

ACFM

MINUTES

21- 30 May 2002

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1 21 MAY 2002 (TUESDAY)

1.1 OPENING

The Chair Tore Jakobsen, opened the meeting at 9:15 am. He welcomed new members and asked each to introduce himself and inform on their background. He also welcomed Hein Rune Skjoldal (Chair of ACE) who would participate in Tuesday's meeting only with the objective to establish good and close working relations between ACE and ACFM. Then, the General Secretary welcomed the participants. He underlined the importance that ACFM and its individual members work to produce advice "based on best scientific information and free from political influence". He also gave background information on the observer issue and said that as a first step ICES will invite other IGOs to become observers to the ICES advisory committees. He emphasised the change in the rules for release of the ACFM report.

1.2 ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND TIME TABLE

Both were adopted without comments.

1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND TECHNICAL MINUTES FROM OCT 2001 AND FROM APRIL 2002

Both were adopted without comments.

1.4 DOCUMENTATION AND REQUESTS FOR ADVICE

The Chair briefly reviewed the list of requests to clarify the tasks ahead of the committee.

1.5 MCAP REPORT

1.5.1 Observers.

The General Secretary said that ICES is looking for contributions to the debate. He considered that any changes are unlikely to take effect before 2004.

The Chair noted that the topic has been discussed at previous meetings. At this point he would only take specific comments as the topic "observers to advisory committees" are also part of the SG on ACFM Working Procedures (SGWP). He would take further comments when discussing the SGWP report.

1.5.2 Stock Rebuilding Plan

ACFM noted and supported MCAP's proposal for a SG on Rebuilding Plans. The SG should both define the framework and also investigate the tools to develop Recovery Plans.

The EC observer stressed that there is a need to provide more specific information when ICES recommends establishing a recovery plan and that ICES needs to be more open to invite commissions to interact together with industry to develop the recovery plans. The main problem is time, paying for the scientists can probably be solved.

In NEAFC, criticism on using the recovery plan as such has been voiced in relation to blue whiting.

Bengt Sjöstrand considered ACFM should ensure that contingency recovery plans exist. He considered that the main task of the proposed SG on Rebuilding plans will be to establish the framework.

5.3 Reviews of North Sea Demersal Fish stock assessments by the North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership

In cooperation with the North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership (NSCFP), ICES plans to have a consultation/review of the assessments of some North Sea demersal fish stocks. As plans are at the moment, reference points not part of the NSC FP review that is restricted to the assessment, short and medium term projections. This review/consultations are currently planned for a 4 days meeting. Plans are for a review during three days and the two last days of the review being open to members of the Partnership, nominees of ICES, EC and the Norwegian Government, i.e ACFM members are welcome.

1.6 WGCCOOP REPORT

The Fisheries Adviser Hans Lassen introduced the report. He noted that several most of the topics would be dealt with under specific agenda items. He drew attention to the NASCO criticism of the west Greenland salmon model. He also referred to the potential problem expressed by Fisheries Commissions on producing contradictory advice because ICES is using three advisory committees (mainly ACE and ACFM). ACFM noted the problems and hoped that MCAP would work to get a more streamlined process for producing the advice.

1.7 STUDY GROUP ON ACFM WORKING PROCEDURES

The Fisheries Assessment Scientist Henrik Sparholt presented the report. He noted the recommendations given in the report and reviewed each of them briefly. He drew attention to the EC paper found in the SGWP report Annex II.

Other participants in the meeting said that they had found the meeting very constructive although the meeting was dominated by scientists from the North European countries and relative little was said taking the situation on the Iberian peninsula into account. The discussion should continue and it was proposed to include the fishing industry in the process.

The ACE chair Hein Rune Skjoldal found that ICES should take active steps to develop and implement an Ecosystem oriented advice (Ecosystem Approach). Under the present system advice based on ecosystem considerations potentially fragment the available expertise. The work in SG and WG gives ICES a broad expertise but the WG/SG tends to be specialists what is lacking is integration of expertise.

1.7.1 Regional assessment and advisory structure

SGWP discusses the pro- and cons of an assessment based on regions. It was noted that the assessment working group largely are regional so a next step if a regional model should be implemented would be to regionalise the advisory system. The SGWP report considers several positive elements of a regional structure. It was also noted that the OSPAR QSR is based on a regional structure. It was argued that assessment and advice are linked and if one is regional the other should also be so. Environmental management advice likewise requires assessment and also here there is linkage with a regional structure. However, to create the basis for integrated advice and to achieve consistency within the advice requires integration of the expertise. This is an argument against making regional structure. There are arguments against a regional structure: Overall consistency, losing external review. Some expressed more sympathy for having subgroups to deal with specific problems rather than introduce a split of ACFM. Finally it was noted that the regional model was among those model analysed by the Bureau group in 2000 and that this structure was not accepted.

The EC observer recalled that the assessments are on a regional basis while the advisory process is general. The objective was to enhance multispecies and technical interactions. This might be done both in regional and in general structure. However, given the restrictions on the available human resources not all regions would have the capacity to on their own to progress along these lines.

