

Scheveningen Group Presidency
Danish Ministry for Food and Agriculture
Holbergsgade 6
1057 Copenhagen
Denmark

Cc: DG MARE

Zoetermeer, 30 June 2022

NSAC Advice Ref. 11-2223

NSAC Advice on the Scheveningen Group JR concerning regional technical measures for Atlantic halibut in Skagerrak and Kattegat

This paper was approved with consensus by the NSAC Executive Committee on 30 June 2023 via fast-track written procedure.

On the 23rd of June 2023, the Scheveningen Group of the North Sea Member States approached the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) with a request to provide comments to the Joint Recommendation (JR) concerning regional technical measures for Atlantic halibut in Skagerrak and Kattegat.

The deadline for provision of comments was significantly limited as the NSAC was asked to provide comments by 27 June. As this did not correspond to the NSAC internal procedures even when the minimum consultation period is applied, the NSAC agreed to inform the Scheveningen group that it shall provide comments applying the minimum consultation period of 48 hrs.

Although not fully convinced about the quality of the scientific background for the JR, as it is primarily based on older data from only one nation, the NSAC agrees on the proposal to close targeted fishery for Atlantic halibut in the spawning period in Skagerrak, as prescribed by the Agreed Record between EU and Norway. The NSAC is consequently accepting that the JR is in line with the signed agreement.

That being said, the NSAC does not see the rationale behind closing the areas in the Kattegat, given the data and given the fact that this is not part of the Agreed Record on the matter between the EU and Norway.

In addition, it is important that the closure is implemented in the same way in Norwegian as in EU waters, so that a level playing field is ensured and so that fishers do not run into complications when changing from fishing in EU waters to Norwegian waters.

We hereby thank the Scheveningen Group for allowing us to comment on the proposed draft Joint Recommendation and invite the Presidency to step in touch in case further clarifications are required.