



**PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCE
OF THE NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION -
PECMAS
18-19 October 2007 at NEAFC Headquarters, London**

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1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair, Mr Snorri Pálmason, Norway, called the meeting of PECMAS to order at 10:00 am at NEAFC HQ. He welcomed the members of PECMAS, representing all Contracting Parties and the observer from ICES. He noted that document PECMAS 2007/02/05 had been available on the NEAFC website. At the EM2007 in June he had informed the NEAFC Commission that PECMAS saw its two main tasks as managing contact with ICES and area management. He felt that this had been accepted by the Commission and this is reflected in the agenda. Iceland echoed the Chair's summing up of PECMAS's main tasks.

2. Adoption of the agenda and appointment of rapporteur

The first draft of the agenda was circulated at the end of June 2007. Comments had been invited before 3 September. No comments had been received. The EU representative commented on 5b. He asked if the advice on changes in the border lines of the areas closed on the Rockall Bank would be dealt with under item 6. It was confirmed that this would be dealt with under agenda item 6e. There were no further comments to the agenda and no items under any other business. The Secretariat was appointed rapporteur.

At 3 pm OSPAR observers joined the meeting and inform about OSPAR initiatives. The presentations and discussions at this part of the meeting will be reported separately.

3. PECMAS comments to the Performance Review

A draft proposal of PECMAS comments to the performance review was circulated in mid-May 2007 with a view to reaching an agreed text by correspondence before the Extraordinary Meeting of the NEAFC Commission on 13-14 June. This had not been possible.

The Chair had, based on that proposal, drafted an answer to the Commission on this item, document PECMAS 2007/02/05. One of the conclusions is that PECMAS is not recommending that advice should be reviewed in NEAFC. This conclusion was presented to the Commission at EM2007 and there were no comments. He went through the details of the paper.

There was considerable discussion of the Chair's draft text, especially on the role of PECMAS and to what extent PECMAS shall handle the advice from ICES.

The following points were made:

It would seem natural that PECMAS, which had scrutinised the text of the MoU with ICES, checked that advice is delivered according to it. The need for reviewing advice was expressed, but the meeting was unclear as to what kind of review should take place.

The Committee looked into the recommendation from the Working Group on the Future of NEAFC, WGFUT, which reads as follows:

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- With respect to the Performance Review Panel's conclusions on these matters, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the Commission that PECMAS be requested to consider the conclusions of the Panel in more detail with respect to specific fisheries, with the exception of the proposal to include managers and representatives of fishing industry in the peer review of scientific work.
- The Working Group agreed to recommend to the Commission that the Terms of Reference for PECMAS be reviewed in order to clarify the role of PECMAS as a mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of communication/cooperation between science and management in line with the objectives of the (amended) Convention.

Which NEAFC body will undertake to clarify the role of PECMAS is not indicated.

It was agreed that the term "review" should be spelled out clearly.

The Secretariat drew attention to the need for feed into the dialogue with ICES in the meeting of the ICES MCAPP with client Commissions. Up to now NEAFC had participated at a Secretariat level. ICES pointed out that MCAPP represented ICES at the political level.

Some saw a role for PECMAS to highlight issues that were important for Contracting Parties to consider in their preparations for the Annual Meeting. The EU did not rule out the possibility that the ACFM Chair made his presentation to PECMAS. This opened up the possibility of asking ICES to clarify issues before the Commission meeting and help the Chair of ACFM in preparing specific contentious questions. This probably means that PECMAS had to meet not before and not later than 29 October.

The EU representative drafted amendments to cover the points made.

The Chair's recommendation was agreed with the following amendments:

To be inserted into paragraph 4:

*1: Replace "It is therefore recommended by PECMAS that NEAFC should not start reviewing the ICES advice" by "It is therefore recommended by PECMAS that NEAFC should not start **peer-reviewing** the ICES advice".*

2. Add "PECMAS should review the scientific advice in order to clarify possible issues or misunderstanding. It should also flag important issues and report them either to the Commission, or send a demand back to ICES for further clarification."

