

## 2016 ACOM and ACOM Expert Group ToR's

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## Advisory Committee

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2015/2/ACOM01 The **Advisory Committee** (ACOM), chaired by Eskild Kirkegaard will work on the following tasks:

- a) Meet in plenary in Copenhagen, 22 to 25 November, 2016 to:
  - i) Review directions and guidelines provided by Council, Bureau and client requests for information and advice;
  - ii) Review the performance of the advisory function in 2016 and agree on remedial actions as appropriate;
  - iii) Review the implementation of the Advice Plan and agree on actions as appropriate;
  - iv) Review progress on Advisory Services in 2016;
  - v) Finalise the 2017 advisory workplan;
  - vi) Review and agree on the 2017 ACOM workplan;
  - vii) Review guidelines for the advisory work and amend as appropriate
  - viii) Consider research needs as input to the Scientific Committee and to the European Commission; and provide advice and guidance on future scientific needs and priorities related to the work of ACOM
- b) Work by correspondence (web conferences) according to the workplans, *inter alia* to adopt advice;
- c) Hold Consultations at national expense in Riga, Latvia in September 2015 during the ASC Meeting to:
  - i) Discuss the 2017 workplan including Terms of Reference, dates and venues for groups to be involved in the advisory process in 2017;
  - ii) Conduct other business related to the functioning of ACOM.

## Supporting Information

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Priority:	High.
Scientific Justification and relation to Action Plan:	Benchmark workshops will be held to peer review data and assessment methods. Expert groups will analyze the available information, develop draft advice, and audit that the stock annex has been applied. Advice drafting groups will develop the draft advice text for adoption by ACOM.
Resource Requirements:	
Participants:	Chair, Vice-Chairs, and nationally nominated, <i>ex officio</i> members and Chairs of joint ACOM/SCICOM Steering Groups. Chairs of the Expert groups with advisory tasks are invited to the ACOM Consultations in September. The ACOM Chair may invite experts to the September Consultations and the November Plenary meeting as appropriate.
Observers	Recipients of advice, Observers to the advisory process
Secretariat Facilities:	The ACOM Plenary meeting will normally be held at ICES HQ to benefit from WebEx facilities and full Secretariat support
Financial:	Included in the Secretariat budget
Linkages to other Committees or Groups:	SciCom (including Steering Groups) on research needs, Council, Bureau

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## **MIRIA – Meeting between ICES and Recipients of ICES Advice**

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2015/2/ACOM02 ICES will invite recipients of ICES advice (Partner Commissions, governments) to meet with the ACOM leadership, chaired by ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard, 11–12 January (tbc) to:

- a) Review the performance of the ICES advisory system in 2015 and discuss issues and concerns arising since the 2015 MIRIA meeting
- b) Discuss the coordination and availability of expert resources for ICES advisory work;
- c) Review the process associated with ICES acceptance of special request and advice on how to ensure that there is a common understanding of the request;
- d) Review the plan for further development of ICES advisory framework in relation to the MSY-approach, mixed fisheries advice, landing obligation/discard ban, integrated ecosystem assessments and ecosystem overviews;
- e) Discuss policy developments of relevance to ICES advice;
- f) Discuss the basis for ICES advice in relation to fisheries management strategies/plans and agreed environmental policy measures
- g) Discuss the frequency of advice and criteria for updating fish stocks advice;
- h) Provide information on and discuss the Workplan for ICES advice in 2016 including issues of timing, transparency, and quality assurance
- i) Any other issues regarding future ICES advice as raised by the advice recipients

MIRIA will report by x Month 2016 for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

## **MIACO – Meeting between ICES, Advisory Councils and other Observers**

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2015/2/ACOM03 ICES will invite the Advisory Councils (ACs) and other ICES observer organizations to meet with the ACOM leadership, chaired by ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard, at ICES Headquarters 13–14 January (tbc) 2016 to:

- a) Invite ACs/observers to report on their experience of working with ICES during 2015 and to present their research and advisory needs, and discuss ICES' experience of participating in RAC meetings in 2015;
- b) Review progress on following up of action points from the 2015 MIRAC meeting;
- c) Discuss practical arrangements in 2016 for cooperation between ACs/observers and ICES, including procedures for delivering and discussion of the ICES advice;

- d) Discuss how stakeholder information can be brought into ICES advisory process;
- e) Discuss the plan for further development of ICES advisory framework in relation to MSY-approach, mixed fisheries advice, landing obligation/discard ban, and integrated ecosystem assessments and ecosystem overviews;
- f) Discuss options for further development of the accessibility of ICES advice.

MIACO will report by xx Month 2016 for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

### **WGCHAIRS – Annual Meeting of Advisory Working Group Chairs**

2015/2/ACOM04      The **Annual Meeting of the Chairs of Working Groups supporting the Advisory process** (WGCHAIRS), chaired by ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard, will meet in ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark, 25–27 January 2016 to:

- a) Review the performance of ICES advisory system in 2015;
- b) Review the expert group work in support of ICES advice in 2016 including reviewing the requests for advice, balance between workload and available resources, the support from the ICES Secretariat and advice on actions to enhance the work as appropriate;
- c) Review the current advisory process including the link between benchmarks, expert groups and review requirements and discuss possible changes to the process. The discussion will be organised as a one day workshop;
- d) Update on inputs from the recipients of advice (MIRIA) and stakeholders (MIACO) regarding ICES advice;
- e) Review developments in analytic approaches and the basis and framework for advice;
- f) Review and discuss the format of expert group reports.

WGCHAIRS will report by 12 February 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

## **Fisheries related Expert Groups**

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### **Generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups**

2015/2/ACOM05 The following ToRs apply to: AFWG, HAWG, NWWG, NIPAG, WGWIDE, WGBAST, WGBFAS, WGNSSK, WGCSE, WGDEEP, WGBIE, WGEEL, WGEF, WGHANSA and WGNAS.

#### **The working group should focus on:**

- a) Consider and comment on ecosystem overviews where available;
- b) For the fisheries relevant to the working group consider and comment on:
  - i) descriptions of ecosystem impacts of fisheries where available
  - ii) descriptions of developments and recent changes to the fisheries
  - iii) mixed fisheries overview, and
  - iv) emerging issues of relevance for the management of the fisheries;
- c) Conduct an assessment to update advice on the stock(s) using the method (analytical, forecast or trends indicators) as described in the stock annex and produce a brief report of the work carried out regarding the stock, summarising where the item is relevant:
  - i) Input data (including information from the fishing industry and NGO that is pertinent to the assessments and projections);
  - ii) Where misreporting of catches is significant, provide qualitative and where possible quantitative information and describe the methods used to obtain the information;
  - iii) For relevant stocks estimate the percentage of the total catch that has been taken in the NEAFC Regulatory Area by year in the recent three years.
  - iv) The developments in spawning stock biomass, total stock biomass, fishing mortality, catches (wanted and unwanted landings and discards) using the method described in the stock annex;
  - v) The state of the stocks against relevant reference points;
  - vi) Catch options for next year;
  - vii) Historical performance of the assessment and catch options and brief description of quality issues with these;
- d) Produce a first draft of the advice on the fish stocks and fisheries under considerations according to ACOM guidelines.

#### **The working group is furthermore requested to:**

- e) Consider and propose stocks to be benchmarked;
- f) Review progress on benchmark processes of relevance to the expert group;
- g) Propose specific actions to be taken to improve the quality and transmission of the data (including improvements in data collection);

- h) Prepare the data calls for the next year update assessment and for the planned data evaluation workshops;
- i) Update, quality check and report relevant data for the stock:
  - i) Load fisheries data on effort and catches into the INTERCATCH database by fisheries/fleets;
  - ii) Abundance survey results;
  - iii) Environmental drivers.
- j) Produce an overview of the sampling activities on a national basis based on the INTERCATCH database or, where relevant, the regional database.
- k) Identify research needs of relevance for the expert group.

Information of the stocks to be considered by each Expert Group is available [here](#).

## **AFWG – Arctic Fisheries Working Group**

2015/2/ACOM06 The **Arctic Fisheries Working Group** (AFWG), chaired by Gjert Endre Dingsør\*, Norway, will meet at a **venue** to be decided from 21–27 April 2016 and by correspondence in September/October to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups;
- b) For Barents Sea capelin oversee the process of providing intersessional assessment;
- c) Continue compiling data for anglerfish in Subarea IIA.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 8 April 2016.

AFWG will report by 4 May 2016 (and **XX** October 2016 for Barents Sea capelin) for the attention of ACOM.

## **HAWG – Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62°N**

2015/2/ACOM07 The **Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62°N** (HAWG), chaired by Niels Hintzen, NL will meet at ICES Headquarters, 29 March to 7 April 2015, and by correspondence January / February to:

- a) compile the catch data of North Sea and Western Baltic herring on 29-30 March
- b) address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups 31 March–7 April
- c) Prepare a list of the features and estimates derived from the existing surveys which are relevant to the interpretation of results and model fitting process and therefore need to be clearly presented in the surveys' group (WGIPS) report.
- d) In preparation of the ecosystem approach for assessing and providing advice, evaluate total biomass of assessed and unassessed pelagic fish stocks & the structural diversity of the pelagic ecosystem in terms of the number of pelagic fish stocks comprising the majority of biomass
- e) Evaluate the bias in advice when bi-annual advice would be given on SSB, F and recruitment for stocks with ages > 5 and having an category 1 analytical stock assessment
- f) Examine where possible the effects of the landing obligation on TAC uptake, distribution of the fishing fleet and quality of the sampling

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the Stock Annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 15 March 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

HAWG will report by **XX** February 2016 (on sandeel), and by 14 April 2016 (all stocks except sandeel) for the attention of ACOM.



### **NWWG – North–Western Working Group**

2015/2/ACOM08 The **North-Western Working Group** (NWWG), chaired by Rasmus Hedeholm, Greenland, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 26 April – 3 May, 2016 and by correspondence August/September to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 2 weeks prior to the meeting according to the Data Call 2016.

For capelin in Iceland-East Greenland-Jan Mayen area, NWWG will agree any changes to the WG type report and the draft advice no later than 10 May 2016.

