

Mathieu Colléter
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Our Ref: C.24.b/LWC/mo

05 June 2018

Subject: Information request concerning the ICES advisory process answering Dutch Special Request *"Comparison of the ecological and environmental effects of pulse trawls and traditional beam trawls when exploiting the North Sea sole TAC"*

Dear Dr. Colléter,

Thank you for letter to Mr. Cornelius Hammer requesting information on the ICES advisory process in relation to Special Requests. Mr. Hammer has asked me to reply to your letter.

As outlined on ICES website, the advisory process consists of several steps to allow quality check and peer review of the science basis for an advice, and ensure independent drafting and approval of the advice by ICES' Advisory Committee (ACOM).

The request from the Netherlands was received by the ICES Secretariat in February 2018. Following the ICES standard procedure, ACOM was consulted on whether to accept the request and subsequently to approve the suggested process for how to handle the request.

The process involved, as outlined in your letter:

- WGECO,
- WGELECTRA,
- RGPulse (review group),
- ADGPulse (advice drafting group) and
- WCPulse (ACOM web-conference to approve the advice).

For WGECO an additional point e) was added to their Terms of Reference:

e) Prepare a list of topics to be considered by WGELECTRA (17-19 April 2018) when answering a request from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality to compare the ecological and environmental effects of using traditional beam trawls or pulse trawls when exploiting the TAC of North Sea sole, on (i) the sustainable exploitation of the target species (species and size selectivity); (ii) target and non-target species that are exposed to the gear but are not retained (injuries and mortality); (iii) the mechanical disturbance of the seabed; (iv) the structure and functioning of the benthic ecosystem; and to assess (v) the impact of repetitive exposure to the two gear types on marine organisms.

The report of WGECO is available at http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2018/WGECO/wgeco_2018.pdf



ICES
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In relation to the request from the Netherlands WGELECTRA was requested to:

“Compare the ecological and environmental effects of using traditional beam trawls or pulse trawls when exploiting the TAC of North Sea sole, on (i) the sustainable exploitation of the target species (species and size selectivity); (ii) target and non-target species that are exposed to the gear but are not retained (injuries and mortality); (iii) the mechanical disturbance of the seabed; (iv) the structure and functioning of the benthic ecosystem; and to assess (v) the impact of repetitive exposure to the two gear types on marine organisms.”

The report of WGELECTRA is available at: <http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/EOSG/2018/WGELECTRA/WGELECTRA%20Report%202018.pdf>

The Advice Drafting Group (ADG) was chaired by ACOM Vice-chair Mark Tasker and attended by The ACOM Chair (Eskild Kirkegaard), Chair of the Review Group (Jake C. Rice), Chair of the Working Group on Electrical Trawling, WGELECTRA (Adriaan Rijnsdorp), Co-chair of the Working Group on Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities, WGECO (Stefán Áki Ragnarsson), Germany (Christopher Zimmermann), Denmark (Ole Ritzau Eigaard), Belgium (Hans Polet by webex), France (Youen Vermard), Latvia (Didzis Ustups) and ICES Secretariat (Lara Salvany)

Following the ADG, the draft advice was made available to ACOM for comments. Comments were received from Canada, Ireland, France, Netherlands and Portugal. These comments were addressed in the ACOM web-conference on 25 May 2018 in addition to issues raised during the web-conference itself.

The ACOM web-conference was attended by:

The Chair of the ADG, the ACOM Chair, ACOM Vice-Chair, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Chair of WGELECTRA, Co-chair of WGECO and ICES Secretariat.

The following ICES Member Countries did not attend the web-conference but approved the advice as agreed at the web-conference: Canada, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Spain and Sweden.

The technical minutes from both the ADG and the Web-Conference are available upon request to the ICES Secretariat.

In order to guarantee our scientific objectivity ICES has implemented strict procedures and the above elaboration is detailing this. In this case as well as in any other, we have adhered strictly to these rules and therefore we cannot share your concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lotte Worsøe Clausen', followed by a horizontal line.

Lotte Worsøe Clausen
Head of Advisory Support