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Cc: DG MARE, Danish Administration

Brussels, 15 April 2024

NSAC Advice 07-2324
NSAC Advice on Fisheries management measures in five Danish Natura 2000 sites in the North Sea and the Skagerrak

This paper was approved by the NSAC Executive Committee on 15 April 2024 with consensus via fast-track written procedure.

1 Background

On the 11th of March 2024 the Danish Administration reached out to the NSAC in accordance with Article 18 of the Framework Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy with a request to comment on the draft proposal regarding Fisheries Conservation Measures under Article 11 for protection of reef structures in five Danish Natura 2000 sites designated under the Habitats Directive 92/43 EEG of 21st of May 1992.

The draft, in which Denmark proposes to regulate fishing activities in the Danish part of the North Sea and Skagerrak for the protection of reef structures designated under the Habitats Directive, was previously sent to NSAC on the 25th of July 2022. Since then, the proposal has been revised in relation to adjustments of coordinates for the buffer zones around the reef structures.

The present proposal entails fisheries management measures in the following four Natura 2000 sites located in the Danish Exclusive Economic zone in the North Sea and Skagerrak, outside 12 nautical miles:

- Thyborøn Stenvolde (EU site code: DK00VA348)
- Jyske Rev, Lillefiskerbanke (EU site code: DK00VA257)
- Store Rev (EU site code: DK00VA258)
- Gule Rev (EU site code: DK00VA259)

In addition, one Natura 2000 site is located in the Danish part of the Skagerrak between the baseline and 12 nautical miles:

- Lønstrup Rødgrund (EU site code: DK00VA301)

As stated in the proposal, the measures shall be taken with respect to fishing activities exercised by all vessels including fishing vessels carrying the flag of other Member States of



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the EU, and to this end Denmark consulted Sweden, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France, the North Sea Advisory Council, and the European Commission.

2 NSAC Advice

On 23 September 2022, the NSAC adopted Advice Ref. 16-2122 on the earlier draft joint recommendation (JR) for a fisheries regulation for the five Danish Natura 2000 sites in the North Sea and the Skagerrak. That advice contained different positions within the NSAC, to some degree reflecting that more work was needed in terms of the preparation of management measures on the sites.

Since then, extensive work and consultations have been carried out by the involved Member States to improve the draft JR, taking into account input from different stakeholders, including the previous NSAC advice and individual positions of its members.

Generally, the NSAC finds it positive that Denmark is moving toward protecting the vulnerable reefs and bubbling reefs in the Danish MPAs in the Skagerrak and the North Sea, and the **NSAC can endorse the new draft joint recommendation on Danish Natura2000 sites with consensus.**

In addition to designating MPAs with a whole-site approach, comprehensive monitoring and baseline studies are needed to assess closure's ecological benefits and socio-economic impacts on fisheries. These should be coupled with effective control and enforcement measures.

3 Conclusion

The NSAC once again thanks the Danish Administration and the Scheveningen Group's Presidency for the opportunity to provide input to the draft proposal for the five Danish Natura 2000 sites. The NSAC appreciates the ongoing dialogue and remains available for further discussion on this matter.