### **WGBAST – Baltic Salmon and Trout Assessment Working Group**

2015/2/ACOM09 The **Baltic Salmon and Trout Assessment Working Group** (WGBAST), chaired by Tapani Pakarinen, Finland, will meet in Klaipeda, Lithuania, 30 March – 7 April 2016 to:

- a) Address relevant points in the Generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups;

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first days of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than six weeks prior to the meeting.

WGBAST will report by 14 April 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

### **WGNAS – Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon**

2015/2/ACOM10 The **Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon** (WGNAS), chaired by Jonathan White\*, Ireland, will meet at ICES HQ, 30 March –8 April 2016 to:

- a) Address relevant points in the Generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups for each salmon stock complex;

- b) Address questions posed by NASCO:

- 1. **With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic area:**

- 1.1 provide an overview of salmon catches and landings by country, including unreported catches and catch and release, and production of farmed and ranched Atlantic salmon in 2015<sup>1</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> *With regard to question 1.1, for the estimates of unreported catch the information provided should, where possible, indicate the location of the unreported catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Numbers of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries should be provided.*

- 1.2 report on significant new or emerging threats to, or opportunities for, salmon conservation and management<sup>2</sup>;
- 1.3 provide a review of examples of successes and failures in wild salmon restoration and rehabilitation and develop a classification of activities which could be recommended under various conditions or threats to the persistence of populations<sup>3</sup>;
- 1.4 advise on possible effects of salmonid aquaculture on wild Atlantic salmon populations focusing on the effects of sea lice, genetic interactions and the impact on wild salmon production<sup>4</sup>;
- 1.5 provide a time series of numbers of river stocks with established CLs and trends in numbers of stocks meeting their CLs by jurisdiction;
- 1.6 provide a compilation of tag releases by country in 2015; and
- 1.7 identify relevant data deficiencies, monitoring needs and research requirements.

**2. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North-East Atlantic Commission area:**

- 2.1 describe the key events of the 2015 fisheries<sup>5</sup>;
- 2.2 review and report on the development of age-specific stock conservation limits;
- 2.3 describe the status of the stocks;
- 2.4 advise on the source of uncertainties and possible biases in the assessment of catch options for the Faroes fishery resulting from the use of samples and data collected in the fishery in the 1980s and 90s. Should it be considered that biases are likely to compromise the catch advice, advise on any new sampling which would be required to improve these assessments;

*In the event that NASCO informs ICES that the Framework of Indicators (FWI) indicates that reassessment is required:\**

- 2.5 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2016/17-2018/19 fishing seasons, with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO

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<sup>2</sup> With regard to question 1.2, ICES is requested to include reports on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO, including information on any new research into the migration and distribution of salmon at sea and the potential implications of climate change for salmon management.

<sup>3</sup> With regards to question 1.3, NASCO is particularly interested in case studies highlighting successes and failures of various restoration efforts employed across the North Atlantic by all Parties/jurisdictions and the metrics used for evaluating success or failure.

<sup>4</sup> In response to question 1.4, ICES is requested to review and update the findings of the ICES/NASCO symposium on the impacts of aquaculture and the request for advice from OSPAR in June 2010.

<sup>5</sup> In the responses to questions 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1, ICES is asked to provide details of catch, gear, effort, composition and origin of the catch and rates of exploitation. For homewater fisheries, the information provided should indicate the location of the catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Information on any other sources of fishing mortality for salmon is also requested. For 4.1 ICES should review the results of the recent phone surveys and advise on the appropriateness for incorporating resulting estimates of unreported catch into the assessment process.

Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding<sup>6</sup>; and

- 2.6 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

**3. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North American Commission area:**

- 3.1 describe the key events of the 2015 fisheries (including the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon)<sup>5</sup>;
- 3.2 update age-specific stock conservation limits based on new information as available;
- 3.3 describe the status of the stocks;

*In the event that NASCO informs ICES that the Framework of Indicators (FWI) indicates that reassessment is required:\**

- 3.4 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2016-2019 with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding<sup>6</sup>; and
- 3.5 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

**4. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland Commission area:**

- 4.1 describe the key events of the 2015 fisheries<sup>5</sup>;
- 4.2 describe the status of the stocks<sup>7</sup>;
- 4.3 compare contemporary indices of abundance of salmon in the West Greenland fishery to historical estimates and suggest options for improving future estimates;
- 4.4 estimate the effects of modifying the timing of the West Greenland salmon fishery, including altering the start date, with regard to harvest and exploitation of contributing stocks;
- 4.5 advise on changes to temporal and/or spatial fishery patterns that may provide increased protection for weaker stocks;

*In the event that NASCO informs ICES that the Framework of Indicators (FWI) indicates that reassessment is required:(The aim should be for NASCO to inform ICES by 31 January of the outcome of utilising the FWI)*

- 4.6 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2016 - 2019 with an assessment of risk relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding<sup>6</sup>; and

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<sup>6</sup> In response to questions 2.5, 3.4 and 4.6, provide a detailed explanation and critical examination of any changes to the models used to provide catch advice and report on any developments in relation to incorporating environmental variables in these models.

<sup>7</sup> In response to question 4.2, ICES is requested to provide a brief summary of the status of North American and North-East Atlantic salmon stocks. The detailed information on the status of these stocks should be provided in response to questions 2.3 and 3.3.

- 4.7 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

WGNAS will report by 15 April 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

#### **WGBFAS – Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group**

2015/2/ACOM11 The **Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group** (WGBFAS), chaired by Tomas Groehsler\*, Germany, and co-chaired by Michele Casini\*, Sweden, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 12–19 April 2016 to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups;
- b) Utilize the main result from WGIAB, WGSAM, WGBFAS, SGSPATIAL with main focus on the biological processes and interactions of key species in the Baltic Sea;
- c) Assess the progress on the benchmark preparation of cod in Division IIIa East, herring in Subdivision 30 and herring in Subdivision 31;
- d) Check the relevance of the reopening procedure and report on reopened advice if appropriate;
- e) Discuss and agree on a workplan for intersessional work for the coming years to improve the assessment and advice of the Baltic cod stocks;
- f) Coordinate the intersessional work agreed under e);
- g) Report during the WGBFAS on progress of the intersessional work and next steps in accordance with the workplan;
- h) Advice on how the results of the intersessional work can be applied in the assessment of the Baltic Sea cod stocks.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 15 March 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGBFAS will report by 26 April 2016 for the attention of ACOM. Concerning ToR d) the group will report on the ACOM guidelines on reopening procedure of the advice before 12 October and will report on reopened advice before 28 October.

#### **WGBIE- Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and Iberian waters Ecoregion**

2014/2/ACOM12 The **Working Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and Iberian waters Ecoregion** (WGBIE), chaired by Lisa Readdy\* (UK), will meet in the ICES Secretariat, 13–19 May 2016 to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups
- b) Assess the progress on the benchmark preparation of Nephrops;

- c) Check the relevance of the reopening procedure and report on reopened advice if appropriate.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGBIE will report by 31 May 2015 for the attention of ACOM. Concerning ToR c) the group will report on the ACOM guidelines on reopening procedure of the advice before 14 October and will report on reopened advice before 28 October.

### **WGCSE - Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion**

2014/2/ACOM13 The **Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE)**, chaired by Colm Lordan, Ireland will meet at ICES Headquarters, 4–13 May 2016 and by correspondence September / October 2016 to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.
- b) Check the relevance of the reopening procedure and report on reopened advice if appropriate.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than XX 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGCSE will report by 19 May 2016 for the attention of ACOM, and by 7 October 2016 for Nephrops stocks, anglerfish and Rockall megrim. Concerning ToR b) the group will report on the ACOM guidelines on reopening procedure of the advice before 12 October and will report on reopened advice before 28 October.

### **WGNSSK - Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak**

2015/2/ACOM14 The **Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak (WGNSSK)**, chaired by Alexander Kempf, Germany, and Jose D 'Oliveira\*, UK, in meet in Hamburg, 26 April – 5 May 2016 and by correspondence in September 2016 to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups. The Norway pout assessments shall be developed by correspondence;
- b) Check the relevance of the reopening procedure and report on reopened advice if appropriate.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 12 April 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGNSSK will report by 12 May 2016, and by 28 September 2016 (Norway pout) for the attention of ACOM. Concerning ToR b) the group will report on the ACOM guidelines on reopening procedure of the advice before 12 October and will report on reopened advice before 28 October.

### **NIPAG – Joint NAFO/ICES Pandalus Assessment Working Group**

2015/2/ACOM15 The **Joint NAFO/ICES Pandalus Assessment Working Group** (NIPAG), chaired by Guldborg Søvik\*, Norway (ICES) and Brian Healey, Canada (NAFO), will meet in ICES HQ, Denmark 7–14 September, 2016, to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.
- b) Test the sensitivity of the length based model to assumptions through sensitivity analysis, investigate the retrospective problem in F and develop further diagnostic plots to aid in achieving confidence in the estimates.
- c) Apply the new ICES method Eqsim to the stock-recruit data to obtain reference points.
- d) Investigate the suitability of both the length based model and the surplus production model for providing advice on the long-term management plan outlined in the request from Norway, including in-season TAC adjustment.
- e) Consider shrimp stocks as decided by the NAFO Scientific Council
- f) Compile, update, analyse and document time-series of by-catches in the shrimp fishery

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than XX 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

NIPAG will report by 21 September 2016 on the ICES shrimp stocks for the attention of ACOM.

### **WGWIDE – Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks**

2015/2/ACOM16 The **Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks** (WGWIDE), chaired by Katja Enberg, Norway, will meet in ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark 31 August – 6 September, 2016 to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups;

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 12 September 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGWIDE will report by 12 September, 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

### **WGHANSA – Working Group on Southern Horse Mackerel Anchovy and Sardine**

2015/2/ACOM17 The **Working Group on Southern Horse Mackerel, Anchovy and Sardine** (WGHANSA), chaired by Lionel Pawlowski, France, will meet in Lorient, France, 24–29 June 2016 and by correspondence in XXX November 2016 (*dates to be decided after WGAEGGS November 2015*) to:

- a) address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups. The work on Bay of Biscay anchovy should be carried out by correspondence in November;
- b) assess the progress on the benchmark preparation of anchovy in Division IXa, horse mackerel in Division IXa, sardine in Divisions VIIa,b,d and Subarea VII, and sardine in Divisions VIIc and IXa.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 25 May 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGHANSA will report by 6 July 2016 for all stocks except Bay of Biscay anchovy and by 23 November for Bay of Biscay anchovy stock for the attention of ACOM.

