

Notes on CLG Bite-size meeting. Tuesday 19 May 2020. The Power of Collaboration.

Global Tuna Alliance.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_May2020_GTA.pdf

The GTA is an independent group of retailers and supply-chain companies, working to ensure that tuna ultimately meets the highest standards of environmental performance and social responsibility. The GTA was established in response to Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) not managing tuna fisheries properly; impacting supply chain commitments. **Key points:**

- The GTA is currently implementing the delivery of the World Economic Forum Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration.
- Collaboration is key to our work
- Key collaborative focus is RFMO engagement to secure harvest strategies for tuna fisheries.
- We welcome new partners.

Discussion

Q. What role, if any, does the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) have in this? Do lessons need to be learned from lack of scrutiny and independent review for it to have credibility?

A. At the moment the focus has been on the Declaration but going forward we would like to see the SSC involved. We would like to produce dashboards for each of the partners to visibly demonstrate progression, as well as link to the Ocean Disclosure Project.

Q. There are signatures to the Tuna Traceability Declaration that don't want to publicly disclose source fisheries. Does GTA ask for public disclosure from members?

A. This has been briefly mentioned and is certainly an ambition, but not a requirement at the moment but a future proposal. This would tie in with the dashboard.

Links for further information

- Global Tuna Alliance <https://www.globaltunaalliance.com/>

North Sea cod fisheries management - adapting to change.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_May2020_NorthSeaCod.pdf

The centre of the cod catch is shifting northward at a rate of 12 nautical miles (13.8 miles) per year – over 190km since the introduction of the first cod recovery plan in 2004. Attempting to manage the stock back to a level (Bpa - 150,000t) last achieved in 1982. **Key points:**

- The NS cod stock is undergoing dramatic change – its shift northward is significant.
- Current age-old assessment isn't perhaps delivering the best science – same IBTS survey as in the 80s.
- Operating in a mixed fishery is challenging at the best of times – even more difficult when stock biomass is moving in different directions.
- Catching sector industry (North Sea Advisory Council and the cross-industry cod group) are working toward more structured information sharing to avoid known hotspots. The North Sea fishing industries (EU and Norwegian fleets) recognise the scale of the challenge involved in maintaining economically viable fleets, whilst at the same time introducing successful remedial measures. They recognise the North Sea cod difficulties will not be solved in a single year but there is a need to reflect on important factors which have a bearing on the successful implementation of a rebuilding plan.
- A positive outcome from Brexit would help relieve some of the pressure issues.
- Next steps include real-time reporting for data sharing to avoid unwanted catches of cod, whiting (and spurdog). To be trialled for one year, until the end of 2020. The intention is to generate alerts, improve consistency in reporting, add more boats and begin sharing alert maps.

Discussion

Q. A reported 190km shift northward in the centre of the cod catch raises alarm bells. There seems to have been a parallel shift with the mackerel stock. Is this a similar problem? Are we seeing the same kind of issue? And if so can we establish a dialogue with ICES to get them to look at these spatial issues?

A. An ICES Benchmark Working Group will meet this year. It is understandable why there is so much industry angst as there seems to be some sort of weakness in the modelling. Industry does not want to be seen to be continually questioning the science but we want to ensure we can work together to prompt sensible review of the stock to explain why some stocks are increasing but cod is dipping. A number of Member States choose to fish in Scottish waters (they travel to fish) whilst UK vessels have no other option and have to fish in that area. So there is an added complexity for UK industry.

Links for further information

- Real-time reporting. Demo version of the app is at www.batmap.co.uk/rtr
- Seafish North Sea cod briefing note. <https://www.seafish.org/article/north-sea-cod-stock-update>

North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA)

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_May2020_NAPA.pdf

The Group was created as a sector wide, multi stakeholder initiative of partners to build a shared, global and non-competitive solution to sustainability issues in the North East Atlantic Pelagic fisheries complex. The Group sets out to achieve an agreement on total allowable catches for North East Atlantic Pelagic fisheries (mackerel, herring, blue whiting) in line with scientific advice, and for a long term science based management agreement. **Key points:**

