

main news Deepwater Species



black scabbard

At the end of last year the Commission brought forward a proposal to set TACs and quotas for nine deep-water species namely, black scabbardfish, argentinines, orange roughy, tusk, alfonosinos, blue ling, ling, roundnose grenadier and red seabream. The French, as holders of the EC Presidency at the time, exerted considerable pressure to get agreement on the proposal at the December Fisheries Council. The Fisheries Council did not accept the proposal and instead issued a joint Council and Commission statement concerning deep-water species. At that time the KFO made it very clear to Minister Frank Fahey that the proposals were totally unacceptable and that TAC and quota were not the right way forward in trying to ensure the sustainability of these stocks.

Recently the Commission have started a discussion process with the member states on the management of deep-sea fisheries resources. In light of these discussions the Commission intends to make proposals for sustainable management of deep-sea resources.

Ireland has put forward an agreed fishing industry, Department of the Marine & Natural Resources, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and Marine Institute set of ideas and views on a number of key issues that need to be addressed in coming up with a sustainable management regime. These can be summarised as:

- TACs and quotas are inappropriate management mechanisms for deep-water species and are totally at odds with the available scientific advice.

- An effort-based regime, which legally exists for certain deep-water species in Western waters, should be used as a basis for an effective management mechanism. Reduction on effort entitlements can be considered.

- Given that deep-water species straddle EU, NEAFC (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission) and other coastal states waters it is essential that the EU negotiates parallel measures with these parties before imposing any unilateral proposal in EU waters.

- Consideration should be given to defined closed areas which have been intensively fished and depleted in Area VI.

- The large fishing opportunities granted by the EU to Norway and Faroes to fish a wide range of deep-water species in EU waters should be addressed before any further EU regime is considered.

- Improved scientific knowledge is essential in assessing these stocks. The mandatory reporting and recording of data in these fisheries is essential.

The future sustainable management and control for deep-water species is of vital importance to Ireland and it is therefore incumbent on all parties to leave no stone unturned in trying to establish a management regime based on the above key issues. Members can be assured that the KFO will vigorously continue to pursue this issue.

Blue Whiting A Major Problem Looming

The KFO, through the North West Pelagic Management Advisory Committee, is determined to develop blue whiting for the consumer market as more fishermen are turning to this fishery in the face of declining pelagic quotas. In 2001, approx. 2,800 tonnes were processed for the consumer market, between on-board and on-shore processing. This involved the vessels taking ashore smaller quantities of fish in their tanks in order to maintain the quality necessary for the consumer market. This fish was graded, processed and whole frozen successfully. The KFO is working closely with BIM and the processors on continuing this development. It is hoped that an even larger quantity of blue whiting will be processed in 2002 and there seems to be willingness within the industry to continue to develop this fishery.

However this progress could be all in vain if the EU does not secure a good deal in the negotiations between the EU/Norway, Faroes, Iceland and others. The scientific advice on this fishery is to cut the overall TAC by 50% and if no agreement can be reached on the international component then the fishery should be closed. There is a concern that the landings of blue whiting have increased dramatically over the last couple of years. This increase in landings can be attributed almost entirely to the Faroes, Iceland and particularly Norway in international waters. These countries can fish basically unrestricted in international waters. Norway has set itself an international TAC of 225,000 tonnes. The EU on the other hand has set a TAC in its waters, which includes international waters.

Based on the reference period 1993-1997 the EU would get a share of 66% of the overall TAC. The Commission have tabled a proposal giving the EU 58%. The EU industry through the Northern Pelagic Working Group, of which the KFO is a member, is unanimously agreed that the EU should get at least 58% of the overall TAC. Given that the Commission has already moved from 66% to 58% the EU industry is not prepared to concede any more. If an agreement cannot be got on this proposal the Northern Pelagic Working Group propose that a separate international TAC be set and allocated among the countries on the basis of track record. Negotiations have already broken down on seven occasions and a further attempt will be made at the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission Annual General meeting in London on the 5th to 9th November.