Actions arising: The Chair will report the amended text to the Commission.

4. Integrating environmental concerns into fisheries management

a) International trends

Attention was drawn to a recent report by an independent panel to develop a model for improved governance by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations published by Chatham House dealing with "Recommended Best Practices for Regional Fisheries Management Organizations."¹ The Chair asked if there were any comments on this report. The Secretariat informed that the report was rather complimentary to NEAFC and particularly mentioned cooperation between OSPAR and NEAFC. Copies of the report and its summary were available at the meeting.

b) Discussions in international multilateral UN system

Reference is made to document **EM 2007/05**, tabled at the Extraordinary Meeting in June under agenda item 14. There were two further reports available from a workshop in Geneva in June on involving the public in international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment and a Nordic meeting on Marine Spatial Planning in June. The Chair asked about the Aarhus Convention. The Secretary gave a short summary of the observations in the paper.

The Chair reminded that the EM2007 had asked PECMAS to comment on articles 83-84 in UNGA Resolution no 61/105. The Icelandic representative reminded the meeting that at the EM he had raised the issue that NEAFC should review how it had met the requirements. The Secretariat introduced document PECMAS 2007/02/11. Iceland read the paper as a confirmation of the fact that NEAFC has done a lot and is willing to do more.

The EU representative pointed out that the UNGA resolution shifts the burden of proof, so you cannot open a new fishery or expand it unless that it can be shown that there is no harmful impact. The UN expects reports back on what RFMOs have done for the 2008 UNGA not later than November 2008. It would probably be too late to put a report before the 2008 AM. Therefore action should be discussed in the first PECMAS meeting in 2008 and then dealt with by an EM2008. The report to AM2007 should include a statement describing the necessary process and time line in order to be able to report back how the shift in the burden of proof is met.

The Chair noted that that idea of closing everything and then opening again when there was proof that fishery would not be harmful had already been aired earlier but had not had much support.

The Icelandic representative did not think that the interpretation of UNGA resolution 61/105 was as clear cut as suggested by the EU. There were a number of ways to meet the requirements. The Icelandic representative proposed that the NEAFC measures be reported and the attention of the NEAFC Commission drawn to the uncertainty about the interpretation of the resolution and which approach could be considered. This was agreed. It was also agreed to ask the Commission if it wishes NEAFC to develop protocols for gathering of information, including protocols for exploratory fishing. The factual information about what NEAFC has achieved will be reported to the Commission.

¹ <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/>

Actions arising: The factual information about what NEAFC has done with respect to UNGA resolutions, PECMAS 2007/02/11, will be reported to the Commission and PECMAS will seek clarification with respect to protocols for gathering information, incl. exploratory fishing.

5. Cooperation with ICES

a) Drafting the request for advice from ICES

A draft proposal (PECMAS 2007/02/08) for the consideration of the group was circulated in advance in the latter half of September, with the following elements.

- i) Requirements in the amended Convention**
- ii) International trends**
- iii) Scientific basis for management measures for fisheries**
- iv) Scientific basis for area management**

b) Reviewing the advice from ICES

The 2007 ACFM autumn meeting took place from 4-11 October 2007 at ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen. The advice is expected to be published on 19 October.

It was agreed that document PECMAS 2007/02/09 was just for information in the event that there was general discussion on the form of the advice from ICES.

Before going onto the document PECMAS 2007/02/8 ICES asked if there was any possibility of compiling all regulations in effect in the NEAFC Area. It would make it possible to answer requests about what effect regulations have on the stock situation, relating changes in fishing mortality to a certain management measure. Changes were understood as changes that affected exploitation patterns and total mortality. The Icelandic representative felt that only changes that really had an effect, not minor changes, should be included. As to whether NEAFC can help, the management authority must document the regulations it wants evaluated. Iceland pointed out that in many cases scientists had the necessary knowledge about regulations. It was agreed that ICES will draft text describing what they want.