Finally it was noted that assessment of the environment are done by HELCOM and OSPAR. The structure needs to take this work within the environmental commission into account to avoid double work.

1.7.2 Review of ICES assessment and advice

SGWP recommends:

ICES needs to introduce a more effective peer review system. It should co-operate with the North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership in developing an independent peer review system for North Sea stocks. ICES should use this project as a basis for developing its own programme of peer review which would apply more widely within the advisory process. Any changes should be introduced gradually.

ACFM accepted the recommendation but noted that the discussion should be separated into considerations of an internal quality control procedure, to be improved internally within ICES and an external review process. The issue is essential to the credibility of ICES advisory system.

1.7.2.1 Internal review of WG assessments

It was proposed to establish a procedure where the review is removed from ACFM. This procedure would include that reviews can be done externally of ACFM and be done by people outside of ACFM. The ACFM Chair and Secretariat

will develop a proposal for an external review process of the assessments. This proposal will be on the MCAP agenda in September 2002 with a view to be forwarded to Council/Bureau for adoption.

1.7.2.2 External Reviews of ICES assessment and Advice

There have been an increasing number of external reviews of ICES assessments and Advice. This list includes the proposed NSCFP review of some North Sea demersal stocks, Northern hake, NEA Cod and Iceland cod.

These reviews have been dealt with at an *ad-hoc* basis and ACFM found that it might be appropriate to consider more well defined procedures. What procedure would be useful and acceptable?

ACFM realises that there will be external reviews and will fully cooperate with all groups that on a sound scientific basis want to review assessments and advice. Also, ACFM noted that many of these reviews are done independent of ICES and that ICES has little or no influence on how these reviews are conducted. Where ICES cooperates attention must be given to the efficient use of limited human resources.

Such reviews are done regionally. The reviews span a wide range of approaches from a single consultant being employed to review a specific assessment and advice (Northern hake), several experts being asked for a second opinion (NEA Cod and the NSCFP review) or a full public (or restricted public) hearing (NSCFP on North sea demersal stocks).

Subgroups were original thought to be independent of ACFM and not part of the ACFM. They might therefore be considered a possible vehicle for external reviews. However, it was realised that this would be seen as an attempt to close the review process and ACFM therefore concluded that Subgroups are not satisfactory for external reviews. They are not sufficient "external".

Instead ACFM found that it would prefer public reviews with participation of stakeholders.

It was not clear whether the initiative for such hearings should come from ACFM/ICES or whether ACFM/ICES should confine itself to cooperation with groups who externally to ICES will take the initiative for such reviews.

1.7.3 Review of assessment versus quality control of assessment

As part of this discussion it was realised that if a full public hearing review procedure should be implemented that this could not be done for all assessment every year. Instead SGWP proposes that a system of benchmark/update assessment should be implemented. While there was no decision that this system should be implemented several members expressed their positive attitude to the proposal.

1.7.4 Matching advice and Management

Three concerns were expressed

The management system on the Faeroe Islands is effort based (fishing days). NWWG or another group should consider ways for better match the advice with the management system.

Iceland mainly uses ICES for quality control of the assessments while giving less attention to the actual advice. ICES should inquire whether this is a correct interpretation and whether Iceland would prefer a statement on the quality of the assessment provide Can Iceland live with a different type of advice?

The need to provide information on the technical interactions, mixed fisheries, was noted.

1.7.5 Strategic direction

SGWP lists five bullet points

- Technical interactions
- Harvest Control Rules (October)
- Simpler methods (Methods WG) Discussion of simpler models versus more complex models.

- Species Interactions (Used where data are available)
- Spatial aspect of management (Fleet data required) Area closures,

This list includes several unsolved scientific problems that should be directed to the SCICOMs, mainly RMC. The list is long and in attempting to address these tasks there is a need for realism in the ambitions. Not everything can be solve at the same time. There are different opinions among ACFM members about the priority but DG Fish is pressing for ACFM to address the technical interaction issues. In management of fisheries with mixed species composition these links must be specified explicitly in the advice. So there is a very immediate need for work in this field.

On a general note, ACFM encourages WG to explore other methods WG should not be constrained to XSA or ICA, which to some extent is current practice. The principle for an assessment should be based on "Best practice employed to be able to give advice". This encouragement should be seen in the light of the discussion on Benchmark/update assessments where a standard method (assessment model) is used for routine advice while alternatives are investigated up to a point when they can be introduced after a full review of the applicability of such a new assessment approach.

The Technical Minutes does include information that is valuable to the assessment working groups. ACFM should use this route more actively to get messages to the WGs. It was noted that the Technical Minutes from 2002 will be part of the assessment working group reports to be found on the publication CD.

1.7.6 Unproductive work

The topics mentioned under this heading were Harvest control Rules (see also report of SGPA) and an Multiannual approach to advice and assessment. Harvest control rules are really just another aspect of multiannual advice. It was noted that multiannual advice might be for a specific F level (which to-day is provided through the PA reference points) rather than for a fixed TAC or other fixed explicit measure. This idea has later be explored in the EC roadmap.

