



**Executive Committee  
Record of Meeting  
Thermae Palace Hotel, Ostend  
18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

**Rapporteur: Tony Hawkins**

**Corrected Draft**

**1. Welcome, Apologies & Elections**

- 1.1 The Chair of the ExCom, Hugo Andersson, welcomed participants to the meeting. He gave a special welcome to Charline Gaudin, the new representative of the EBCD, and to Eamon Mangan, representing the French government. He thanked Luc Corbisier of SDVO for making practical arrangements for the meeting. Apologies had been received from Colin Brodie, Nicky Holmyard, Pierre George Dachicourt, Svend Erik Andersson and Gus Pastoor.
- 1.2 The rapporteur listed the action points from the previous meeting. Most of these were covered by agenda items.

**2. Marine Strategy Framework Directive**

- 2.1 This new Directive had been discussed at the previous meeting. Implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive must be done by member states. The NSRAC may have a view on the definition of 'Good Environmental Status' for fisheries. A letter had been received from CNPMEM on this subject. Caroline Gamblin spoke to the letter and emphasised that defining Good Environmental Status for fishing activities will pose particular problems for the RACs. The NSRAC should be represented at a meeting on this subject, due to take place on 25th March. .
- 2.2 Peter Hopkins, from the Commission, said that the ICES Task Groups preparing the indicators for Good Environmental Status had now almost completed their work. There could be little input from the RACs into that process. Decisions on the indicators will be taken by the Commission in July, following a meeting in March. However, the socio-economic and data exchange groups were only just beginning their work and DG Mare would like to involve the RACs in those activities.
- 2.3 Christien Absil thought we should be careful to stick to those issues we were able to take a view on. Some of the issues being discussed were very tricky ones, and it might be difficult for us to reach a consensus. Stakeholders were able to participate in their own right.

- 2.4 Charline Gaudin proposed that we should attend the Working Group meeting in March. The work of Task Group 3 related to commercial fisheries, and lots of indicators were being defined, many of them revolving around Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). That should concern us.
- 2.5 Christien Absil re-emphasised that we should have a joint opinion on the descriptor if we were to comment effectively. We did not have time to take it on board, and it was unlikely that we could reach a consensus on MSY. The NSRAC was not a stakeholder platform. Euan Dunn supported Christien's view. This was a horizontal issue, and it would not be possible for the NSRAC to reach a consensus.
- 2.6 Peter Breckling said that if we agreed the subject was not important for fisheries management then we could agree with the eNGOs. However, it was important, and we should therefore deal with it here. We may not come to a common conclusion but it was important to discuss the subject. Charline agreed. It was not just about reaching a consensus; we needed to keep each other informed. Ate Oostra thought that Peter had struck the right note. These deliberations about Good Environmental Status would have an impact upon us, and we should therefore discuss the subject.
- 2.7 Hugo Andersson thought that our immediate need was for more information; then we could find out whether we could reach a common view or not. Barrie Deas asked how we should do this. Perhaps we needed a forum for discussing the subject. As Peter had pointed out, the socio-economic and data exchange groups were about to meet and we should interact with them. On the indicators of Good Environmental Status, there would be a three month consultation period once the Commission had adopted the proposals, with the intention of adopting the indicators at the end of July. We would have the opportunity to comment during the consultation period. Euan Dunn thought that Nicky Holmyard's attention should be drawn to the existence of a socio-economic group.
- 2.8 Discussion concluded with a request to the Commission to provide a speaker on the subject of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and the adoption of indicators of Good Environmental Status, for the Demersal WG meeting in April.

### **3. Report of the Demersal Working Group**

- 3.1 Barrie Deas summarised the deliberations of the meeting of the Demersal WG which had just concluded. There had been a full agenda. We would tidy up the text of the long term management plan for *Nephrops* and a small group would then develop management options for this fishery for further discussion with fishers. JAKFISH had come forward with finance for meetings at the fishing ports. The review of the management plan for flatfish had been discussed, linked with the evaluation of this plan by STECF and the forthcoming ICES WG meeting. We could put in our requests to the Commission for options to be considered within the plan. There had been an interesting exchange of views on how more integrated fisheries management might be achieved through the preparation of fishery management plans. It was agreed that we needed to address the subject of markets for fish. On the evaluation of the plaice box we were awaiting a report.
- 3.2 The Demersal WG had also discussed the new Omega gauge, and whether it was fit for purpose. The TNO study, carried out in the laboratory, had been revealing, but there was a need for studies of the use of the gauge at sea. We had agreed to contact the Expert group on Control to express our misgivings about the way the

gauge was being introduced. There had been a complete breakdown of communications in introducing the new gauges. We would copy our comments to DG Mare.

