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CC SUD
Aurelio Bilbao Barandica
6, rue Alphonse Rio
56100 Lorient
France

Subject: Fishing opportunities for 2015 for Bay of Biscay sole

Your ref: Opinion 93 of the SWW
AC

Dear Mr Bilbao,

Thank you for the SWW AC's opinion on 2015 fishing opportunities for Bay of Biscay sole and the long term management of this stock. We have recently had the opportunity of discussing methods for the management of Bay of Biscay sole stocks and I wanted to congratulate the SWW AC again for its very positive contribution to the development of a management framework for this stock.


The Commission has drawn on the long term management framework proposed by the SWW AC, and evaluated by the ICES, to determine its TAC proposal both for 2014 and 2015. The Council of Ministers held last December adopted a TAC of 3,800 tonnes for 2015 in compliance with the management framework proposed by the SWW AC. According to the ICES, a TAC set at 3,800 will enable sole to be fished at rate that would in all probability be in line with the MSY in 2017. This approach appears acceptable to us given:

- i. the socio-economic importance of the Bay of Biscay sole fishery;
- ii. the socio-economic consequences of different TAC levels for 2015 assessed by using the IAM bio-economic model;
- iii. the fact that, according to the ICES opinion of June 2014, a TAC equivalent to 3,800 tonnes will allow the sole stock biomass to increase by 6%, which is significantly higher than the precautionary biomass of 13,000 tonnes.

I would like to note that the safety net mechanism, which provides for a reduction of the TAC if there's an increase in fishing mortality for two consecutive years, could be applied as of the setting of fishing opportunities for 2016. In particular, (i) in the event that the spawning biomass is estimated as being higher than the precautionary biomass (13,000 tonnes), but the fishing mortality levels have increased over the course of the last two years (here meaning in the course of 2013 and 2014), the TAC for 2016 shall be reduced by 10% on 2015; (ii) in the event that the spawning biomass is estimated as being lower than 13,000 tonnes, other stricter measures shall be applied.

I would like to thank you for this constructive contribution. If you have any additional questions I invite you to contact Mrs Evangelia Georgitsi, the coordinator of the Regional Advisory Councils (evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,



Lowri EVANS

CC. J. Verborghe, R. Ataide, E. Bianchi, E. Georgitsi (DG MARE)