

**AGREED RECORD OF FISHERIES CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN
THE EUROPEAN UNION, NORWAY AND THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR 2024**

8 DECEMBER 2023

- 1 A European Union Delegation headed by Mr Erik LINDEBO, a Norwegian Delegation headed by Ms Ann Kristin WESTBERG and a United Kingdom Delegation headed by Mr Colin FAULKNER met in the periods from 7th to 9th November in London, 21st to 23rd November in Brussels and 6th to 8th December in London, to consult on mutual fisheries relations including the management of shared stocks for 2024.
- 2 The Heads of Delegations agreed to recommend to their respective authorities the fishery arrangements for 2024 as outlined in this Agreed Record, including Annexes I to XI and Tables 1, 2 and 3.
- 3 The Delegations underlined their determination to cooperate, in their mutual interest, in securing continued responsible fisheries and ensuring the long-term sustainability and optimum utilisation of shared stocks.
- 4 The Delegations took note of the progress made in consulting on a trilateral framework agreement, which will be the basis for their future cooperation to ensure the long-term sustainability and optimum use of their shared stocks. The Delegations confirmed their ambition to conclude that agreement in 2024.
- 5 The Delegations agreed that the scope of this Agreed Record should be the stocks occurring within the areas under the jurisdiction of all three Parties.
- 6 The Delegations noted that certain arrangements between the Parties, including but not limited to arrangements for access to waters, quota transfers, licencing of vessels and other conditions for fishing in the respective zones of fisheries jurisdiction, may be regulated by bilateral arrangements.
- 7 The Delegations agreed to exchange information relevant to stocks within the scope of this Agreed Record on a timely, efficient, and transparent basis: for example, information relating to quota transfers, access arrangements, catches, and any relevant management measures. The Delegations further noted the benefits of continued close collaboration and information exchange.
- 8 The Delegations agreed that management measures and sharing of stocks as per Table 1 are without prejudice to possible future arrangements between the Parties.
- 9 In that context, the Norwegian Delegation signalled their intention to invite the other Parties to consultations with a view to revisit and review the sharing keys for some of these stocks.
- 10 The Delegations agreed to hold an intersessional meeting in late May-early June 2024 to review progress on the actions set out in this Agreed Record. They agreed that they would use that opportunity to establish a TAC for sprat in ICES Division 3.a and Subarea 4.
- 11 The Delegations agreed that chairing of consultations will rotate on an annual basis, starting from 1 January of every year, until 31 December, and that Norway will exercise the role as

chair for 2024, followed by the UK in 2025 and the EU in 2026. They agreed that meeting dates should be set well in advance, and no later than 30 days before the meeting, to allow for securing necessary meeting venues and for delegations to be able to make travel arrangements in due time before the meetings. In this regard the Delegations agreed to hold a meeting at the end of January 2024 to plan their activities for the year ahead.

- 12 The Delegations agreed that the chair will be responsible for ensuring that all Parties will be included in all communications with ICES, which arise out of this trilateral forum, on shared stocks.

13 JOINTLY MANAGED STOCKS

- 13.1 The Delegations agreed, as an ad hoc approach for 2024, to consider cod, haddock, herring, plaice, saithe and whiting to be jointly managed stocks. Each Party's share of each stock for 2024 is shown in Table 1.
- 13.2 The Delegations acknowledged that, although all Parties have introduced legislation that prohibits most forms of discarding of fish, discards remain a serious problem and are contributing to the sub-optimal utilisation of fisheries resources.
- 13.3 The Delegations agreed to work towards improving exploitation patterns and reducing unwanted catches and discards through the use of technical measures to improve the selectivity of fishing gear; closed seasons and areas; as well as any other appropriate measures. They acknowledged the usefulness of complementary technical measures to achieve those objectives.
- 13.4 The Delegations agreed to apply the inter-annual quota flexibility (IAF) scheme as set out in Annex II. For 2024, the IAF scheme will apply to haddock, herring, plaice, saithe and whiting.
- 13.5 In light of the de minimis and high survivability exemptions contained in its landing obligation, the EU Delegation informed the UK Delegation and the Norwegian Delegation of its intention to continue in 2024 to adjust from the EU quotas the estimated amounts of the discards.
- 13.6 In light of the de minimis and high survivability exemptions contained in its landing obligation, the UK Delegation informed the EU Delegation and the Norwegian Delegation of its intention to continue in 2024 to adjust from the UK quotas the estimated amounts of the discards.

14 LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLANS

- 14.1 The Delegations reaffirmed their commitment to having long-term management plans (LTMP) in place for jointly managed stocks and committed to progressing this work in 2024.
- 14.2 The Delegations referred to paragraphs 12.2 to 12.4 of the Agreed Record of their consultations for 2023, and their decision to form an *ad hoc* subgroup to advance the work on LTMPs and facilitate the communication with ICES in the delivery of this work. The Delegations agreed that the subgroup should continue its work in 2024.