- 3.3 The Demersal WG had received reports from fishers on their experience with the effort management regime. There had been particular problems with gears in the TR1 category. In Scotland, alternative ways of getting the effort down had been tried. In England the regime was causing hurt. In Denmark it was interfering with rights based management and in Germany and France there were transfer and derogation problems. In order to feed information into the June and October STECF meetings we will produce an informative paper on the effort regime.
- 3.4 The WG had also discussed the EU/Norway negotiations and their importance; the MIRAC meeting with ICES; the framing of ICES advice in terms of MSY and the danger of being trapped into major TAC changes over one year; the delays in preparing a new Control Regulation; and initiatives on discards. In relation to whiting discards, a focus group was being established to consider the problem and to deal with the wider problem of mismatch between TACs and fishing opportunities with recovering stocks.
- 3.5 The Demersal WG wished to support the NWWRAC in its initiative on data deficiencies and in the formation of a task force to address this problem. Marieke Verweij had given a presentation on differing perceptions of the stocks. On reform of the CFP we had attended the important Inter-RAC Conference and had submitted comments to the Commission on behalf of the NSRAC. We now awaited the White Paper from the Commission.
- 3.6 The Demersal WG was supporting the FISUMANI project application, which might provide much needed funding and scientific support for the development of long term management plans. The WG had also considered the Technical Conservation Measures regulation, which was currently on hold. Fishers would be considering and exchanging their views on Deep Sea Access.

#### **4. Report of the Spatial Planning Working Group**

- 4.1 Euan Dunn remarked that although the Spatial Planning WG had held no further meetings since discussions at the ExCom in October 2009 there was nevertheless much going on. The UK had recently announced to outcome of the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of bids for offshore wind farm developments around the UK coast, which would affect fishers. In addition, there was a need for the NSRAC to engage with the UK governments over proposals for Marine Protected Areas.
- 4.2 Wind farm developers have now signed zone development agreements with the Crown Estate. By 2020 it is the aim of the UK government to meet one quarter of the UK's needs (25 gigaWatts) through offshore sources and 80% of the proposed developments were in the North Sea RAC region. The Dogger Bank proposal alone was intended to provide 9 gW. Nigel Proctor later pointed out that this would require a massive development with many wind turbines, perhaps 1,500 to 1,600 turbines each of 2.5 kW. Euan remarked that the timetable was short. In 2010 site selection and the submission of planning applications would take place. In 2014 to 2016 construction would begin, and by 2020 the developments would be complete. In addition to the Dogger Bank, developments were also proposed for the Moray Firth, the Firth of Forth, Hornsea, Norfolk and Hastings.

- 4.3 The detailed time table for the Dogger Bank was very tight. Consultation workshops would be held in the spring of 2010. *Forewind* – the development consortium – had appointed a fishery liaison officer, Colin Warwick, to engage with the RACs. On the morning of March the 11<sup>th</sup> Euan was meeting *Forewind* to discuss the Dogger Bank development, and to discuss how consultation would take place. Engagement of the NSRAC with this major development would be a challenge.
- 4.4 The designation of a Dogger Bank SAC under the Habitats Directive was now resting in the higher echelons of the UK government. The delay was perhaps caused by the wind farm proposal. We would need to wait and see what was being proposed for the Dogger Bank. The JNCC was in the meantime appointing international liaison officers to deal with this and with other proposals for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within the UK MCZ. We had received a presentation on these proposals in Ijmuiden. The actual areas had not yet been selected but consultation was taking place over more generalised areas. The Channel developments were being considered under the 'Balanced Seas' initiative and the East Coast developments under the 'Net Gains' initiative. These are essentially fancy names given to the regional stakeholder forums.
- 4.5 The JNCC now wishes to engage with the NSRAC at a meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>, in the afternoon. It would be helpful if representatives from Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Belgium could attend. The JNCC wanted to discuss the kind of data available on the distribution of fishing, the value of the area to fishing, and fishing effort in given areas.
- 4.6 On developments by other member states, three workshops were being held on the development of Natura 2000 sites within the Dutch EEZ, and would lead to the formulation of the final advice on these sites. Euan was attending on behalf of Birdlife and the NSRAC was also invited to send a representative. The meetings would take place in the period 22-24<sup>th</sup> February.
- 4.7 Peter Breckling asked why fishers from other member states should attend meetings to discuss MPAs established under British law. He could understand if SACs were being designated under the Habitats or Birds directives but areas designated under UK law did not affect fishers from other states. Peter pointed out that there are areas in the German EEZ which were closed to the German fleet but which did not affect other fishers. The same was true for Danish areas in the Kattegat.
- 4.8 Euan thought this may be so, but nevertheless the JNCC would like fishers from other member states to contribute to the discussions on these new proposals. Barrie Deas pointed out that UK jurisdiction over fishing activities only extended out to 6 nm because of historic fishing rights. He thought that the intention would be to designate these sites as MPAs initially but then to confirm them as SACs later. They were massive areas and we had to protect the fishing areas within them.
- 4.9 Antoine le Garrec said that the Dogger Bank had originally been proposed as a SAC. Now it was being designated for a wind farm. How was this possible? Surely the wind farm would affect any sensitive site?
- 4.10 Barrie Deas thought that the capacity of the NSRAC to protect fishers against both wind farms and MPA proposals was limited. Could we look to other bodies to obtain funding for fishers to prepare themselves? Funds might be available from the developers, the Crown estate or even the JNCC. Funding should perhaps be a prerequisite for engagement. With a dedicated person, well versed in GIS, data could be assembled and charts prepared but with fishers retaining ownership.

