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Opinion 124 on fishing opportunities 2019

Overall situation:

SWWAC made several general recommendations in August 2018, in the framework of the replies to the consultation organised by DG Mare on this subject. The general improvement in the state of stocks was pointed out with in particular the stabilisation of mortality by fishery to the level corresponding to MSY, in the waters under SWWAC responsibility. Efforts must however be maintained and even increased in order to reach the CFP objectives in 2020. Moreover, it will be necessary to take account of the complete implementation of the landing obligation for the first time when setting the 2019 TAC. In order for this transition to take place in the best possible conditions, the Commission's proposals must, in addition to the overall TAC level, explain the percentages relating to landings and the inclusion of the old discards. Also, the deduction of the de minimis should, according to the members of the fishing sector take account of the actual use of this measure and cannot be made automatically, without consideration of the distribution of the fleets that are able to benefit from exemptions. The SWWAC members expect the Commission to improve transparency and employ educational methods.

SWWAC now intends to distinguish them in a specific manner, and to make recommendations stock by stock. The table below gives a summary of the scientific and management data of the stocks in SWWAC's area of responsibility.





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Stocks	F(2017)	SSB(2018)	TAC 2017	TAC 2018	TAC 2019	
					ICES proposal	DG Mare proposal
Pescada VIIIabde Merluza VIIIabde Merlu VIIIabde	0,25	306 516	119 765	111 785	142 240	141 160
Pescada VIIIc&IXa Merluza VIIIc&IXa Merlu VIIIc&IXa	0,44	23 885	10 520	9 258	8 281	7 963
Linguado VIIIab Lenguado VIIIab Sole VIIIab	0,3	13 182	3 420	3 621	3 967	3 823
Areiro VII-VIII Gallo VII-VIII Cardine VII-VIII	0,22	96 660	15 043	13 528	18 976	19 836
Areiro VIIIc&IXa Gallo VIIIc&IXa Cardine VIIIc&IXa	0,162	2 503	1 159	1 387	431	1 872
FS Areiro VIIIc FS Gallo VIIIc FS Cardine VIIIc	0,177	8 821			1 633	
BB Tamboril VIIIabde BB Rape VIIIabde BB Baudroies VIIIabde	?	?	42 496	42 496	10 799	41 370
W Tamboril VIIIabde W Rape VIIIabde W Baudroies VIIIabde	0,28	59 751			31 042	
BB Tamboril VIIIc&IXa BB Rape VIIIc&IXa BB Baudroies VIIIc&IXa	?	?	3 955	3 955	2 062 débarquement	4 023
W Tamboril VIIIc&IXa W Rape VIIIc&IXa W Baudroies VIIIc&IXa	0,126	11 839			2 153 débarquement	
Cavala Caballa Maquereau	0,38	2 354			318 403	
Badejo VIII&IXa Bacaladilla VIII&IXa Merlan VIII&IXa	?	?	2 540 (VIII)	2 540 (VIII)	1 613 débarquement	2 540 (VIII)
Juliana VIII&IXa Abadejo VIII&IXa Lieu jaune VIII&IXa	?	?	1 995	1 995	1 131	1 995
Solha VIII&IXa Solla VIII&IXa Plie VIII&IXa	?	?	395	395	194 débarquement	395
		>Fmsy	>MSY Btrigger			
		SSB in 1000t				

Specific recommendations:

This opinion is based on the discussions of the "benthic species VIII&IX" working group, the below recommendations were agreed by the members representing the fishing sector in the different member countries concerned. However, SWWAC's NGO members wish to point out that their position is and will always be, aligned with the best scientific opinion available, i.e. the ICES' opinions for each of the stocks. Hence, the NGOs are not in agreement with the proposals made for the following stocks: Angler VIIIabde, Nephrops VIIIc and IX&X, Hake VIIIc&IXa, Hake VIIIabde, Mackerel, Place. The NGO representatives would also point out that it is urgent to implement management based on the ecosystems, in addition to the traditional approach, as well as taking account of the impacts of mixed fisheries on the use and definition of the TACs.





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Megrim VIIIabde

SWWAC's members propose to follow the opinion of the ICES i.e. a TAC of 18976 tonnes on condition that interzone flexibility of 25% between zones VII. and VIIIabde is maintained.

Megrim VIIIc

It is necessary to follow ICES' recommendation for this stock, i.e. an overall TAC of 2064 tonnes for the two Megrim species.

Angler VIIIabde

Considering the perceptible improvement of the angler stocks and the stability of the landing TAC since 2014 and the necessity to take account of the implementation of the landing obligation for this fishery: According to the members the 2019 TAC should therefore be the same as the TAC 2018 plus the discards, 2019 TAC_(catch) = TAC_{2018(landing)} + **discards**.

