

From: Moriarty, KevinR [KevinR.Moriarty@agriculture.gov.ie]

Sent: 15 February 2011 14:03

To: 'info@fif.ie'; 'Killybegs Fishermans Organisation'; 'isefo@eircom.net'; 'Irish South & West'; 'IFPO'; 'irishfish.org@gmail.com'; 'maddock.joe@gmail.com'

Cc: Hoffman, Nicholas; Kelly, Josephine; 'Paul Connolly'; O'Neill, SheilaM (Fisheries); Holohan, Maria; 'Keatinge, Michael'

Subject: Revised document on improved gear selectivity in the Celtic Sea for urgent comment

Importance: High

Attachments: Selectivity_options_Celtic_Sea revised options 15 Feb.doc

Folks,

Please see attached re-worked discussion document on foot of our meeting last week for your consideration. When considering the way forward we should bear in mind a number of issues.

In the first instance, the December Council declaration (copied in attached discussion document) was to show commitment to addressing the high level of discards and the sustainability of haddock and whiting which may assist in keeping fishing effort out of the Celtic Sea and was the basis for the 15% increase in TAC of whiting and haddock for 2011.

Secondly, at the meeting on the 7th there was general agreement that the discard levels are unacceptable and cannot be allowed continue, that we are currently under-utilising the yield potential of both haddock and whiting in the Celtic Sea, that we are catching the fish too young and impacting on future reproduction and long term bio-mass size of these stocks. Indeed there was general agreement that something needed to be done, and to protect the potential of the large 2009 year class it needed to be done ASAP (if possible by mid 2011).

At the meeting it was agreed that the best way forward was to bring any proposal that had good industry support to the French authorities and French industry in order to secure a joint approach with the French, the other main player in the Celtic Sea white fish fisheries. In the event that such broad agreement was secured, its implementation and the means of same would be explored. It should be noted that the Commission will be seeking an update on progress and will be monitoring efforts to improve selectivity. The Department will explore with the Commission if any arrangement agreed with the French can be implemented at EU level and made applicable for all vessels.

Whatever option will have some short term pain, however significant reductions in discards will have an immediate impact on bio-mass levels and ultimately fish size resulting in higher quotas and better economic return in the medium term.

In order to inform taking this initiative forward and to support discussions with the French the views of industry on the following options is sought:-

1. Can you accept the option outlined in the document for the Nephrops fishery (trawl) to (as a minimum) insert a **3m** long **110mm** square mesh panel into the existing trawl (70-79mm and 80-99mm cod-end nephrops nets);
2. Can you accept the option outlined in the document for the Mixed finfish (trawl) fishery to (as a minimum) insert a **3m** long **110mm** square mesh panel into the 80 – 99mm trawl;
3. Of the two options outlined in the document for the dedicated whitefish fishery (>100mm trawl and seine) can you support either :-
 - a. inserting a **3m** long **100mm** square mesh panel into the existing trawl (>100mm cod-end)
 - b. insert a **3m** long **110mm** square mesh panel into the existing trawl (>100mm cod-end)
4. If you cannot support any of the above please outline precisely any other measures you would consider so we can get the Marine Institute to evaluate them.
5. As the measures for 2011 would be an "initial" step please indicate what further selectivity improvements you would support and over what time frame.

As previously indicated there is a short turn around time on this to allow discussions take place with the French, **so it would be appreciated if we could have a unified response before Close of Business on Monday 21st February.**

Please cc Nick Hoffman and Josephine Kelly with your reply.

Kind Regards

Kevin Moriarty