

NEAFC Activity Report

November 2005 – October 2006

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1. Introduction

This report gives an overview of the events, arrangements, contacts and decisions made by NEAFC since last year's Annual Meeting.

2. Housekeeping

The refurbishment of the third floor of Berners Street was finalised just before the 24th Annual meeting in November 2005. Contracting Parties found the refurbishment quite adequate and appreciated the better arrangements for meeting rooms and altogether the use of the space on the floor. The meeting rooms have - on a trial basis - been made available together with the conference facilities of the International Coffee Organisation through a professional conference bureau. This has turned out to be quite feasible and uncomplicated, not interfering with the Secretariat to any degree. There is still building work going on at the upper floors and it has been necessary to sort out a number of problems arising from this process. The refurbishment of the upper floors is expected to end in February next year.

3. Management Measures adopted

The following management measures were adopted and came into force in 2006

Year Agreed	Year In force	Management Measures	Objections
2005	2006	Regulatory measures for the pelagic fishery for redfish for 2006, including a reduction in the TAC from 75,200 tonnes to 62,416 tonnes.	The Russian Federation
2005	2006	Regulatory measures for mackerel for 2006: 42,289 tonnes of mackerel was set aside for 2006 in areas beyond fisheries jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties in ICES areas IIA, IV, V, VI, VII and XII and allocations	Iceland
2005	2006	Regulatory measures for the protection of haddock in ICES Sub-division VIb for 2005 closing an area for trawl fishing	None
2006	2006	For blue whiting NEAFC establishes an allowable catch limitation of 253,000 tonnes of Blue Whiting for 2006 in waters beyond the areas under national fisheries jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties.	None
2005	2006	30 % reduction in fishing effort in fisheries for fish species inhabiting deep waters in the Regulatory Area from 1 January 2005.	None
2005	2006	Vessels operating in the NEAFC Regulatory Area shall not deploy gillnets, entangling nets or trammel nets at any position where the charted depth is greater than 200 metres.	None
2005	2006	As an interim measure, NEAFC recommends that no directed fishery for the basking shark should be undertaken in the Convention Area in 2006. Contracting Parties are urged to make available all data on the basking shark, including fisheries data, available to ICES for further evaluation of the state of the stock.	None
2005	2006	Each Contracting Party undertakes to limit the effort for 2006 put into the directed fishing for deep-sea species as set out in Annex 1B of the Scheme in the NEAFC Regulatory Area. The effort shall not exceed 70 per cent of the highest level put into deep-sea fishing in previous years for the relevant species. The effort should be calculated as aggregate power, aggregate tonnage, fishing days at sea or number of vessels, which participated.	None

4. Meetings of the Commission and subsidiary bodies of NEAFC

NEAFC Meetings 2005 - 2006			
Date	Venue	Chair or convener	Meeting
7-11 November	HQ	Einar Lemche D (FG)	24 th Annual Meeting
7-9 February	HQ	Kolbeinn Árnason, Iceland	Working Group on the Future of NEAFC
5-6 April	HQ	Martin Newman, EU	PECCOE I
6 April	HQ	Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland	Advisory Group on Data Communication, AGDC
26-28 April	HQ	Michael Arbuckle, FAO	NEAFC Performance Review Panel I
21-22 June	HQ	Stuart Lachlan, EU	NEAFC Working Group on Deep Sea Species
17-19 July	HQ	Michael Arbuckle, FAO	NEAFC Performance Review Panel II
3-4 October	Tallinn	Martin Newman, EU	PECCOE II
5 October	Tallinn	Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland	Advisory Group on Data Communication, AGDC
10-11 October	HQ	Michael Arbuckle, FAO	NEAFC Performance Review Panel III
13 November	HQ	Martin Newman, EU	PECCOE III
13 November	HQ	To be decided	PECMAS I
14-18 November	HQ	Einar Lemche, D(FG)	24 th Annual Meeting

D (FG), Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

IUU fishing has dominated PECCOE’s agenda. The effect of A- and B-lists for IUU vessels is growing all the time and has put pressure on companies involved in IUU operations and on flag states, which are urged to get vessels off the B-list. A consolidated Scheme including both the present Scheme of Control and Enforcement and the non-Contracting Party Scheme – with amendments – and added measures for port state control well beyond the requirements proposed by FAO was drafted.

