play with several proposals for areas in the Kattegat being closed or restricted. Since the last meeting a draft advice on this topic has been circulated within the WG: “Swedish proposal for fisheries conservation measures in the marine protected areas in Kattegat”. He said that he has received many constructive comments on the proposal, especially from Henrike Semmler and Markus Lundgren (European Angler’s Alliance). After a discussion it was agreed that the chair Kenn Skau Fischer and Thomas Wenzel Kruse will make a new draft taking the received comments into account. That new proposal will be circulated for approval within the WG as soon as possible.

10.2 Bart Adriaenssens apologized for Malin Wilhelmsson and Lena Tingström not being able to attend the meeting today. Thereafter he asked which working group will be working with the Swedish proposal. The chair replied that it will be the Skagerrak and Kattegat WG and that the Ecosystem WG will be consulted on the final proposal later.

**11 Any other relevant business**

11.1 Erlend Grumsrud raised the question on the need of a new Skagerrak-agreement in the light of Brexit. The chair replied that he thinks the issue is complex and complicated. Norway and Sweden seem to think that the Skagerrak agreement is valid in itself; Denmark is not so sure about it. It’s for the Commission’s Legal Services to determine the validity of the Skagerrak agreement if the North Sea agreement is terminated.

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

12 It was decided to have the next meeting the 2nd October 2018 in Gothenburg.

**13 Closing**

13 The chair thanked all participants and closed the meeting (12.43).

**Action points**

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| **ACTIONS** | **RESPONSIBLE** |
| The report from the last meeting, held in Gothenburg the 2nd February 2018, was approved with one amendment (3.1). | Secretariat |
| The Whiting Group continues its work on finalizing a proposal on how to remove the TAC (4.1 & 5.4). | Whiting GroupMembers |
| Work continues finalizing a proposal for a management plan for plaice in the Kattegat and sole in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat (4.1.2). | Michael Andersen Members |
| Further discussions on selectivity in the Pandalus fishery and a presentation of the Swedish Norden-grid at the next meeting (4.1.4). | Peter Ronelöv Olsson Members |
| Finalizing advice on Swedish proposals for fisheries conservation measures in marine protected areas in the Kattegat (5 & 10.1). | Kenn Skau Fischer and Thomas Wenzel KruseMembers |
| Draft letter to the governments of Sweden and Denmark regarding the management of cod in the Kattegat and the work on a proposal for a management plan for plaice in the Kattegat and sole in the Kattegat and the Skagerrak (6.3 & 7). | Kenn Skau FischerMembers |
| The next meeting of the WG will take place the 2nd October 2018 in Gothenburg (12). | SecretariatMembers |

**ATTENDANCE**

**Last name First name Organisation Email**

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