- 4.11 Jan Willem Wijnstroom thought the time scale for discussion of fishery measures by the Commission for any SAC proposals was very short – only a few days. Was there any prospect of widening the time frame? Peter Hopkins said that the Commission was in a similar position as the Directive allocated only 5 days for discussion of fishery measures within SACs. We should perhaps raise this with Haitze Siemers at the March stakeholder conference. Euan Dunn said that the RSPB had suggested that a longer period for consultation to be provided in its submission on CFP reform. He agreed that the RACs also required much better resources to engage with these threats to fishing and to engage in the many meetings that would be taking place.
- 4.12 It was appreciated that these developments had created a great deal of work for Euan Dunn. This was an area of the NSRAC's work which required our full attention, and we needed to insist on an integrated approach to all these developments; MPAs, SACs and wind farm proposals. Peter Hopkins agreed that there should be better integration and said that the Commission was trying to play a coordinating role and bring the member states together on these issues.
- 4.13 Hugo Andersson concluded by saying that it was clear that the NSRAC needed better funding to cope with these additional pressures. We should discuss this as a priority at the next meeting of the Spatial Planning Working Group. In the meantime, those wishing to attend the 11<sup>th</sup> March meeting with the JNCC should inform Euan as soon as possible.

## **5. Reports of other Working Groups**

- 5.1 There was nothing to report from either the Skagerrak & Kattegat WG or the Socio-Economic WG.

## **6. Reform of the CFP**

- 6.1 The NSRAC had submitted its advice on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. Now, the Commission was holding a series of workshops on various aspects of reform. In January a workshop had been held on rights based management. Charline Gaudin had attended. The Commission had said that it proposed to establish an ITQ system, with common competition rules. Member states would be responsible for implementation. There was not yet a final position on the principles, and a debate was still going on. Smaller scale fisheries may be exempted. There would be no privatisation of the resource, only short term concessions with respect to fishing rights. There were intended to be safeguards against excessive concentration, speculation in quotas and to protect the small scale fisheries. Presentations had been given by the Commission, Norway and Iceland. These had demonstrated both positive and negative features of an ITQ system. Its introduction was intended to achieve a better balance between the fleet and the resource. It would make vessels more profitable. The Danish example had been featured. There had been lots of discussion and many people had expressed concern, especially over fisheries shared with Norway. Many of the questions raised had remained unanswered.
- 6.2 Hugo Andersson thanked Charline for her summary. Barrie Deas, in the context of a workshop on governance held by the Commission, thought it was clear that there would also be a move towards regional management bodies under CFP reform, and these might well be the RACs. However, the membership of the regional

