



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/C1/trijs/sd/Ares(2020)

Mr Emiel Brouckaert  
NWWAC Chairman  
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Mr Kenn Skau Fisher  
NSAC Chairman  
North Sea Advisory Council  
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The Netherlands  
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**Subject: Non-recurrent request to ICES on criteria for listing on Prohibited Species List**

Dear Mr Brouckaert, Dear Mr Skau Fisher,

Thank you for your letter from 18 December 2020 on this subject and your members' continued efforts to provide advice to the Commission during these difficult times.

We fully share your concerns regarding the conservation of particularly vulnerable species. In our view, the prohibited species list is an important management tool to ensure that the conservation objectives under the CFP are met. ICES already provides us with advice on vulnerable species that can be used as a basis for management decisions.

As you are aware, from 2021 onwards, many of the stocks in the North Sea and the North Western Waters – not least for the skates and rays that you mention in your letter – are jointly managed with the UK. Management of these stocks will be governed by the new partnership agreement concluded in the last days of 2020.

The Commission is determined to continue to pursue a science-based approach to fisheries management in its relations with the UK. However, given that the agreement with the UK was concluded only recently, we believe it would be premature to send such a request to ICES before we have had the opportunity to explore this topic further with our British partners. Given also the number of stocks we share, it is important to work for mutual buy-in to any possible management decisions, also as a way of ensuring a level playing field for our industry.

Let me assure you and your members that your input on this subject is valued and that we will return to this as part of our considerations for the sustainable management of our shared stocks in the future.

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

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA  
Director-General