News in short

Harbour Development

The closing date for submission of tenders for this development was extended from the 5th October to the 13th October 2001. The KFO understands that all tenders are in and are currently being assessed. It is hoped that the EPA license will be issued sometime in November. The KFO will continue to work closely with the Department of Marine and Natural Resources on this matter and is hopeful that the contract can be signed shortly.

North West Pelagic Management Advisory Committee

The North West Pelagic Management Advisory Committee has resumed after the summer recess. The Committee has made a number of recommendations to the Department of Marine and Natural Resources on the management of fisheries which should see quotas utilised to the optimum. The Committee is concerned with the state of the herring stock and are working closely with the John Molloy and Ciaran Kelly of the Marine Institute in drawing up a five-year plan to promote the recovery of the stock. The Committee has succeeded in getting the acoustic herring survey for the Autumn back on the table which should provide useful data. The Committee has recommended that there be one allocation of mackerel to the RSW vessels for the Autumn after tonnage has been set aside for the polyvalent segment. The good management of the Autumn 2001 mackerel fishery will be critical to having a similar regime in place for 2002 whereby there will be one allocation of mackerel to RSW vessels with a condition that 30% would be reserved for the Autumn. A list of administrative sanctions/penalties has been drawn up and recommended to the Department of the Marine & Natural Resources which will apply to vessels which overshoot their allocation. On the processing side the committee has been very active in advocating the launch of the processing measure under the National Development Plan.

KFO Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the KFO was held on 25th May 2001. There was a good attendance and in addition to usual AGM business the main items discussed included, whitefish renewal scheme, harbour development, hake and cod recovery plans, review of Common Fishery Policy, management of fisheries.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers were thanked for their assistance over the years and Kitt Noone & Co. were appointed as auditors for the coming year.

There were two new members appointed Declan Doogan and Paddy O'Malley to the Board of Directors. The Board now consists of Martin Howley Chairman, Kevin Mc Closkey Vice Chairman, Declan Doogan, Michael Callaghan Eamonn Mc Hugh, Teddy O' Shea, Patrick O' Malley, Cathal Boyle and Hugh Mc Bride.

Appointment to Marine Institute Board

In July this year, KFO Chief Executive, Sean O'Donoghue, was appointed to the Board of the Marine Institute, by Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Frank Fahey. Joey Murrin the former Chief Executive is also a member.

New Appointments at DoMNR

The KFO welcomes the appointments of Ms Julie O'Neill as Secretary General and Ms Sara White as Deputy Secretary General at the Department of the Marine & Natural Resources. Ms O'Neill succeeded Tom Carroll as Secretary General of the Department following his retirement at the end of September of this year.

Review of the Common Fisheries Policy

During the month of September, the Irish National Strategy Review Group on the Common Fisheries Policy, in which the KFO is an active member, prepared and submitted a report to the European Commission on its Green Paper "The Future of the Common Fisheries Policy". This submission summarises the Group's view of the Green Paper and also makes important recommendations that the Group strongly believes must be incorporated into the current policy if fish stocks and communities that depend on them are to be sustained after 2002. A summary of these comments and recommendations are outlined below:

Strengthening and Improving Conservation Policy

If every available tool is to be used to tackle conservation problems, as declared in the Green Paper, the Group considers that the access regime must be rolled out to 24 miles, rather than a roll over of the 6 and 12 mile zone, as recommended in the Green Paper. The Group proposes that the Commission's debate on technical conservation measures (TCMs) must be accelerated. The Group is very critical of the method used to allocate quotas and believes that the review process now affords the opportunity to fully address this, in favour of coastal fishing communities.

Strengthening the Social and Economic Dimension of the CFP

In the Group's view, the most disappointing aspect of the Green Paper is its treatment of socio-economic issues. The Group strongly believes that it is time to acknowledge that regions dependent on fisheries should have better access to the resources which are proximate to them. The Group cites ESRI-commissioned research that analyses the importance of the Irish fishing industry to the regions.