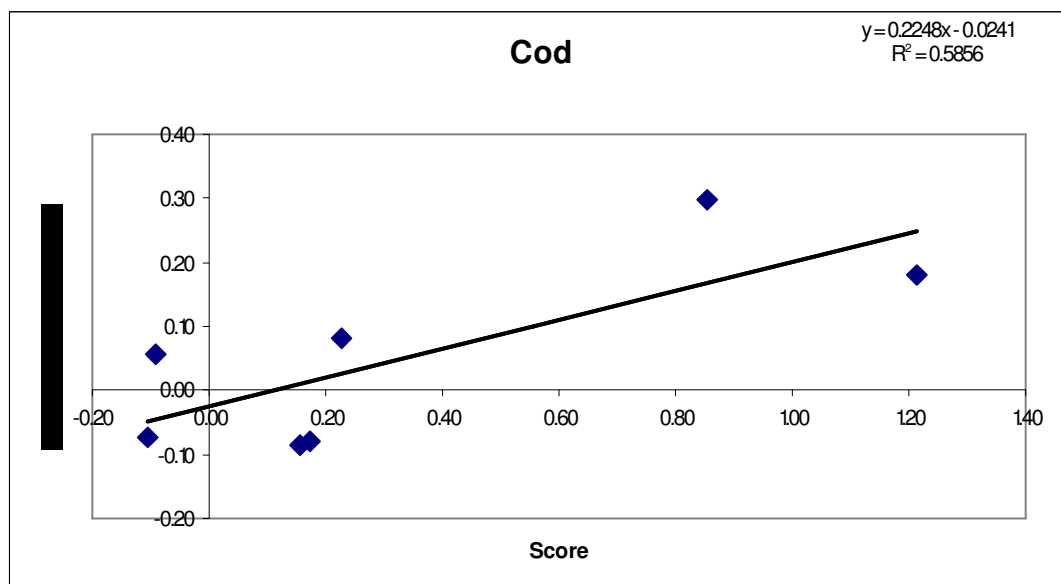
management bodies would have to conform to the Treaties. There are currently no regional decision making organisations within the EU. The idea was that such RMOs would put proposals to the Commission, and these would then go through normal procedures. There was a strong interest in delegated management controlled by defined standards and principles.

- 6.3 Pim Visser had attended a seminar on price formation. There were major questions over what was happening to prices. Fewer fish were being landed by fewer vessels at the same number of ports (there had been no decommissioning of ports). Operational costs were increasing, but prices were decreasing. Some ports were now organising international auctions. Seafood has a greater future but we must sort out the problems over prices. We must consider why and how fishers buy fish. There were two drivers; price and quality. Demersal prices had dropped by 45% and the position had been especially hard during 2008. Imports were cheap and were rising because the euro was so strong. The only place to find the true value of fish is on an open auction market. However, EAFPA has, for a number of years, been expressing concern that values, as well as volumes, are falling in real terms. As EU consumption of fish rises, so the contribution made by fish caught in EU waters has declined. Imports are rising, and the costs of other foods are rising, but the prices for plaice and cod are falling – even the price of sole had declined. We were lacking a pan-European market direction. We had no parachute to get out of this situation. Some innovative actions were being taken; we were developing quality; providing training in traceability; adding value; and promoting links between ship and shop. However, local initiatives were not enough. Improving fresh fish prices is a European not a local problem and we need more effective research, actions and initiatives at the European level. Sustainable fishing requires: sustainable fish stocks; viable fishing effort by viable producers; served by a viable support sector. Collective action is required on quality, labelling, publicity, supply management, marketing, sale options and logistics. The Producer Organisations and auctions should take collective action to promote wild North Sea caught products. There were many campaigns for farmed fish and we need to do the same for fresh fish from the North Sea.
- 6.4 Fred Normandale was concerned that seafood consumption was rising, but through more and more imports. Many of our own fish were being discarded dead. Pim Visser was convinced that imports were here to stay. However, we needed a level playing field in terms of health and food safety standards. We needed to strengthen the markets for our own products and get the best prices. Barrie Deas thought that one of the most important factors affecting price was the industry's reputation. Recent books and films had undermined the industry. Fishing, in terms of its footprint on the environment, had a low impact compared to other forms of food production yet fishers were being depicted as destroyers of the environment. Lobby groups and occasionally scientists were pouring scorn and poison on the industry. We needed a coordinated approach from all member states to emphasise the high quality of our fish.
- 6.5 Christien Absil said that products from the Far East were here to stay. We would have to fill niche markets, with small quantities of good quality fish at high prices, emphasising local catches with a low carbon footprint. Niels Wichmann said that the image of the industry was not that bad, according to a report that had been commissioned. He thought we needed to know more about how consumers behaved. The situation was not helped by the WWF fish guide. Contradictory information was being fed to consumers. Pim Visser emphasised that people like fish and are sympathetic to fishermen. The NSRAC needed to discuss this subject more deeply and could perhaps come up with a pan-European programme. We

should consider a one day conference on this subject – linked to one of our meetings. Antoine Le Garrec agreed. The NSRAC was the right forum to start this process off. We must work together to counteract some of the bad publicity the industry had received. Ann Bell proposed that we should tag such a meeting on to our ExCom meeting in Boulogne.