Recalling the work done in SGMAP in 1998 and in ACFM (working paper by Nils Hammer in 1999) ACFM considers that the first task is to distinguish between annual advice and annual assessment. If ICES can establish that bi-annual assessments can provide the required information then ICES can do this on their own. In Canada this has been done for several stocks. It was proposed (but no decision was taken) that ICES should start moving into a benchmark-update model. Before that can be done ACFM needs to define criteria for when it is time to invite a full assessment. However, for the political sensitive stocks it will be difficult not to update the advice whenever a new assessment is presented. ICES has experienced pressure for in-year updates of the assessment rather than pressure for multiannual advice. If ICES wants to give advice for several year ICES cannot update the assessment. As a first step it was proposed that ACFM should develop criteria when to leave the advice unchanged and it was proposed to construct a table with candidates

1.7.7 Software

The Secretariat has developed a project proposal for a software package to deal with data handling from national data submissions to the production of the ACFM report. As part of that package the Secretariat has implemented a graph producing software. Focus should be to produce summary output to be produced by standard programs. This should be published as soon as possible.

Certification of software: Dankert Skagen, Norway has distributed three programmes (AMCI) to be tested. CEFAS volunteered to test this system..

1.7.8 Fast Track Approach

ICES has had a number of requests for "fast track advice". Recent examples include Herring in Subdiv. 30 (Finland) and from DG Fish: Plaice in Div. IIIa, Celtic Sea herring, Northern hake and Bay of Biscay Sole. ACFM considered several aspects of this form of advice. The form of advice places additional strain on the human resources available and the quality of the ACFM advice. It was mentioned whether this was an ICES policy of giving away work to improve ICES profile. ACFM acknowledges that there are legitimate reasons for such ad-hoc requests. ACFM also recognises the need for a framework that makes it possible for the laboratories to plan. ACFM raised the following questions:

- Who decides that we can accept a request? (Answer: MCAP)
- Who should develop the background documentation? (Answer: The ACFM chair delegates to whoever he finds is the appropriate laboratory or person following a standard procedure agreed in 1994, see annex V).

- Criteria when an advice should be revised (Answer: The requests are generated externally and ICES has little or no influence whether a request will be forthcoming, ICES only criteria is accept or refuse to deal with a request. ACFM is very critical on the need to revisit the assessment but accepts that these needs are seldom scientific only)
- How should the WG be involved?
- How does the review work?

The EC observer clarified the background for recent DG Fish requests:

- Plaice IIIa: DG Fish was presented by Denmark and Sweden with catch rate (cpue) information indicating much more fish in the sea than indicated by ICES
- Herring Celtic: ICES had provided a half year advice
- Sole in the Bay of Biscay: Political compromise
- Northern hake: Revised assessment indicating that the reference points were not valid any longer

DG Fish will only accept to send new requests if there is indications that the advice is invalid but that there is a long range of reasons for ad-hoc request. He also noted that: ACFM is free to revise its own advice e.g. herring 1996. DG Fish recognises that the WGs do not have time to address the requests and finds that the answers are not very satisfactory. He concluded by proposing that ICES come up with a plan that funds these fast track advice, the basic point is that the plan should generate additional human resource.

ACFM considers that ICES should be restrictive to update the assessments. When that is deemed required ACFM also finds that *ad-hoc* groups are better than WGs to address these issues. There was a discussion on standards when the advice shall be changed. ACFM was not able to define strict guidelines as it had problems with fixing some % rule.

On the quality of advice ACFM is aware that there is a very real danger that changes is simply reflecting noise in data and therefore not valid ground for changing the advice. ACFM should only change the advice if there is significant changes indicated, Clients need to accept that the advice is based on an assessment with which there is associated a certain uncertainty and therefore a minor change in e.g. a survey result is not sufficient to indicate that the assessment was faulty and a revision of the advice is justified. Assessments are often made on preliminary data that are later revised usual not significantly. This has a possible risk that the WG has to revise the data and possibly change the intersessional advice.

ACFM did not come to any conclusion but in general there is a reluctance to change the advice unless there are very clear indications that the assessment or advice is faulty. There are cases when we argue that there is no information to change the advice and then repeat the advice. The burden of proof is that the assessment and advice is at fault not that the assessment is correct.

1.7.9 Lay-out of WG reports

ACFM asked for an analysis of which parts of the WG reports that can be taken out and only be available on CD and Web. One proposal was the diagnostics to be available on CD only. However, as a guiding principle there should be sufficient information to be able to reproduce the assessment. Another topic was the lay-out of the diagnostics table that clearly could be improved. The chair asked the reviewers to indicate the tables and figures they are using in the review and indicates those that are not useful.

1.8 CHANGES IN ASSESSMENT BETWEEN YEARS

Further work to be done.

1.9 QUALITY PROJECT

Two issues were mentioned: WGs prefer to have the quality handbook information as part of the report and there is a clear need for Software to deal with national data submitted to ICES and manipulated by assessment experts.

1.10 MANUAL FOR THE FORMULATION OF THE ADVICE

Tore Jakobsen had done some initial work but this is not completed. There was a consideration that the move towards standardise may not in all case be a useful approach. ACFM should focus on formulating concise advice. The guidelines should be revisited. They have not been discussed with clients.

