

**Subject: EU request on preliminary  $F_{MSY}$  ranges for Baltic cod, herring and sprat stocks**

The European Commission has requested ICES to provide  $F_{MSY}$  as ranges for Baltic Sea stocks, demersal stocks in the North Sea, anchovy in the Bay of Biscay and horse mackerel in the context of developing a proposal for a management plan for these stocks. To be able to respond to the request ICES has set up the following process:

- a) A workshop WKMSYREF3 will be held in October 2014 which will identify appropriate methods and criteria to determine  $F_{MSY}$  ranges, which result in no less than 95% of the estimated maximum sustainable yield based on individual weight, maturity, natural mortality and selection for the most recent 10 year period and stock recruitment time ranges as defined in recent benchmarks; establish methods to determine upper limits to  $F_{MSY}$  ranges compatible with ensuring a <5% risk of the stock falling below  $B_{lim}$  not only in assessment years but also in forecast years under full MSEs; estimate 5 year values of  $F_{msy}$  and  $B_{MSYtrigger}$  for each of the case stocks such that management following advice based on these  $F_{msy}$  ranges will be precautionary and yield are no less than 95% of MSY and establish guidelines and where appropriate indicate suitable software for the estimation of  $F_{MSY}$  ranges for category 1 stocks where full MSE analyses are not available.
- b) For Baltic Sea stocks actual estimates of ranges early March 2015 following the planned benchmarking process for the Baltic Sea cod stocks.
- c) For North Sea demersals, anchovy and horse mackerel first estimates will be developed in the WKMSYREF3 workshop; these will then be evaluated in the relevant benchmarks early 2015 and will be published together with the recurrent advice on these stocks in 2015.

The European Commission has informed ICES that it expects to table a proposal for a Baltic Sea fisheries management plan by October 2014 and that the Commission therefore needs proposals for  $F_{MSY}$  for the Baltic Sea stocks primo September 2014. ICES will, with the process described above, deliver the advice on  $F_{MSY}$  ranges for Baltic Sea stocks in March 2015 and ICES will not be able to deliver the advice within the timeframe requested by the Commission.

After discussions between the Commission and ICES it was agreed that ICES provides the Commission with a list of  $F_{MSY}$  values for the Baltic Sea stock concerned with a preliminary indication of a range.

The table below contains the current  $F_{MSY}$  values as proposed by ICES and a range calculated as the  $F_{MSY}$  value +/- 10% with the constraint that the upper limit is equal to or less than  $F_{pa}$  to ensure that the calculated ranges are all within the boundaries of the precautionary approach.

ICES underlines that the ranges provided in the table below are preliminary and do not represent ICES advice on ranges consistent with the objective of achieving no less than 95% of the estimated maximum sustainable yield. These estimates will be provided in March 2015.

| Stock  | F <sub>MSY</sub>    | Range       |
|--|---------------------|-------------|
| Cod 2224   | 0.26                | 0.23 – 0.29 |
| Cod 2532   | 0.46                | 0.41 – 0.51 |
| Herring in Subdivisions 25 – 27, 28.2, 29 and 32.                                | 0.26                | 0.23 – 0.29 |
| Sprat  | 0.29                | 0.26 – 0.32 |
| Herring in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga)                                       | 0.35                | 0.32 – 0.39 |
| Herring in Subdivision 30 (Bothnian Sea)   | 0.15                | 0.13 – 0.17 |
| Herring in Subdivision 31  | No reference points | -           |
| Herring in Division IIIa and Subdivisions 22–24 (western Baltic spring spawners) | 0.28                | 0.25 – 0.31 |