Fleet Policy

The Group acknowledges that fleet policy has an important role within the management of European fisheries, but believes that the Commission's stance, that capacity cuts are the answer to all problems within the CFP is oversimplified and therefore inadequate. The Group proposes that fishing efforts must be specific and targeted; reductions in effort and/or capacity should be of equal importance; that cuts should take account of technological progress only if it improves the effectiveness of the fleet catching fish; the definitions of capacity and effort should be revised; and due regard given to the socio-economic importance of fishing in future fleet programmes.

Improving Governance Within the CFP

The Group supports all recommendations made in this section. In particular the Group highlight its own document on Regional Management and the need to involve the stakeholders in Regional Advisory Committees as proposed in its document.

Monitoring Control and Enforcement

The Group welcomes the Commission's objective to "ensure effective enforcement of the CFP through transparent arrangements which guarantee a level playing field across the EU" and makes recommendations to ensure this guarantee has credibility. These include: a system of 'observer corps', an increase in the powers of the Community Inspectors, and the implementation of new provisions for entry/exit and catch reporting.

External Relations

The Group welcomes the objectives of the Commission to promote co-operation, sustainable and rational exploitation of fishery resources in international and third country waters. The Group advocate strongly that the Northern Agreements (Norway & Faroes) be reviewed, particularly the fishing opportunities these countries have in Western waters and that the principle of Community Preference is adhered to when dealing with imports from Third Countries.

Research and Scientific Advice

The Group advocates many of the proposals on this issue, but adds a number of recommendations to strengthen these including: that fishermen must be more involved in fisheries research and management; that Precautionary Reference points for all stocks should be re-evaluated; that assessment and management areas for key fish stocks should be evaluated and redefined where necessary; that more research is funded by the EU and the current management regime be reviewed to incorporate social and economic aspects.

Promoting Animal and Public Health and Safety

The Group supports the recommendations in this section of the Green Paper, and advocates that the policies of DG SANCO be applied consistently and uniformly for all food products originating from within and outside the EU.

Promoting the Environment Dimension of the CFP

The Group supports the integration of the environmental dimension into the CFP. However, to ensure environmental sustainability and co-operation, the Group believes that the Commission should introduce 'Marine Environmental Protection Schemes'.



New Vessels

A number of new vessels have joined the fleet since our last newsletter and the KFO would like to take this opportunity to wish all these fishermen who took up the initiative under the first phase of the Whitefish Renewal Scheme every success for the future. KFO members who recently acquired new whitefish vessels are :

Brendan Mc Grath:	MFV Avro Chieftain
Brendan Mc Grath:	MFV Avro Viking
Piaras O'Donnell:	MFV Eire Og
Adrian Boyle:	MFV Girl Denise
Eddie Kelly:	MFV Regina Ponti



KFO Website

The KFO website is now live on the world wide web and can be found at www.kfo.ie. It includes information on the KFO, TACs and Quotas, Monthly Allocations, our newsletter, press releases, publications, landings at key Irish ports, membership details, and useful links. We hope our members and other audiences find it a useful resource and communications tool. Let us know what you think by e-mailing kfo@eircom.net

Cod and Hake Recovery Programmes

Over the past number of years it has become apparent that there is a problem with the cod and hake stocks. At the December 2000 council meeting member states persuaded the Commission that cutting TACs and Quotas were not an effective measure in itself to restore the stocks of cod and hake. The Commission agreed to put emergency measures in place in the short term with a view to implementing multi-annual recovery plans of at least five years afterwards. These would be discussed with the industry before finalising.

Cod Area VI (from an Irish perspective)
Although the cut of the cod quota by almost 50% in ICES area VI for 2001 will affect Irish fishermen the emergency measures had little impact on them. The emergency measures included, closed areas to the west of Scotland and the Clyde from the 6th March to 30th April 2001 to allow cod to spawn. A further technical conservation proposal has been agreed which will apply from the 1st January 2002. This measure includes an extension of the measures adopted in the Irish Sea to an increase in mesh sizes in most areas, square mesh panels and conditions relating to the by-catch of cod. The long-term recovery plan (5 years at least) will be discussed with the industry in Brussels on the 29th and 30th of October. The measures on the table to be discussed are multi-annual TACs and

Quotas, fishing effort, technical conservation measures, control structural measures and market regulation.

