



**Nephrops Development Group  
Record of Meeting  
Ergon House London  
30<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

**Rapporteur: Tony Hawkins**

**Draft Record**

1. It was agreed that the purpose of the meeting was to define clear objectives for the plan, and develop a range of options for instruments to meet those objectives. There could be few actual decisions on the plan at the moment. That would await comment first by fishers and then by wider stakeholders. The actual 'plan' would be short and would be inserted at the beginning of a larger document which sets out the arguments in more detail. The actual plan would also need to be compatible with the Commission's concept of a management plan.
2. The next draft would have some of the 'fancy stuff' removed. Some of the detailed material which had been necessary to get us to this point could also now be removed. The draft should now aim to set out clear objectives and actions.
3. There is great diversity between the fleets catching *Nephrops* and this must be brought out in the document. Different fleets, in different areas, differ from one another. We are not able to do a full economic analysis for each of these fleets and it is important that we do not dictate economic measures either for member states or fishing businesses. We can outline economic objectives and warn about the impacts of overcapacity upon the stocks but it is for fishers to decide whether they operate profitably or not. We can only set out guiding principles.
4. There was extended discussion of the setting of objectives for *Nephrops*. Overall, we were seeking high yields from the fishery, which were sustainable in the long term, but with protection for any vulnerable functional units and which provided safety in terms of choosing appropriate targets for fishing mortality. Advice from ICES is likely to be a target for  $F$  between  $F_{0.1}$  and  $F_{MAX}$ . TACs would change from year to year due to the varying abundance and a fixed  $F$ . However, if the stock started to show a serious decline it would be necessary to adjust  $F$  in line with the decline. The results from the UWTV would drive decision-taking. It was noted that at present no  $B_{TRIGGER}$  has been set to define the point where the stock has seriously declined.
5. Although the accreditation agencies were seeking a move towards analytical assessments and in some cases recovery plans they would probably be satisfied if the management regime adopted was in line with the evolving ICES advice.

6. There was discussion of whether CPUE could be used to assess the state of *Nephrops* stocks but this was not favoured because of the problem of targeting and other factors.
7. There was a lengthy discussion of the options for providing protection to the functional units. ICES wants management of the functional units and this has been endorsed by STECF and the accreditation agencies. Some sectors of the industry would be opposed to the setting of TACs for each functional unit and would wish to retain flexibility to move between one functional unit and another. A long list of management options was discussed and this would be placed in the draft management plan for stakeholders to consider.
8. Discussion of measures to reduce discards focused on the difficulty of being prescriptive. Different vessels, in different areas faced different problems. Many vessels had quota for whitefish. It was decided that solutions had to be tailored to particular circumstances. It was pointed out that catch composition rules were difficult to comply with and actually led to discarding. They are only in place because they can be seen to be observed at sea. If other measures are taken to ensure compliance is being observed then it should be possible to ease catch composition rules.
9. The point was made that the plan should recognise its interdependence on other management plans, including those imposed by the Commission.
10. There was discussion of the management options for reducing impact upon vulnerable, endangered and protected species and upon the sea bed and benthic communities. The main option here was likely to be the designation of MPAs. Some participants thought this was unnecessary as these areas had been trawled over for years and were no longer pristine. The point was made however that they could recover and that there was a need to protect some types of benthic habitat. Only a small proportion of the total *Nephrops* area would need to be designated.
11. It was agreed that once the plan is put in place it will need to be monitored
12. There was lengthy discussion of the economic objectives of the plan. It was pointed out that within a more accountable system of quota or effort management the pressure was not on the stocks but upon the fleets themselves. However, rather than impose capacity reductions, even taking account of technology creep, it was better for member states and fishing businesses to decide how to deal with the economic pressures. The important over-riding objective of the plan was to prevent any increase in mortality rates. Technical developments must not be allowed to threaten the stocks.
13. Transfer of effort into the North Sea *Nephrops* fishery had occurred in the past as an unintended consequence of restrictions imposed on other sectors of the fleet and in other areas, some of them outside the North Sea. This issue had to be addressed in this management plan. Currently transfers were not a problem as effort caps are imposed within the North Sea as a result of the cod recovery plan. Those measures were not imposed to protect *Nephrops* but to curb illegal landings and reduce discards. Should the days at sea regime be removed, perhaps as a result of cod recovery, then other mechanisms will need to be sought to reduce the risk of effort transfers on to *Nephrops*. In practice, the North Sea TACs should limit any transfer of effort from other regions. Increase in effort should not be a problem if the fishing mortality is properly controlled and monitored i.e. if removals are limited rather than landings (this is currently not the case).

14. It was agreed that the preamble of the plan should refer to the need for fishers to become more responsible for recording what they remove from the sea. It is their responsibility to ensure that landings are within quota, and to reduce discards.
15. It was agreed that stronger reference should be made in the text to the need to monitor progress with the plan once it has been implemented. A list of performance indicators would be included.
16. There was an issue over whether we thought that certain functional units ought to be classed as permanently vulnerable, and always have protection imposed, or whether each one should be treated on its merits. It was decided that we should mention this issue, but not attempt to resolve it at this stage
17. We would try to have the plan ready in a more developed form for the next Demersal Working Group (26<sup>th</sup> May) or for the Boulogne ExCom (28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> June), perhaps with initial responses from the industry. Meetings with the industry might be held in:
 

The Netherlands:	Urk
Denmark	Thyboron; Hanstholm
Scotland	Fraserburgh; Pittenweem
England:	North Shields
18. Discussions at the ports would be led by local representatives of the industry, and would report back on the outcome. A set of generic slides could be prepared to aid the discussions. The meetings will need to be publicised beforehand, perhaps with a press release for the local fishing press.

19. Participants

Pim Visser	EAFPA
Giles Bartlett	WWF
Mike Park (Chair)	SFF
Barrie Deas	NFFO
Svend-Erik Andersen	Danish Fishermen's Federation
Michael Andersen	Danish Fishermen's Federation
Tony Hawkins	Rapporteur
Jane Sandell	SFO Ltd
Ewan Bell	CEFAS
Helen Dobby	MSS