

To interested organisations on the attached list

23 December 2003

*Dear Colleague*

## **WESTERN WATERS : EFFORT CEILINGS FOR THE NEW REGIME**

1. I am writing to advise you about the assessed levels of fishing effort that the Fisheries Departments in the UK have submitted to the European Commission in keeping with the provisions of Articles 3 and 10 of Council Regulation 1954/2003 for the management of fishing effort in Western Waters.

2. We were required to provide by 30 November assessments of the average fishing effort (Kw days) for:

- demersal fisheries
- edible spider crab fisheries
- scallop fisheries

for the period 1998 to 2003 for ICES and CECAF areas. The assessments for the UK together with the underlying methodology are set out in Annexes A to B to this letter. They were sent to the Commission on 18 December, later than the deadline because resources had to be devoted to preparatory work in support of negotiations at the December Fisheries Council.

3. For your information I am also enclosing a table (Annex C) setting out the effort data for each year between 1998 and 2002. You will note that in putting forward our assessments, we have based average effort for crabs and scallops on the reference period 2000 to 2002 because logbook returns, from which effort is calculated, were not mandatory for fishing trips on which non-TAC species alone were caught. Despite our best efforts it has been possible to build up a comprehensive picture of effort for 1998 and 1999. You will further note that for scallops in Areas V/VI we have simply used 2002 to represent the assessed average because of the distortions created by the closure of fishing grounds due to amnesic shellfish poisoning (ASP).

4. We are aware that there is an upward trend in one or more of the crab and scallop fisheries. We cannot anticipate future increases in effort but there is

provision within Council Regulation 1594/2003 to seek adjusted effort ceilings on account of non-TAC fishing activity where this can be justified.

5. We are also required to advise the Commission of the steps that we shall be taking to regulate fishing effort in Western Waters. The following, which is based on established practice in the UK, has been notified to the Commission:

“As with the current regime, UK Fisheries Departments will operate a system of regularly monitoring the uptake of fishing effort by UK vessels fishing in the areas covered by the regulation. This will make use of the log-book data on activity each vessel reports for each trip along with the additional data reported on dates and times when zone boundaries have been crossed. This allows allocation of fishing effort to the different categories of areas and fishing gear.

Reports on effort uptake will be produced on a monthly basis unless effort uptake for any area/gear combination is shown to be more than 80% or above the normal profile for uptake of fishing effort for the time of year. At this time Fisheries Departments will review the situation and consider what actions are needed to ensure that fishing effort is controlled appropriately. Decisions on the management actions to be taken will also include consideration of the level of uptake of fishing opportunities (e.g. quotas) in the areas. More frequent reporting of effort uptake will also be initiated.”

6. I hope that this is helpful. May I also remind you that new (revised) effort ceilings for fishing activity in Western Waters will only take effect once they have been agreed by the Council on the basis of a proposal from the Commission. This is unlikely to be before the middle of 2004. In the meantime if there are any points on which you would like clarification please do not hesitate to ring [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) or myself.

Best wishes for 2004

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Fisheries IV

## INTERESTED ORGANISATIONS

Anglo Scottish - FPO  
East of England FPO  
FPO  
North Sea PO  
Northern FPO  
Lowestoft FPO  
South Western FPO  
Cornish FPO  
Wales and West Coast FPO  
Fleetwood FPO  
Northern Ireland FPO  
Anglo North Irish FPO

UKAFPO  
NFFO  
Shellfish Association of Great Britain  
South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen Ltd  
Association of Sea Fisheries Committees  
[REDACTED] - States of Jersey  
[REDACTED] - Guernsey SFC  
[REDACTED] - DAFF Isle of Man