

The North Sea Advisory Council

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Anders Mikkelsen
Fisheries Director
Scheveningen High Level Group
c/o Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark
Slotholmsgade 12
1216 Copenhagen
DENMARK

1st December 2016

Joint Recommendation of the Scheveningen High-Level Group

Dear Mr Mikkelsen,

The members of the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) Executive Committee, have considered the Joint Recommendation of the Scheveningen High-Level Group – “Sprat Box in the North Sea – supplement to the discard plan for the industrial fisheries in Kattegat, Skagerrak and the North Sea”.

NSAC members agree that the Sprat Box currently prevents the flexibility required to allow vessels to fish where they can reduce their unwanted bycatch as much as possible. The joint recommendation is based on a solid scientific work that has been approved by ICES.

NSAC members nevertheless wish to recollect that the original intention of the sprat box was to reduce the catches of juvenile herring. The NSAC supports effective measures that do protect juvenile herring, including the protection of herring spawning grounds. ICES states that “*activities that have an impact on the spawning habitat of herring should not occur, unless the effects of these activities have been assessed and shown not to be detrimental*” (ICES herring advice 2016). The most serious of these is the ever increasing pressure for marine sand and gravel extraction and the development of wind farms (ICES HAWG report 2016).

The NSAC can therefore, in line with our advice so far, give full support to the recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

Niels Wichmann
Chairman

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