15 COD

- 15.1 The Delegations noted that the Northern Shelf cod advice from ICES establishes a new stock definition merging West of Scotland cod with North Sea cod forming a single assessment unit with three sub-stocks: northwestern, Viking, and southern. They noted that the new sub-stock-based advice for the northwestern sub-stock includes Division 6.a. The Delegations noted that ICES advises that the TAC for Northern Shelf cod should be no more than 22,691 tonnes for 2024. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 29.6% of total catch (by weight) in 2022. ICES projects a discards rate of 17.5% of total catch (by weight) in 2023. The Delegations noted that the TAC in 6.a. was previously agreed bilaterally between the UK and EU. Given the lack of separate ICES advice for Division 6.a., they agreed that the quota allocation to Division 6.a. should be determined in this trilateral forum.
- 15.2 The Delegations agreed that, in the long-term, in order to respond to the substantially changed perception of the stock as a result of the ICES benchmark process, they would seek to devise a methodology that better aligns ICES sub-stock-based advice with effective TAC area management. They noted that this would require significant and in-depth technical and scientific work to ensure the effectiveness of measures. They therefore agreed that, ahead of that longer-term work being concluded, it was important to put in place an interim set of arrangements for the 2024 TAC year.
- 15.3 As part of those interim arrangements, the Delegations agreed to increase the TACs for all four sub-areas covered by this agreement by 15% compared to the TACs for 2023 in light of the increasing stock biomass. This means that the TAC for Northern Shelf cod for 2024 will be 31,301 tonnes. The TAC for Division 6.a should be 1,392 tonnes, the TAC for Subarea 4 24,900 tonnes, the TAC for Skagerrak (sub-division 20) 3,559 tonnes, and the TAC for Division 7.d 1,450 tonnes.
- 15.4 To continue to support ongoing improvements in the sustainable management of the Northern Shelf cod stock, the Delegations agreed to continue the closures of spawning grounds as described in Annex III.
- 15.5 The Norwegian Delegation informed the EU and UK Delegations that three areas had been closed in the southeast part of the Norwegian Economic Zone (NEZ) from 1 July to 31 December 2023 in order to protect juveniles and small cod. The aim is to continue such closures in 2024. In addition to the closure of nursery areas, the Norwegian Delegation informed that Real Time Closures can be triggered in the demersal trawl and Danish seine fishery in the NEZ, if the intermixture of juvenile cod, saithe, haddock, and whiting exceeds a certain limit. Finally, they explained that if the intermixture of juvenile cod is above the legal limit, vessels are obligated to change fishing ground.
- 15.6 The UK Delegation informed the EU and Norwegian Delegations that a National Cod Avoidance Plan was still active in UK waters. The plan continues to cover a variety of measures in different areas of UK waters of the North Sea. The measures include restrictions on mesh size on nets, alongside real time closures and real time reporting to protect high abundances of cod of all ages. These are in addition to existing seasonal closures in UK waters for the protection of spawning aggregations of cod. The UK delegation also indicated that it was likely to restrict the amount of cod quota in Division 7.d which would be allocated to its fleet for 2024.
- 15.7 The EU Delegation informed the UK and Norwegian Delegations that it intends to continue in 2024 the cod avoidance measures introduced in 2020 and 2021. These

measures include specific selectivity measures, area closures for protection of spawning aggregations of cod as well as the possibility for member states to introduce National Cod Avoidance Plans. Such plans will be assessed by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries. In addition, the EU explained that specific actions on control have been undertaken since 2020 including additional efforts on last haul evaluations and the triggering of real time closures and the procedures for the monitoring of these closures.

- 15.8 The Delegations agreed to set up a working group of experts from each party to assess the way that current spatial, seasonal and technical measures help to promote the sustainable management of the Northern Shelf stock. As part of this work, they should focus on possible improvements or modifications to such measures that could provide additional protection to the various sub-stocks. These measures should be developed with due regard to the levels of mixing between the three sub-stocks. The Delegations agreed that that work should be conducted at pace in 2024 and that the working group should report back to the Parties as soon as possible. The UK agreed to chair that working group.
- 15.9 In parallel to the work of this working group, the Parties agreed that their respective experts would monitor the fishery closely throughout 2024 to ensure that the new management regime for the stock should not bring about changes in fishing patterns that would have a detrimental impact on the sustainability of any of the three sub-stocks. They agreed to discuss the outcomes of those monitoring activities at their meetings throughout 2024.
- 15.10 The Delegations noted the current terms of reference for the North Sea Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Working Group (Annex IV) which seeks to enhance the control of the cod and cod-related fisheries in the North Sea to ensure compliance with technical measures and catch registration obligations, and committed to continue to promote a culture of compliance within their respective fisheries.
- 15.11 The Delegations noted that ICES in its 2023 advice for Northern Shelf cod stated that it was not in a position to provide area-specific catch advice without additional genetic data sampled routinely from both commercial fisheries and scientific surveys. The Delegations consequently agreed that the way forward in the management of these stocks would include additional sampling of genetic material and the exchange of information regarding ongoing relevant research on the topic. Moreover, the Delegations recommended that this workstream should be taken forward as a priority and agreed that they would approach ICES for guidance (Annex X).