### **WGDEEP - Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep-Sea Fisheries Resources**

2015/2/ACOM18      The **Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep-Sea Fisheries Resources (WGDEEP)**, chaired by Pascal Lorance, France, and Gudmundur Thordarson, Iceland, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 20–27 April 2016 to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.
- b) Complete the development of Stock Annexes for all the stocks assessed by WGDEEP.
- c) Update the description of deep-water fisheries in both the NEAFC Regulatory Area and ICES area(s) by compiling data on catch/landings, fishing effort (inside versus outside the EEZs, in spawning areas, areas of local depletion, etc.), and discard statistics at the finest spatial resolution possible by ICES Subarea and Division and NEAFC Regulatory Area and describe and prepare a first Advice draft of any emerging deep-water fishery with the available data in the NEAFC Regulatory Area .
- d) Continue work on exploratory assessments for deep-water species.
- e) Evaluate the stock status of Icelandic stocks for the provision of annual advice in 2016.
- f) Evaluate the stock status of all EU stocks for the provision of biennial advice in 2016
- g) Prepare for an evaluation of the stock status for the non-EU stocks for the provision of biennial advice due in 2017.

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 01 April 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGDEEP will report by 3 May 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

## WGEEL - Joint EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eels

*ToRs to be updated after WGEEL meeting in December 2015*

2014/2/ACOM19 The Joint EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eels (WGEEL), chaired by Alan Walker, UK, will work by correspondence with a deadline of 2 October 2015 to:

- a) Assess the latest trends in glass and yellow eel indices and produce the first draft of the ICES annual eel advice.

The WGEEL will furthermore meet in Antalya, Turkey, from 24 November to 2 December 2015 to:

- b) Progress the development of the whole-stock assessment methods using the latest available data
- c) Progress an eel stock annex and make recommendations for further work;
- d) Review developments in the standardization of methods for data collection, analysis and assessment and make recommendations for further work;
- e) Identify relevant data deficiencies, monitoring needs and research requirements;
- f) Report on significant new or emerging threats to, or opportunities for, eel conservation and management;
- g) Address the generic EG ToRs from ACOM.

WGEEL will report the December meeting by 17 December 2015 for the attention of ACOM, WGRECORDS, SSGEF and FAO, EIFAAC and GFCM.

## Supporting Information

### Priority

In 2007, the EU published the Regulation EC 1100/2007, establishing measures for the recovery of the eel stock. This introduced new challenges for the Working Group, requiring development of new methodologies for local and regional stock assessments and evaluation of the status of the stock at the international level.

The EU Member States provided their first EMP Progress Reports in 2012 and the WGEEL in 2013 used the biomass and mortality stock indicators reported therein to provide the first attempt at a stock-wide assessment based on biomass and mortality reference points. However, the WGEEL meetings in 2013 highlighted the following main issues:

1. -lack of quality assessment of the assessment methods and reported stock indicators
2. -incomplete reporting by MS of the required stock indicators to the EU in 2012, and to ICES in 2013
3. -lack of stock indicators of countries that are outside the EU but inside the natural range of the European eel (i.e. north African



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countries)

4. The WGEEL is developing plans and pursuing opportunities to address the first issue, through development of a common approach to local and national stock assessment, and for existing and new national methods to be fully documented and peer-reviewed.

5. It is anticipated that the second and third of these issues will be addressed, at least in part if not in full, ahead of the 2015 meeting of the WGEEL, through the second round of EMP Progress Reporting (June 2015) and ongoing efforts by GFCM and member countries to develop new eel data for the Mediterranean region.

6. The EU Commission will require an annual update on the status of the panmictic eel stock in 2015 to set the results of the national EMP Progress Reports within the context of the international stock.

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The EU has requested advice in October 2015 and thus it is needed to have part of the work done by correspondence before the actual meeting of the group.

European eel life history is complex and atypical among aquatic species. The stock is genetically panmictic and data indicate random arrival of adults in the spawning area. The continental eel stock is widely distributed and there are strong local and regional differences in population dynamics and local stock structures. Fisheries on all continental life stages take place throughout the distribution area. Local impacts by fisheries vary from almost nil to heavy overexploitation. Other forms of anthropogenic mortality (e.g. hydropower, pumping stations) also impact on eel and vary in distribution and local relevance.

#### Scientific justification

Exploitation that leaves 30% of the virgin spawning-stock biomass is generally considered to be a reasonable target for escapement. The EC Regulation set a limit for silver eel escapement to the sea of at least 40% of the silver eel biomass relative to the best estimate of escapement that would have existed if no anthropogenic influences had impacted the stock.

WGEEL recommended in 2010 that Eel Management Plan reporting must provide the following biomass and anthropogenic mortality data:

-B<sub>post</sub>, the biomass of the escapement in the assessment year;

-B<sub>0</sub>, the biomass of the escapement in the pristine state. Alternatively, one could specify B<sub>lim</sub>, the 40% limit of B<sub>0</sub>, as set in the Eel Regulation;

-B<sub>best</sub>, the estimated potential biomass in the assessment year, assuming no anthropogenic impacts (and without stocking) have occurred and from all potentially available habitats.

- $\Sigma A$ , the estimation of B<sub>best</sub> will require an estimate of A (anthropogenic mortality (e.g. catch, turbines)) for density-independent cases, and a more complex analysis for density-dependent cases.

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	Most but not all EU Member States reported quantitative estimates of the required stock indicators to the EU in 2012. The reliability and accuracy of these data have not yet been fully evaluated. Furthermore, the stock indicators of all non-European countries that lay within the natural range of the European eel are lacking.
Resource requirements	Sharepoint; Access to national EMP progress reports for 2015 from EU Member States.
Participants	EIFAAC, ICES and GFCM Working Group Participants, Invited Country Administrations, EU representative, Invited specialists
Secretariat facilities	Support to organize the logistics of the meeting.
Financial	At countries expense
Linkages to advisory committees	ACOM
Linkages to other committees or groups	WGRECORDS, SCICOM, SSGEF
Linkages to other organizations	FAO EIFAAC, GFCM, EU DG-MARE, EU DG-ENV

## WGEF - Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes

2015/2/ACOM20 The **Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF)**, chaired by Jim Ellis, UK, will meet in Lisbon, Portugal, from 15–24 June 2016 to:

- a) Address generic ToRs for Regional and Species Working Groups.
- b) Update the description of elasmobranch fisheries for deep-water, pelagic and demersal species in the ICES area and compile landings, effort and discard statistics by ICES Subarea and Division, and catch data by NEAFC Regulatory Area. Describe and prepare a first Advice draft of any emerging elasmobranch fishery with the available data on catch/landings, fishing effort and discard statistics at the finest spatial resolution possible in the NEAFC Regulatory Area and ICES area(s).
- c) Evaluate the stock status for the provision of biennial advice due in 2016 for (i) spurdog, (ii) skate stocks in the Celtic Seas and (iii) skate stocks in the Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast ecoregions.
- d) Conduct exploratory analyses and collate relevant data in preparation for the evaluation of the stock status for the provision of biennial advice due in 2017 for (i) skate stocks in the North Sea ecoregion; (ii) skate stocks in the Azores and MAR; (iii) catsharks (Scyliorhinidae) in the Grater North Sea, Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast ecoregions; (iv) smooth-hounds in the Northeast Atlantic and (v) tope in the Northeast Atlantic.

- e) Conduct exploratory analyses and collate relevant data in preparation for the evaluation of the stock status for the provision of quadrennial advice due in 2019 for the following widely-distributed shark stocks: (i) Portuguese dogfish; (ii) Leafscale gulper shark; (iii) Kitefin shark; (iv) Porbeagle, and the following species that are on the prohibited species list: (v) angel shark, (vi) basking shark
- f) Review, update and standardise Stock Annexes for elasmobranchs where necessary
- g) Draft ToRs for a dedicated workshop in 2017 to address elasmobranch discards including (i) the evaluation and development of methods for estimating the levels of discards, focusing on specified case-study species and metiers representing species with contrasting levels and qualities of data, (ii) update availability of discard survival studies, and (iii) provide preliminary estimates of mortality rates of discards for case-study species

The assessments will be carried out on the basis of the stock annex. The assessments must be available for audit on the first day of the meeting.

Material and data relevant for the meeting must be available to the group no later than 2 June 2016 according to the Data Call 2016.

WGEF will report by 1 July 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

#### **WGHARP – Group on Harp and Hooded Seals**

2015/2/ACOM21      The **ICES/NAFO/NAMMCO Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals (WGHARP)** chaired by Mike Hammill, Canada, will meet in ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark, 15-19 August, 2016 to:

Harp seals: Northwest Atlantic stock:

- a) explore the impact of proposed harvest strategies that would maintain the North Atlantic harp seal population at a precautionary level of a PA framework, using the Canadian levels as a case study, and that would have a low risk of decreasing below the critical level
- b) assess how good this new management plan functions and under what conditions this management framework would fail
- c) To assess how different scenarios of reductions of the population to the N70 level will affect the abundance of pup of the year, juvenile seals and adult seals in Greenland waters

Harp seals: Greenland Sea stock:

- d) evaluate new model developments and comparisons with old assessment model

White Sea/Barents Sea harp seal stock

- e) provide advice about current status and catch potential for harp seals

WGHARP will report by **1 December** 2016 for the attention of the ACOM.