## 7. North Sea Fishers' Survey

7.1 Henrik Sparholt of ICES gave a presentation on the results of the Fishers' Survey based on a questionnaire issued annually through the NSRAC. The main source of information is a questionnaire based on fish abundance, eg. 'has the abundance of cod changed since last year?'. The answers are collated for different areas of the North Sea. Further analysis within ICES has applied a weighting factor to the different answers. The scores have then been worked out for the different areas. The scores have been compared with the results of the ICES Bottom Trawl Survey, in terms of changes in Spawning Stock Biomass from one year to the next. The results for cod over the years 2002 – 2008 are shown below:



7.2 A similar correspondence has been obtained for haddock, plaice, and sole. So, the scores from the Fishers' Survey agree with ICES estimates. That result leaves the way open for the Survey results to become part of the assessment model as one out of several timeseries – in that way the ICES estimate of SSB will be influenced by the score. For this to happen, further analysis of the score calculation must be carried out to ascertain:

- Whether subarea size should be included
- Whether subareas be weighted according to stock importance, e.g. based on IBTS data
- Whether additional information on average size, recruitment etc should be included
- Whether other score algorithms should be considered

Then, the ICES assessment models can be modified to include the Fishers' Survey Score timeseries of abundance changes from one year to the next.

- 7.3 This approach looks really promising. We now have a time series which can be used in the assessments, but it needs a scientist to go through these calculations in order to present the results at an ICES benchmark meeting. The conclusion is that the Fishers' Survey should be continued as a good way of obtaining a time series of abundance.
- 7.4 Hugo Andersson thanked Henrik for his efforts on behalf of the Survey. Michael Park warned that enthusiasm for the survey had waned amongst fishers. Paula den Hartog agreed but thought that the knowledge that ICES is using the results would go some way towards restoring confidence in the survey. Barrie Deas said this was a very positive development. Our efforts were paying off. We should prepare a press release on this. The method offers a way of introducing fishers' information into the ICES assessments in a systematic way.
- 7.5 Henrik Sparholt thought that it was too late to introduce the figures into the 2010 benchmark meetings, which were about to be held. First we would need to prepare the material for the benchmark meeting. A scientific paper could also be prepared on this subject. Niels Wichmann said that a Danish journalist could perhaps interview Henrik, and the information could be released to the press by that means. Ann Bell pointed out that Ian Napier, of the North Atlantic Marine Centre, who had prepared the most recent data had also made a number of comments on the survey. She would discuss the preparation of a scientific paper with Henrik and Ian.

## **8. Good Practice Booklet**

- 8.1 Lorna Duguid has prepared a draft sustainability booklet for the NSRAC. This now needs feedback from members. Barrie Deas thought we all ought to take a little time to read the booklet and then send our comments to the Secretariat. It is currently quite long and comprehensive, and the text would probably benefit from being cut.

## **9. Commission Update**

- 9.1 Peter Hopkins returned to the subject of the Omega gauge and the request for Commission funding for additional measurements. He believed that funding of work on the Omega gauge would be eligible for EFF funding.
- 9.2 On the Technical Conservation Measures Regulation, the Presidency compromise had now been withdrawn. New measures would be considered as part of the CFP reforms. In the meantime, interim measures would apply until 2011. A proposed workshop on this subject in March had been cancelled. The Commission hoped to present something on the way forward in April.
- 9.3 Further workshops were being held on CFP reform. The timing of events was as follows:

Small scale fisheries workshop	25 <sup>th</sup> February
First phase of impact assessment	March
EFF and finance	April
External dimensions	May

The La Coruña meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of May would be followed by an informal ministerial meeting. Then, in the first quarter of 2011 the first proposals would be put on the table.

- 9.4 A non-paper had been produced on Deep Sea Access, following a communication in 2007 on deep sea stocks. Comment had been invited from stakeholders. The non-paper was quite critical of the management of deep sea stocks and proposed a review of the deep sea regulation. There were several options. The deep sea fisheries could simply be brought into line with the control regulation. Some changes would be necessary to fulfil international obligations. There was certainly a need for an in depth review of the regulation. Stakeholders have until the 9th April to comment on the non-paper. Christien Absil wondered whether the NSRAC should respond. Barrie Deas said that we had discussed this at the Demersal WG, but not in sufficient detail to prepare a response. Perhaps a brief document should be circulated to members of the NSRAC suggesting that a review of the regulation was required. We would then see whether there was support for this from the NSRAC. It was agreed that Michael Park and Antoine Le Garrec would prepare a draft for comment.
- 9.5 It was agreed that the Commission would be asked for a calendar of events for the coming year. Normally, significant dates are given on the Commission's home page for RACs: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/iwt/taxonomy/term/139>

## 10. North Sea Stakeholder Conference

- 10.1 Ann Bell gave details of the forthcoming stakeholder conference to be held on March 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in Newcastle. The conference had come out of the deliberations of the Spatial Planning WG, where it had become apparent that there was a need for coordination of activities across the North Sea. An initiative had been taken by the North Sea Commission to bring all the interested parties together. A programme had been prepared with help from Simon West and Ernesto Penas. Defra would be meeting the costs of the conference and it was planned that 120 participants would take part. The NSRAC had funding for 10 members of the NSRAC to attend and those who wished to go should contact the Secretariat. A presentation on the NSRAC would be given on the second day of the conference by Pim Visser, and would emphasise the difficulties experienced by the RAC over the many different initiatives now being taken in the North Sea.