16 HADDOCK

- 16.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2024 should be no more than 149,024 tonnes. This represents an increase of 17.8% in the advice compared to 2023. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 33.5% of total catch (by weight) in 2022. ICES projects a combined discards and industrial bycatch rate of 18.2% of total catch (by weight) in 2023.
- 16.2 The Delegations acknowledged the increasing divergence between actual catch levels and the potential catch levels advised by ICES. They agreed, nonetheless, to exercise caution by setting the TAC in line with the F_{MSY} lower scenario as provided for in the catch options table of the ICES advice. This led to a TAC for 2024 of 118,955 tonnes. This is an increase of 74% compared to 2023 which resulted in a TAC of 101,421 tonnes (85.26%) in Subarea 4, 6,233 tonnes (5.24%) in Subdivision 20, and 11,301 tonnes (9.50%) in Division 6.a.

17 HERRING

- 17.1 The Delegations referred to the report of the working group on herring, whose terms of reference were set out in Annex III of the Agreed Record of fisheries consultations between the Parties for 2022. They noted that this report presents a well written and comprehensive overview of the development of the herring distribution, fisheries, management approaches and challenges. The working group stopped short of suggesting new management models for exploitation of North Sea autumn-spawning (NSAS) herring as this was considered a task for managers. Furthermore, the Delegations recalled their decision to meet early in 2023 to continue the revision of the current management regime and to finalise this work before October 2023.
- 17.2 The Delegations noted the progress which they had made in the course of 2023 on this issue. They recalled that they had discussed various potential revisions to the current management regime with the aim of achieving a sustainable and simplified management model. They agreed that the management of NSAS herring should be based on a single TAC. The Delegations nevertheless agreed that further work is needed before this can be implemented in practice.
- 17.3 The Delegations acknowledged the joint request to ICES about the evaluation of a new harvest control rule for herring (Annex IX). The Delegations agreed that both scientists and managers of the Parties should attend the scoping meeting for the joint request, planned by ICES in January 2024.
- 17.4 The EU Delegation recalled its separate request to ICES for advice on additional elements of a long-term management plan for NSAS herring, including Western Baltic spring-spawning (WBSS) herring.
- 17.5 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2024 in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, and eastern English Channel should be no more than 532,166 tonnes. This represents an increase of 28.3% in the advice compared to 2023.
- 17.6 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2024 for the A fleet of 510,323 tonnes. This is an increase of 28.7% compared to 2023.
- 17.7 They also agreed that bycatches of herring in other fisheries (the B fleet) should be set at 7,716 tonnes in 2024.
- 17.8 The Delegations also noted that the TACs for the C and D fleets in Skagerrak are to be set out in the EU-Norway bilateral agreement on the regulation of fisheries in the Skagerrak and Kattegat for 2024. The Delegations further noted that that agreement set out the TACs for the C and D fleets, which respectively should not exceed 29,735 tonnes and 6,659 tonnes.
- 17.9 The Delegations noted that combined levels of the A, B, C and D fleet TACs/allowances are MSY compliant for NSAS herring. This assumes that any transfers from the C-fleet in division 3.a to subarea 4 are limited to no more than that portion of the C-fleet TAC that is considered to be NSAS herring in 3.a, taking into account recently-observed mixing rates in 3.a (average for 2020-2022: 43% in the C-fleet and 70% in the D-fleet being NSAS herring).

- 17.10 The EU and UK Delegations informed the Norwegian delegation of their bilateral arrangement for 2024 on the subject of inter-area quota flexibility, as set out in paragraph 2e of the Written Record of fisheries consultations between the UK and the EU for 2024.
- 17.11 The Delegations noted that ICES has advised a zero catch of WBSS herring since 2019. They also noted the decision by the EU to establish a TAC for 2024 of 788 tonnes for WBSS herring in Subareas 22-24 exclusively used for bycatch in the Baltic Sea.
- 17.12 The UK Delegation informed the Norwegian and EU Delegations that it would be reviewing its control and enforcement regimes in 2024 and 2025. As part of that review, the UK will be assessing the use of selectivity mechanisms and devices in its waters, including in fisheries where NSAS herring are caught incidentally.
- 17.13 The EU Delegation noted the need to prioritise within the MCS WG tasks the cooperation on the control of NSAS herring bycatches in other fisheries with a view to share and recommend best practices on weighing and catch registration.

18 PLAICE

- 18.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches of plaice in Subarea 4 and Subdivision 20 in 2024 should be no more than 154,663 tonnes. This represents an increase of 3.1% in the projected catches of plaice in Subarea 4 and Subdivision 20 compared to 2023. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 60.6% of total catch (by weight) in 2022, and ICES projects discard rates of 54.0% of total catch (by weight) in 2023.
- 18.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2024 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Subdivision 20 (Skagerrak) of 154,663 tonnes. This is an increase of 2.6% compared to 2023.
- 18.3 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 136,413 tonnes (88.20%) and the TAC for Subdivision 20 is 18,250 tonnes (11.80%).

