



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

**Director General**

Brussels,  
D3 ADV ARES (2017)

Mr. Ivan Lopez  
Chairman  
Long Distance Advisory Council  
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28036 Madrid  
SPAIN

**Subject: Request for advice to ICES on status of deep-waters stocks in EU & NEAFC regulatory area**

*Your ref.: R-02-17/WG2 of 14 July 2017*

Dear Mr. López,

Thank you for your request sent last July and sincere apologies for the delayed reply. We have read your request very carefully and wish to confirm that the ICES scientific assessments of deep-sea species are for the main part either lacking data or lacking a proper assessment method, which is why ICES gives advices in line with the precautionary approach.

Of the stocks you have listed, only round nose grenadier in subareas 6 and 7, and divisions 5.b and 12.b, and blue ling in subareas 6–7 and Division 5.b have an MSY assessment.

ICES advice, for most of the deep-sea species, is given on a biannual basis, and the ICES Working Group on Deep Sea Species (WGDEEP) is scheduled to meet again in April 2018 with a view to publish a new scientific advice for the deep-sea stocks in June 2018.

However ICES, where possible, is providing information on catches taken inside and outside the NEAFC Regulatory Area, as requested by NEAFC. Attached is a link to two pieces of advice that might be helpful for you:

[http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2016/Special\\_Requests/NEAFC\\_categorization\\_of\\_stocks.pdf](http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2016/Special_Requests/NEAFC_categorization_of_stocks.pdf)

[http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/Special\\_Requests/NEAFC\\_Technical%20service\\_landings\\_within\\_and\\_outside\\_NEAFC\\_RA.pdf](http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/Special_Requests/NEAFC_Technical%20service_landings_within_and_outside_NEAFC_RA.pdf)

Furthermore, the scientific committee of NEAFC, PECMAS, is collaborating closely with ICES to make sure that its advice includes, where possible, the elements required to ensure a proper management of the deep-sea stocks in the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

Concerning your requests on the level of discarding, ICES is currently including an assessment of this discard level. Furthermore, fishermen are required, in accordance with Article 14(4) of the Control Regulation (Regulation 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009), to record quantities above 50 kg of fish discarded, for species which are not under the landing obligation.

As far as the adoption of a specific Commission delegated regulation setting derogations to the landing obligation and *de minimis* rules for species subject to the landing obligation in NEAFC is concerned, we are not currently in a position to proceed with it because of the absence of sufficient data and scientific advice as required by Art. 15(5) (c)(i) and (ii) of the Basic Regulation. However, DG MARE would be grateful for the LDAC to have an information point on the state of play of the external dimension of the landing obligation at one of its forthcoming meetings in order to enable a discussion on this important issue.

We also take this opportunity to provide you with the final STECG report from March 2017, and we would be grateful for you to share with us any additional relevant data you might have. You can find the report link:

[https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/1672821/STECF+PLEN+17-01\\_JRC106580.pdf](https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/1672821/STECF+PLEN+17-01_JRC106580.pdf)

Given the assessments currently being developed by ICES, I suggest that we discuss your proposal at a future opportunity in order to ensure that we apply our common knowledge to ensure a solid management of the deep-sea species.

Let me thank you again for your cooperation and constructive input. I look forward to our continued cooperation and invite you to contact Ms Pascale Colson (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273) should you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

João AGUIAR MACHADO

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