## Supporting Information

Priority:	High priority as a tool for the assessment and management of harp and hooded seal in the North Atlantic Ocean. WGHARP receives requests for advice from member countries through ACOM and/or NAFO Scientific Council, including recognition of the need for a precautionary approach to management of seal populations
Scientific justification:	A number of North Atlantic nations currently harvest harp and hooded seal stocks and there is a need for a relatively neutral forum for developing and vetting scientific advice on sustainable harvests of these stocks. The WGHARP provides this forum through the inclusion of ICES and NAFO member state scientific experts in pinniped biology and the quantitative techniques necessary for development of sound catch advice; members represent all harvesting nations as well as nations without seal harvests.  ToR b) is a potential request from Norway.
Resource requirements:	None beyond the contributions from member states
Participants:	The Group is normally attended by some 10-15 members and guests.
Secretariat facilities	None
Financial:	None
Linkages to advisory committees:	WGHARP reports to ACOM and NAFO Sc.C.
Linkages to other committees or groups:	SSGHIE, SSGSUE, WGMME
Linkages to other organizations:	NOAA/NMFS, NAMMCO, Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Committee. The work of this group is closely aligned with harp and hooded seal research and management programs conducted by the governments of Canada, Greenland, Norway, Russia, and the United States

### WGMIXFISH-ADVICE – Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice

2015/2/ACOM22 The **Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice** (WGMIXFISH-ADVICE), chaired by Youen Vermard\*, France, will meet at ICES Headquarters, 23–27 May 2016 to:

- a) Carry out mixed demersal fisheries projections for the North Sea taking into account the single species advice for cod, haddock, whiting, saithe, plaice, sole, turbot, *Nephrops norvegicus*, sole VIIId and plaice VIIId that is produced by WGNSSK in May 2016, and the management measures in place for 2017;
- b) Carry out mixed demersal fisheries projections for the Celtic Sea taking into account the single species advice for cod, haddock, and whiting that is produced by WGCSE in 2016, and the management measures in place for 2017 and further develop advice for the region;
- c) Carry out mixed fisheries projections for the Iberian waters taking into account the single species advice for hake, four-spot megrim, megrim and white anglerfish that is produced by WGBIE in May 2016, and the management measures in place for 2017 and further develop advice for the region;

- d) Produce a draft mixed-fisheries section for the ICES advisory report 2015 that includes a dissemination of the fleet and fisheries data and forecasts for the North Sea, Celtic Sea [and where possible the Iberian waters].

WGMIXFISH will report by 3 June 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

## Supporting Information

Priority:	The work is essential to ICES to progress in the development of its capacity to provide advice on multispecies fisheries. Such advice is necessary to fulfil the requirements stipulated in the MoUs between ICES and its client commissions.
Scientific justification and relation to action plan:	<p>The issue of providing advice for mixed fisheries remains an important one for ICES. The Aframe project, which started on 1 April 2007 and finished on 31 March 2009 developed further methodologies for mixed fisheries forecasts. The work under this project included the development and testing of the Fcube approach to modelling and forecasts.</p> <p>In 2008, SGMIXMAN produced an outline of a possible advisory format that included mixed fisheries forecasts. Subsequently, WKMIXFISH was tasked with investigating the application of this to North Sea advice for 2010. AGMIXNS further developed the approach when it met in November 2009 and produced a draft template for mixed fisheries advice. WGMIXFISH has continued this work since 2010.</p>
Resource requirements:	No specific resource requirements, beyond the need for members to prepare for and participate in the meeting.
Participants:	Experts with qualifications regarding mixed fisheries aspects, fisheries management and modelling based on limited and uncertain data.
Secretariat facilities:	Meeting facilities, production of report.
Financial:	None
Linkages to advisory committee:	ACOM
Linkages to other committees or groups:	SCICOM through the WGMG. Strong link to STECF.
Linkages to other organizations:	This work serves as a mechanism in fulfilment of the MoU with EC and fisheries commissions. It is also linked with STECF work on mixed fisheries.

### WGMIXFISH-METH – Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice Methodology

*ToRs to be updated after WGMIXFISH meeting in October 2015*

2015/2/ACOM23 The Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice Methodology (WGMIXFISH-METH), chaired by Youen Vermard, France, will meet in London, UK, 19-23 October 2015 to:

- a. Review progress on mixed fisheries methodologies and consider how they might be taken forward and incorporated into the advisory process. In particular, focus should be given to the following priorities:
  - Short term catch forecasting methods, including methods to incorporate data-poor stocks taking account of uncertainties;
  - Incorporation of advice on protected, endangered and threatened (PET) species into mixed fisheries advice;
  - Incorporation of Fmsy ranges into forecasting procedure to provide advice which minimises incompatibility between management advice for multiple stocks exploited in mixed fisheries. This may be developed through robust medium term Management Strategy Evaluation approaches,

- Application of methodology to other ICES regions, fisheries and stocks.

WGMIXFISH-METH will report by 23 November 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

## Supporting Information

Priority:	The work is essential for ICES to progress in the development of its capacity to provide advice on multi-species fisheries. Such advice is necessary to fulfil the requirements stipulated in the MoUs between ICES and its client commissions.
Scientific justification and relation to action plan:	The issue of providing advice for mixed fisheries remains an important one for ICES. However, in practice all recent advice in this area has resulted from the work and analyses done by sub-groups of STECF rather than ICES. The Aframe project, which started on 1 April 2007 and finished on 31 March 2009 developed further methodologies for mixed fisheries forecasts. The work under this project included the development and testing of the Fcube approach to modelling and forecasts. In 2008, SGMIXMAN produced an outline of a possible advisory format that included mixed fisheries forecasts. Subsequently, WKMIXFISH was tasked with investigating the application of this to North Sea advice for 2010. AGMIXNS further developed the approach when it met in November 2009 and produced a draft template for mixed fisheries advice. WGMIXFISH has continued this work in 2010 to 2012.
Resource requirements:	No specific resource requirements, beyond the need for members to prepare for and participate in the meeting.
Participants:	Experts with qualifications regarding mixed fisheries aspects, fisheries management and modelling based on limited and uncertain data.
Secretariat facilities:	Meeting facilities, production of report.
Financial:	None
Linkages to advisory committee:	ACOM
Linkages to other committees or groups:	SCICOM through the WGMG. Strong link to STECF.
Linkages to other organizations:	This work serves as a mechanism in fulfilment of the MoU with EC and fisheries commissions. It is also linked with STECF work on mixed fisheries.

## WGScallop – Scallop Assessment Working Group

*ToRs to be updated after WGScallop meeting in October 2015*

2015/ACOM24 The **Scallop Assessment Working Group (WGScallop)**, chaired by Kevin Stokesbury, USA, will meet 5-9 October 2015, in Trinity, Jersey, UK, to:

- a. develop recommendation on whether there are sufficient data and appropriate methods for defined assessment areas to produce stock assessments.
- b. develop recommendation for stock assessment methodologies for data limited and data rich situations.
- c. further investigate and quantify benefits of MPA's and/or rotational areas from the perspective of the scallop fishery.
- d. develop a recommendation to examine a global project at the European level.
- e. complete and finalize the 3 year report, self-evaluation.

WGScallop will report by 6 November 2015 for the attention of ACOM.

## Supporting Information

Priority: Essential

Scientific justification: The original ToR's for this working group were:

1. Distribution of fishing effort and landings for scallop inshore and offshore waters, and explore the development of a common data base.
2. Identification of stock assessment and management units
3. Biological parameters
4. Stock assessment methods and evaluation of indicators of stock status and identification of reference points
5. Data provision and feasibility of obtaining data
6. Efficacy of scallop fisheries management measures
7. Impact of scallop harvesting on habitat and habitat recovery rates

Over the past two meetings the Group has discussed and compiled information on these ToRs. In the upcoming meeting the group will finalize the analysis by addressing the above ToRs.

The proposal to initiate a WG on scallops is justified on the basis of the national and international importance of this fishery in a number of countries in north west Europe and North America. There is currently no common scientific or assessment forum for discussion and development of common assessment methods for scallops. The qualitative descriptors for determining good environmental status (Directive 2008 EU) we are concentrating on are:

**Descriptor 1:** Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions.

**Descriptor 3:** Populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within safe biological limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock.

**Descriptor 6:** Sea-floor integrity is at a level that ensures that the structure and functions of the ecosystems are safeguarded and benthic ecosystems, in particular, are not adversely affected.

The focus of the 3 year working group is to providing scientific advice on scallops, defining a common approach to the assessment of stocks. In the 2013 meeting the workshop examined ICES areas: IIa, IVa, IVb, V, VIa, VIa and IVb, VIIa, VIId, VIIe/h, VIIg, and VIII. Scallop species and biological stocks were identified in each of the ICES areas. The group developed a working Matrix with points for each of the ToR compiling the existing information on surveys, available data and stock assessment approaches; several key factors emerged. All research groups rely heavily on aging methods and proportion by year class is a fundamental data set. Many of the other factors varied between research groups.

In 2014, the group began to develop a common data base of fisheries landing effort for ICES areas. Expanding on the 2013 work the group collected information on estimations of  $F$ ,  $F_{MAX}$ , von Bertalanffy growth parameters by stock/ICES rectangle, and the existing stock assessments from 2004 to 2014, including the unit of measure.  $F_{max}$  was not a good proxy for  $F_{msy}$  for King or Queen scallops due to flat topped YPR curves, at current selection patterns. There was no evidence of a stock recruitment relationship. There was evidence of connectivity between beds and work is underway on examining these processes through the study of environmental conditions and genetics. MPA's appear to be a useful tool for improving overall scallop productivity, reducing fishing effort, negative impact on the sea floor and improving habitat condition. However, MPA's need to be carefully chosen considering adult population densities, current structure, presences of predators and/or competitors. Rapid declines may occur within protected populations; possibly due to environmental/climatic conditions.

Recent declines in scallop recruitment in the Eastern English Channel have occurred and appear to be linked to environmental conditions, particularly average SST between May and July and the Atlantic low. Habitat studies on the effects of dredging are underway and suggest recovery from impact in 0.5 to 5 years depending on the dynamic environmental condition of the area. However, this is very dependent on what the habitat is, i.e. if it is ground that has been historically fished.

In this meeting the group will compile the information from the previous two meetings, add additional information and address the three descriptors in a final report.