19 SAITHE

- 19.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach, catches in 2024 should be no more than 73,815 tonnes. This represents an increase of 25% compared to the advice for 2023. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 7.9% of total catch (by weight) in 2022. ICES projects discard rates of 5% of total catch (by weight) in 2023.
- 19.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2023 in ICES Subareas 4 (North Sea) and 6 (Rockall and West of Scotland), and Division 3.a (Skagerrak and Kattegat) of 73,815 tonnes. This is an increase of 25% compared to the TAC for 2023.
- 19.3 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 and Division 3.a is 66,876 tonnes (90.60%), and the TAC for Subarea 6.a is 6,939 tonnes (9.40%).

20 WHITING

- 20.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2024 should be no more than 128,290 tonnes. This represents an increase of 16.5% compared to the advice for 2023. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 42.7% of total catch (by weight) in 2022, and ICES projects discard rates of 29.9% of total catch (by weight) in 2023.

- 20.2 The Delegations acknowledged the increasing divergence between actual catch levels and the potential catch levels advised by ICES. They agreed, nonetheless, to exercise caution by setting the TAC in line with the $F_{MSY\ lower}$ scenario as provided for in the catch options table of the ICES advice. This resulted in a TAC for 2024 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Division 7.d (Eastern Channel) of 95,596 tonnes. This is an increase of 124% compared to the TAC for 2023.
- 20.3 The Delegations also noted the methodology for the split of whiting TACs between the ICES Subarea 4 and Division 7.d set out in the Agreed Record for 2023, and agreed to apply that methodology again with respect to their quotas for 2024. Taking into account that methodology, they agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 76,697 tonnes (80.23%), and the TAC for Division 7.d is 18,899 tonnes (19.77%).

21 OTHER SHARED STOCKS (NOT JOINTLY MANAGED)

- 21.1 The Delegations agreed during the fisheries consultations for 2021 that there are several stocks not covered in Table 1 that, based on their migration pattern, are shared stocks and consequently should be jointly managed in order to better ensure their long-term sustainable management. This includes inter alia hake, anglerfish and Norway pout.
- 21.2 The Delegations agreed during the fisheries consultations for 2022 to establish a Working Group of experts to collect and collate data on the distribution of hake in the Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, the Northern Bay of Biscay and adjacent waters (Annex VI). Representatives from the Working Group presented the results of their work during the intersessional meeting held in Brussels on 15 and 16 June 2023, and again during annual consultations for 2024 at a meeting held in London on 7 to 9 November 2023. The Delegations welcomed the progress made in fulfilling the tasks of the Group. They noted that additional work was needed to harmonise survey data, with a view to facilitating the delivery of biomass estimates across management areas. The Delegations agreed that the Working Group should carry out this outstanding work and deliver a final report early 2024.
- 21.3 The Delegations took note of the terms of reference for the Working Group on Norway pout as set out in Annex VII. The Delegations agreed not to take this work forward in 2024 given other priorities.
- 21.4 The Delegations noted the ongoing work of the Working Group on the distribution of Anglerfish in Subareas 4 and 6 and in Division 3.a (for which the Terms of Reference are set out in Annex VIII). They stressed the importance of quickly bringing the work to conclusion, and requested the Working Group provide the full report as soon as practicable.
- 21.5 The UK Delegation noted the importance of taking the necessary steps to bring the stock into trilateral management, and confirmed its ambition to see the stock managed on a trilateral basis as soon as practicable and, ideally in time for the consultations for 2025.

22 CATCH INFORMATION

- 22.1 Catch information was submitted by all Parties and is included in Table 2. The Delegations agreed to continue to work together in 2024 to refine this process.

23 MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE (MCS) MEASURES FOR JOINT STOCKS

- 23.1 The Delegations noted that for a comprehensive management regime, efficient and trustworthy MCS measures are crucial, and that strategic and operative MCS cooperation between the inspections services of the Parties is a prerequisite to improve compliance and to achieve a level playing field. Hence, the Delegations welcomed initiatives to improve dialogue and exchange experience between the inspection services to increase the general understanding of the Parties' MCS regimes.
- 23.2 The Delegations also referred to the 'Stand Alone Agreement' signed November 2022 (Agreed Record of Conclusions of Fisheries Consultations between Norway, the EU, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and the UK on Control Measures for Pelagic Stocks in the North East Atlantic) where the parties agreed to apply the arrangements outlined in that Agreed Record at the latest from 1 January 2026.
- 23.3 In the Agreed Record the Parties agreed to apply the Terms of Reference for a CS MCS WG for 2023 and 2024. The Delegations agreed that monitoring, control and surveillance of the joint stock North Sea herring is covered by any relevant measures concluded for the four species covered by the coastal State agreements.
- 23.4 The Delegations referred to the decision in 2018 by the EU and Norway to establish a Working Group on MCS of Fisheries on Joint Stocks in the North Sea (NS MCS WG) under the terms of reference outlined in Annex IV. They also agreed the revised work plan for 2019-2024 outlined in Annex V.
- 23.5 The Delegations noted the work of the NS MCS WG in 2023, including meetings in Edinburgh (17-18 January), Brussels (31 May – 1 June) and Bergen (5-6 September).
- 23.6 The Norwegian Delegation informed the UK Delegation and EU Delegation that a new regulation regarding sampling and sampling plans for landings of fish for industrial purposes will be implemented from January 1, 2024.