## 11. Wind Farm Developments in the North Sea

- 11.1 Following discussion of wind farms on the previous day, Harald Oestensjoe, manager of the Southern Norway Trawlers Association had asked whether he could raise again the subject of the wind farm proposal on the Dogger Bank by *Forewind*.
- 11.2 Statoil and Statkraft had put forward plans for building a park of windmills in the UK sector on Dogger Bank. They were partners in the *Forewind* consortium together with RWE, Npower and Scottish and Southern Energy. Statoil saw wind power as a strategic area for developing renewable forms of energy. Margareth Ovrum, president of Technology and New Energy in Statoil had said "our goal is to mature

the projects on Dogger Bank up to the point of making a decision to invest. Hopefully these projects will be profitable and technically realisable. Dogger Bank is a challenge where our competence from the oil and gas business offshore will be of significance.” Both Statoil and Statkraft have previously been involved in building the 315 megawatt wind park at Sheringham Shoal in UK waters.

- 11.3 At 8.660 square kilometres, the Dogger Bank zone is not only the largest of the proposed offshore sites; it is also the farthest from shore (between 125 and 195 kilometres), presenting a number of significant technical challenges. The water depth is 18-63 metres (59 to 206 feet). *Forewind* had agreed with The Crown Estate a target installed capacity of 9 gW, although the zone has a potential for approximately 13 gW, which equates to around 10 per cent of total UK electricity requirements. If developed it is likely to be the world’s largest offshore wind project. The development will be for 2 – 3,000 windmills; really big ones!
- 11.4 There were a number of adverse consequences from this development, in terms of habitats (for sandeels, plaice, turbot), for the health of fish stocks, for the dispersal of sandeels, and other species. Fisheries would be directly affected. Three kinds of fishery took place on the Dogger Bank:
- Gill-netters
  - Danish seines
  - Sandeel trawlers

The fisheries were from Denmark, Norway and other countries. The main fish species were:

- Turbot
- Plaice
- Sandeel

In 1980-2003 the landings of sandeels had been 700,000 tonnes. In 2003-2007: it had been about 300000 tons. The drop had occurred through there being fewer vessels, and as a result of management measures.

- 11.5 A Special Area of Conservation (SAC) had originally been proposed for the Dogger Bank, but the status of that was now uncertain. The value of UK fisheries within the SAC had been estimated as £6,397,264 in 2007 and £5,683,872 in 2006. Danish fisheries were worth 23 million Euros. The Norwegian sandeel fishery on Dogger Bank depends on the size of the quota in EU waters. In 2009 it was 27.500 tons with an approx. value of 40 million NOK. In earlier years the Norwegians fished much more with a relatively high quota. The Dogger Bank was especially important for its sandeel fishery. That would also mean fishing for other species like sprat, blue whiting and Norway pout would be affected.
- 11.6 What strategy should fishers adopt? Primarily we needed to convince *Forewind* to drop the whole project which would be expensive and risky. If not, we should convince *Forewind* to place the windmills where they were the least troublesome for fisheries. We would need to have a close dialogue with *Forewind* throughout the whole project on the consequences for fish, fisheries, and nature conservation, and on where the wind turbines should be placed. We need to get together with other organisations representing the interests of fishermen. It might be possible to get some help from NGOs like the WWF.

