

MIAC/MIACO 2016
Annual Meeting between ICES, the ACs and Other Observers
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REFLECTIONS OF WORK AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN
THE LONG DISTANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND ICES

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DISCLAIMER:

This is a personal report stating own reflections of the author for the meeting. It is not intended to provide an accurate reflection of the views of the LDAC delegates or members nor summarise the meeting outcomes but give an idea of LDAC areas of interest with regard to ICES. A full and official report of the meeting will be drafted by ICES together and the meeting papers and presentations are available on the dedicated Sharepoint site.

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF WORK IN 2015 AND ASPIRATIONS FOR 2016

One of the LDAC work priorities during 2015 was to strengthen work and collaboration with scientists to improve understanding of the state of the highly migratory stocks (tropical tuna and tuna like species such as swordfish), deepsea species (including deepsea sharks) and demersal stocks (cod, Greenland halibut, redfish, hake, etc.) outside EU waters.

In particular, the LDAC looks for enhancing the communication with ICES and scientific bodies of RFMOs such as NEAFC (ICES client), NAFO or ICCAT in terms of provision of advice regarding key commercial stocks for the EU long distance fleet. The LDAC already provides technical evidence-based advice to the European Commission in preparation for RFMO annual meetings in which it also participates as part of the EU delegation. However, the LDAC would like to participate more actively in the scientific process, in observer capacity, and discussions on MSE and review/set up of multiannual management plans

2. ICES PARTICIPATION IN AC MEETINGS

The LDAC appreciates the sustained level of openness and transparency of ICES towards clients and external users that has inspired a frank and open dialogue between scientists, policy makers and stakeholders. Dialogue between scientists and stakeholders on several ICES on AC meetings in presenting the advice and explaining the advisory process as well as sharing ongoing work on ecosystem, fisheries overviews helps to achieve a deeper understanding of ICES work methods and strategy for the forthcoming years.

The LDAC is thankful of the opportunity catered in the annual MoU between ICES and EC regarding availability of prominent ICES scientists to attend 1-2 AC meetings yearly to present relevant ICES annual advice on stocks.

Due to the fact that ICES deals with few stocks outside Community waters, there was no direct participation of ICES scientists at LDAC meetings in the past. However, this changed in 2015 and the Head of ICES ACOM kindly accepted the invitation to participate at LDAC WG2 meeting on 23 April 2015. This group deals with North Atlantic agreements and RFMOs (namely NAFO and NEAFC). Discussions were held on the input and role of ICES in relation to stock assessment and advice for the North East Atlantic stocks and interaction with the Scientific Council of NEAFC.

We hope this will continue in the future and that ICES representatives can provide a year update (at least once a year) at future WG2 meetings. The LDAC Secretariat will be in contact with ICES and issue the invitation in due advance.

Finally, the LDAC held an International Conference on the Challenges and Opportunities for Implementation of the External Dimension of the CFP. This was a highly successful event held in Las Palmas on 16-17 September 2015 with high attendance rate and wide media coverage. ICES was invited to participate in the Science Panel to discuss about ecosystem approach to fisheries management and scientific underpinning to setting VMEs but could not make it for agenda constraints.

3. PRESENTATION OF ICES ADVICE AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The LDAC is supportive of the continuation of training courses on basics of stock assessment for Commission officials and fishing stakeholders. These courses have proven to be fairly popular and successful amongst AC members and also the Secretariat staff! Positive feedback in helping daily work to dealing with scientific reports and extracting critical information from them to feed production of draft advices.

4. LDAC PARTICIPATION IN ICES MEETINGS

The LDAC is committed to be involved in benchmarking process and nominate representatives to attend benchmark and data compilation (now called evaluation) meetings focused on stocks that are relevant for us, for example some of the Arctic stocks (such as redfish, Greenland halibut, etc.)

We also hope to be more involved and participate in the ICES advisory process and progress with thinking on discards, multispecies approach, mixed fisheries, etc. The ICES WG on Maritime Systems (WGMARS) might be a good platform and act as a “think tank” on this. This forum allows interaction and in-depth discussions between scientists involved in assessments and stakeholders with the aim to achieve a sustainable exploitation and conservation of fishing resources from a biological, social and economic perspective.

5. RESEARCH NEEDS AND AREAS FOR COLLABORATION ICES-LDAC

5.1. Deepsea species

The LDAC wishes to improve knowledge and data quality for NEAFC Deepsea species subject to catch limits in the EU TAC and Quotas Regulation and also under Annex I.B of NEAFC Rec. on Fishing Opportunities (see table in Annex I). These stocks are data poor in most cases (categories 3-6) and even may have unknown status with no reference points available. The LDAC wishes that ICES fine-tunes its assessment methods and concentrates effort in defining where possible precautionary reference points and MSY ranges for these stocks as this will have an impact on implementation of landing obligation for these stocks from 1-1-2017 (art 15.1.d) as most of them have very little or zero quota and they are currently being discarded. This is very important to benefit from flexibilities and exemptions to landing obligation provided for in the CFP Regulation, particularly for inter-species flexibility laid out in art 15.8 of CFP Regulation (this supedita using 9% against available quota only for no quota stocks only if they are within "safe biological levels").