The Chair asked for comments on document PECMAS 2007/02/08. The EU asked about the situation of the shift in timing. ICES informed about the discussion between Norway and the EU. The ICES work plan for 2008 allows for advice on all EU stocks and EU-Norwegian stocks will be advised on 1 July. For NEAFC stocks, blue whiting, mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring will be ready in early October. The EU referred to the discussion in February of moving forward the NEAFC stocks, with a possibility for revision if new survey data show a need for change. Has this happened? ICES informed that it had not, but redfish and deep water species were now in the early round. The EU expressed strong concern that the three pelagic stocks had not been brought back. This would cause problems for coastal state and NEAFC negotiations at the end of the year. He had expected that this message had gone strongly from NEAFC to ICES. ICES responded that in the internal evaluation it has been stated that EC-Norway stock took priority. The change in timing had been very difficult to accommodate.

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The Chair stated that this meant that in the request the date for advice would be 3 October 2008.

There were no comments with respect to the introductory parts and the recurring advice. He asked if there were any proposals for non-recurring advice. The EU asked if this was not covered in the fast track procedures. It was informed that this covered specific issues. Former examples were the stock structure of redfish and survey design. Norway asked if more could be done with respect to surveys apart from urging they be undertaken, for example supporting regional surveys as proposed by ICES and including pelagic redfish in the pelagic surveys in the Norwegian Sea or other initiatives. ICES illustrated the process with the example that NEAFC asks for information on deep-sea stocks and concludes that surveys are needed. NEAFC's role would be to support such survey being undertaken. PECMAS could discuss concrete proposals from ICES if necessary.

The Chair suggested that if there were other proposals they could be submitted by e-mail. Iceland thought it necessary to see the advice before setting up special requests. ICES thought that special requests indicated priorities. It was concluded that requests would be repeated as long as NEAFC felt that the response could be improved. Iceland asked how PECMAS could follow up on specific proposals for research. The Chair suggested that ICES go through his answer to the request for advice last year. ICES went through its letter of response dated 2 March 2007:

1. Assessment methodology, blue whiting and Norwegian Spring Spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring.

NEAFC asks ICES to evaluate the results of the joint Russian-Norwegian project on developing new assessment tools for blue whiting and Norwegian Spring Spawning (Atlanto-Scandian) herring.

This question has been forwarded to the Working Group on Northern Pelagic and Blue Whiting (WGNPBW) who will meet in autumn 2007. The response will be provided within October.

ICES had responded.

2. Regarding redfish stocks in the North Atlantic (ICES areas I, II V, VI, X, XII and XIV and the NAFO regulatory area).

*a. NEAFC requests ICES to provide information on the stock structure of *Sebastes mentella* fished in pelagic and demersal fisheries on the continental shelf and slope in the entire area, i.e. relationship between the redfish in areas I, II, V, VI, X, XII and XIV and NAFO regulatory area;*

The information that has been gathered as far as ICES is aware does not warrant a re-evaluation of the stock structure. ICES has asked the relevant expert groups (the fish stock assessment groups and the Working Group on Stock Identity) to compile data and inform the advisory system when the data would allow a re-evaluation. Therefore, it is unlikely that ICES can provide new advice on this issue in 2007. (See response to 2f below)

Iceland questioned this conclusion. ICES thought that there was little hope that anything more would be achieved.

b. NEAFC will seek specific advice from ICES along the lines of that given recently regarding deep-sea species on the appropriateness of the introduction of potential management units for redfish in the Irminger Sea and adjacent waters.

ICES does not consider that there is any change of the basis for the advice. Perhaps, this question needs clarification on what NEAFC intends by the reference to advice for deep-sea species by ICES. I expect your comments on this issue.