Hake (from an Irish perspective)
Emergency measures have also been put in place for hake. These include holding any hake caught separately from other fish caught. A number of protection areas, or "boxes" have been set up in the West and South of Ireland in which 100mm mesh must be used for all fisheries. Vessels catching hake in excess of 20% must use 100mm mesh. Vessels landing 250kg or more of hake must report to the Department of Marine Fishery Officer. Vessels landing 500kg or more must land in designated ports. Other measures in place are, observer programme, sampling of landings, entry/exit requirements. A

summary of all the measures was distributed to all the members on the 20th June 2001. These emergency measures will form the basis for the multi-annual recovery plans for hake which will be discussed on the 31st October 2001.

The KFO will keep you informed of details on both recovery plans as they arise.

VHI for Healthcare

VHI Healthcare would like to draw KFO members' attention to a new plan called 'Assist'. This is a special worldwide medical emergency service, which offers a 24-hour helpline if you become unexpectedly ill or injured during the first 180 days abroad. If you need to be transported back to Ireland for medical treatment, Assist will make the necessary arrangements and cover the cost up to a limit of IRE1 million (€1,269738.08). For further information or to avail of the 10% group discount through the KFO contact VHI Healthcare on 1850 444444 or visit: www.vhihealthcare.com



TUNA FISHERY 2001 - LOG OF TUNA FISHING IN THE BAY OF BISCAY & WEST OF THE BLASKETS (MFV ETERNAL DAWN - MFV CELTIC QUEST)

KFO Members article



Pictured (Left) are Kevin Boyle and Denis Carbury.

In any new fishery, accurate information is vital. Having acquired as much information as possible we departed mid July for the Bay of Biscay, making sure we did not arrive there for the full moon. On arriving in Biscay after four days steaming we came across over two hundred Spanish line and pole boats. On trying trolling for seven or eight hours with little success we tried our first shot with mid-water gear in the middle of the Spanish pole fleet. Four hours later we yielded a haul of 300 – 400 kg of albacore tuna. Trying further east the following night yielded a good nights fishing of ten tonnes. About fifty French pelagic boats started to appear in the area the following day. Over two more nights fishing in the area our catch amounted to about 20 to 23 tonnes of albacore tuna. We decided to make La Rochelle our landing port as it was only twelve hours from the fishing grounds. Facilities in La Rochelle are excellent with fuel, ice, water and engine repairs all readily available.

It was very nice to be made that welcome in a foreign port.

During the next trip, fishing was slacker due to the full moon. After the full moon we started again. The French pelagic boats were now more scattered and steaming 70 to 100 miles daily with little success. At this time word came from Ireland that Irish boats were taking good hauls west of the Blaskets. French boats from Brittany were taking 30 to 50 tonnes per trip.

On arriving west of Ireland, 40 to 50 French boats were working the area with up to 40 Spanish line boats. Marks were deeper here, 20 to 30ftm. After four to five nights with very little fish we decided to fish our gear deeper. This worked well with all the Irish boats, some taking as much as 100 tonnes for a trip. Given our experience in the Bay of Biscay we knew what to look for on our sounders with regard to marks of tuna. Tuna were also visible on the sonar.

The tuna fishery in France is similar to the Irish herring or mackerel fishery. This year was the first time in 5 years that the Tuna did not show

so well in Biscay. While there, one of the Irish boats, MFV De Linn skippered by Hugo Boyle was boarded by the French fishery patrol vessel. The French captain informed Hugo that the French pelagic vessels were fishing since mid June. Speaking with the La Rochelle port authority last week ten French vessels landed there, each full of albacore tuna. The French fleet returned to Biscay after the fish disappeared West of the Blaskets.

Personally we believe with more accurate information and more Irish vessels joining this fishery, which passes our back door during the season, there is a major fishery here for the Irish fishing fleet, using mid-water gear. One of the secrets to the French boats doing so well is the fact that French boats all communicate with each other sharing information from different areas.

Finally we would like to take this opportunity to thank BIM for their help and assistance in making this fishery a reality for us. And we look forward to participating in the fishery next year.