- 11.7 Peter Breckling said that the German government thought it would not be possible to have wind farms within an offshore SAC. He asked whether compensation would be paid to fishers for loss of fishing opportunities. Niels Wichmann's view was that the fishery should continue unhindered. If not, there were two issues; one was the disturbance of fish during the construction phase; the other was the loss of fishing opportunities, which required compensation. For one site Danish fishers were receiving compensation for the next 25 years. We needed to get organised now.
- 11.8 Euan Dunn said we had to look at all the Round 3 developments. Quite a lot of fisheries data had already been collected for the SAC consultation, but more would be needed. He was meeting *Forewind* on the 11<sup>th</sup> March and perhaps one or two people could also attend from the NSRAC. This meeting would set the terms of engagement.
- 11.9 Antoine Le Garrec asked what the views of the eNGOs were on this development, which would have an adverse impact on the ecosystem. Giles Bartlett said that the priority of the WWF was to reduce the impact of man-made environmental change and wind farms were part of the solution. However, habitats were important too and any adverse effects must be minimised.
- 11.10 Peter Hopkins thought the Spatial Planning Group within DG Mare might be able to help with coordination. Euan Dunn remarked that although the NSRAC had signalled the need for better cooperation between member states, so far there had been no central coordination. The North Sea Stakeholder Conference would be very important in emphasising the need for a coordinated approach and for marine spatial planning to be engaged in. Luc Corbisier thought that the Commission should be playing a central role but Peter Hopkins pointed out that the Commission only had exclusive competence for fisheries. It played no role with respect to energy policy.
- 11.11 Pim Visser thought we could not comprehend the magnitude of this development. It was huge, but it had strong political impetus behind it. He agreed that we should all join together to present our viewpoint. Hugo Andersson thought that the first step would be to seek funding to coordinate our work. We had data on the fisheries but we needed someone to put it together and estimate the real value of the fisheries. Members should consider whether there were any sources of funding to help the NSRAC carry out this crucial work. Pim Visser said it was especially important to employ a consultant to maximise the value of the fishery. Euan Dunn thought we needed a marine spatial plan for the Dogger Bank area. We also needed to deploy dedicated capacity, with GIS skills, to this problem. Peter Breckling said that we should try to increase the costs of this development. There would already be heavy development and insurance costs. We could also seek 'no go' areas outside the area of development.

## **12. A European Fisheries Ecosystem Plan**

- 12.1 Professor Chris Frid of the University of Liverpool gave a presentation on making the European Fisheries Ecosystem Plan operational. His full presentation is available on the website.
- 12.2 European waters produce around 10 million tonnes of fish and shellfish a year. That is over 10% of the global total mix of species including pelagic, demersal and industrial species. In the old days, if you were worried about cod, you controlled cod fishers. You decided on your limit with a model of cod populations. A simple model involved natural mortality, recruitment and fishing mortality. Now, a new approach

was being adopted, with emphasis on Maximum Sustainable Yield, Maximum Economic Yield, Safe Biological Limits and the UN Code on Responsible Fishing – maximum sustainable yield again. Following the perceived success by industry and policy makers around the North Sea of the European Fisheries Ecosystem Plan project, a follow up was commissioned to extend the approach to a wider area and to move to looking and the practical issues of implementation. The project was looking at three RAC regions. A conceptual plan had already been developed for the North Sea. We now had to try to make it operational. There would be three case studies in the North Sea: the mixed flatfish beam-trawl; the sandeel industrial, the herring pelagic and the mixed whitefish fishery. The project was seeking engagement with the NSRAC, and was looking for tools for determining the management objectives in the RAC regions.

- 12.3 Hugo Andersson thanked Chris Frid for his presentation. Barrie Deas asked what an ecosystem plan would look like. Chris replied that it would set out ecosystem objectives and then examine how these might be delivered. Barrie asked how it would deal with uncertainty and Chris replied that a good ecosystem plan would be adaptive - changing as more information came in. Giles Bartlett said that the NSRAC was currently preparing a long term management plan for the Nephrops fishery. How could the project help with this aim?. Chris said that if the NSRAC contacted him he would ensure that the project engaged with the NSRAC.

### **13. Administrative Matters**

- 13.1 There had been a letter from Aberdeenshire Council saying that it would be willing to host the NSRAC for the coming period. If members were willing to consider this proposal representatives of the Council would attend the June ExCom meeting to make a presentation. Niels Wichmann said that it was too soon to make a decision today. We should await the presentation. Ann Bell reminded members that there would also be changes to the Secretariat, as she would be retiring on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2010. There might be a case for obtaining someone specialising in planning in her stead.
- 13.2 We would be able to send 3 representatives to the CFP Reform Conference in La Coruña on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. It was suggested that Hugo Andersson should attend accompanied by a fishers' representative and a representative of the 'others'. Interested individuals were asked to contact the Secretariat. It would be necessary to match participants to the workshops at the conference.
- 13.3 Cooperation with the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee was discussed. The Committee now had much more power under the Lisbon treaty. Three members of the Committee had been appointed to liaise with the NSRAC. They will be invited to the next ExCom and Demersal WG. It will also be important for representatives from the NASRAC to attend Committee meetings where key decisions were being taken. Charline Gaudin is willing to act as a source of information on the subjects the Committee is considering. The Secretariat is also compiling information on the dates of Committee meetings. We had assisted the committee in the past by providing briefing material, and we could continue to provide them with inputs on important subjects.
- 13.4 Hugo Andersson announced that he would be standing down as Chairman of the ExCom at the autumn General Assembly. The ExCom would need to consider a replacement, and there may need to be an election. Barrie Deas expressed his

appreciation for all the work Hugo had done for the NSRAC. The NSRAC had grown in stature and become important over the period that Hugo had chaired it.