Iceland wondered that if it was possible to advise on management areas for deep-sea species of which we know very little, why is it not for redfish, where we have a lot of information. The EU thought there was not much hope of progress as long as the stock structure had not been sorted out. ICES suggested that if this was seen as an inconsistency it should be spelled out clearly. ICES and Iceland drafted a new text.

c. In order to allow the Contracting Parties to formulate and implement a recovery and subsequent management plan for pelagic redfish in the Irminger Sea and adjacent waters, NEAFC will request ICES to recommend appropriate harvest control rules which take into account the need to avoid disproportionate exploitation of redfish in different geographical areas.

d. The objective of any future management plan shall be to establish such levels of catches and fishing effort which will result in the sustainable exploitation of pelagic redfish in the Irminger Sea and adjacent waters. This management plan should take due account of the management measures agreed for 2007 as set out in this recommendation.

These requests have been passed on to the North Western Working Group (NWWG) and ICES will respond in October 2007.

The EU representative pointed out that the answer seems to be for NEAFC and ICES to cooperate on the harvest control plan. He wondered how PECMAS should handle this, specifically the readjustment of the TAC and other provisions. The Chair suggested that, if there is something lacking, it should be dealt with at the Annual Meeting.

*e. NEAFC requests ICES to provide a detailed description of the newly developed pelagic fishery for *Sebastes mentella* in the Norwegian Sea as well as the traditional fishery on the slopes, especially with regard to temporal and spatial distribution;*

The Working Group on Arctic Fisheries (AFWG) will consider this item at their meeting and ICES will respond in June.

A response was received in June. Advice on Pelagic *S. mentella* will be included in the recurring advice.

*f. NEAFC is aware of genetic research ongoing aiming at clarifying the uncertainty regarding the origin of the redfish in the high seas within ICES Division II. The aim of the researchers is to finalize a draft report of their findings during the first half of 2007. Based on these results and other relevant information, ICES is requested to advise NEAFC on possible relationships of pelagic redfish in ICES Division II with *Sebastes mentella* in adjacent areas.*

NEAFC is kindly asked to provide ICES with further information on this ongoing research so that the information can be passed on to the Working Group on Stock Identity (SIMWG). This Group is tasked to compile relevant information, and especially new information, and in cooperation with redfish experts evaluate the available information and whether a re-evaluation of the stock structure is warranted. The Group works by correspondence in 2007. If the Group concludes that sufficient new data are available, ICES will re-evaluate the stock structure in 2008. ICES will keep NEAFC informed of the work of SIMWG.

The Chair proposed that the request should not be repeated as it has been merged with the request on stock structure.

3. Regarding vulnerable habitats and deep-water species.

a. Vulnerable deep-water habitats in the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

NEAFC requests ICES to continue to provide all available new information on distribution of vulnerable habitats in the NEAFC Convention Area and fisheries activities in and in the vicinity of such habitats.

Particularly relevant is information assisting NEAFC in evaluating appropriateness and effectiveness of the temporary closures of the Faraday, Hecate, Antialtair, Altair seamounts and the area on the Southern Reykjanes Ridge. NEAFC also requests advice on other possible actions to protect vulnerable habitats in the Regulatory area. NEAFC requests that such information should be available not later than November 2007.

The Working Group on Deep-water Ecology (WGDEC) will consider this question, and the advice will be released to NEAFC in June after joint consideration by ACFM and ACE.

Presented in June, but not fully responded. Request to be repeated.

b. Deep sea species.

NEAFC requests ICES to evaluate the use and quality of VMS data and records of catch and effort to be received from NEAFC in order to provide information on the spatial and temporal extent of current deep-water fisheries in the NE Atlantic. If data quality allows such analyses, these should be provided with particular emphasis on activity in the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

NEAFC reiterates its request that ICES develop suitable criteria for differentiating fisheries into possible management types (e.g. directed deep-water fisheries, by-catch fisheries etc.) and to apply these criteria to categorise individual fisheries in order to enable NEAFC to develop fishery-based management initiatives. Shortcomings in data quality that impede this exercise should appear in the evaluation under pt 1.