1.11 STOCKS NOT NEED TO BE REVIEWED IN PLENARY

It was agreed following proposals in SGWP that there may be several stocks that could be left out of the plenum discussions giving more time to the problem stocks. The Chair distributed a draft list to subgroups, which may amend the list as they see fit. Also, if an individual ACFM member finds that a specific stock requires a plenum discussion this stock would be included in the plenum agenda.

1.12 BUSINESS SESSION

Concerning reports that were tabled, there was a proposal for assigned reviewers to write reviews and that these be send directly to the chairs. This proposal did not apply to reports that are listed as "available on request". In general there were support for the idea but restriction on the available manpower prevented its implementation.

The basic comment was "The basic point is to get rid of TORs, not adding to the work load."

1.13 ITEM 6. PRESENTATION OF THE SGPA REPORT (DANKERT SKAGEN)

He emphasised the following points from the report:

- Precautionary Harvest Control Rule may be a better approach than using the PA reference point.
- More emphasis on fishing mortality than on SSB
- Structural uncertainty how to set reference point in an unstable assessment (Northern hake)
- Environmental regime shifts (NEA cod, Eastern Baltic Cod)
- Small pelagics proposal two stage management strategies
- Rebuilding plan test using simulation

On a general note on S-R relationships Hein Rune Skjoldal considered that fish stocks are dynamic entities with much of their variability driven by environmental changes. He considered that what has happened was that there had been a change in S-R models from a theoretical framework to empirical models. He found that there is a need to reinstall a theoretical basis. The model would then not be restricted to a point estimate but rather to an area in the parameter space.

ACFM found that the time is ripe for a thorough revision of the proposed reference points. ACFM agreed the Timetable for an overall review as given in Annex IV. ICES has an inconsistent definition of B_{lim} . SGPA was unable to agree a framework for B_{lim} and B_{pa} . The first meeting of SGPA in December should define the framework within which the revision shall operate.

For this meeting ACFM can look at individual stock revisions. If the reference point is obvious wrong we will revise the reference point. The EC observer found that it is better now to change the PA reference point if they are demonstrated to be wrong.

1.14 ACE

This point was moved up on the agenda because the ACE chair would need to leave early.

Hein Rune Skjoldal: ACE (June 2002) will deal with

- 1) Occurrence of cold water coral in relation
- 2) Influence on Non- target species from fisheries

- 3) By-catch of small cetacean
- 4) Sensitive habitats that can be impacted by fishing
- 5) Protection of genetic diversity on exploited stocks
- 6) Ecological dependence

All these topics are fisheries related and the chair hoped that there would be sufficient fisheries expertise available on ACE to allow a thorough analysis and debate of these issues. ACFM thanked Hein Rune for taking time to participate in the discussions and said that they would support the work in ACE.

1.15 MATTERS REQUIRING ACFM/ACME/ACE COORDINATION

Attention was drawn to the Bergen declaration from the Fifth International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea and intermediate ministerial meeting. Again here is the commitment for developing an ecosystem approach also to fisheries management. ACFM must reflect on these political signals.

There were no matter to coordinate with HELCOM and OSPAR. Henrik Sparholt reported briefly from the IBSFC/HELCOM meeting February 2002

PG on Commercial Catch, Discards, Biological Sampling

The meeting noted that the report of PG on Commercial Catch, Discards and Biological Sampling was available and that this report included a number of recommendations for further work. These recommendation will be brought forward to the ACFM consultations. Those related to the need for software will be picked up by the Secretariat in specifying a new software for assessment purposes. ACFM finds that this work is very important as all good assessment starts with good data.

1.16 WGSTAL

The meeting noted that the Liaison Working Group on Fisheries Statistics had met together with the Eurostat working group "Fisheries Statistics" and that CWP had had an intersessional meeting in March. ACFM emphasised the need for accurate statistics and encouraged the continuation of cooperation under the CWP umbrella.

1.17 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS WITH COOPERATIVE ORGANISATIONS

The Chair drew attention to reports from the following meetings:

- Report of the 2001 NEAFC Annual Meeting
- North Sea Commission Partnership for Fisheries meeting February 2002
- CWP Intersessional meeting 21-22 March 2002
- Extraordinary NEAFC meeting 10-12 April 2002

There were no comments to these reports .

In closing the meeting the Chair announced that every day will start with a plenum at 9:00 to review progress by the subgroups. The meeting closed at 18:50.

2 22 MAY 2002 (WEDNESDAY)

ACFM chair opened the plenum and reviewed the tasks allocated to the subgroups.

3 23 MAY 2003 (THURSDAY)

Review of the status of work progress. Sea Bass: Draft produced. WGBFAS : Cod mainly done, herring Baltic Proper, WGDEEP: Revise report, progress according to time schedule. WGNEPH: 3 management area, Draft,

4 24 MAY (FRIDAY)

Review of the status of work progress. Norwegian coastal cod need not be discussed in plenum. Baltic Salmon proposed a plan for discussion and need to come back to summary sheets in a 2 hours session on Saturday. NPBW finished Icelandic capelin, not to be discussed in plenary. BFAS flatfish missing 1 hour requires coordination with WGBAST.

