

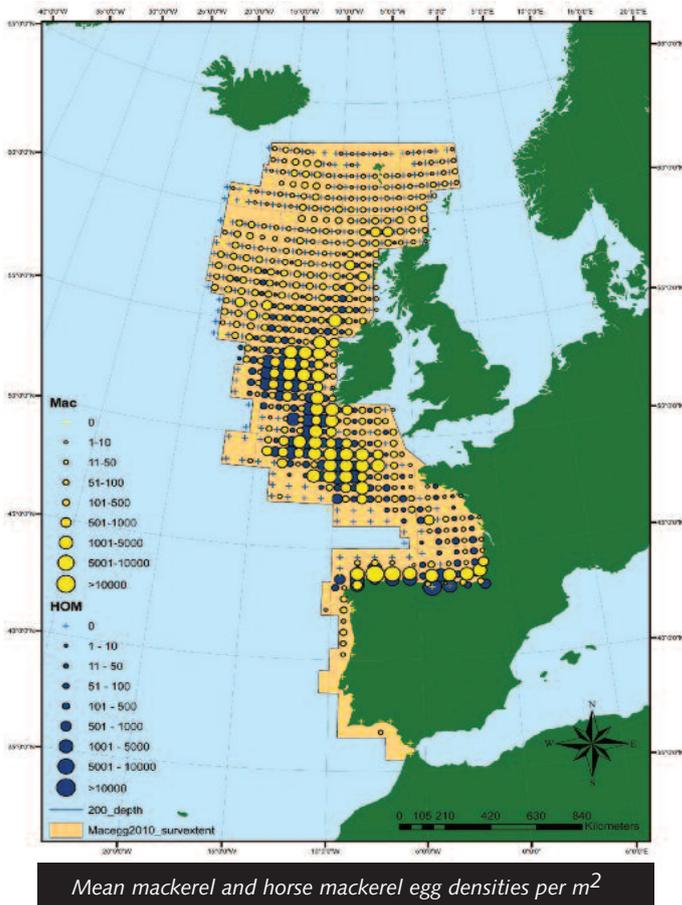


# news



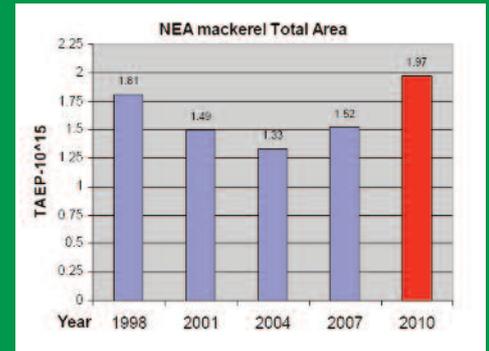
## Mackerel Egg Survey Confirms Large Stock Size

In the first half of this year, the international mackerel and horse mackerel egg survey was carried out along the European shelf edge. This ICES co-ordinated survey is conducted every three years (since 1977) and provides the necessary data on egg abundance and fish fecundity to determine the spawning stock biomass for NEA mackerel and egg production for western horse mackerel.



Institute finished the programme off the northwest of Ireland at the end of July.

The survey is adaptive in nature and survey vessels continue their east-west sampling transects until no eggs are encountered in order to define the boundaries of the spawning area. This year, an unprecedented westwards extension of mackerel spawning was experienced with vessels regularly encountering newly spawned mackerel eggs as far west as 20W. In addition, spawning occurred unusually early. Normally peak spawning happens around May or June, but in 2010 some 66 per cent of egg production occurred from mid-February to the end of April. Additional survey effort, contributed to by Iceland and the Faeroes, focused on the northern peripheries of the traditional survey area to determine whether there was any significant spawning extending into new northern areas.



Total Annual Mackerel Egg Production estimates, 1998 – 2010.

A small amount of spawning of the order of 1 per cent of the total takes place in Icelandic and Faroese waters.

Horse mackerel eggs were found early in the year in the Bay of Biscay and the Cantabrian Sea. They started moving up the shelf edge and onto the Porcupine bank in April. There was a large drop in numbers of horse mackerel eggs found in May but numbers increased again at the shelf edge and the Porcupine Bank in June and July. The 2010 egg production showed a 30 per cent decrease on 2007 numbers. However, the figure for 2007 was a 60 per cent increase on 2004 numbers, and 78 per cent on 2001.

It has to be noted that the current figures are preliminary. Finalised egg results and fecundity analysis will be produced by the ICES working group for the mackerel and horse mackerel egg surveys, which will meet in April 2011. This working group will calculate total seasonal Stage 1 egg production estimates for mackerel and horse mackerel, and use finalised fecundity data to provide SSB estimates for mackerel. It will also look at the effectiveness of the 2010 survey in relation to previous surveys.