Resource requirements:	None.
Participants:	Oliver Tully, Ireland (Marine Institute), Lee Murray, Isle of Man (Bangor University), Ewen Bell, England (CEFAS), Helen Dobby, Scotland (Marine Scotland Science), Eric Foucher, France (IFREMER), Spyros Fifas, France (IFREMER), Gwladys Lambert, Wales (Bangor University), Kevin Stokesbury, United States (University of Massachusetts), Brad Harris, United States (Alaska Pacific University), Heather Moore, Northern Ireland (AFBI), David Palmer (CEFAS), Lynda Blackadder Scotland (Marine Scotland Science), Jonas Jónasson, Iceland (HAFRO), Carrie McMinn, Northern Ireland (AFBI), Sarah Clarke, Ireland (Marine Institute), Isobel Bloor, Isle of Man (Bangor University), Bryce Beukers-Stewart England (University of York), Strand Øivind, Norway (IMR)
Secretariat facilities:	None.
Financial:	No financial implications.
Linkages to advisory committees:	ACOM
Linkages to other committees or groups:	There are no obvious direct linkages.
Linkages to other organizations:	There are no obvious direct linkages.

## WKMEDS – Workshop on Methods for Estimating Discard Survival

2015/2/ACOM25 The **Workshop on Methods for Estimating Discard Survival** (WKMEDS), chaired by Mike Breen (Norway) and Thomas Catchpole (UK), will be established and will meet at ICES HQ, Copenhagen 17–21 February and 24–28 November, 2014, in London, UK 20-24 April 2015 and in [Ghent, Belgium](#) 30 November to 04 December in 2015 to:

- a) Develop guidelines and where possible identify best practice for undertaking discard survival studies (using the framework detailed in the report of STECF Expert Working Group EWG 13-16) (2014 Workshop);
- b) Identify approaches for measuring and reducing, or accounting for, the uncertainty associated with mortality estimates;
- c) Critically review current estimates of discard mortality, with reference to the guidelines detailed in 1, and collate existing validated mortality estimates;
- d) Conduct a meta-analysis, using the data detailed in 3, to improve the understanding of the explanatory variables associated with discard mortality and identifying potential mitigation measures; and



e) Based on ToR a) to d) a CRR should be developed for SCICOM consideration.

WKMEDS1 will report by 14 April 2014 for the attention of WGFTFB, ACOM and SCICOM

WKMEDS2\* will report in December 2014 for the attention of WGFTFB, ACOM and SCICOM

WKMEDS3 will report by 13 May 2015 for the attention of WGFTFB, ACOM and SCICOM

WKMEDS4 will report by 18 December 2016 for the attention of WGFTFB, ACOM and SCICOM

\* An additional meeting is required in 2014 to address key issues that could not be covered in the first meeting, due to workload and the lack of availability of suitable expertise.

## Supporting information

Priority	The European Commission has requested that an Expert Group to Develop Methods for Estimating Discard Survival is established to address the urgent need for guidance on methods. Consequently, these activities are considered to have a very high priority.
Resource requirements	Production of Working Group Report.
Participants	It is anticipated the group will be attended by approximately 20 members and guests.
Secretariat facilities	Share point site.
Financial	Support for travel experiences and per diem for 3 non-European experts to attend the WG meetings. Support for travel expenses for WG members to attend the WG meeting. Support for travel expenses for WG members to attend the RACs
Linkages to ACOM and groups under ACOM	This group will report directly to ACOM. The work of this group will enable the collection of standardised discard mortality survival data for a number of European fisheries, and therefore will provide supporting information for the advisory groups. The guidelines on discard survival assessment will be reviewed by ACOM.
Linkages to other committees or groups	The activities of this group will be coordinated by SCICOM, through SSGESST. It will work closely with WGFTFB, and will develop links with other WGs and advisory groups utilising data from discard survival assessments.
Linkages to other organizations	The guidelines on survival assessments produced by this group will be of interest to various Regional Advisory Councils, as well as institutes and organisations conducting discard survival assessments in support of the Landing Obligation of the new EU Common Fisheries Policy.

## Ecosystem related Expert Groups

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### **WGECO – Working Group on the Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities**

2015/2/ACOM26      The **Working Group on the Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities** (WGECO), chaired by Anna Rindorf, Denmark, will meet in Copenhagen, Denmark 6–13 April 2016 to:

- a) Develop and assess indicators of Good Environmental Status for seafloor integrity: Further develop indices of impact on the seafloor and sensitivity of the benthic community to different pressures, and the link to function (joint ToR with BEWG)
- b) Investigate possible indicators of scavengers, examine their relation to discard amounts and evaluate the spatial effect of a landing obligation on the scavengers
- c) Use the data available to evaluate the ecological consequences of restoring stocks to MSY levels and the degree to which fisheries are “balanced”.
- d) Distributional indicators in the context of MSFD: developing operational and surveillance indicators and exploring the link to pressure and drivers
- e) Review and further develop indicators of state of sensitive species throughout the ICES area and suggest risk based advice on sensitive species
- f) Consider methods to integrate indicators in support of integrated assessment of GES at the MSFD descriptor level (in collaboration with the DEVOTES project and building on work from WGBIOV)

WGECO will report by 24 April 2016 to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

ToRs for consideration for the 2017 meeting

- a) Expanding the DPSIR framework with links to ecosystem services: How does state and impact relate to the provision of ecosystem services and human wellbeing
- b) Continue the development of foodweb indicators and comment on the suggested foodweb indicators from WKFooWI and WGSAM
- c) Identify data weaknesses in the data available to address WGECO ToRs and recommend priority areas for data collection and model development

### **WGMME – The Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology**

2015/2/ACOM27      The **Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology** (WGMME), chaired by Begoña Santos (Spain) and Graham Pierce (UK), will meet in Madrid, 8–11 February 2016 and by correspondence in December 2015 to:

- a) Review and report on any new information on population abundance, population/stock structure and management frameworks for marine mammals;
- b) Update North Atlantic information on negative and positive ecological interactions between grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*)/other marine mammals;
- c) Update the database for seals;

- d) OSPAR requests to review the draft OSPAR assessment of the abundance and distribution of harbour seals and grey seals and an assessment of grey seal pup production in the North-east Atlantic. ICES is requested to assess the validity of the data analysis that underpins the assessments and if necessary, to recommend any changes that should be implemented in future assessments.
- e) To support OSPAR in the delivery of common indicator assessment of Cetaceans through:
  - i) the collation on estimates of coastal bottlenose dolphin abundance in the assessment units identified, over an appropriate time frame;
  - ii) To assess trends in abundance (and where possible distribution within range) of coastal bottlenose dolphins in the assessment units identified, against targets proposed;
  - iii) To present an overview of data on cetacean species other than coastal bottlenose dolphins that may be available to make a regional assessment in the frame of indicator M-4;
  - iv) To collate and assess the data identified in (i) against the targets proposed.

WGMME will report by 12 February 2016 on ToR d-e and by 4 April 2016 on ToRs a-c for the attention of the Advisory Committee.

## Supporting Information

Priority	
Scientific justification	<p>ToR a) This may contribute to the work required for the MoU between the European Commission and ICES to “provide new information regarding the impact of fisheries on other components of the ecosystem including small cetaceans and other marine mammals...” and to aid Member Countries in “scientific and technical developments in the support of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, such as by designing marine monitoring and assessment programmes, identifying research needs and methodologies advice”.</p> <p>There will be an attempt to integrate cetacean bycatch issues into fish stock advice in 2015. This work is needed to support that and put bycatch into the context of other pressures on cetacean populations. The ASCOBANS threat matrix and individual MS evaluations under the MSFD and Habitats Directive should prove useful sources of information.</p> <p>ToR b) There is increasing evidence of possible interactions between these species, particularly as the population of grey seals in the ICES area increases (while in some areas harbour seal populations are decreasing).</p> <p>ToR c) A standing requirement to keep the new seal database up to date and to ensure its usefulness.</p> <p>Seal depredation is included in some models.</p> <p>This is needed to help in the refresh of the Ecosystem overviews. Details of the Ecoregion boundaries may be found on the ICES website.</p> <p>ToR d) Data collected for the assessments should include the most recent data available, and go back in time to the point at which data with a relatively high confidence are available. Historical circumstantial or anecdotal evidence (with a relatively good</p>

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confidence in its accuracy) should also be submitted. Such historical evidence could prove useful when setting baselines to indicators.

The assessments of the marine mammal indicator for the OSPAR IA2017 will need to be finalised by the end of 2016 and maybe earlier (depending on the delivery timetable which is still being agreed on by OSPAR). All data for this final assessment will need to have been collated and be ready for analysis by Spring 2016.

The request below for ICES WGMME (suggested to be scheduled in 2016) involves the production of a first draft of the assessment.

For request (d)

The draft assessments for M3 and M5 will be delivered to OSPAR by the UK as the indicator lead by 16 Nov 2015. They will be available to ICES WGMME in December 2015. The assessments are based on data collated in 2015 from OSPAR Contracting Parties, throughout the range of harbour seal and grey seal in the North-east Atlantic.

Note also that in Spring 2015, the UK hosted a workshop for seal experts from the OSPAR area to discuss:

- Distribution metrics for both species;
- Assessment methods: setting baselines targets and for abundance and distribution metrics;
- Data Accessibility - identify potential barriers and discuss arrangements data collation and storage.

The conclusions from this workshop will be communicated to ICESWGMME to help them address the proposed ToR

Intended use of the request output is related to MSFD indicators:

- M-3: Distribution and abundance of seals and M-5: Grey seal pup production - The advice from ICES will be used to inform the final assessment of the indicators due by August 2016, for inclusion in the Intermediate Assessment in 2017 (IA2017). The assessments will also be used to meet the national requirements for reporting under Article 8 of the MSFD in 2018.
- M-4: Distribution and abundance of cetaceans - The request will help to fulfill the need of OSPAR to report in 2016 on the outcome of the assessment of common indicators related to marine mammals, with a view to include information into the Intermediate Assessment in 2017 (IA2017). The assessments will also be used to meet the national requirements for reporting under Article 8 of the MSFD in 2018. This request is needed because, as yet, no body or country has volunteered to lead collation and assessment of marine mammal monitoring or survey data.

Additional notes:

The Seal indicators (M3 and M5) and lead by the UK; M4 lead by the Netherlands

Additional notes: OSPAR has issued a data call for Contracting Parties. This data is being held by SMRU as a temporary data management solution. It is suggested at this time that WGMME do not progress work on the seal database until its clear how this database will be used. It is likely that OSPAR will request that ICES manage the OSPAR M3 and M5 data – although this is pending funding.

