

ECOREGION Iceland and East Greenland

SUBJECT NEAFC request to ICES for clarification of the TAC level and the basis of the advice for Beaked redfish (*Sebastes mentella*) in Subareas V, XII, and XIV and NAFO Subareas 1+2 (Deep pelagic stock > 500 m)

Request

*NEAFC refers to the advice from ICES (2.3.11) of June 2014 for beaked redfish (*Sebastes mentella*) in Subareas V, XII and XIV as well as in NAFO Subareas 1 and 2 (Deep pelagic stock > 500 m).*

NEAFC has noted that there is a discrepancy, where the advice table indicates a specific figure for a TAC level of 10 000 tonnes, whilst in the explanatory text, there is no specific figure given for a TAC level.

NEAFC requests ICES to explain this discrepancy, indicating the origin of the figure of 10 000 tonnes. ICES is requested to explain the basis of the 10 000 tonnes figure prior to the start of the Coastal State consultations for 2015 for this redfish stock, which are due to take place in London on 7 and 8 October next

ICES response**ICES Redfish (deep pelagic stock) advice**

ICES welcomes the opportunity to clarify its advice, ICES notes that in the ICES advice (ICES, 2014a) under the Outlook section no specific numerical outlook for 2015 is provided because ‘no assessment can be presented for this stock due to the insufficient commercial dataset and short time-series of suitable survey data. Therefore, fishing possibilities cannot be projected.’ Thus no specific catch advice is provided, and no specific value is given in an Outlook table or in the ICES Advice in the first section of the advice sheet.

Instead ‘ICES advises on the basis of precautionary considerations that catches in 2015 of deep pelagic *S. mentella* be significantly reduced.’ As indicated above in the absence of an assessment and a short term forecast ICES is not able to advise a specific catch, nevertheless in order to provide some guidance to the term ‘significant reduction’ ICES has drawn inference from the management plan evaluation (ICES, 2014b). Based on these management plan evaluations ICES was not yet able to advise on a harvest control rule that would ensure a maximum sustainable yield, but has offered options for the harvest from this stock which are considered precautionary in the intermediate period until more data are available. All of the options explored in these evaluations indicate a reduction from recent catches in 2015. However, ICES also noted that none of the catch options given in the management plan evaluation (Table 2.2.3.2.2 in ICES, 2014b) are precautionary and only options with catch below 10 000 tonnes have a more than 50% probability of giving increasing biomass. Based on these considerations ICES considers that only catch options less than 10 000 t should be considered for 2015. In this context ICES noted this element of the advice in the historic advice table is as < 10 000 tonnes, not as indicated in the NEAFC letter ‘a specific figure for a TAC level of 10 000 tonnes’

Basis of the < 10 000 tonnes

In March 2014 ICES issued a response to a special request from Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland on an evaluation of a proposed harvest control rule for deep pelagic redfish in the Irminger Sea and adjacent waters (ICES, 2014b). Table 2.2.3.2.2 in this section presented results from the management plan evaluation forecasts for several selected HCR candidates. Column 6 gave the catch and column 9 presented the associated probability of an increase in Biomass from 2014 to 2025 ($P(B_{2025} > B_{2014})$). If this probability exceeded 0.5 the catch in column 6 was associated with a greater than 50% probability of increase in Biomass. Conversely if the probability was less than 0.5 this would be associated with a greater than 50% probability of further Biomass decline. A catch of approximately 10 000 tonnes is associated with the point where the probability of increase exceeds the probability of further decline, (see rows 5 and 6). It should be noted that column 8 ($P(B_{2020} > B_{2014})$) where none of the probabilities exceed 0.5 shows that none of the catch option tested are expected to increase Biomass in the short term.

Sources

- ICES. 2014a. Beaked redfish (*Sebastes mentella*) in Subareas V, XII, and XIV and NAFO Subareas 1+2 (Deep pelagic stock > 500 m). Report of the ICES Advisory Committee 2014. ICES Advice, 2014. Section 2.3.11.
- ICES. 2014b. Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland request to ICES on evaluation of a proposed harvest control rule for deep pelagic redfish in the Irminger Sea and adjacent waters. Report of the ICES Advisory Committee 2014. ICES Advice, 2014. Section 2.2.3.2.