24 ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF VESSEL DATA

- 24.1 The Delegations noted the decision by the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) to implement and set into production the new Electronic Reporting System (ERS) based on the Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (FLUX) UN/CEFACT Standard on the 15th of January 2024. This date will also be the start of the two-year transition period wherein the remaining Contracting Parties shall test and implement the new ERS data exchange system based on the FLUX UN CEFACT standard. The Delegations agreed that the timeframe established by NEAFC would also be an appropriate timeframe to finalise revisions of the current agreements on bilateral electronic exchange of data between the Parties, including position data, catch and activity data, and notification and authorisation data.
- 24.2 Furthermore, the Delegations noted the progress made at technical level to develop a template for an electronic notification and authorisation scheme based on the FLUX UN/CEFACT standard with the intention to establish bilateral data exchanges, as appropriate. They also noted the ongoing technical work on the electronic exchange of catch and activity data (ERS) based on the FLUX UN/CEFACT standard, and agreed to continue this scoping exercise in a trilateral setting to establish a template with the intention to establish bilateral data exchanges, as appropriate.
- 24.3 The Delegations agreed to seek suitable arrangements within the scope of the Working Group on electronic exchange of data as outlined in Annex XI.

8 December 2023

For the European Union Delegation

Erik LINDEBO

For the Norwegian Delegation

For the United Kingdom Delegation

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CONDITIONS FOR FISHERIES BY THE PARTIES IN 2024

I. JOINT STOCKS

1. The Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for the stocks mentioned in Table 1 for 2024 shall be as indicated in that table. If ICES make new scientific recommendations, the Parties will review these TACs.
2. The TACs referred to in paragraph 1 shall be divided between the Parties as indicated in Table 1.
3. Each Party shall inform the other Parties of allocations granted to a third country for fishing of the stocks referred to in Table 1.
4. The Parties shall supply each other with monthly catch statistics for fishing on the stocks referred to in Table 1 by their own vessels. Communication of these statistics for the preceding month shall take place at the latest on the last day of each month.

II. FISHERY REGULATIONS

1. The Parties will inform each other of their respective fishery regulations applicable in the North Sea.
2. A Party intending to introduce or amend fishery regulations applicable to vessels of the other Parties shall duly inform the other Parties of such intentions.

INTER-ANNUAL QUOTA FLEXIBILITY

The inter-annual quota flexibility scheme applicable to the jointly managed stocks discussed during these consultations shall be terminated if:

- The spawning stock biomass is estimated to be below the precautionary reference point B_{pa} in the TAC year and the fishing mortality is estimated to be above the precautionary reference point F_{pa} in the intermediate year; or
- the SSB is estimated to be below B_{pa} in both the TAC year and the year thereafter.

Each Party may transfer unutilised quota from the TAC year to be caught in the following year. Each Party may transfer up to 10% of its total quota allocation. This quantity cannot be transferred further in subsequent years.

Each Party may authorise fishing by its vessels beyond its total quota allocation for the TAC year by up to 10%. The quantity fished beyond the allocated quota shall be deducted from the Party's allocation for the year after the TAC year.

The Delegations agreed that in order to ensure transparency in the operation of inter-annual quota flexibility, more detailed information on catch utilisation shall be exchanged.

To note, the TAC year is the year for which the agreed TAC applies, and the intermediate year is the year prior to the TAC year.

SEASONAL AREA CLOSURES TO PROTECT SPAWNING COD

The following areas in the table below will be closed for all gears excluding pelagic gears (purse seine and trawl), for the identified time period:

Time Limited Closures				
No	Area Name	Coordinates	Time period	Additional Comment
1	Stanhope ground	60° 25N - 001° 45E 60° 25N - 002° 00E 60° 10N - 002° 00E 60° 10N - 001° 45E	01 January to 30 April	
2	Long Hole	59° 07.35N - 0° 31.04W 59° 03.60N - 0° 22.25W 58° 59.35N - 0° 17.85W 58° 56.00N - 0° 11.01W 58° 56.60N - 0° 08.85W 58° 59.86N - 0° 15.65W 59° 03.50N - 0° 20.00W 59° 08.15N - 0° 29.07W	01 January to 31 March	
3	Coral edge	58° 51.70N - 03° 26.70E 58° 40.66N - 03° 34.60E 58° 24 00N - 03° 12.40E 58° 24 00N - 02° 55.00E 58° 35 65N - 02° 56.30E	01 January to 28 February	
4	Papa Bank	59° 56N - 03° 08W 59° 56N - 02° 45W 59° 35N - 03° 15W 59° 35N - 03° 35W	01 January to 15 March	
5	Foula Deeps	60° 17.5N - 01° 45W 60° 11.0N - 01° 45W 60° 11.0N - 02° 10W 60° 20.0N - 02° 00W 60° 20.0N - 01° 50W	01 November to 31 December	
6	Egersund Bank	58° 07.40N - 04° 33.0E 57° 53.00N - 05° 12.0E 57° 40.00N - 05° 10.9E 57° 57.90N - 04° 31.9E	01 January to 31 March	(10 x 25 nm)
7	East of Fair Isle	59° 40N - 01° 23W 59° 40N - 01° 13W 59° 30N - 01° 20W 59° 10N - 01° 20W 59° 10N - 01° 28W 59° 30N - 01° 28W	01 January to 15 March	

