



Opinion 84: Long-term management of anchovies in the Bay of Biscay

Whereas:

- SWW RAC's opinion 69 of November 2012 on assessment methodology for anchovies in the Bay of Biscay,
- The results of STECF working groups 13-24 and 14-05, and the reports of STECF plenary sessions of November 2013 and March 2014,
- The importance of reducing to a minimum the risks of collapse of the anchovy biomass in the Bay of Biscay, by adopting an exploitation rule whose risk probability is less than 5%,
- The importance of implementing an exploitation rule which will stabilise the fishing possibilities, taking account of the very high variability of the anchovy biomass in the Bay of Biscay from year to year,
- The importance of long-term management,
- The conclusions of the meeting of the Pelagic Species working group of 24 April 2014,

The members of SWW RAC recommend:

- It would be advisable to change the management period for anchovies in the Bay of Biscay, and go back to management based on the civil year, starting on 1st January 2015.
- The fishing possibilities for 2015 and the following years should be set using the G4 exploitation rule, as defined in the STECF report of March 2014. The fishery would therefore remain closed when the biomass is estimated at lower than 24,000 tonnes. Above this level, and up to 63,000 tonnes, the fishing possibilities should be set by applying an exploitation rate of 0.45. When the biomass is estimated at a level higher than or equal to 64,000 tonnes, the fishing possibilities are set at 25,000 tonnes.
- It is important to note that according to STECF, the proposed management rule makes it possible to limit the risk of the biomass of the stock falling below the biomass limit, and ensure greater TAC stability, even if the average level of catches is reduced.
- A management plan should be formally adopted for this stock as quickly as possible. It should be mainly composed of the exploitation rules defined in the previous paragraph, and of measures linked to the new obligation to land all catches, particularly the implementation of the provisions of article 15(4).
- In July 2014, the fishing possibilities should be adopted according to the scientific and regulatory procedure normally used since the reopening of this fishery, this being a TAC level corresponding to the period from 1st July 2014 to 30 June 2015. This regulation adopted should then be abolished in December 2014, and it would be appropriate for the anchovy fishing possibilities for 2015 and the following years to be once again included in the Tac and Quotas regulation, and of course set according to the new exploitation rule adopted.