



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/C1/JS/ds/Ares(2021)

Mr Emiel Brouckaert
NWWAC Chairman
Ireland
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Mr Kenn Skau Fisher
NSAC Chairman
North Sea Advisory Council
The Netherlands
tamarat@nsrac.org

Subject: NWWAC & NSAC advice on the Fishing Opportunities 2021 for undulate ray in the English Channel (ICES 7d, e)

Dear Mr Brouckaert, Dear Mr Skau Fisher,

Thank you for your letter from 9 December 2020 on Undulate Ray and for your members' continued efforts to provide advice to the Commission. Your input on this subject is valued, even if the outcome of negotiations may not always deliver the desired results.

On the specific subject of Undulate Ray in the Channel, we recognise that the science has benefited greatly thanks to the considerable efforts of both fishers and scientists.

In terms of the assessment of the stock, this is a matter for ICES to comment upon. We understand your members are involved in the ICES stakeholder meetings, and the Commission services also support the involvement of ICES at the Advisory Council meetings. I would therefore suggest that you continue to invite ICES to explain what further data is required of stakeholders in order to further improve the stock assessment. I understand that was the case in the joint NWWAC/NSAC Focus Group on Skates & Rays on Thursday 10 December 2020 with the participation of Pascal Lorange (ICES/IFREMER).

It is of vital importance that your members have a good understanding of the basis of the catch advice, as this is the best available scientific information. ICES provides independent and internationally peer-reviewed scientific advice and it is crucial that this forms the basis of our negotiations with our coastal state and international partners. This is thus the best way to maintain a common understanding and preventing any one party

setting fishing opportunities based just upon their own assessment, which could result in a prejudicial outcome for your members.

As you are aware, this stock is shared with the United Kingdom and thus subject to ongoing consultations. It is therefore too soon for me to comment upon the level of the TAC. We note the observer status of several of your members at the EU-UK consultations and endeavour to keep all ACs members up to date with progress on this matter.

Thank you once again for your correspondence. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please kindly contact my colleague Ms Pascale Colson (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA
Director-General