Time Limited Closures				
No	Area Name	Coordinates	Time period	Additional Comment
8	West Bank	57° 15N - 05° 01E 56° 56N - 05° 00E 56° 56N - 06° 20E 57° 15N - 06° 20E	01 February to 15 March	(18 x 4 nm)
9	Revet	57° 28.43N - 08° 05.66E 57° 27.44N - 08° 07.20E 57° 51.77N - 09° 26.33E 57° 52.88N - 09° 25.00E	01 February to 15 March	(1.5 x 49 nm)
10	Rabarberen	57° 47.00N - 11° 04.00E 57° 43.00N - 11° 04.00E 57° 43.00N - 11° 09.00E 57° 47.00N - 11° 09.00E	01 February to 15 March	East of Skagen (2.7x4 nm)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE (MCS) OF FISHERIES ON JOINT STOCKS FROM 2019 TO 2024

The objective of the Working Group is to cooperate, exchange information and best practices related to control of joint stocks, in mutual interest of securing continued responsible fisheries and ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable exploitation of the marine living resources for which the Parties are responsible.

The scope of the Working Group is mainly fisheries for cod, haddock, saithe, whiting, plaice and herring in the North Sea.

The MCS Working Group should:

1. Compare existing inspection practices and guidelines with the view to recommend best practices for:
 - Sea inspections (e.g., gear, catch composition, discard ban/landing obligation).
 - Landing inspections.
2. Compare relevant topics with the view to, as appropriate, recommend best practices such as:
 - Weighing requirements, including sampling plans etc.,
 - Logbook, landings, sales documentation, and traceability requirements.
3. Conduct missions (exchange of inspectors) to identify inspection best practices, weighing and documentation practices as appropriate.
4. Consider the need and topics for training or workshops for inspectors taking advantage of other fora or meetings.
5. Exchange experience on other relevant issues such as discard ban/landing obligation, post landing inspections, procedures and practices, including as regards enforcement measures further to the identification of violations.
6. Exchange experience on existing risk assessment methods and consider the possibility to share relevant output data related to risk assessment (identified risks and risk handling).

In addition, the NS MCS WG should also focus on monitoring, inspection and surveillance for the control of the cod and cod-related fisheries in the North Sea to ensure compliance with technical measures and catch registration obligations.

If there are any other relevant issues, which the Working Group believes would result in a more efficient Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of fisheries in the North Sea, the Working Group could explore these as appropriate.

TENTATIVE WORK PLAN FOR THE MCS WG NORTH SEA

Task	2019	2020 / 2021	2022	2023	2024
1. Sea Inspections	Compare	-			Recommend best practice
2. Landing inspections	Compare	-			Recommend best practice
3. Weighing requirements	-	-	Compare		Recommend best practice
4. Logbook, landing, sales data and traceability requirements	-	-	Compare		Recommend best practice
5. Training/Workshop as appropriate	Training TBD	Training TBD	Training TBD	Training TBD	Training TBD
6. Exchange inspectors/missions (as appropriate)	Missions TBD	Missions TBD	Missions TBD	Missions TBD	Missions TBD
7. Post Landing Inspections	-	-	Compare		- Recommend best practice
8. Risk assessment	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic and tactical level)	Exchange experience and exchange relevant output data (strategic and tactical level)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON HAKE

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on the distribution of hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) in the Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, the Northern Bay of Biscay and adjacent waters.

The objective of the Working Group is to collect and collate information on the entire geographical distribution of all life stages of hake (Northern stock), based on internationally recognised data collection methods and on the distribution of catches from this stock.

The Working Group shall:

1. Present currently available fishery independent data on the geographical distribution on an annual survey basis for all life stages (biomass and abundance or their appropriate proxies) at the highest level of spatial resolution possible and coded by relevant ICES Areas and national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
2. Describe/Evaluate the quality, coverage and utility of the survey data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space, consistent with standards acceptable to the Working Group, including listing all the scientific surveys which are available for determining the distribution of the stock or which are carried out by the Parties.
3. For each coastal State, present total annual catch data by month and ICES statistical rectangle from 1987-2020, and by the respective zones of national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters as precisely as the data allow since 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
4. Describe the quality, coverage and utility of the catch data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space.
5. Compile the management measures, as provided by fisheries managers, adopted by the Parties for the stock, such as catch limitations and quota schemes (including quota uptake levels), as well as any management measures which would have an impact on such catch limitations.
6. Present a description of the fleet segments involved in the fisheries of the stock by each Party since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.

The Working Group shall be composed of scientific experts from the Coastal States. Managers will provide the Working Group with the necessary material to document the management measures.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON NORWAY POUT

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on the distribution of Norway pout (*Trisopterus esmarkii*) in Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Division 3.a (Skagerrak and Kattegat) and adjacent waters.