5 25 MAY *(SATURDAY)

Review of the status of work progress. AFWG is waiting for a for a rerun of NEA Haddock. HAWG Finish as planned. NWWG: What remains is Greenland halibut and Redfish.

6 26 MAY (SUNDAY)

There was work in several subgroups to prepare Summary sheets for plenum.

7 27 MAY (MONDAY)

AFWG: Coastal cod and Northern Prawn not dealt with in the Plenary.

In connection with the discussion of the NEA Cod there was a general discussion of recovery plans: ACFM should consider how to advise of recovery plan and in this connection supported the MCAP proposal for a SG on this issue. There were no new considerations presented.

NEA cod: Revision of the predicted maturity ogive resulted in a change in the advice from a recovery plan to an ordinary advice. The same with blue whiting where a new recruitment resulted in the same change in advice. This might give ICES some credibility problems. There are several initiatives for these tasks to be taken up within the next working year of ICES. High F and low stocks are factors, which make these sudden jumps in the advice more frequent.

NEA Haddock: New assessment made by the Subgroup. Not included in the 2nd draft, will be updated and we will return to this stock.

NEA Saithe: The assessment as with other stock assessed by the AFWG are difficult to review there is too little explanations and test of what the effects will be of different settings.

Greenland halibut: Plotting the confidence limits would be informative. Risk based advice.

8 28 MAY (TUESDAY)

HAWG: A comment of general interest was on consistency between the advice of North Sea herring and western Baltic spring spawning herring. It is very important that we give consistent advice (based on fisheries) for IIIa (look at North Sea autumn herring stock and the spring spawning). Another comment was on misreporting between North Sea and Div. IIIa and between North Sea and Div. Via to be looked into. For the autumn spawning herring: State of Stock for autumn spawners will refer to the last assessment year for this stock autumn 2001.

Topic for the October meeting Confidence limits of estimated SSB and F.

NWWG: A general problem of trying to solve immediate assesment problems and the need to use properly tested and documented methods. This makes it very difficult to evaluate the assessments and makes it uncertain how reliable the new method is. WG docs describing the methods should be available to the ACFM Sub-group and in the WG report there should be a comprehensive description of it.

Standardized output format is needed so that the output can be easily used by other software. It would not be acceptable to ACFM if ACFM *a priori* reject methods due to lack of documentation and verification if the method can solve a problem. Then others will afterwards make these calculations outside ICES and in reality leave ICES out of the advisory system.

9 29 MAY (WEDNESDAY)

The General secretary conducted elections of WG chairs and nomination for ACFM chair after the lunch break. See annex III.

Faroe Plateau Cod: Advice diagram does not function. Is this a case where the client does not want advice. Check with the Faeroese authorities

Faeroese Haddock: Improved assessment compared to last year. It was stressed that the advice should be consistent with the Plateau cod.

WGNPBW:

Norwegian spring spawning herring: The ecological information was much appreciated and this should be communicated back to the WG. The assessments however were not particularly well documented. This is the top priority of the WG. The practice of running a VPA based on input from another assessment method. This is not good practice and should be abandoned.

Authors of software should provide the relevant output table directly to be used by ACFM. The Secretariat should write to members and describe the requirements.

Blue Whiting: Unstable assessment. Martin Pastoors will draft a text for the comparison between the previous and this assessment.

WGBFAS: Flatfish not considered in the Plenary. WGBFAS has not spent much work on the summary sheets and the ACFM sub group had to spend much time on developing the sheets.

10 30 MAY (THURSDAY)

The morning and most of the afternoon was spent on formulation of advice.

Having finished the formulation of advice there was a brief business session that deal with the remaining topics on the agenda

10.1 ACFM CONSULTATIONS AT THE 90TH ANNUAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE 2002 IN COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

The consultations will be held on the Sunday 29 September.

10.2 ACFM MEETING 9-17 OCTOBER 2002

The need for expanding the advice from being stock based to also include a fisheries dimension was briefly reviewed. The EC observer stressed that management is fisheries and area based not stock based. DG Fish therefore needs a translation from the stock advice to an area advice. This was particular important for those fisheries that exploit several stocks, mixed fisheries. Individual advice stock by stock is not sufficient Dg Fish and the other fisheries commissions need information on the constraints and relations there are between the TACs, e.g. is it possible to fish the North Sea haddock proposed quota without overfishing the North sea Cod? He hoped that the autumn ACFM would provide some information along such lines.

10.3 MATTERS RELATED TO 2002 ANNUAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE

Apart from the proposal for a SG on framework for recovery plans that was discussed together with the MCAP report there were no other topics to be discussed under this agenda item. The Chair noted that there would be two additional set of recommendations !0 SG on recovery plans and 2) Revision on PA reference points.

10.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no AOB.

10.5 CLOSING

The Chair thanked the participants for their hard work and wished them a safe journey home. He recited a small limerick, see annex VI. He then closed the meeting.