Mackerel Eggs in the sample

Mackerel and horse mackerel spawn mainly along the shelf edge from Portugal to the north of Scotland. In order to obtain a reliable estimate of the quantity of eggs spawned and the fecundity of the fish, the spawning area requires an extensive survey coverage in both geographical spread and time. In 2010, ten research institutes from nine countries -- Scotland, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and for the first time Iceland and the Faeroes -- took part in the programme to cover the spawning area between Portugal and the west of Scotland during six spawning periods from January to July. Overall, sixteen surveys, totalling 334 days of ship time, were carried out. The surveys started in early February off the coast of Portugal, and the Marine

Provisional egg numbers were presented at the ICES Working Group which carries out the stock assessments for mackerel and horse mackerel stocks, for their assessment meeting at the end of August. These figures indicated that there was a 23 per cent increase in total annual NEA mackerel egg production in 2010 compared to 2007. This is the highest annual production since 1998. This gives a preliminary estimate of spawning stock biomass in 2010 of:

- 3,226 million tonnes for western component
- 0,907 million tonnes for southern component
- 4,133 million tonnes for western and southern components combined.

### UPDATE: THE CRUSTACEAN SECTOR

When it comes to seafood products, today's consumer is likely to be concerned about issues of sustainability and provenance, and failure to satisfy those concerns is becoming a more serious problem for those in the seafood industry.

The development of the eco-label has gone a long way to restoring trust among the public regarding the ethical credentials of seafood – we are all familiar with the MSC logo which has world-wide recognition. We are rapidly approaching a point where seafood which is not certified in this manner will be un-saleable and pressure is mounting for species such as crab and lobster to be included in the provenance process.

In response to these pressures, Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has expanded its Quality Seafood Programme (QSP) by developing a specific Brown Crab Seafood Standard which will ensure that QSP-labelled Brown Crab comes from, and can be traced back to, a fishery which is operated in an environmentally responsible fashion by legally operated vessels working to a very high standard of catch, grading and handling. The parameters of the Crab Standard are now completed and it is reassuring to know that this Standard will be fully recognised in the international marketplace. Trials are currently being carried out on a pilot basis to complete fine-tuning of the Standard, but it is envisaged that a substantial number of Irish crabbers will supply the lucrative continental Christmas markets with fully-certified QSP Brown Crab.

### BSA Crab Closure

Once again we have reached that time of year – good quality Brown Crab in abundance, strong demand from local processing plants, suitable weather conditions for fishing (for the most part) – when the fishing of Brown Crab and Spider Crab in the Biologically Sensitive Area is closed. Yet again, the Days at Sea for vessels >10metres are used up. Yet again, fishermen, processors, those employed in all the aspects of the shore-based services dependant on this fishery over a substantial segment of the south and west coasts are left wondering when this crazy system will be addressed. Not this year it would appear.

The European Commission has circulated a non-paper on “Spatially-structured Management of Nephrops in Zone VII”. It sets out two potential options for management based on inputs (effort control) and out-take (TACs) by individual Functional Unit (FU). The scientific advice has advocated FU management for many years because the Nephrops populations and fisheries on different mud patches have different productivities and dynamics and should, where possible, be managed separately.

According to the Commission, the proposal is motivated by the following:

- some member states have asked for FU management to address requirements laid down in MSC or other certification bodies;
- the scientific advice is to manage by FU, and the Commission is obliged to take account of this advice;
- to achieve MSY in individual Nephrops stocks by 2015, some form of finer scale management will be required; and
- some Nephrops stocks such as the Porcupine Bank and Farn Deep appear to have been over-exploited and are now at very low levels.

In the non-paper the effort management option appears to be ruled out by the Commission in the short-term at least. There

are many issues surrounding management by FU-specific TACs although the Commission sees this option as “implementable in the near future” (i.e. 2011). Of particular concern is the fact that Ireland and the UK have close to 100 per cent uptake of VII Nephrops quotas in the most recent years. French uptake has been less than 50 per cent and Spanish uptake has been less than 30 per cent. Therefore any splitting out of the overall TAC would either have to take account of the uptake disparity or adjust relative stability keys for area VII as a whole. The non-paper has summarised quota share by country and area for the last decade (1999-2008), but the choice of reference period could be very important as fishing patterns have changed and landings are thought to be more accurate with the implementation of sales notes in recent years.