Improved reporting on annual inspection and surveillance activities in the NEAFC Regulatory Area, according to agreed formats, allows PECCOE to concentrate on the evaluation of inspections and the handling of infringements. Information from individual Contracting Parties is compiled in a compliance report collated by the Secretariat. The development of secure areas on the NEAFC website with updated information for inspectors and surveillance platforms has continued in 2006.

The AGDC has continued reviewing the North Atlantic Format, widely used for VMS messages. The Group advises NEAFC, other Regional Fisheries Organisations and national fisheries authorities that wish to seek its advice in technical matters.

A NAF website has been set up by NEAFC. The NAF-format site currently contains reference information for the NAF-format which can be useful for other organisations using or considering using the NAF-format. This year NEAFC joined the FAO fisheries statistics body, CWP, which has taken on a review of recent developments and future challenges including electronic data communication and new data requirements for ecosystem considerations. The manager of the NEAFC VMS database was invited as one of 11 global experts in the ‘Expert Consultation on the use of vessel monitoring systems and satellites for fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance convened’ by FAO 24 -25 October 2006.

The Working Group on the Future of NEAFC met in February drafting terms of reference and membership for a NEAFC performance panel and procedures for

handling proposals for closing areas to fishery. The proposal for the panel was adopted by postal vote and the Performance Review Panel submitted its report on 7 November 2006. The amendments to the NEAFC Convention and London Declaration agreed were adopted by postal vote in July-August 2006.

With respect to deep-sea fisheries, the NEAFC Working Group on Deep-sea Fisheries, at its meeting in June, reviewed new information and advice from ICES and refined the forms for reporting detailed catch data from deep-sea fisheries. Their information and advice did not allow the Group to go beyond the proposal from last year to cut effort by 30 %. Following an exchange of letters between the ICES and NEAFC Secretariats, NEAFC VMS data have been made available to the ICES scientific community. ICES has plotted data for the years 2003 – 2005. In order to be able to use these data for individual fisheries they need more complete reporting on gear used and probably fisheries involved. The response from ICES is still to be considered as preliminary with a scope for improvement next year.

5. Other meetings and conferences in 2004/2005

Meeting	Date	Venue	Convener
CWP and FIRMS Steering Group meeting	13-15 February.	ICCAT HQ Madrid	FAO
Informal consultations UNFA Review Conference	20-24 March	UN HQ New York kjh	UN
MCAP-MICC meeting	10-11 April	ICES HQ kjh	ICES
Nordic Conference Focus on the Economy	3-4 May	Tórshavn (lecture) kjh	Nordic Council of Ministers
Marine Nature Conservation in Europe in 2006	8-12 May	Stralsund, lecture) kjh	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Bonn.
UNFA Review Conference	22-26 May	UN HQ New York kjh	UN
North Atlantic Conference MPAs	6-7 June	Tromsø, Lecture kjh	Norway
North Atlantic Fisheries Minister Meeting	8 June	Hurtigruten lecture kjh	Norway
7th ICP Meeting Biodiversity	12-16 June	UN HQ New York	UN
ICES Symposium Fisheries Management Strategies	28-30 June	Galway, Ireland kjh	ICES
Nordic Network in international organisations	01 Sep	Oslo kjh	Nordic Council of Ministers
Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries	26-28 Sep	Bergen kjh	FAO, Norway
Expert Consultation on VMS and satellites *	24-26 Oct.	FAO, Rome JN	FAO
Chatham House update on IUU *	21 November	Chatham House	Chatham House
Global IUU Monitoring Workshop *	22-23 Nov.		Royal Inst. International .Affairs London

Members of the Secretariat have been invited to contribute in a personal capacity at some of these meetings.