11 ANNEX I PARTICIPANTS

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Agenda

Advisory Committee on Fishery Management

ICES HQ, 21–30 May 2002

Plenary Sessions 21 May and 27-30 May 2002

- 1) **Opening**
- 2) **Adoption of agenda and timetable**
- 3) **Approval of minutes and technical minutes from October 2001 ACFM meeting and sub-group in April 2002**
- 4) **Documentation and Requests for Advice**
- 5) **MCAP report**
 - a) **Admission of observers**
 - b) **Stock re-building plans**
 - c) **North Sea Commission reviews in August 2002**
- 6) **WGCOOP draft report**
- 7) **SG on ACFM Procedures**
 - **Definition and use of Status Quo F**
 - **Intersessional ACFM work**
- 8) **PG on Commercial Catch, Discards and Biological Sampling**
- 9) **Study Group on Further Development of the Precautionary Approach to Fisheries Management (ACFM) and WG on Methods in Fish Stock Assessment**
 - a) **Guidelines for establishing stock rebuilding plans**
 - b) **Bias**
 - c) **Reference Points**
 - d) **Timetable for revision of PA Reference Points**
 - e) **Quality of assessments**
- 10) **WGSTAL**
- 11) **ACFM Management Procedures**
 - a) **Commissions position on the advisory process**
 - b) **Review of ACFM e-mail procedures handling requests**

- c) **Manuals and Handbook**
- d) **Assessment software**
- 12) **Reports from meetings with Cooperative Organisations**
 - a) **Report of the 2001 NEAFC Annual Meeting**
 - b) **North Sea Commission Partnership for Fisheries meeting February 2002**
 - c) **CWP Intersessional meeting 21-22 March 2002**
 - d) **Extraordinary NEAFC meeting 10-12 April 2002**
- 13) **Matters requiring ACFM/ACME/ACE coordination**
 - a) **Fifth International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea and intermediate ministerial meeting (Bergen Declaration)**
 - b) **OSPAR**
 - c) **HELCOM**
 - d) **IBSFC/HELCOM meeting February 2002**
- 14) **ACFM report**
 - a) **Form of advice**
 - b) **Format of the report**
 - c) **Introductory items**
 - d) **Table of contents**
- 15) **Election of Working Group Chairs (WG proposal in brackets)**
 - a) **WGBAST (Ingemar Perä, Sweden)**
 - b) **WGNAS (Dave Meerburg, Canada)**
- 16) **ACFM Consultations at the 90th Annual Science Conference 2002 in Copenhagen, Denmark**
- 17) **ACFM meeting 9-17 October 2002**
 - a) **Mixed Fisheries – requirement for fleet based data**
- 18) **Matters related to 2002 Annual Science Conference**
 - **Proposal for a SG on framework for recovery plans**
- 19) **Preparation of advice to Commissions and Member countries**
- 20) **Nomination of new ACFM Chair**
- 21) **Any Other Business**
- 22) **Closing**

13 ANNEX III ELECTION AND NOMINATION OF CHAIRS

WGBAST:

The Working Group had nominated Ingemar Perä, Sweden. There was no additional nomination. Ingemar Perä was unanimously elected as chair of WGBAST for a three-year term starting 1st January 2003.

WGNAS:

Dave Meerburg, Canada had been nominated by WGNAS. However, Dave Meerburg informed ACFM that he would not be available for the post as chair of WGNAS. The General Secretary conducted a nomination. There were two nominations

- Walter Crozier, NI, UK
- Brian Dempson, NF, Canada

The General Secretary conducted a vote. There were 16 votes 4 abstentions (no vote) 1 blank in total 21 votes. Walter Crozier, UK, NI,iiii (5 votes), Brian Dempson, Canada, NF, iiiii iiiii (10 votes). Later Brian Dempson (Canada) informed ACFM that due to changes in his working conditions he would not be able to receive the election. He regretted that if this has caused problems and trust that Walter Crozier would be an excellent chair for WGNAS.

Walter Crozier was elected chair of WGNAS for a three year term starting from 1 January 2003. Walter Crozier has confirmed that he is available as chair.

ACFM Chair:

The General Secretary conducted the nominations and the following were nominated (list given in alphabetic order by family name):

- David Armstrong, UK
- Eero Aro, Finland
- Manuela Azevedo, Portugal (After the nomination in August Manuela Azevedo thanked the Committee for the trust in her they had expressed but informed ACFM that unfortunately she would not be available for the post as ACFM chair)
- Poul Degnbol, Denmark
- J.-J. Maguire, Canada
- Jake Rice, Canada (After the nomination Jake Rice thanked the Committee for the trust in him they had expressed but informed ACFM that unfortunately he would not be available for the post as ACFM chair)
- Dankert Skagen, Norway

The General Secretary was instructed to write to the nominees and confirm that they would be available

14 ANNEX IV. LETTER TO DELEGATES DESCRIBING THE PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND REVISIONS OF THE PRECAUTIONARY REFERENCE POINTS

To

Governments and Fisheries Commissions as Recipients of the ACFM report

Dear Sir

ICES advice on the management of fish stocks is arrived at in three stages. In the first stage, an international working group of scientists assesses the state of the stock for the most recent year, and compares it with the precautionary reference points for that stock. This shows whether the stock is in a good or a poor state ('inside or outside biological safe limits'). In the second stage, the working groups forecast the most likely future stock and catch levels corresponding to a range of fishing rate options. This provides options from which a total allowable catch can be selected. Later, in the third stage, the Advisory Committee for Fishery Management evaluates the working group assessment and forecast, and then provides agreed advice on the most appropriate TAC or other management recommendation, consistent with the application of the Precautionary Approach.