Editorial



by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO

There is rarely a dull day in the fishing scene and so far in 2001 this has been the case, with the outlook for an even more eventful end of year.

This issue of KFO News has devoted considerable space to the Irish Strategy Review Groups response to the Commission's Green paper on the Common Fisheries Policy. An improved and more equitable CFP is of critical importance to long term viability and sustainability of Irish fishing. The Strategy Review Group has set down a very clear and succinct response to the Commission Green Paper and highlights with some excellent graphics the shortcomings of the Commissions paper. The response represents the united views of the Irish fishing industry and it is critical over the next twelve months that every avenue is explored to try and get a better deal under a revised CFP for the Irish fishing industry.

It is likely that the December Fisheries Council will have the management of deep-water species again on its agenda. The KFO has not changed its stance from last year on its outright opposition to using TACs and quotas as a means of managing these species. A very comprehensive Irish document has been submitted to the Commission (see front page) which puts forward a more effective means other than TAC and quotas of managing these stocks. The KFO will continue to oppose any TACs and quotas proposal.

The Budget is set for the 5th December. The KFO is pursuing two key issues as it did last year covering a seafarers allowance and the social welfare issue.

This issue of the newsletter includes a very interesting piece from two of our members fishing for tuna in the Bay of Biscay with mid-water gear. I am convinced that this method of fishing for tuna will prove to be very viable.

On the front page the blue whiting issues are highlighted. Hopefully with the combined lobbying efforts of the EU pelagic industry a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations can be attained by the EU. The industry has made it very clear that their bottom line is 58% of the overall TAC.

The KFO web-site is up and running and it is our intention to keep it updated with relevant information for our members.

As with previous issues of KFO news I hope our members find this one useful and informative.



Members news

Vessel Insurance

The KFO is currently discussing with insurance companies the possibility of providing a group scheme for vessels. It is expected that these schemes will provide discounts for vessels and the possibility of refunds on their premiums. With a view to processing and assessing schemes, the KFO will be contacting the members in the near future seeking information on their vessels.

Grant Aid

Initial indications are that a large number of applications have been received by BIM for new vessels under the new Whitefish Fleet Development Measure. The closing dates for modernisations and second-hand vessels expired during October, while grant aid for safety equipment is ongoing. Details of approved new vessel projects are expected to be announced by the Minister for the Marine in early December 2001.

BIM is administering another Programme, titled "Towards Innovation and Sustainability in the Fisheries Sector - Supporting Measures for Sea Fisheries Development" that will provide grant aid in eight main areas: e-trade and other IT policies; small scale coastal fisheries; producer organisations; quality certification, added value, traceability and working conditions; collection of basic data for fisheries; improved knowledge and transparency; sustainable fisheries management; and experimental fisheries/technical conservation measures. The closing date for the first round of projects was 29th June 2001 and an announcement is expected shortly. The closing date for the second round is the 31st October 2001.

Court Decision On Social Welfare Insurance For Share Fishermen

Ms Justice Carroll delivered her judgment on the 2nd October on two appeals to the High Court taken by Francis Griffin and William Deasy on the employment status of share fishermen. The Department for Social Community and Family Affairs had contested that share fishermen are insurable at PRSI Class A when their share earnings are over a certain level per week. Ms Justice Carroll upheld the judgment in the Mc Laughlin case (1986) in favour of William Deasy and Francis Griffin in that share fishermen are engaged in a joint venture with the boat owner and not employed on a contract of service. The implications of this judgment is that vessel owners are not liable for PRSI contributions for the crew.

Important Upcoming Activities November – December 2001

November 5-9

North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, London.
Three key issues of relevance to KFO members are on the agenda, including blue whiting, deep-water species and rockall haddock.

November 19-23

Second round of EU-Norway negotiations, Brussels.
These talks will involve mackerel and blue whiting from an Irish point of view.

November 27

Fisheries Council, Brussels.

December 5

Budget to be announced.
Social welfare, Seafarers allowance and taxation issues will be of interest to KFO members and wider fishing community.

December 17-18

Fisheries Council, Brussels.
Annual TAC's and quotas will be negotiated at EU level.