13.5 Euan Dunn asked whether the email addresses of NSRAC participants could be placed on the new website. Joyce Walker explained that this would be contrary to the Data Protection Act. Unless members sent a confirmatory email, saying that they were willing for their email addresses to be posted on the website it could not be done.

13.6 Hugo Andersson closed the meeting by thanking Luc Corbisier and the SDVO for the excellent dinner. He thanked the interpreters for their good work.

## 14. Action Points

1. The Commission will be asked to provide a speaker on the subject of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and the adoption of indicators of Good Environmental Status, for the Demersal WG meeting in April. (2.8).	Peter Hopkins Secretariat Chair of Demersal WG
2. The NSRAC needs better funding to cope with the additional pressures from both wind farm and MPA proposals. We will discuss this as a priority at the next meeting of the Spatial Planning Working Group. Those wishing to attend the 11th March meeting with the JNCC should inform Euan as soon as possible. (4.13).	Secretariat Chair of Spatial Planning WG
3. The NSRAC will discuss the marketing of North Sea fish at a one day meeting, aimed at promoting a pan-European approach. We will consider tagging such a meeting on to our ExCom meeting in Boulogne (6.5).	Secretariat Pim Visser Antoine Le Garrec
4. The NSRAC will encourage Henrik Sparholt and Ian Napier to prepare a scientific paper on the Fishers' Survey, demonstrating its value in supplementing the ICES assessments. Niels Wichmann will arrange for a Danish journalist to interview Henrik, to publicise the success in applying the survey results (7.5).	Secretariat Niels Wichmann
5. A draft sustainability booklet has been prepared for the NSRAC. This now needs feedback from members. Comments should be sent to Ann Bell. (8.1).	Members Secretariat
6. Michael Park and Antoine Le Garrec will prepare a draft document on Deep Sea Access for circulation to members of the NSRAC, suggesting that a review of the regulation is required. We would then see whether there was support for this from the NSRAC (9.4).	Secretariat Michael Park Antoine Le Garrec
7. The Commission will be asked to provide a calendar of events for the coming year (9.5).	Secretariat Peter Hopkins
8. Those members of the NSRAC who wished to attend the North Sea Stakeholders Conference should contact the Secretariat (10.1).	Members Secretariat
9. Members should consider whether there are any sources of funding to help the NSRAC carry out a coordinating role with respect to spatial planning issues. A consultant is needed to help fishers maximise the estimation of the value of their fisheries. Dedicated capacity with GIS skills is also required. (11.11).	Members

10. Interested members should contact the Secretariat about attendance at the La Coruña conference on CFP reform. Only 3 places are available (13.2).	Members Secretariat
---	---------------------

## 20. Participants

### MEMBERS

Pim Visser  
Paula den Hartog  
Willem de Boer  
Peter Breckling  
Christine Absil  
Giles Bartlett  
Euan Dunn  
Mike Park  
Jan Willem Wijnstroom  
Antoine le Garrec  
Caroline Gamblin  
Charline Gaudin  
Emiel Brouckaert  
Barrie Deas  
Ate Oostra  
Niels Wichmann  
Jaroslaw Zielinski  
Tony Hawkins  
Hugo Andersson  
Ann Bell  
Joyce Walker

EAFPA  
Dutch Fishing Industry  
Dutch Fishing Industry  
German Fishing Industry  
North Sea Foundation  
WWF  
Birdlife  
SFF  
EAA  
UAPF  
CNPMEM  
EBCD  
Rederscentrale  
NFFO  
EUCC  
Danish Fishermen's Federation  
PAOP  
Rapporteur  
NSRAC Chair  
NSRAC Exec Sec  
NSRAC Secretariat

### OBSERVERS

Peter Hopkins  
Nigel Proctor  
Eamon Mangan  
Henrik Sparholt  
Fred Normandale  
Luc Corbisier  
Robert Stevenson  
Mamu Desutter  
Harald Oestensjoe  
Chris Frid

European Commission  
EAA  
French Fisheries Ministry  
ICES  
NFFO  
SDVO  
NESFO  
BCCF  
S Norway Trawlermen's Assoc  
University of Liverpool