The advice is thus developed by a comparison between the assessment and the reference points. The stock status indicators that are used in this comparison are the spawning stock biomass and the fishing mortality.

ICES developed in 1997-1998 a set of proposed reference points for about 65 stocks using various methods and the stock and fishery data then available. This was considered a provisional step in the implementation of the precautionary approach. Since then these reference points have been kept under constant review individually but now five years later a general review is now required. This review should include a review of the principles that were used to establish reference points, revisiting all proposed reference points and consideration of stocks for which reference points could not be proposed in 1998.

ICES considers that this should be done in a planned coordinated process to achieve as best as possible consistency so that differences between stock reference points only reflect ecological and population dynamic differences.

The process proposed is aimed at securing a large degree of consistency across stocks and working groups and not overload the Assessment Working Groups. The elements in the process are as follows:

1. The Study Group on the Precautionary Approach (SGPA) and the ICES Secretariat will work inter-sessionally in the remaining part of 2002 to develop technical guidelines to be discussed and agreed at a meeting by the SGPA in December 2002. These guidelines should take into consideration the expected output from related working groups (SGPRISM and SGGROMAT).
2. A special Study Group chaired by the chair of ACFM and consisting of the assessment working group chairs will meet in late February 2003 and will consider a proposal for revision of all the PA reference points. This proposal will be developed by the Secretariat based on the principles established by SGPA at its meeting in December 2002.
3. The assessment working groups will review the revised PA ref. points at their meeting in 2003.
4. ACFM will adopt the new points in May and October 2003 and base its advice on these.

ICES invites observers from governments and Fisheries Commissions (EC DG FISH, IBISFC, NASCO, NEAFC) to participate in this process.

ICES will also invited Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation and FAO to participate in this process.

Northeast Arctic Cod

A special issue concerning reference points is those defined for the Northeast Arctic Cod. In December 2001 The State Committee for Fisheries of the Russian Federation requested a revision of Fpa for NEA cod. It was referred to the

proposed new B_{pa} of 375,000 tons and argued that since B_{pa} and F_{pa} are interrelated mathematically it is natural to "specify F_{pa} with reference to the adjusted B_{pa} ". The present values of B_{pa} and F_{pa} for NEA cod are, however, not interrelated mathematically, as is the case for a number of stocks. Neither is it straightforward to make them mathematically interrelated. The revision of historic data was on the maturity ogives and weights, while all the numbers are unchanged and the proposed new B_{pa} does not necessarily warrant any change in F_{pa} ."

In a working document presented to the Arctic Fisheries Working Group Meeting (AFWG) in April 2002, "Revision of PA reference points for NEA cod by Yu. A. Kovalev", three alternative $F_{lim} = F_{loss}$ are estimated using the PASOFT package over two periods, and the resulting values varies from 0.6 to 0.9, and are on average close to the presently used value of 0.7.

Regarding Biomass-points, the issue was discussed in a subgroup at the AFWG-meeting. Several working documents were presented and discusses, as well as the ACFM comments from May 2001 and the peer review from October 2002. It was concluded that a special study group meeting would be required :

AFWG failed to reach consensus on two critical issues:

- * the need to split the time period;
- * the technical basis for determining values of B_{lim} and B_{pa} from the SSB/R relationship.

The Study Group shall to resolve these issues before candidate values for reference points can be put forward. Clear guidance from ACFM regarding the operational definitions of reference points would be helpful in achieving such consensus."

This Study Group has been included in the process for revision of the precautionary reference points.

The proposed recommendations to be considered at the ICES 2003 statutory meeting are given in annex I.

Annex I: Proposed Recommendations to be passed at the 90th Statutory meeting, Copenhagen 28 September 9 October 2002.

ACFM is the parent committee for all three groups.

The **Study Group on the Further Development of the Precautionary Approach to Fishery management [SGPA]** (Co-chairs: C. Bannister, UK and M. Azevedo, Portugal) will meet 2-6 December 2002 at ICES HQ to:

- 1) Complete the technical guidelines for revision of A reference points developed by the Chairs of the SGPA and the ICES Secretariat

An **Study Group on Biological Reference Points for Northeast Arctic Cod** (Chair: Yuri A. Kovalev, PINRO) will be established and will meet in Svanhovd, Norway 13-17 January 2003 to:

- a) determine the most appropriate time period for estimating biomass and fishing mortality reference points;
- b) Review the framework for calculating reference points established by SGPA in December 2003 and specify the technical basis for the reference point calculations;
- c) Propose reference points based on a) and b). In the event that agreement is not reached on points a) and b) different alternatives will be formulated and compared.

The Study Group will report on 24 January to the Study Group on Revision of Reference Points for its meetings 24-28 February 2003.