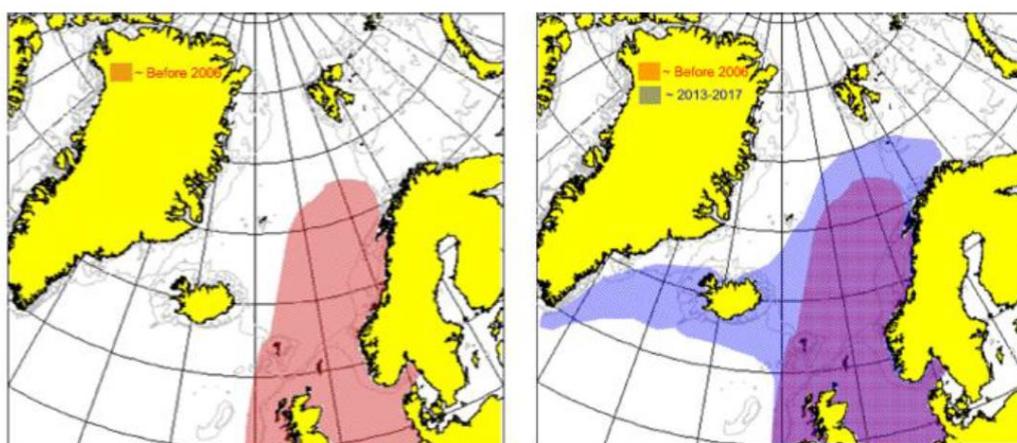
- Distribution changes have caused new challenges in allocation sharing.
- For each stock the issue is political, rather than biomass based (at least at present).
- No single state can close the MSC conditions set in the MSC certification. Transboundary cooperation and agreement is a pre-condition for a solution.
- Certifications for mackerel can be restored, and maintained for herring and blue whiting, if coastal states can agree on catch shares under the ICES advice. However, the NEAFC Working Group on Allocation Criteria was disbanded in 2019.

Discussion

Q. Can you explain a bit more about mackerel pattern you mentioned?

A. There has been a significant change in mackerel feeding grounds (pre-2006 vs 2013-2016).

Mackerel Feeding Grounds (pre-2006 vs 2013-16)



Q. Isn't it time to stop supporting bad behaviour (setting unilateral catch) and for retailers to commit to sell mackerel that is UK caught/landed?

A. The vast majority of the mackerel being supplied into UK market for UK retailers will be the MINSAs fishery (the fishery that has lost its MSC certification). In terms of unilateral market action NAPA has not taken this forward as an option mainly due to anti-trust/collusion issues have to be closely adhered to. Care needs to be taken. This is really an individual question for individual retailers not for a collaborative response.

Q. This is a shared stock so all countries are responsible and should reach an agreement on allocation between them. NAPA has significant challenges. Are there other instances where market facing businesses have tried to exert pressure on fisheries management decision makers? And, with what success?

A. Only time will tell but we have to at least try. This is about bringing pressure to bear on Coastal States decision makers in a coordinated manner. Previously efforts by the supply chain have been to work with the producers themselves. This needs to be a collaborative effort.

- With a shared stock all contracting parties have to receive agreement and NAPA could have a role to play here. These are moving stocks and ICES can't pinpoint exactly why. Fisheries management, which has always relied on stability, then becomes more difficult. The Coastal States have to agree, there is no unilateral solution. Reference to catching on the High Seas is more of a distraction – the stocks are managed as a whole – it is your allocation so it is your decision as to where you catch it. The issue is more about the amount allocated to each individual country.

Q. Is NAPA going to engage with the Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group - includes entire Scottish pelagic fleet and primary processors and some secondary processors? Is part of the NAPA's strategy to work on a policy objective to reduce the current unsustainable levels of fishing in International waters?

A. This is a significant move to set up an advocacy group that is trying to drive change at a political level. The NAPA membership is upper supply chain based. One of the first steps will be to set up a roundtable with the catching sector but no formal agreement is envisaged.

Q. This concerns the future of MSC certification in relation to Brexit and the possible lack of agreement on stocks shared between the EU and the UK & others. The lack of agreement on coastal state allocations is most visible in relation to mackerel; NEAFC have worked on this for some years, but without success.

A. These are shared stocks and allocations need to be agreed to ensure sustainable management levels. There are 28 certified fisheries in the North East Atlantic and many are functioning very well. This comes down to mechanisms. The cod stock illustration today shows a simpler model for agreed management. But with a large single stock, which is highly migratory, with many parties involved, it becomes more complicated.

Links for further information

- Environmental Defense Fund paper on governance issues including quota allocations in NE Atlantic available here: <https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/documents/building-resilience-fisheries-governance.pdf>
- Book on Game Theory and Fisheries Management. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-030-40112-2>
- Seafish mackerel briefing note. December 2019. https://seafish.org/media/Northeast_Atlantic_mackerel_note_Dec19_FINAL.pdf