Of critical national concern with this proposal is the internal management of several FU quotas. Obviously there will be a need to maintain flexibility of access to Nephrops fisheries. Thus allowing fishermen to maximise catch and economic returns. Administratively this could be extremely complex and difficult to manage. There will be on-going debate at EU level about the practicalities and necessity of finer scale management of Nephrops stocks between now and the December Council.

## BIM's Strategy to Deliver on the Potential of Irish Seafood

Minister of State, Sean Connick, formally launched BIM's new strategy for 2010-2012 on July 23, at the offices of D.A.F.F. in Clonakilty, Co. Cork. The strategy sets out specific targets for job creation, value increases, training places, aquaculture output, differentiation of Irish seafood, and increased membership of the Seafood Circle.

It is the first time that BIM has published a strategy with measurable targets and actions. It aims to assist the seafood industry to deal with current challenges (both cyclical and structural) and to capitalise on opportunities for growth across the sector.

A key growth area identified is the increasing demand for seafood arising from global population growth and the importance of food security in the longer term. The supply of seafood within the European Union is acute; of the demand for 12 million tonnes, valued at €60 billion, close to 65 per cent is sourced from third countries. However, over time as many of these supplying countries become wealthier, they will consume more of what they produce and this will reduce the

availability of seafood from outside Europe. This will present an opportunity for Irish seafood producers, particularly those who succeed in differentiating their products on the market and by adding value through innovation.

To improve service delivery, BIM has established new units to deal specifically with Economics, Strategic Planning, Health and Safety, Processing Services and Procurement. BIM's activities are now re-arranged around four specific themes: Environment and Sustainability; Skills Development; Business Development and Innovation; and Knowledge and Technology Transfer. The Strategy sets out 70 Actions, under the four themes and progress will be measured against specific key performance indicators. In addition, new Regional Development Officers have been appointed.

Where appropriate, projects and schemes for the sector's development will be provided in the context of the Measures set out in the Irish Seafood National Programme 2007-2013 and in the EU co-funded Programme.

# Commission To Adopt Implementing Control Rules In Early December

The new control regulation (Council Regulation 1224/2009) came into force on January 1, 2010. The Commission has now published 255 pages of draft implementing rules as required under several articles in the control document. The FIF met with Commission control officials on September 23 to express concerns with a number of the implementing rules and to seek clarification on others. Outlined below are three key issues that will affect the fishing industry.

## 1. Engine Power Certification

The draft implementing rules do not reflect the Commission's statement on the certification of engine power given at the time the control regulation was agreed at the Fisheries Council in Luxemburg in October 2009. This declaration makes it very clear that the implementing rules will not apply to existing engines. It specifically states:

"...such rules will only be applicable to such engines that are renewed, replaced or technically modified after the entry into force of these detailed rules. Such detailed rules will not affect the status of engines installed in a fishing vessel in cases of changes of ownership provided that the engine is not renewed, replaced or technically modified in conjunction with that transfer of ownership or thereafter."

At the meeting with Commission officials, the FIF reiterated the difficulties with the certification of engine power as it stands in the draft implementing rules and insisted that the declaration be honoured.

## 2. Weighing of All Fishery Products

The new control regulation stipulates that all fishery products are weighed on systems approved by the competent authorities unless an exemption is acquired by adopting a sampling plan approved by the Commission and based on the methodology adopted by the Commission. The weighing already applies for pelagic species and will apply to all other fishery

products from January 1, 2011. The draft implementing rules made it virtually impossible to obtain an exemption as provided for in the control regulation thus requiring that all fishery products are weighted at the place of landing. This is totally unworkable particularly from a quality and time aspect. A simplified and practical sampling methodology is required in the implementing rules, otherwise the EU demersal and shellfish fisheries will not be operable.

## 3. Penalty Point System

A new penalty point system is included in the control regulation. This point system is in addition to any criminal sanctions which may be imposed for serious infringements. The table below outlines the points set out in the draft implementing rules to be assigned to vessels for a range of serious infringement.

Penalty points are assigned to the licence holder of the vessel for infringements however if the vessel is sold, the points will transfer to the new holder of the licence. If a vessel accumulates 12 points or more there will be an automatic suspension of the fishing licence for a period of at least two months.

For each point above twelve, the period of suspension shall be extended by five calendar days. The number of additional days for each point above twelve shall be 10, 15 or 20 in the case of a second, third or fourth suspension respectively.

The accumulation for the fifth time of twelve points or more by the holder of a fishing licence shall trigger automatically the permanent withdrawal of the fishing licence. The vessel cannot be used ever again as a fishing vessel, nor can the owner sell the capacity. A penalty point system will also apply to the skipper of the vessel. The Member State is responsible for adopting this system.