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Resource requirements	None
Participants	The Group is normally attended by 10-20 members.
Secretariat facilities	None apart from the usual support in completing and publishing the report.

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Financial	No financial implications.
Linkages to advisory committees	The work of WGMME may support development of the ecosystem overviews and the new format of fisheries advice.
Linkages to other committees or groups	
Linkages to other organizations	OSPAR

### WGBYC - Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species

2015/2/ACOM28 The **Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC)**, chaired by Marjorie Lyssikatos, USA, will meet at ICES HQ in Copenhagen Denmark, 1–5 February 2016 to:

- a) Review and summarize annual national reports submitted to the European Commission under Regulation 812/2004 and other published documents and collate PETS bycatch rates and estimates in EU waters;
- b) Evaluate and report on trends in bycatch rates and estimates of protected species where possible from MS reporting under 812 and from DCF;
- c) Evaluate the range of (min/max) impacts of bycatch on cetacean species where possible by assessment unit. , furthering the bycatch risk approach to assess likely conservation level threats and prioritize areas where additional monitoring is needed;
- d) Collate and review information from National 812 reports and elsewhere relating to the implementation of bycatch mitigation measures and ongoing bycatch mitigation trials, compile recent results and coordinate further work on protected species bycatch mitigation;
- e) Continue to develop, improve and coordinate methods for bycatch monitoring, research and assessment within the context of European legislation (e.g. MSFD), regional conventions (HELCOM and OSPAR) and targets;
- f) Develop collaborative research proposal among WGBYC members to pursue research project(s) and funding opportunities in support of researching PETS and target species behaviour in relation to fishing gear;
- g) Continue, in cooperation with the ICES Data Centre, to develop, improve, populate, and maintain the database on bycatch monitoring and relevant fishing effort in European waters. Adapt the WGBYC d-base to accommodate the incorporation of other PETS bycatch data as reported through the DCF and other sampling schemes (**intersessional**);
- h) Collate DCF and other monitoring scheme records relevant to total observer effort and bycatch of PETS (**intersessional**);
- i) Adopt new structural changes to tabular output of PETS bycatch and associated effort data necessary to meet emerging data needs and requests from other ICES Working Groups (i.e. stock assessment WG's and WGMME (**intersessional**));
- j) Review reports and related ToR from other ICES Working Groups/Workshops that may have bycatch of PETS under their purview. The goal is to not duplicate work (**intersessional**).

- k) The definition of a PET is unclear. ADGBYC considered that it would be useful for WGBYC to recommend criteria for defining PETS, and then the relevant expert group be asked to apply those criteria (regionally if necessary) to arrive at a draft list. A discussion on who should compile information/contribute to future advice should follow.

WGBYC will report by 26 February 2016 to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

## Supporting Information

Priority	The current activities of this Group will lead ICES into issues related to the ecosystem affects of fisheries, especially with regard to the application of the Precautionary Approach. Consequently, these activities are considered to have a very high priority.
Scientific justification	<p>a) The European Commission has decided not to amend Res. 812/2004 and to integrate monitoring of protected and endangered species into the new DCF (DCMAP). It is essential to cooperate with the scientists who design observer schemes and protocols for the monitoring of catch and discards;</p> <p>b) Evaluating trends in bycatch rates where possible from Reg. 812 reports is an essential component to the effectiveness of the legislation and monitoring of bycatch impacts on populations;</p> <p>c) This is essential to use in answering part of the European Commission MoU request to “provide any new information regarding the impact of fisheries on marine mammals, seabirds...”;</p> <p>d) ICES Member Countries are required to reduce levels of bycatch under several pieces of legislation; the response to this ToR will help meet that aim;</p> <p>e) Bycatch monitoring and assessment is fundamental to the work of the group; in light of significant changes in legislation that will impact monitoring programs for PETS any improvements in coordination and methods will help the group and other workers in this field;</p> <p>f) Improving scientific understanding how target and non-target catches interact with commercial fishing gear is fundamental to developing effective mitigation measures to reduce bycatch on vulnerable species;</p> <p>g-j) An operating database allows for more efficient response to future advice requests and an audit trail for information used in the Group’s reports; remaining intersessional ToR’s all aim to increase efficiency of WGBYC’s tasks in providing advice to various groups.</p> <p>k) The advice drafting group added this new term of reference as a result of no clear definition on the list of PETS under the purview of WGBYC. Developing a set of criteria will help to compile such a list.</p>
Resource requirements	None beyond usual Secretariat facilities
Participants	13–21 members
Secretariat facilities	Secretariat support with meeting organization and final editing of report.
Financial	No financial implications
Linkages to advisory committees	ACOM
Linkages to other committees or groups	WGFTFB, WGMME, WGSE, WGEF, SGPIDS, WGCATCH, WGMIXFISH, WGSFD, WGNSSK, SCICOM
Linkages to other organizations	NAMMCO, ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, GFCM, EC, IWC

## WGDEC – ICES/NAFO Joint Working Group on Deep-water Ecology

2015/2/ACOM29 The Working Group on Deep-water Ecology (WGDEC), chaired by Neil Golding, UK, will meet at ICES HQ in Copenhagen, Denmark, 15–19 February 2016 to:

- a) Provide all available new information on distribution of VMEs in the North Atlantic with a view to advising on any new closures to bottom fisheries or revision of existing closures to bottom fisheries (NEAFC standing request: this may be updated in 2015). In addition, provide new information on location of habitats sensitive to particular fishing activities (i.e. vulnerable marine ecosystems, VMEs) within EU waters (EC standing request: this may be updated in 2015);
- b) Review the process by which boundaries for bottom fishing closures are considered and develop a consolidated approach in light of recent work undertaken by WGDEC;
- c) Continue development of the ICES VME Database and ICES VME Data Portal;
- d) What is the spatial distribution of fishing as a result of closures brought into effect between 2006 and 2014? How do bottom fishing closures within the NEAFC Regulatory Area affect the distribution of fishing effort?

WGDEC will report by 25 March 2016 to the attention of the ACOM Committee.

## Supporting Information

Priority:	High as a Joint group with NAFO and is essential for providing information to help answer external requests
Scientific justification and relation to action plan:	<p>a) This information and maps are required to meet part of the European Commission MoU request to “provide any new information regarding the impact of fisheries on ..... sensitive habitats” and the NEAFC request “ to continue to provide all available new information on distribution of vulnerable habitats in the NEAFC Convention Area and fisheries activities in and in the vicinity of such habitats.” The location of newly discovered/mapped sensitive habitats is critical to these requests. It is essential that ICES/WG chair asks its Member Countries etc. to supply as much relevant information as they may have by one month in advance of the WGDEC meeting;</p> <p>b) This is an important development of the VME database. Records within the VME database originate from a number of different sources; from specific targeted habitat mapping surveys with a high degree of spatial accuracy through to bycatch records from towed gear/longlining. Through developing a weighting system for these records, the information underpinning any new recommendations on closures, or modifications to existing closures, can be assessed and weighted based on reliability and significance. A clear method of setting boundaries around groups of records would be of considerable help in providing justification for such boundaries;</p> <p>c) There is a requirement to update the ICES VME database to include new information on the distribution of VMEs (including VME indicator species) submitted under ToR (a);</p> <p>d) ICES has not considered the effects of deep sea mining on VMEs</p>

	previously. This may be of interest in comparing with the effects of bottom-fishing activities;
	e) This will provide a useful review of a developing area of science.
Resource requirements:	The usual helpful support from the Secretariat will be appreciated.
Participants:	The Group is normally attended by some 15-20 members and guests.
Secretariat facilities:	None, apart from the Sharepoint site
Financial:	No financial implications.
Linkages to ACOM and its expert groups	ACOM is parent group. WGDEEP is related, but no explicit overlap in work this year.
Linkages to SCICOM and its expert groups	No direct linkages, though the work of BEWG is related
Linkages to other organisations:	OSPAR, NEAFC

### JWGBIRD – OSPAR/HELCOM/ ICES/Working group on Marine Birds

2015/2/ACOM30 The **Joint OSPAR/HELCOM/ICES/ Working Group on Marine Birds** (JWGBIRD), co-chaired by Ian Mitchell (UK), Morten Frederiksen (DK) and Volker Dierschke (tbc) (Germany) will meet at ICES HQ Copenhagen, 9–13 November 2015 to work on ToRs and generate deliverables as listed below:

- a) Conduct an assessment of the OSPAR MSFD common indicators for OSPAR Regions II, III and IV, as a contribution to the OSPAR IA2017: B1 – marine bird abundance and B3 – marine bird breeding success. Reporting should follow the format and time frame pre-defined by OSPAR, and will ensure access to the underlying data used to produce the assessment. Where this is not possible, then these datasets should be flagged and the pathway for access to the data described.
- b) Conduct an assessment of indicators B1 and B3 in OSPAR Region I, where sufficient data are made available by Contracting Parties.
- c) Up-date the HELCOM core indicators related to seabirds as a draft contribution to the second holistic assessment. The reporting format and time frame should follow the pre-defined guidance given by HELCOM and as specified in the core indicator process. If time permits, further develop seabird indicators. A specific need for further development of the breeding success parameter has been identified.
- d) Review and revise the monitoring guidelines drafted by the HELCOM BALSAM project, for future inclusion in the HELCOM Monitoring Manual.
- e) Review strategic studies of seabird ecology in relation to offshore wind farm impacts.
- f) Design a protocol (or protocols) for assessing the effects on seabirds of the new CFP Landings Obligations. This continues on from work conducted by JWGBird in 2014 and could include the following:
  - i. Conduct sensitivity scoring of species to reduction in food from discards (and offal) using the protocol developed by JWGBird 2014.
  - ii. Pre- and post-Obligations comparison of abundance and breeding success of those species scored as most sensitive.
  - iii. Meta-analysis of diet studies of seabird species thought to depend largely on discards to seek species-specific, temporal and regional differences in such dependencies, to be able to predict where birds might be most affected.