The objective of the Working Group is to collect and collate information on the entire geographical distribution of all life stages of Norway pout, based on internationally recognised data collection methods and on the distribution of catches from this stock.

The Working Group shall:

1. Present currently available fishery independent data on the geographical distribution on an annual survey basis for all life stages (biomass and abundance or their appropriate proxies) by relevant ICES Areas and national fisheries jurisdiction since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
2. Describe/Evaluate the quality, coverage and utility of the survey data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space, consistent with standards acceptable to the Working Group, including listing all the scientific surveys which are available for determining the distribution of the stock or which are carried out by the Parties.
3. For each coastal State, present total annual catch data by month and ICES statistical rectangle from 1987-2021, and by the respective zones of national fisheries jurisdiction as precisely as the data allow since 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
4. Describe the quality, coverage and utility of the catch data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space.
5. Compile the management measures, as provided by fisheries managers, adopted by the Parties for the stock, such as catch limitations and quota schemes (including quota uptake levels), as well as any management measures which would have an impact on such catch limitations.
6. Present a description of the fleet segments involved in the fisheries of the stock by each Party since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.

The Working Group shall be composed of scientific experts from the Coastal States. Managers will provide the Working Group with the necessary material to document the management measures.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON ANGLERFISH

Terms of Reference for a Working Group on the distribution of Anglerfish (*Lophius budegassa*, *Lophius piscatorius*) in subareas 4 and 6, and in Division 3.a (North Sea, Rockall and West of Scotland, Skagerrak and Kattegat).

The objective of the Working Group is to collect and collate information on the entire geographical distribution of all life stages of the two species of Anglerfish, based on internationally recognised data collection methods and on the distribution of catches from this stock.

The Working Group shall:

1. Present currently available fishery independent data on the geographical distribution on an annual survey basis for all life stages (biomass and abundance or their appropriate proxies) at the highest level of spatial resolution possible and coded by relevant ICES Areas and national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters since year 1987, or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
2. Describe/Evaluate the quality, coverage and utility of the survey data for the purposes of assessing the distribution and migration of the stock in time and space, consistent with standards acceptable to the Working Group, including listing all the scientific surveys which are available for determining the distribution of the stock or which are carried out by the Parties.
3. For each coastal State, present total annual catch data by ICES statistical rectangle from 1987-2021, and by the respective zones of national fisheries jurisdiction and international waters as precisely as the data allow since 1987 or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.
4. Describe the quality, coverage and utility of the catch data and fishing effort data for the purposes of assessing the distribution of the stock in time and space.
5. Compile the management measures, as provided by fisheries managers, adopted by the Parties for the stock, such as catch limitations and quota schemes (including quota uptake levels), as well as any management measures which would have an impact on such catch limitations.
6. Present a description of the fleet segments involved in the fisheries of the stock by each Party since year 1987 or for an alternative period if so decided by the Working Group.

The Working Group shall be composed of scientific experts from the Coastal States. Managers will provide the Working Group with the necessary material to document the management measures.

JOINT REQUEST TO ICES TO ADVISE ON A LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR NORTH SEA HERRING AUTUMN SPAWNERS IN NORTH SEA, SKAGERRAK AND KATTEGAT AND EASTERN ENGLISH CHANNEL

The EU, Norway, and the UK jointly request ICES to advise on the long-term management strategies on North Sea autumn spawners herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subarea 4 and divisions 3.a and 7.d, (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel). A request is provided below.

ICES is requested to identify appropriate precautionary combinations in the format of Tables given in its response to the EU, Norway and the UK request to ICES to evaluate a multi-annual management strategy for herring (*Clupea harengus*) in Subarea 4 and divisions 3.a and 7.d, autumn spawners (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, eastern English Channel) (her.27.3a47d), using:

- A harvest control rule with a fishing mortality equal to the target F when SSB is at or above B_{trigger}
In the case that the SSB is forecast to be less than B_{trigger} at spawning time in the year for which the TAC is to be set, the TAC shall be fixed consistently with a fishing mortality that is given by: $F = F_{\text{target}} * \text{SSB} / B_{\text{trigger}}$
- A range of B_{trigger} from 800 000 to 1 700 00 tonnes with a range of target F s up to F_{Lim}
- For the combinations above explore the following exploitation pattern scenarios:
 1. Recent exploitation pattern (averaged over 2012-2021).
 2. A historic exploitation pattern (averaged over 1998-2007).
 3. Ranges of assumptions for values of F_{0-1} that vary between 0-0.1 independent from recent exploitation patterns for older fish (F_{2+}).
 4. The recent exploitation pattern with $F_{0-1}=0$ from above contrasted with exploitation patterns moved to one year older and one year younger fish (three scenarios).

Long term goals:

- Maximise yield
- Minimising the risk of falling below B_{lim}
- Achieve stability of catches

All alternatives should be evaluated with and without a constraint on the inter-annual variation of TAC. When the rules would lead to a TAC, which deviates by more than 20% below or 25% above the TAC of the preceding year, the Parties shall fix a TAC that is respectively no more than 20% less or 25% more than the TAC of the preceding year. The TAC constraint shall not apply if the SSB at spawning time in the year for which the TAC is to be set is less or equal to B_{trigger} .