### SERIOUS INFRINGEMENT

### POINTS

Not fulfilling of obligations to record and report catch or catch-related data	2-4
Non transmission of a landing declaration or sales note when the landing of the catch has taken place in a third country	2-4
Failure to land any species subject to a quota caught during a fishing operation unless this would be contrary to obligations provided for in the rules of the CFP in fisheries or fishing zones where such rules apply	2-4
Fishing for a stock for which fishing is prohibited	4-5
Use of prohibited or non-compliant gear	4-5
Falsification or concealing of markings, identity or registration	4-5
Concealing, tampering or disposal of evidence	4-5
Taking on board, transshipping or landing of undersized fish in contravention of the legislation in force	4-5
Fishing activities inconsistent or in contravention of conservation and management measures of a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation	4-5
Fishing without a valid licence, authorisation or permit	6-7
Fishing in a closed area or during a closed season	6-7
Fishing for a stock under moratorium	6-7
Obstruction of work officials or observers exercising their duties	6-7
Transshipping to, participating in joint fishing operations with, support or re-supply of fishing vessels engaged in IUU fishing	6-7
Use of a fishing vessel with no nationality	6-7
Manipulation of an engine with the aim of increasing its power beyond the maximum continuous engine power according to the engine certificate	6-7

## The Ecosystem Approach to Fishing in Ireland -

### The Beaufort Research Project

The Beaufort Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) project is an Irish initiative to develop the science and management approaches to carry out sustainable commercial fishing that minimises impacts on the ecosystem. The project is funded by the Irish Government through the Sea Change Strategy and the Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation (2006-2013), within the NDP. It will run from 2009-2016, and is a collaboration between the Marine Institute, the University of Cork, and Queens University Belfast. The Principal Investigator on the project is Dr. Dave Reid, based at the Marine Institute

Traditionally, fisheries management has focused on sustainable fishing for individual commercial stocks. The EAFM expands on this to encompass other parts of the ecosystem linked to fishing. Simply, the EAFM is about managing fisheries to minimise, or ideally remove, adverse impacts on the marine ecosystem. The assumption is that a healthy ecosystem is more productive, just as healthy stocks are more productive. At the same time, we are able to address the growing public concerns about the marine environment. None of this can ever be achieved without the co-operation of the industry itself, and the project is eager to collaborate with industry representatives and individual fishermen in this work.

A series of important ecosystem areas have been identified, ranging from very large e.g. the Celtic Sea or the western edge pelagic fishery area, to small local fisheries e.g. Galway Bay shrimp or Dundalk cockles. For each of these in turn, the major pressures on the ecosystem, not just fisheries, will be identified. Risk Assessment methodology will be used to identify the key issues by area, and whether there are ways to manage fisheries better to reduce these risks and impacts. This is not a job for scientists alone, the aim would be to work with the key players in each area, most importantly those who make their living fishing in these areas, and want to continue doing so.

An important part of the EAFM is reducing bycatch and discards for targeted fish and other animals, particularly protected and vulnerable species, such as seabirds and mammals. This will include the usual methods e.g. mesh size changes or closed areas. However, fishermen know best how to avoid unwanted catch. The project will draw on that knowledge to develop more imaginative approaches that reduce the economic impact on the fishermen AND minimise the bycatch. Again, this has to be a co-operative effort between scientists, e.g. gear technologists to target scientific work on ideas from working fishermen. Seabirds and mammals are also competitors with fisheries, and this works in both directions, with both potentially drawing on the same limited resource. So another part of the project aims to understand this interaction; does fishing affect these species, directly or indirectly, and

# Editorial

by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



The ICES scientific advice for next year for the widely distributed stocks was issued on the October 1, 2010. The main stocks of interest to Ireland are mackerel, horse mackerel, blue whiting and atlanto Scandia herring. The advice for mackerel is very positive with the egg survey (see article page one) showing a large increase in the stock size to an estimated 4.1 million tonnes. ICES is advising a TAC for next year based on the management plan in the range 592,000-646,000 tonnes. This is a 13 per cent increase compared to 2010. This is very positive news; however the advice also clearly shows the catches for 2010 at a staggering level of 930,000 tonnes. This is 63 per cent above the scientific advice for this year. The irresponsible and reckless behaviour of Iceland and the Faroes, and to a lesser degree Russia, in setting autonomous mackerel quotas respectively of 130,000, 85,000 and 45,000 tonnes, plus Spanish landings of 84,000 tonnes in excess of their quota, are the main reasons for this massive overshoot of the scientific advice. This unjustified and irresponsible behaviour has to be stopped otherwise it is only a matter of time before the mackerel stock will collapse. The EU as the major stakeholder has to take decisive action to stop this now. I welcome



Commissioner Damanaki's and our own Ministers' (Connick and Smith) very strong statements over the last couple of months. However what is required now is action and not words. This issue is of critical importance to the Irish pelagic industry and we will continue to pursue vigorously every avenue to ensure that we have a sustainable mackerel fishery for the future.