The LDAC will follow with interest current work and progress by ICES in developing methodology and template for providing advice for Western Waters stocks and to provide qualitative advice for Categories 3 and 4 (data poor) for determination of stocks status relative to MSY proxies. We will also follow the risk based assessment methods for Categories 5 and 6 as many deepsea species are within these categories.

5.2. Tuna selectivity for reduction of juvenile catches

One specific area of collaboration mentioned in MIACO 2015 is in relation to the increase in selectivity to reduce catches of immature tuna and other associated by-catches. (e.g. FAD). As you know, this year is particularly important for Bigeye Tuna Stocks in the Atlantic within ICCAT RA but also for other parts of the world, such as YFT and BET in the Indian Ocean or Western Pacific. This topic remains very relevant in 2016.

The LDAC looks forward to a reply from ICES on the two above requests. If needed, this could be channeled by sending special requests for advice submitted via the European Commission in accordance with the MoU ICES-EC.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF LANDING OBLIGATION OUTSIDE EU WATERS

The LDAC is only on the preconception or reflection phase as the LO at present does not apply to demersal stocks outside EU waters. Although in 2017, the LO will only apply to species defining the fisheries and we do not foresee problems, we are concerned for the period 2018-2019 as will show complex scenarios re by-catches of no target species in ICES stock areas that are shared both within the EU and NEAFC RA. It is likely that some of them will become choke species and currently there is patchy information on discards. We think it will be very important in this situation to establish set up a dedicated Member State Regional Group to deal with the concerned stocks.

The European Commission has made it available to the LDAC in December 2015 the final reports that form the study on "Advice on the management of discards in EU fisheries beyond EU waters" – Ref. MARE Contracts No 3 (PHASE I) and No 6 (PHASE II)/2015. This study was commissioned to a consortium led by MRAG (UK) including scientific partners such as IEO & AZTI (Spain), IPMA (Portugal), Wageningen UR (The Netherlands) and IRD (France). These reports deal with questions of legislative and technical nature in relation to the implementation of landing obligation outside EU waters. The methodology used for the study is based on discard estimates drawn from scientific campaigns. Its aim is to provide an overview of the existing international legal obligations in relation to discards at the RFMOs (with specific focus on ICCAT and NAFO) as well as at the Fisheries Agreements with Third Countries.

The LDAC will endeavor to make a critical review of this Study during the first quarter of 2016 and go into analysis of the potential "choke species" by fisheries, and also intends to inform Commission and the MS Regional Group if constituted.

END

ANNEX I. Catch limits for Deepsea Stocks
in International Waters, ICES Vib, XII, XIVb
(Extracted from TAC and Quota Regulation 2015)

Summary description:

- Annex IB NEAFC FO includes 49 species: 12 are subjected to TACs by the EU; 17 are deepwater sharks (coinciding with the EU Deepsea Regulation); and the remaining 20 not subjected to catch limits (quotas).
- NEAFC Rec. 7/13 forbids direct fishery and retention on board of deepwater sharks.
- Unknown Stocks of wide distribution, without reference points.
- Limited data: only exploitation and stock trends (Increasing/Stable/Decreasing)
- Recommendation made on catches, by-catches and discards.
- Little quota or quota cero in several cases (“Choke Species”)
- Catch and discard data insufficient, although improving in the last years.

Table of deepwater species subject to catch limits in EU waters and NEAFC

Species Name	Code	Areas	EU	ESP
Black Scabbardfish	BSF	V-VII and XII	3357	191
Greater Silver Smelt	ARU	V-VII	4316	0
Alfonsino	ALF	III-XIV	296	67
Tusk	USK	VI-VII	937	46
	USK	I, II and XIV	21	3
Grenadiers	RNG/RHG	Vb, VII	4078	66
	RNG/RHG	VIII-XIV	3279	2354
Orange Roughy	ORY	VII	0	0
	ORY	I-V and VIII-XIV	0	0
Blue Ling	BLI	Vb, VI, VII	4746	157
	BLI	XII	558	533
Ling	LIN	VI-XIV	8464	2332
Red Seabream	SBR	VI-VIII	160	128
Greater Forkbeard	GFB	V-VII	2434	706
	GFB	X-XII	65	0
Deepwater Sharks (17 Species)		V-X	0	0
Deanias (Bird Beak Dogfish)		XII	0	0

New quotas for RNG 2016:
Xb,XIIc,XIIa1 & XIVb1: 717t
Vib,VIIc1,VIIk1,Vb1a: 2000t
XIIb: 796t