The constraint mechanism shall be tested separately from and in combination with 10% banking and borrowing mechanism. Banking and borrowing should be suspended when SSB is below B_{trigger} .

Evaluation and performance criteria

Each alternative shall be assessed in relation to how it performs in the short term (5 years), medium term (next 10 years) and long term (next 25 years) in relation to:

- Average SSB

- Average yield
- Indicator for year to year variability in SSB and yield
- Risk of SSB falling below B_{lim}

JOINT REQUEST TO ICES REGARDING GENETIC WORK ON NORTHERN SHELF COD SUB-STOCKS

ICES, as the coordinating body, is requested to promptly suggest a comprehensive experimental design, including a detailed sampling protocol and methodological specifications, for genetic analysis of the Northern Shelf cod stock complex, which the Parties could implement as a priority. This design will aim to enhance understanding of sub-stock dynamics, especially stock-mixing throughout the year, aligning with the broader goal of guiding area-specific catch advice.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF DATA FOR
2024**

The Delegations agreed that the Working Group on Electronic Exchange of data should meet as appropriate in 2024 under the Terms of Reference described below. Before the Working Group meets necessary technical scoping exercises can be conducted within the same Terms of Reference.

The Working Group shall seek to identify suitable technical arrangements for electronic exchange of data based on the Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (FLUX) UN/CEFACT Standard.

The Working Group shall:

1. Establish templates for electronic exchange of notification and authorisation data with the intention to revise the current bilateral arrangements between the Parties.
2. Establish templates for electronic exchange of catch and activity data (ERS) with the intention to revise the current bilateral arrangements between the Parties. Furthermore, identify additional reporting needs, any outstanding issues and elements that can improve performance of the current bilateral systems for electronic exchange of catch and activity data (ERS). Establish technical procedures and specifications to implement the possibility to pull data covering fishing activities before entering and after exiting the economic zone of the other Party. Establish improved technical procedures to deliver RET messages directly to the fishing vessels to secure satisfactory exchange and increased quality of catch and activity data.
3. Follow up the implementation of bilateral arrangements on the exchange of position data (VMS).

The Working Group should submit its report to the Parties well in advance of the annual consultations for 2025. Reports from possible technical scoping exercises should also be submitted to the Parties well in advance of the annual consultations for 2025.

TABLE 1

**2024 QUOTAS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED SHARED STOCKS IN THE
NORTH SEA**

Species	ICES Area	TAC	Sharing					
			Norway		EU		UK	
			%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes
Cod	4	24,900	17	4,233	36.36	9,054	46.64	11,613
Haddock	4	101,421	23	23,327	12.59	12,769	64.41	65,325
Saithe	4, 3.a	66,876	52	34,776	35.88	23,995	12.12	8,105
Whiting	4	76,697	10	7,670	25.32	19,420	64.68	49,607
Plaice	4	136,413	7	9,549	66.53	90,755	26.47	36,109
Herring	4, 7.d	510,323	29	147,994	50.71	258,784	20.29	103,545

TABLE 2

2022 CATCH STATISTICS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED SHARED STOCKS IN THE NORTH SEA

Species	ICES area	EU catches				Norway catches				UK catches			
		Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total
		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK	
Cod	4	916	2,385	588	3,889	15	1,026	1,207	2,248	21	1,244	5,651	6,916
Haddock	4	1,266	813	1,692	3,772	1	2,224	296	2,521	125	3,431	22,055	25,611
Saithe	4, 3.a	765	4,506	11,163	16,435	49	13,439	7,339	20,827	2	1,098	5,648	6,748
Whiting	4	910	179	742	1,832	1	900	11	912	131	732	9,836	10,699
Plaice	4	12,301	2,691	1,416	16,408	-	21	1	22	2,527	751	1,197	4,475
Herring	4, 7.d	33,686	4,272	171,856	209,814	-	121,176	12,494	133,670	3,487	-	79,740	83,227

TABLE 3

2023 PROVISIONAL CATCH STATISTICS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED SHARED STOCKS IN THE NORTH SEA

Species	ICES area	EU catches ¹				Norway catches ²				UK catches ³			
		Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total
		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK	
Cod	4	994	3,074	797	4,865	14	1,861	1,504	3,379	23	1,443	6,473	7,938
Haddock	4	2,872	793	1,233	4,898	11	2,136	205	2,352	110	2,854	20,160	23,125
Saithe	4, 3.a	545	3,711	12,510	16,510	14	22,356	4,949	27,319	0	1,127	4,129	5,257
Whiting	4	758	152	725	1,634	30	940	33	1,003	96	641	8,097	8,834
Plaice	4	9,500	2,084	1,146	12,731	2	37	1	40	2,046	1,027	955	4,029
Herring	4, 7.d	2,588	3,279	155,513	161,381	31	91,736	18,752	110,519	362	0	72,698	73,060

¹ January – October 2023

² January – 30th November 2023

³ January – 10th October 2023