An **Study Group on Precautionary Reference Points for Advice on Fishery Management** will meet 24-28 February 2003 at ICES Headquarters (Chair: ACFM Chair, members Chairs of the following assessment Groups: HAWG, WGBFAS, AFWG, NWWG, WGNPWG, WGNSSK, WGHMM, WGNSDS, WGSSDS, WGMHSA and chair and co-chair of SGPA) to

- 1) Review the proposal prepared by the ICES Secretariat on Reference Points for the stocks dealt with by HAWG, WGBFAS, AFWG, NWWG, WGNPBW, WGNSSK, WGHMM, WGNSDS, WGSSDS, WGMHSA. The proposal shall be built on the framework developed and agreed by SGPA in December and the outcome of the special meeting on NEA Cod reference points to be held in 13-17 January 2003.
- 2) Propose revisions of the Reference points used by ACFM in formulating advice on fishery management for consideration by the assessment working groups and with a view for adoption and use by ACFM in its May and October 2003 meetings.

The Group will report to ACFM and its assessment working groups on 5 March 2003.

Supporting Information

Priority:	High
Scientific Justification:	<p>The work on developing PA has continued within ACFM and ACFM has developed a practice. With the workload on ACFM it is unsatisfactory to continue to use this vehicle for the development. Also, it is desirable to open the discussion to involve also scientists outside ACFM.</p> <p>ACFM adopted at its May 2001 meeting draft principles on which to formulate the ACFM advice. These principles include the use of rebuilding plans under certain conditions without this term being precisely defined. ACFM furthermore faced significant problems in formulating consistent advice for deep water species and for some other species for which data are either lacking or scarce. The SG should analyse these situations and propose a consistent policy.</p>
Relation to Strategic Plan:	Establish the scientific basis for the Precautionary and Ecosystem Approaches

	and their application in ICES advice
Resource Requirements:	
Participants:	15-20
Secretariat Facilities:	
Financial:	
Linkages to Advisory Committees:	MCAP found that there is a strong need for this group. The work of the Group shall be taken forward by the study groups on reference points and together with reports from these two groups report to the assessment groups and then to ACFM at its May 2003 meeting.
Linkages to other Committees or Groups:	RMC
Linkages to other Organisations:	
Cost Share	

15 ANNEX V 1.7.1 MID-TERM REQUESTS FOR ADVICE (EXTRACT FROM ACFM MINUTES FOR 1994)

The Chairman informed the Committee that, following a request from the European Commission in July to review the advice for 1994 on demersal stocks in Sub-area VI, he and the General Secretary had agreed to provide a review. The Chairman had formed a sub-group consisting of selected ACFM members and the Chairman of the Working Group on the Assessment of Northern Shelf Demersal Stocks, which worked by e-mail and telephone. After agreement within the sub-group the draft was distributed to all ACFM members before it was sent to the Commission at the end of August. The Chairman recognised, however, that this procedure had not given ACFM members a chance to review the new material in the working group report and therefore asked members for their views on how intersessional requests for advice should be handled in future.

In discussion it was recognised that the advice given had not been reviewed by all ACFM members, but it was accepted that the procedure adopted was the only practicable one on this occasion and that the advice given was the best available in the circumstances. It was important that it did not preempt what might be decided by ACFM later in the year. As it turned out, for example, ACFM at the present meeting rejected the forecasts on which the intersessional advice had been based mainly because the Working Group assessment had not taken account of the large unreported landings. This presents ACFM with two possibilities for handling intersessional requests in future: to provide an ad hoc response prepared by a sub-group or to circulate all relevant material to the whole Committee and seek agreement before responding. If the former is accepted then it would be necessary to decide if the response constitutes full ACFM advice or if it is provisional pending further discussion at an ACFM meeting. If an ad hoc response is considered to be full ACFM advice then there is the difficulty of merging it with later advice prepared at the meetings.

One way of handling intersessional requests would be to identify a sub-group of ACFM members who would act on behalf of ACFM, and if required attend an additional meeting. For this to be practicable it would be necessary to decide the composition of the sub-group at each ACFM meeting. Alternatively, the composition of the sub-group could vary according to the subject matter of the request, e.g. it might contain the proposed presenter and reviewers of the relevant report together with the respective Working Group chairman.

The Observer from the European Commission stated that in his view further intersessional approaches were inevitable when required. ACFM accepted that it has a responsibility to provide a response but that the type of response may depend on the nature of any new information available, e.g. recruitment estimates, and on the form of advice appropriate for the stock in question (e.g. catch or effort). Any response should also take the uncertainties of any new information into account: it might, for example, be unwise to change forecasts on the basis of new survey estimates of recruitment without a full analysis. Revised advice should not be given, furthermore, if no new information is available. On the basis of the discussion it was agreed that ACFM should show a readiness to respond to intersessional requests for advice and that convening a sub-group consisting of the appropriate presenter, reviewers and working group chairman is the most practicable way of dealing with such requests. However, it was also agreed that requests should be distributed to all ACFM members when they are received and that any ACFM member who so requests should be included in the sub-group. It was also agreed that all revisions to advice would be sent to all ACFM members before it is sent to the body that has requested it.

16 ANNEX VI

There once was a man from Bergen

Who's advice was for mackerel through sturgeon

When under the gun

He advised F of one

But said it as though it was urgent.