- iv. An inventory of the seabird colonies which may be vulnerable to the changed availability of discards to ‘generalist piscivores’ and studies into appropriate remedial action.
- g) Assessment of the current scale of the threat and measures from non-native predators at seabird colonies in the NE Atlantic. The assessment could be made using existing literature, or on the basis of a questionnaire designed by JWGBird in 2014 to collect information on i) characteristics of the seabird colonies and their predators, ii) potential or existing pathways of introduction and invasion, iii) measures planned or already in place, iv) animal rights issues and hunting regulations and v) legislation and conservation aims.
- h) Review long-term studies on fishery-driven changes in the marine community of NW European waters that have had consequences for seabirds, to provide insights into the ecological processes underlying changes in the seabird populations. This review could be used to provide recommendations to ICES for the management of fisheries, particularly low-trophic level (LTL) fisheries.

JWGBird will report by 16 November 2015 for the attention of ICES ACOM and SCICOM, HELCOM and OSPAR.

## Supporting information

Priority	The ToRs are listed in order of priority, with the points a) and b) being of equal priority. OSPAR Contracting Parties are expecting the group to deliver ToR (a) related to the operation of two MSFD indicators. HELCOM Contracting Parties are expecting the group to deliver ToR (b) related to the core indicators and (b) related to the monitoring guidelines.
Scientific justification	<p>a,b) ICES has played a key role in supporting the development of regional indicators of bird population status in the Greater North Sea since the inception of EcoQOs in 2001. In 2013, OSPAR adopted a first set of common indicators to support the implementation of the EU MSFD including two common indicators for marine birds. The joint OSPAR/ICES working group was formed in 2014 in order to e.g. take forward the further development and testing of these indicators. This task under the ToR will be to review the assessments and report including recommendations on the future operation of these indicators by Contracting Parties.</p> <p>c,d) HELCOM joins the group to further enhance coherence of environmental status assessments between the two RSCs. Coherence in the assessments is seen as being of particular relevance for the highly mobile seabirds migrating across the two regions.</p> <p>e) There is an urgent need to fill key knowledge gaps regarding impacts of offshore wind on seabird populations, and to promote establishment of strategic monitoring studies that will quantify population-level impacts. The rapid increase in numbers of consented offshore wind farms and plans for further development make such work urgent, and important in the context of seabird conservation as well as helping to inform industry about how to reduce consenting risk and to develop in locations and with designs that minimise hazard to seabirds. The group will also have the benefit of a report prepared following the Inter-governmental Workshop in London in September 2015.</p> <p>f) The new CFP Landings Obligations will come into force for pelagic fisheries in 2015, for Baltic fisheries by 2015 and 2017 (depending on the fishery), for key demersal species (cod, hake, sole) in North Atlantic waters by 2016 and for all other commercial species in all</p>

waters by 2017. With some derogations, fishers will be obliged to land all commercial species they catch and will not be allowed to discard these species. The Landings Obligation is often referred to as the 'discard ban'. In 2014, JWGBird started to develop a protocol that could be used to assess the impact of the Landings Obligations on seabirds through potential changes in their food supply. ToR e) aims to continue this work.

- g) In addition to fisheries impacts, the other potentially manageable pressure from seabirds is from predation by non-native mammals that invade previously predator free islands. The scale of the ongoing impact or potential impact from non-native mammals is unknown. The group will build on work by JWGBird in 2014 and compile an inventory of threats and measures concerning non-native predators at seabird colonies on offshore islands. The work will also inform EU Member States on whether they should be further developing the OSPAR MSFD candidate indicator M4 - Non-native/invasive mammal presence on island seabird colonies.
- h) Determining a causal link between fishing activities and apparent shortages of prey for seabirds has proved difficult to obtain. But could seabird demographic data (e.g. on breeding population size, breeding success), which is currently collected, be used to inform management of fish stocks, so that fishing does not have a detrimental impacts on the food supply of seabirds? The group will use the review they completed in 2014 of studies on the impact of fishing for seabird prey species on seabird demographics to consider how impacts may be included in ICES advice on fish stock management.

Resource requirements	The research programmes which provide the main input to this group are already underway, and resources are already committed. The additional resource required to undertake additional activities in the framework of this group is negligible. HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties are to commit national experts to participate in the annual meeting of the group as well as in intersessional work as needed.
Participants	About 20 participants are expected in the newly merged group.
Secretariat facilities	Two rooms in ICES HQ at the time of the meeting and the usual helpful Secretariat support.
Financial	No financial implications for ICES.
Linkages to ACOM and groups under ACOM	This is an ACOM group. Its outputs may inform the work of other groups working on integrated ecosystem assessments
Linkages to other committees or groups	There is a close working relationship with all the groups of SSGEPI.
Linkages to other organizations	OSPAR (in particular ICG-COBAM and BDC) and HELCOM (Particularly HELCOM State and Conservation)

## Regional database

### SC-RDB – Steering Committee for the Regional Database FishFrame

*ToRs to be provided after SC-RDB 2015 meeting (November 2015)*

2015/2/ACOM31

## Benchmark ToRs

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### **IBP-Bass – Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea**

2015/2/ACOM32      **The second Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea (IBPBass2)** that will serve as in Inter-Benchmark Protocol, chaired by Michel Bertignac, France, will meet by correspondence (01 December 2015 –31 March 2016) to:

- a) Review quality and performance of age composition data for French fishery landings in the Stock Synthesis model formulated by IBP-bass;
- b) Develop input data is for stock assessment including empirical weights at age;
- c) Develop age compositions for the Channel groundfish survey and test in SS3 model.
- d) Evaluate the appropriateness of existing reference points and estimate new if necessary based on conclusions form WKMSYREF3 and 4.

Stock	Stock leader
Sea bass in IVbc and VIIa,d–h	Mike Armstrong <a href="mailto:mike.armstrong@cefas.co.uk">mike.armstrong@cefas.co.uk</a>

### **IBPMegrim – Inter-Benchmark Workshop on Megrim (*Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis*) in Divisions VIIb–k and VIIIa,b,d (West and Southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay)**

2016/2/ACOM33      An **Inter-Benchmark Workshop on Megrim (*Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis*) in Divisions VIIb–k and VIIIa,b,d (West and Southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay)** (IBPMegrim), chaired by Santiago Cerviño (IEO, Spain) and reviewed by Ernesto Jardim (JRC) and XXX, will be established and meet by correspondence until February 15, 2016 to improve the data inputs and model in an effort to move this stock from an ICES category 3 assessment to a category 1 assessment. This IBP was originally scheduled to conclude in September 2015.

The IBPMegrim is conditional of data available to ICES. A data call was issued with a deadline beginning of July. Provisioning and raising the data are ongoing activities, scheduled to conclude by 15 December 2015. The main activities to be undertaken are:

- a) Compile the historic series of discard data, with special focus on French data that was not available in the previous benchmark, with assistance from WGCATCH 2015;
- b) Improve assessment model settings:
  - i) Update the assessment model script to incorporate the additional data requested by the data call;
  - ii) Fit the model with the new data and parametrization, as required;
  - iii) Review the model script for the projections as some inconsistencies were detected at WGBIE 2015;
  - iv) If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method,) should be put forward;

- v) Develop recommendations for future improvements of the assessment methodology and data collection;
- vi) Propose possible reference points using the guidelines and process outlined in WKMSYREF4;
- vii) Update the stock annex as appropriate.

The work will be conducted by correspondence. Working documents should be provided to the reviewers by 15 February 2016. The Inter-Benchmark Workshop will report by 29 February 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

Stock	Name, Institute	Role
Meg-78ab	Ane Iriondo, AZTI	Stock coordinator and stock assessor
	Leire Ibaibarriaga, AZTI	Model development
	Joël Vigneau and Anne-Sophie Cornou, IFREMER	Data providers

### **WKSAND – Benchmark Workshop on Sandeel Stocks in the Greater North Sea**

2014/2/ACOM34 A **Benchmark Workshop on Sandeel stocks (WKSAND)**, chaired by External Chair Jim Berkson, USA and ICES Chair Harald Gjørseter, Norway, and attended by invited external experts Bob Furness, UK and **XX (Name), XX (Country)** will be established and will meet in at ICES late June 2016 **tbc.** for a data evaluation meeting and in Bergen, Norway **(XX Date, late October)** 2016 for a Benchmark meeting to:

- a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
  - i. Stock identity and migration issues;
  - ii. Life-history data;
  - iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data;
  - iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook
- b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology. If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;
- c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice ([section 1.2](#)), WKMSYREF3 and WKMSYREF4.

- d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;
- e) As part of the evaluation:
  - i) Conduct a 3 day data evaluation workshop. Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation workshop consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;
  - ii) Following the Data evaluation, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

<b>Stocks</b>		<b>Stock leader</b>
San-34	All stocks	Lotte Worsøe Clausen (Denmark)
	SA1	Lotte Worsøe Clausen (Denmark)
	SA 2	Lotte Worsøe Clausen (Denmark)
	SA3	Espen Johnson (Norway)
	SA4	Anna Rindorf (Denmark)

The Benchmark Workshop will report by XX 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

#### **WKPELA– Benchmark Workshop on Pelagic Stocks**

2014/2/ACOM35 A **Benchmark Workshop on Pelagic stocks** (WKPELA), chaired by External Chair XX (Name), XX (Country) and ICES Chair Asta Gudmundsdóttir, Iceland, and attended by invited external experts Jason Cope, USA, Jan Horbowy, Poland and Carey McGilliard, US will be established and will meet in ICES HQ, 24–26 November 2015 for a data evaluation meeting and 29 February – 4 March 2016 for a Benchmark meeting to:

- a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
  - i. Stock identity and migration issues;
  - ii. Life-history data;
  - iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data;
  - iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook
- b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology.

If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;

- c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice ([section 1.2](#)), WKMSYREF3 and WKMSYREF4.
- d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;
- e) As part of the evaluation:
  - i. Conduct a 3 day data evaluation workshop. Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation workshop consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;
  - ii. Following the Data evaluation, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

Stocks	Stock leader
Her-noss	Erling Stenevik

The Benchmark Workshop will report by 1st April 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

#### **IBPBLW –Inter Benchmark Protocol of Blue Whiting**

2015/2/ACOM36 The Inter-Benchmark Protocol of Blue Whiting (IBPBLW), chaired by **Patrícia Gonçalves** for ICES and **xx XX, XX** (External Chair) and with **xx XX, XX and xx XX, XX** as external reviewers will be established and will meet by correspondence from **February to March 2016** to:

- a) evaluate the robustness of the SAM model in situations with clear "year effects" in survey indices as observed in the IBWSS 2015, test appropriate model modifications and /or make criteria for posterior discarding of survey indices;
- b) estimate recruitment for short term forecast from the present available survey indices;
- c) retrospectively examine the impact of including Q1 catches in the assessment year;
- d) estimate Biological Reference Points.