The ICES 2011 advice for blue whiting following the agreed management plan is a TAC of 40,100 tonnes. This is down from 540,000 tonnes in 2010, a massive 74 per cent reduction. This advice has to be very suspect not withstanding in my view that the blue whiting stock is declining from a period of high productivity. The scientific advice over the last ten years has been very inconsistent with huge fluctuations both up and down on a yearly basis. It is hoped that when the Coastal States discuss it at their upcoming meeting in London on October 18-19, that they set a reasonable TAC for 2011, knowing the very

volatile nature of the scientific advice. In addition it is obvious that the scientific assessment of this stock requires a total review, as the present assessment is not fit for purpose. I expect the Pelagic RAC will pursue this next year.

The advice for western horse mackerel for 2011 is the same as this year. A 33 per cent reduction is advised for Atlanto Scandia herring if the management plan is followed. However a lower reduction of 25 per cent is advised if the maximum sustainable yield approach is adopted.

The Commission has indicated it intends to have implementing rules relating to the control document agreed by early December (see article page three). Adopting these rules within this timeframe is not realistic, as some of the existing provisions in the draft are totally unworkable, such as the weighting, sampling methodology, power and penalties point system. The Commission must engage in meaningful discussion and dialogue with the stakeholders, otherwise we will end up with complex, unworkable implementing rules. It will cause chaos in the fishing industry to no avail.

The Commission has recently indicated that it is considering a closure of all fisheries in Area VIa and in the Irish Sea. Its reason for proposing this drastic measure is that the existing cod measures are not delivering on cod recovery. This is obviously totally unacceptable from an industry prospective and will require action by all concerned to put forward an alternative approach that allows our lucrative nephrops and demersal fisheries to continue.

## Important Dates October - December 2010

October 1	EAPO AGM	Göteborg, Sweden
October 8	Working Group 11 – Long Distance RAC	Brussels
October 11	Pelagic RAC Working Groups 1 & 11	London
October 11	ACFA (Working Group 1) & RACs - Commission's TAC & Quota Proposals 2011	Brussels
October 12-14	Mackerel Coastal States	London
October 15	Workshop on Western Waters Regime	Brussels
October 16	'Marbh Chrios' (Dead Zone) Artistic Impression	Killybegs Mooney Boats
October 18-19	Blue Whiting Coastal States	London
October 19	Whitefish Quota Management Meeting	Dublin
October 19	Cod Effort Strategy Group	Dublin
October 21-22	Atlanto Scandia Herring Coastal States	London
October 25-26	Fisheries Council	Luxemburg
October 27-29	Mackerel Coastal States	To Be Decided
October 27	NWWRAC AGM & Executive Committee	Dublin
October 28	NWWRAC Workshop Focus Group	Dublin
November 2	EAPO Working Group Markets Regulation	Brussels
November 8-12	NEAFC AGM	London
November 9-10	Belgium Presidency Symposium "Improved Fisheries & Science Partnerships as Policy Drivers"	Ostende, Belgium
November 16	CFP Review Seminar	Brussels
November 15-19	EU/Norway 1st Round Bilateral Negotiations	Brussels
November 22	SFPA Consultative Committee	Dublin
November 29-30	Fisheries Council	Brussels
December 8	ACFA Bureau	Brussels
December 8	EAPO Extended Bureau	Brussels
December 9	ACFA Plenary	Brussels
December 9-10	EU/Faroes Bilateral	Brussels
December 13-14	Fisheries Council	Brussels

Continued from page 3.

## The Ecosystem Approach to Fishing in Ireland -

vice versa; is that interaction positive or negative; and can we mitigate any impacts on these animals and on the fishery.

Ecosystem modelling is seen as a key component in developing an EAFM. It is not possible to survey and monitor everything, so these models can examine options in a virtual world. Essentially these models depend on what eats what, and how much, and on growth and reproduction. Outputs from these models can be compared to things we know have happened in the real world, to ensure that they do reflect reality reasonably accurately. The models can then explore likely results of various management measures. Again, the test ideas should come from fishermen as well as scientists.

Any operational EAFM has to work with the national and international management rules, so the project includes a research component looking at governance in Irish fisheries, and abroad. As with the rest of the project this depends on working with the industry to explore new approaches including co-management, or some sort of rights-based management. The key is to draw on international experience to craft management solutions for regional and local fisheries in Ireland.