

MINUTES

The North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC)

WG Skagerrak and Kattegat (10th Meeting)

Date: April 7 2011

Location: H.C. Andersens Boulevard 37.1, Copenhagen, Denmark

Attendants list:

Chair Carl Jesper Hermansen, Danish Fishermen's Association

Rapporteur Fredrik Lindberg, Swedish Fishermen's Federation

Michael Andersen, Danish Fishermen's Association

Svend-Erik Andersen, Danish Fishermen's Association

Bertil Andersson, Swedish Fishermen's Federation

Viking Bengtsson, Swedish Fishermen's Federation

Jonathan Brosch Jacobsen, Danish Fishermen's Association

Jan Hansen, Danish Fishermen's Association

Kim Kær Hansen, Danish Fishermen's Association

Karin Linderholm, Swedish National Board of Fisheries

Peter Olsson, Swedish Fishermen's Federation

Bent Pallisgaard, Danish Directorate of Fisheries

Kenn Skau Fischer, Danish Fishermen's Association

Clara Ulrich, DTU Aqua

1. Opening

The chair Carl Jesper Hermansen opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as follows from these minutes.

3. Minutes from the WG-meeting March 22 2010

The minutes from the meeting in Copenhagen March 22 2010 were approved.

4. Cod

The working group discussed the present situation as to the state of the cod in the Kattegat. It was concluded that the present order leading to constant reductions in effort is unacceptable.

One aspect of the problem often overseen is the state of the seal stock. That situation is at present a severe problem for the cod stock and the fisheries.

The Danish fishermen declared that Denmark, as a consequence of the closed areas, have received compensation in the form of more effort, which Sweden have not. The reason for the latter is that the Swedish National Board of Fisheries has not seen the need for it, totally against the will of the Swedish fishermen. This situation is not acceptable.

Another aspect of the closed areas in the Kattegat is the allowance for German fishermen to fish in the closed areas. This paradox means in reality that the German quota was used up in two months time [1/8 – 5/10-2010]).

As to the closed areas in the Kattegat it is said that an evaluation of the effects shall be made in 2012. The working group expressed fear that if the result is positive, then the areas will be everlasting and even expanded, and if the result is not positive, the areas will be permanent and stretched out.

The working group also concluded the need for an analysis of the environmental problems in the Kattegat, *e.g.* the bottom temperature seems to be less good nowadays for *e.g.* cod.

The group was of the view that it is at all tragic that all light is on the fisheries, when the reasons for the problems are to be found elsewhere.

An alternative previous discussed by the group is the RTC solution, which the group again found a more suitable solution to the existing problems than the closed areas.

Peter Olsson expressed the need for new ideas and that perhaps that now is the time for the fisheries to present green solutions.

The group also discussed the different fishing patterns existing in the *Kattegat*, *e.g.* as to Swedish grid fisheries.

The working group **decided** that Michael Andersen shall write a proposal for a letter, from the working group, to be sent to all interested parties explaining the reasons behind the small appearances of cod in the Kattegat apart from the fisheries and that this letter also shall include all the arguments behind the groups advocating of RTC instead of closed areas. The letter shall be adopted by the working group in a written procedure.

5. Plaice

Clara Ulrich, DTU Aqua, held a presentation: "Assessment and Management for Plaice in Skagerrak and Kattegat".

The reason behind is the Danish fisheries problem in receiving MSC certification for the plaice fisheries due to the poor quality of the assessment (*cf.* § 7 in the minutes from the meeting of the working group March 22 2010); ICES plaice assessment is not of such a quality that it can be used in this perspective.

Clara Ulrich has examined all available relevant data and presented her conclusions: One is that the mismatch between VMS and logbooks is very low and that it has been constantly decreasing since 2005; therefore this cannot be the reason for the demerits in the assessment. Clara has also found that there is complicating and very large overlap of age classes over length distribution and that no spawning has been observed in the Skagerrak during the first quarter of the year. Furthermore the findings indicate that spawning is taking place in the Kattegat and the western parts of the Baltic Sea and that there are larval drift from the North Sea to the Kattegat, especially in windy waters. She also concluded that there is a high migration between IIIaN and IIIaS (6 – 23%).

Clara Ulrich stated that it is not an easy thing to deliver a high quality assessment of the Skagerrak plaice. One solution she could see was to include the Kattegat and Skagerrak stock in the North Sea stock or to combine the Skagerrak stock with the North Sea stock and the Kattegat stock with the Baltic Sea stock. A third solution presented by Clara was to design a management plan for the Skagerrak plaice as within the North Sea, taking special considerations to the Skagerrak plaice occurrences.

After discussion the meeting **decided** that Michael Andersen and Jonathan Brosch Jacobsen shall start the work of designing a management plan for the Skagerrak and Kattegat plaice and to bring that forward for the working group and thereafter the NSRAC. DTU Aqua will continue the work done in this perspective and present their findings within the system of ICES. The ambition is that this can lead to proper assessment and a functioning management plan in 2012.

6. Nephrops

The working group discussed the present situation from the perspective of the work done and ongoing within the NSRAC (*i.e.* the focus group of the Demersal working group) as to a management plan for the North Sea nephrops.

The question posed in this perspective, as for the Skagerrak/Kattegat, is whether the working group shall produce a draft for an own management plan or if it is relevant and appropriate to follow the work in the focus group and thereafter adapt it to the special circumstances of the nephrops fisheries in the Skagerrak/Kattegat.

After discussions on the relevant aspects, *i.a.* minimum size and other differences as to the fisheries in the Skagerrak/Kattegat and the North Sea (*e.g.* the Swedish grid fisheries for nephrops), the group **concluded** to closely follow the work in the focus group and also that the special circumstances in the Skagerrak/Kattegat fisheries must be safeguarded if that area is to be included in the management plan for North Sea nephrops.

7. Prawns

The working group discussed the prawn fisheries and the state of the stock.

It was expressed that the present situation strongly is indicating a coming good prawn fisheries (lots of appearances of small prawns in the northern parts of the Skagerrak and the southern parts of the North Sea).

As to the “Sustainable shrimp fishery project” it was expressed by Clara Ulrich, DTU Aqua, that the work is going to commence soon.

The working group discussed the problem of discards in the prawn fisheries and potential technical solutions, *e.g.* more selective gears.

8. Halibut

Karin Linderholm, Swedish National Board of Fisheries, presented the legislation in force as to halibut in Sweden (unilateral regulation) and expressed that Sweden has sent an identical proposal to STECF, via the European Commission.

The Swedish fishermen concluded that the Swedish legislation in force is as bad as it can be, since all non-Swedes can fish halibut and the Swedish fishermen cannot.

Sven-Erik Andersen *et al.*, who had read the Swedish report sent to STECF, concluded that it was of a substandard quality.

The working group **concluded** that the Swedish legislation in force and the report sent to STECF is of such a quality that it ought to be dismissed.

9. Application for a Kattegat Interreg project

Viking Bengtsson presented a draft for a project aiming to secure marine biological competence as for the Kattegat and to develop forms of cooperation between different stakeholders.

The Danes expressed interest for the project.

10. Natura 2000

The working group discussed Natura 2000 and fisheries and concluded the need to closely follow the ongoing processes in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat.

The working group **decided** to have a thorough discussion as to this at the next meeting.

11. AORB

The working group discussed the need for more meetings and concluded the intention to have at least three meetings per year.

The date for next meeting was decided to be July 1.

12. Closing

The chair Carl Jesper Hermansen thanked the participants for the constructive meeting and declared it closed.

Carl Jesper Hermansen
Chair

Fredrik Lindberg
Rapporteur