ICES concluded based on the analysis presented to NEAFC of the 2003-2005 VMS data that the usefulness of VMS data would be greatly improved by linking VMS information to logbook information providing gear and catches. ICES concluded that if the analysis should be taken further indeed such merging of data sets would be necessary. ICES offers that the Chairs of WGDEC and WGDEEP, Paul Marchal and Mark Tasker will visit NEAFC HQ during this spring and together with NEAFC determine what data are available and what data are required to provide a response in continuation of the advice given in 2006. ICES is aware of the confidentiality issues and will fully cooperate with NEAFC in respecting such concerns.

The NEAFC Secretariat informed that it had considered offering support in running queries to specifications by the scientists. Request to be repeated.

ICES is also asked to compile data on document PECMAS 2007/02/ed historical or present spawning/aggregation areas of blue ling in the NEAFC Convention area.

WGDEEP will deal with this issue during their meeting in April and the response will be provided in June 2007.

Responded in June, but we are still waiting for some project results in November. Therefore, it should be repeated.

c. Co-ordination of scientific deep sea surveys in the NEAFC Convention Area.

NEAFC asks ICES to consider co-ordination of existing deep-sea surveys. The evaluation may also include recommendations for the development of new surveys if it is considered to be appropriate.

WGDEEP will discuss general requirements for deepwater surveys, looking at existing surveys and consider how these meet the requirements. Also, WGDEEP may consider changes, need and opportunity for co-ordination. Depending on the results from WGDEEP, ICES may decide to set up a Planning Group for deep-sea surveys at this year's Annual Conference. ICES will report on the developments and outcomes from WGDEEP in June.

Responded in June, should not be repeated. ICES informed that there was ongoing discussion on how to go about this.

With respect to the proposal to include Pelagic *S. mentella* in the pelagic surveys in I and II, this will be raised in ACFM anyway.

In this context, ICES noted that the most important contribution from PECMAS was to set priorities with respect to what NEAFC wants and not to instruct ICES how to go about it. In connection with the request for advice, PECMAS should draw the attention of the NEAFC Commission to where information is lacking hampering answers from ICES to questions relevant to management in the NEAFC Area.

The Chair summed up that PECMAS has dealt with all the issues; the only items outstanding are 2 c and e which will be dealt with eventually at the Annual Meeting, as will the inclusion of Pelagic *Sebastes mentella* in the Northern regional survey.

The ICES observer and the Icelandic representative had prepared text to clarify point 2a in last year's request. In addition some background was given.

The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) suggested that the management plan for redfish in the Irminger Sea should be flagged to the Commission. The EU representative asked what would be gained because this only affects the advice for 2009. He was more concerned with timing of the advice for the main stocks. Before the meeting in November he would like to see clarification about timing. The ICES observer would inform the NEAFC Secretariat about the outcome of decisions of the Council on ICES's work plan and its implications for the timing of advice in 2008. With respect to redfish, he suggested that NEAFC made a proposal for a management plan together with ICES. The EU representative mentioned that in case a management plan needs to be developed, it becomes unclear which body within NEAFC will draft this plan in collaboration with ICES.

The Chair summed up that there will be a reply on timing from ICES before the Annual Meeting and a statement on how to proceed with the redfish management plans. The EU representative could accept this in general, but would like to coordinate with the member states.

The Norwegian representative suggested text to ensure that pelagic *S. mentella* in the Norwegian Sea was included in the text for recurring advice. The ICES observer volunteered to draft text to cover this. The draft was presented on the screen making it clearer that all fisheries are covered by the request. The text was slightly amended and agreed.

Actions arising: The request for advice will be finalised 12 November. All items were agreed upon except 2c and e.

6. Area Management

a) Experience from other parts of the world and other RFMOs

There is a lot of material available and the Secretariat will summarise some of the important developments. For the North East Atlantic OSPAR has produced some quite helpful overviews. The Secretary participated in a meeting of the OSPAR Working Group on Marine Protected Areas, Species and Habitats, MASH in February 2007. OSPAR has enquired whether there is a possibility for a meeting on a technical level, for example during the PECMAS meeting in October. This will be investigated further with all involved.

b) Marine Spatial Planning, MPAs

The report from a Nordic meeting in June will be available.

c) Objectives

The Chair introduced the issue presenting proposal for procedures, PECMAS 2007/02/15. It starts with the proposal from the WGFUT and specifies PECMAS' involvement.