This year the angler stock has been subject to an analytical assessment, considering the volume of this species in the catches (over 60%) SWWAC's members would like the angler VIIIabde stock to be reclassified as an analytical stock.

The members also wish to repeat the request they made last year concerning the implementation of interzone flexibility between zone VII. and VIII. of 10%, as the reverse already exists and for the same percentage (10%).

Angler VIIIc & IXa

SWWAC's members would like the ICES opinion to be followed.

Nephrops VIIIab

The 2019 TAC proposed by the Commission (3878 tonnes) is based directly on the ICES' opinion, as regarding the authorised landings. This appears to be consistent with the exemption for the high survival rate put in place for this fishery, which amounts to a theoretical exemption for this stock from the landing obligation. It would however be appropriate for this interpretation to be confirmed.

Also, the ICES must in future take account of the updated survival rate following the SURTINE study (AGLIA, 2017), i.e. 51 % instead of 30%.





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Nephrops VIIIc

Considering the results of the scientific campaign published in October 2018 by the Spanish Oceanographic institute¹ and of the data supplied by the fishing sector, the members of the SWWAC request the reopening of this fishery.

Nephrops IX&X

The members propose to maintain the 2018 TAC in 2019 (381 tonnes). The TAC for the zone IX&X cannot be reduced to the addition of the recommendations made by the ICES for Functional Units 28 and 29 (281 tonnes), in particular when the opportunity of catching 100 tonnes in functional unit 30 was already recognised in 2018.

Hake VIIIabde

The members propose to follow the ICES recommendations for 2019, or a more moderate rise in the TAC (the ICES proposal leading to a rise of 26%) in view of the average yields in the recent period in the Bay.

Hake VIIIc&IXa

The 11% reduction proposed by the ICES is considered too high by the members of SWWAC, considering the socio-economic importance of this fishery and the already significant impact of the implementation of the landing obligation. The members therefore propose to maintain the 2018 TAC in 2019.

Sole VIIIab

The members propose to follow the ICES recommendations. And also the Bay of Biscay Sole management plan, the members reaffirm the need for multiannual measures so as to give better long-term visibility.

Hake VIIIabde

On the basis of a 2017 opinion and in the absence of real data on the state of the stock, the ICES recommends setting the landings at the reduced average level of a precautionary threshold. This opinion does not include the data on discards which according to the study carried out by AZTI for the European Parliament is 782 tonnes².

¹ González Herraiz I., Paz Sampedro M., Celso Fariña A., 2018, INFORME DE CAMPANA, Campaña de Seguimiento de Índices de Abundancia de Cigala en la Unidad Funcional (UF) 25 de Galicia Norte en Buques Comerciales (CARACAS), Centro Oceanográfico de A Coruña

² Prellezo R., Iriondo A., Santurtun M., Valeiras J., 2018. Research for PEC Committee – Landing Obligation and Choke Species in Multispecies and Mixed Fisheries – The South Western Waters, European Parliament, policy Department for Structural and Cohesion policies, Brussels.





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It is therefore necessary in the framework of the implementation of the landing obligation to increase the 2019 TAC to the level of real catches i.e. 3,322 tonnes³.

Pollack VIIIabde

The members ask for the TAC to remain as its current level: $TAC_{2019} = TAC_{2018} + \text{discards}$

Mackerel

The members were surprised by the ICES recommendations which proposes a large reduction in catches particularly considering the ICES recommendation from the previous year (a reduction of over 40%). Considering the large catches made and the observed level of the stock, this reduction is considered to be too great, the industry cannot accept it. It is necessary according to the members to improve the estimation method and to check the data used for the drafting of the ICES' 2019 opinion. Pending further studies, the members asked for the 2018 TAC to be maintained, and therefore $2019 \text{ TAC} = 2018 \text{ TAC}$.

Plaice VIII

The members support maintaining the TAC at the same level plus discards: that is, to maintain the landing TAC and add an assessment of the discards.

Minority opinion: Bass VIIIab

In spite of their concerns about the uncertainties surrounding catches made by leisure fishing, the members of the fishing sector consider that this species should not be subject to an analysis by the advisory council in the framework of this opinion: Bass VIIIab are not subject to a TAC.

However, the members who represent recreational fishing wish to submit their opinion to the Commission now:

The members representing recreational fishing in the SWWAC support the ICES opinion, but recommend that the Union's responsibilities should be examined in detail so as to include recreational fishing in the regulations on fishing opportunities.

³ TAC 2018 increased by discards of 782 tonnes.