The Secretariat was an observer in the IMPAST project, which explored the possibilities of using satellite imagery to validate VMS data. The project has been finalised, but validation studies continue and NEAFC Contracting Parties participate.

The Secretariat has participated in a project as a partner under the 6th EU Framework Programme for Research, Technology, Development and Demonstration, the SHEEL project. The objective of this project was to facilitate the production and implementation of cost-effective and secure electronic fisheries logbooks in Europe. The project has been finalised.

The EU JCR funded CEDER project, aiming at estimating catches, effort and discards in real time, is in its start up phase. The NEAFC Secretariat is participating in the project as a partner.

6. The Scheme and VMS

Contacts with the VMS database and information to inspection services are ongoing and in real time. All Contracting Parties and communication parties report positions automatically, but some Contracting Parties have had problems in 2006. A lesser number are transmitting Article 10 messages automatically to the Secretariat. The Secretariat has had to input a growing number of messages manually this year. Those inspection services that are able to forward data from the Secretariat automatically and in real time to their inspection craft are still limited in number. The number of messages has stabilised around 300,000 annually.

Improvement in the timeliness and accuracy of catch statistics submitted from the statistical services of Contracting Parties under the Scheme led to a proposal for a facility to allow Contracting Parties to input monthly aggregate catch data directly in to the NEAFC database via the website. The facility has been established and has been run on a trial basis for 2006.

7. Contacts with Contracting Parties

The Secretariat has distributed more than 119 letters to Heads of Delegations on both administrative and operational matters, a similar number to last year. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of Scheme letters on matters concerning the Schemes - from 37 last year to 82 in 2006. This reflects the increased attention to the movements of vessels on the NEAFC IUU A- and B-lists.

Contacts with individual Contracting Parties and participants at NEAFC meetings are increasingly maintained via e-mail and the website is regularly updated with reports and details of meetings. The website has been overhauled graphically and the information on the secure area makes meeting and other preparatory documents, as well as letters sent to Heads of Delegation, available electronically as soon as they are ready.

8. Contacts with non-Contracting Parties

The increased focus on IUU fishing has led to a surge in contacts with non-Contracting Parties and companies wishing to run legal transshipments operations. The naming and shaming of vessels on IUU A- and B-lists has also led to an increase in responses from the flag states, vessel owners, operators and charterers.

9. Regional and International Contacts

Cooperation with sister organisations in the North Atlantic on information on IUU fishing continued this year. The 5th Meeting of the North Atlantic Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, NARFMOs, will take place in the first quarter of 2007.



For a three year provisional period NEAFC has agreed to make accessible its existing hardware and software to support the implementation of SEAFO VMS without compromising its own system and to develop a separate database for SEAFO in NEAFC's server. A proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding on this matter has been submitted by SEAFO for consideration by NEAFC.

NEAFC also cooperates in VMS and MCS related issues with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission whose Secretariat was recently established.

The Secretariat has answered the following enquiries from international organisations or conferences:

- **UNDOALOS**

1. Response to UNDOALOS with respect to giving effect to paragraphs 66 to 69 of resolution UNGA resolution 59/25 concerning the impacts of fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems, according to General Assembly resolution 60/31.

2. NEAFC response to request for information from UN January 2006 covered the updating of the Convention in the light of developments in international law since 1992 with respect to biodiversity, ecosystem and precautionary approach. The Strengthening of cooperation, through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, as the way forward to improve ocean governance in the high Seas and the contact between NEAFC and OSPAR.

- **FAO**

Questionnaire for monitoring the implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for responsible fisheries, the international plans of action on capacity, sharks, seabirds, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and the strategy for improving information on status and trends of capture fisheries

10. Environmental concerns

- **OSPAR**

The Secretary participated as an observer at a meeting of the OSPAR Management Group for the Quality Status Report 2010 (MAQ), 18-19 October 2006 in London. A second meeting will take place between Heads of Delegation of the Commissions of OSPAR and NEAFC at NEAFC Headquarters on 13 November 2006.

Kjartan Hoydal, Secretary

9 November 2006