He suggested the following procedure:

i) First Step

A Contracting Party submits a proposal for consideration.

ii) Second Step

To be reviewed by PECMAS a proposal must include:

- description of the issue/need for action
- objectives/rationale
- scientific knowledge
- definition of the area
- suggested measures and their possible impact on fisheries in the area

iii) Third Step

PECMAS reviews a proposal

- assesses the relevance of the proposal for NEAFC
- defines further the objective that should be reached
- if needed, gathers further knowledge, i.e. from:
 - existing ICES reports
 - asks ICES for further information and its opinion
 - other information/opinions
- if knowledge is insufficient to make a decision, it is possible to recommend temporary measures to be in place until knowledge is available (e.g. ICES answer to a request)

iv) Fourth Step

PECMAS a) rejects the proposal, or b) makes a recommendation for measures to the Commission.

The recommendation should include suggestions on:

- gear restrictions/regulations (examples presented in Annex I)
- area
- time frame (long term, seasonal or short term)

v) Annex 1

Possible measures:

Protect -

Juveniles (gear restrictions or closed areas where juveniles are known to occur)
spawning area
other fish related
corals
seamounts or other kind of vulnerable habitats
other “bottom” or habitat related

Regulate -

all fishing
all bottom fishing
all bottom trawl fishing
all pelagic fishing
all trawl fishing
all static gears
all long line fishing
all gill nets fishing

The Chair again explained the thinking behind the proposal and asked for comments on his draft for PECMAS procedures.

The Icelandic representative thought this was the way forward and could accept the framework set up. The EU representative thought the plan did follow logic with respect to controlling expanding or new fisheries. However, it did not cover situations where areas are closed and only opened again when more information is available, for example from exploratory fishing. Furthermore, this proposal should consider the UNGA resolution philosophy by which you cannot open a new fishery or expand it unless it can be shown that there is no harmful impact on the habitat. The Icelandic representative pointed out that the Party that makes a proposal for a measure is supposed to have done its homework. He did not see that the Chair’s proposed procedure would not accommodate the closing-opening sequence mentioned by the EU. The EU representative saw a need for guidance from the Commission with respect to a possible “NAFO” solution, where areas are closed and information is gathered by allowing controlled exploratory fishing. The Icelandic representative thought that, for the time being, the procedure proposed by the Chair would guide PECMAS on how to handle proposals for measures. The EU representative could go along with keeping the proposal as a general framework until the Commission sets further details.

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There was some discussion on how to handle different situations, particularly establishing protocols for monitoring closures, which were closed immediately on a precautionary basis (knowledge about a vulnerable area) pending exploration and research. It was suggested that PECMAS could make proposals for protocols for exploratory fishing in closed areas.

The ICES observer did not see great difficulty in being involved in advice, when a proposal was accompanied by all the relevant information.

It was agreed that the NEAFC Commission should be asked to instruct PECMAS as to how to proceed. Should there be a system for automatically closing, vulnerable areas and, if so, under which procedure? The Chair urged the Group to look at the procedures as they stand, before starting policy discussions on how to handle closures in the light of the UNGA resolution. The EU representative suggested further linkages with OSPAR, but could go along with the Chair's proposal.

PECMAS proposed to the Extraordinary Meeting of the NEAFC Commission in June that the Committee could send fast track requests for advice directly to ICES,² without waiting for a NEAFC Commission meeting.³ The ICES observer pointed out that this was not an organisational issue with problems in the bureaucracies on both sides. It was more a question of resources and data. ICES usually needs a couple of weeks to find out how soon they can respond.