IBPBLW will report by 8 **April, 2016** for the attention of the ACOM and WGSAM.

## Supporting information

Priority	High
Scientific justification	
Resource requirements	-
Participants	Scientist and stakeholders involve with this stock / fishery
Secretariat facilities	None.
Financial	No financial implications.
Linkages to advisory committees	ACOM
Linkages to other committees or groups	WGWIDE
Linkages to other organizations	-

### WKNSEA – Benchmark workshop on North Sea stocks

2015/2/ACOM37 A **Benchmark Workshop on North Sea stocks** (WKNSEA), chaired by External Chair XX(Name), XX (Country) and ICES Chair David Miller, the Netherlands, and attended by invited external experts Martin Dorn, USA, Matthew Dunn, New Zealand and XX(Name), XX (Country) will be established and will meet at ICES HQ, 23–25 November 2015 for a data evaluation meeting and 14–18 March 2016 for a Benchmark meeting to:

- a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
  - i. Stock identity and migration issues;
  - ii. Life-history data;
  - iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data;
  - iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook
- b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology. If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;
- c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points

taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice ([section 1.2](#)), WKMSYREF3 and WKMSYREF4.

- d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;
- e) As part of the evaluation:
  - i) Conduct a 3 day data evaluation workshop. Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation workshop consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;
  - ii) Following the Data evaluation, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

Stocks	Stock leader
Dab-nsea	Holger Haslob
Sai-3a46	Jennifer Devine

The Benchmark Workshop will report by **XX 2016** for the attention of ACOM.

#### **WKIRISH – Benchmark process for the Irish Sea**

*See the Benchmark Steering Group (BSG) resolutions.*

#### **WKNEP – Benchmark workshop on *Nephrops* stocks**

2015/2/ACOM38 A **Benchmark Workshop on *Nephrops* stocks** (WKNEP), chaired by External Chair Dankert Skagen, Norway and ICES Chair Ewen Bell, UK and attended by invited external experts **XX (Name), XX (Country and XX (Name), XX (Country)** will be established and will meet in Lisbon, Portugal, 27 June to 1 July 2016 for a data evaluation meeting and in Cadiz, Spain 24–28 October 2016 for a Benchmark meeting to:

- a) Evaluate the appropriateness of data and methods to determine stock status and investigate methods for short term outlook taking agreed or proposed management plans into account for the stocks listed in the text table below. The evaluation shall include consideration of:
  - i. Stock identity and migration issues;
  - ii. Life-history data;
  - iii. Fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data;
  - iv. Further inclusion of environmental drivers, multi-species information, and ecosystem impacts for stock dynamics in the assessments and outlook



- b) Agree and document the preferred method for evaluating stock status and (where applicable) short term forecast and update the stock annex as appropriate. Knowledge about environmental drivers, including multispecies interactions, and ecosystem impacts should be integrated in the methodology. If no analytical assessment method can be agreed, then an alternative method (the former method, or following the ICES data-limited stock approach) should be put forward;
- c) Evaluate the possible implications for biological reference points, when new standard analyses methods are proposed. Propose new MSY reference points taking into account the WKFRAME2, results and the introduction to the ICES advice ([Section 1.2](#)), WKMSYREF3 and WKMSYREF4.
- d) Develop recommendations for future improving of the assessment methodology and data collection;
- e) As part of the evaluation:
  - i. Conduct a 3 day data evaluation workshop. Stakeholders are invited to contribute data (including data from non-traditional sources) and to contribute to data preparation and evaluation of data quality. As part of the data compilation workshop consider the quality of data including discard and estimates of misreporting of landings;
  - ii. Following the Data evaluation, produce working documents to be reviewed during the Benchmark meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

<b>Stocks</b>	<b>Stock leader</b>
Nep-3-4	Mats Ulmestrand
Nep-32	Guldborg Søvik
Nep-2324	Spyros Fifas
Nep-2829	Cristina Silva
Nep-30	Yolanda Vila

The Benchmark Workshop will report by **XX 2016** for the attention of ACOM.

## New Expert Groups and other 2016 meetings (except Data related EGs)

### **WKSHARK2 – Workshop to compile and refine catch and landings of elasmobranchs**

*Resolution was adopted by ACOM in October, 2014*

2014/2/ACOM38 The **Workshop to compile and refine catch and landings of elasmobranchs** (WKSHARK2), chaired by Maurice Clarke, Ireland will meet in Lisbon, Portugal from 19–22 January 2016, to:

- a) Collate the landings data for sharks, rays, skates and dogfishes (including examination of those data supplied to FAO and ICCAT), at the highest spatial resolution and at least per ICES Division, as well as year and Member State.
- b) Compile an agreed landings dataset for each stock considered by ICES WGEF. Review of national data in relation to data quality (including taxonomic categories) and develop protocols to better document the decisions made when ICES WG estimates of landings are required.
- c) Develop a standard operating procedure for stock coordinators.

WKSHARK will report by 29 January 2016 for the attention of ICES WGEF and ACOM

### **Supporting information**

Priority:	High, because problems occurred with the landings data in provision of advice.
Scientific justification and relation to action plan:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The increasing availability of landings by species rather than generic categories requires a workshop to refine and collate data at a spatial resolution that can allow amalgamation at the appropriate spatial stock specific scale. This is not currently possible.</li><li>b) An agreed set of landings data needs to be compiled for each stock, with full documentation of decisions made on allocations. Currently the knowledge of allocations and other decisions is not documented and requires communication directly with both stock coordinators and national data providers.</li><li>c) There is currently no standard exchange format, and one is required.</li><li>d) For quality control purposes, a database is required to ensure that landings data are stored and accessible for assessment and advice purposes.</li><li>e) Stock coordinators will benefit from having an agreed standard operating procedure.</li></ol>
Resource requirements:	No specific resource requirements, beyond the need for members to prepare for and participate in the meeting.
Participants:	Experts with knowledge of Elasmobranch fisheries, stock coordinators from ICES WGEF.
Secretariat facilities:	Meeting facilities, production of report.
Financial:	None

Linkages to other committees or groups: None.

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Linkages to other organizations: Liaise with ICCAT to achieve consistency of pelagic shark landings data.

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## **WKSAR- Workshop on Atlantic Sardine**

2015/2/ACOM39 The **Workshop on Atlantic Sardine** (WKASAR), chaired by Alexandra Silva\* (Portugal) and Lionel Pavlowski\* (France), will work by correspondence during 2016 and meet 25–30 September 2016, Lisbon, Portugal, to:

- a) Review information on sardine stock identification, connectivity and migrations within European Atlantic waters (Subarea VII to sub-division IXa);
- b) Collate, standardize and analyse survey, fishery and biological data (egg abundance, abundance-at-age, catch biomass, catch-at-age, weight-at-age and maturity-at-age) at the lowest possible geographical and temporal level;
- c) Based on ToRs a) and b) propose scenarios of sardine stock structure and dynamics;
- d) Develop guidelines for stock assessment and when possible identify methods/models appropriate to handle scenarios proposed in ToR c).

WKSAR will report by 7 October 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

## **Supporting information**

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Priority	This workshop will provide ICES with knowledge on the best possible approach to assess the status and provide management advice for sardine in the ICES area taking into account the most recent knowledge on stock structure and dynamics. It will also provide the necessary data with the appropriate spatial and temporal resolution.. Consequently, the work is considered to have a very high priority.
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Scientific justification	<p>Two sardine stocks are currently assumed in Atlantic European waters: Sardine in Divisions VIIIa,b,d, and VII and Sardine in Divisions VIIIc and IX. There is strong evidence that sardine has a complex population structure and dynamics in the Northeast Atlantic and that mixing takes place between the two stocks. The current assessment and management units may not be consistent with real biological/dynamic units. The last review of this issue was carried in the last benchmark for Sardine VIIIc and IXa (WKPELA, 2012) based on results from the EU project SARDYN. Since then, new work has been carried out and more data has been compiled, especially in Divisions VIIIa,b which justifies re-visiting the issue of stock structure and dynamics, both to re-evaluate the two stock assumption and to evaluate the need to consider additional complexity in stock dynamics at sub-stock level.</p> <p>WGHANSA recommended a Benchmark for both sardine stocks in IXa, VIIIc and in VII, VIIIabd should be carried out simultaneously in 2017. WGHANSA considered the joint approach for the two sardine stocks will require a longer data compilation/mining workshop made at least 6–7 months before the benchmark meeting to allow timely decisions about assessment approaches and models to be explored in the benchmark.</p> <p>WKASAR will provide (i) the basis for assumptions about stock structure and dynamics (ii) the databases needed to perform assessment with alternative scenarios of stock structure and dynamics and (iii) guidelines on appropriate stock assessment methods, for the joint benchmark of Sardine stocks in IXa, VIIIc and in VII, VIIIabd.</p>
Resource requirements	The research programmes which provide the main input to this group are already underway, and resources are already committed. The additional resource required to undertake additional activities in the framework of this group is negligible.
Participants	The Workshop will be attended by 15-20 members, including experts in DEPM and acoustic surveys and stock assessment (mostly members of WGACEGG and WGHANSA). Participation (e.g. half a day) may be extended to stakeholders (e.g. SWRAC representative).
Secretariat facilities	None.
Financial	No financial implications.
Linkages to advisory committees	The Workshop has links to ACOM.
Linkages to other committees or groups	The Workshop was recommended by WGHANSA and has linkages to WGACEGG. The Workshop will provide key information for the joint benchmark workshop of the two Atlantic sardine stocks: Sardine in Division VIIIa,b,d and Sub-area VII and Sardine in VIIIc and IXa. A joint benchmark of the two stocks has been proposed for 2017.
Linkages to other organizations	Not applicable.