The Chair summed up: We have to ask for guidance from the Commission on two issues:

1. What is the interpretation of the UN resolution and will that change the way closures are handled.
2. Are the proposed procedures overall acceptable as a basis for PECMAS.

<p>Actions arising: The Commission will be asked to give policy advice on the interpretation of UNCA resolution 61/105 paragraphs 83 and 84 and authorise the proposed procedures.</p>

d) Actions arising

There are no new specific proposals on new closures, but PECMAS has been asked to review:

- The vulnerable deep water habitats closed in 2004 on the Reykjanes Ridge, Hekate, Faraday, Altair and Antialtair seamounts, for which the measures expire at the end of 2007. See Annex I
- The advice from ICES in June suggesting changes in the closures on the Rockall Bank decided in 2006. See Annex II.

² Extraordinary Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission 13-14 June 2007, Volume I – Report

³ The Group drew the attention of the Commission to the fact that it will approach ICES directly when need arises using a fast track procedure if necessary.....

The President concluded that there was general support for the recommendations of PECMAS. **The recommendations were then adopted.**

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The Chair noted that ICES had advised and the Russian Federation has made a proposal for a recommendation, based on the advice from ICES in June. The NAFO measures had also been circulated. The EU representative wanted to coordinate on these two issues. There was a break to allow coordination 10-10:30 am. Meeting started again 10:25.

The Chair invited the ICES observer to present their advice with respect to these two issues. The ICES observer presented the advice for all specific requests in 2006. Some of the issues had been touched upon yesterday.

The representative of the Russian Federation introduced document PECMAS 2007/02/14, a proposal for changes in closures in the NEAFC Regulatory Area in order to protect deep water corals. The representative of the Russian Federation gave the background for this proposal, referred to the discussions at AM2006, in PECMAS in February 2007 and the advice given by ICES in June. It includes an addition at the Hatton Bank and adjustments of boundaries in existing closures on the Rockall Bank. The EU representative thanked the representative of the Russian Federation and informed that they had to take this proposal back and discuss it. He had a problem with an area on the North-western part of the Rockall Bank.

The representative of the Russian Federation asked how to proceed. The Chair pointed out that we are still trying to develop procedures. The EU representative thought that it was acceptable to send proposals agreed in PECMAS, but with respect to this particular proposal he needed more time. It was agreed that PECMAS could look at this again on 12 November at the Annual Meeting to see if it can agree on this as a PECMAS proposal. The EU representative volunteered to circulate concerns to the PECMAS membership in advance of the Annual Meeting.

The Chair then asked for comments on the situation vis-à-vis the 2005-2007 closures. He noted that ICES did not have any new information on the effect of these. Should PECMAS propose a prolongation or just state that there was new information?

The Icelandic representative felt PECMAS cannot make any proposal because there is no new information. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agreed and stressed the need for guidelines to handle the proposals. The representative of the Russian Federation agreed.

It was agreed to report to the Commission that there is no new information, so PECMAS cannot evaluate the effect of the 5 areas. PECMAS cannot be involved in policy decisions. The Chair informed that he would circulate a draft of his presentation to AM2007 in advance of the meeting.

The Icelandic representative noted that these areas currently have no fishery and we will not get any information until some takes place. The EU representative agreed but then there has to be a protocol to regulate exploratory fishery.

<p>Actions arising: The Chair will report to the Commission that there is no new scientific advice for the 2005 -2007 closures. A final version of a recommendation for the closures on Hatton and Rockall Bank will be considered by PECCOE 12 November.</p>
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7. Other possible tasks for PECMAS

There were no proposals. This agenda item should not be included in future agendas.

8. Report of the meeting

The Summary Records will be circulated after the meeting and form the basis of the report from the meeting.

9. Future meetings

Early February and 29 October 2008 will be suggested to the Commission.

10. Any other business

There was none.

11. Actions arising

Detailed under the individual agenda items

12. Closure of the meeting

The Chair closed the meeting at 1 pm on 19 October, thanked the Committee and wished everybody a safe journey home.