

BSAC summary report of the meeting with ICES on the Baltic

Online, Monday, 12 June 2023, 15:00 - 17:00 CEST.
Attended by the Chair of BSAC ExCom and Secretariat.

The goal was to discuss 2 proposals to address the issues with the stocks in the Baltic.

ICES explained that the recent advice show that many stocks have a 0catch or a decline in their advice.

There are challenges in the Baltic meaning that many species and habitat were not in good condition.

This affects food web, functionality, reduces resilience and resistance against environmental changes.

ICES proposed to **organise a workshop in 2024 picking up the recommendations of the previous ICES workshops and explore what can be done** and to work on a draft proposal for a **scientific project potentially funded by EMFAF to transfer knowledge to effective fish stock management in the Baltic.**

Scientists at the meeting discussed different topics in relation to the challenges faced.

The Chair summarised 3 main conclusions from the discussions:

(1) One challenge faced is that **current single stock advice does not consider the environment and its changes.** The other drivers of the stocks apart from fisheries are not considered.

(2) **ICES could improve the way it is looking at stocks:** Where to feed in the environment in the current framework, informing the current framework.

(3) There are areas where there is a **need for more science:** connectivity between coastal and open science, influence of climate change on growth and recruitment, etc.

The workshop could address the first 2 and the scientific project the 3rd one.

There were also discussions about the need to advise more cautiously because of uncertainty and the important link to be made with the MSFD descriptors (including size/age structures).

BSAC ExCom Chair presented the agreed BSAC position relevant for the meeting: specifically the calls to take into account better species interaction/ecosystem considerations and the need for more research/capacity for mixed fisheries advice.

He thanked ICES for inviting Chair and Secretary of the BSAC to attend the meeting and thanked for initiative and looking for a way forward.

Finally, he highlighted the scheduled BSAC workshop on predator in October, addressing the invitation for engagement of the scientist from all scientific institutes from each Baltic Member State.

The scheduled BSAC recommendation on the TAC advice in early July was also brought to the attention of the participants of the meeting.

ICES will draft a report from the meeting, it will liaise with scientist to build the scientific project and further discuss the workshop that should take place in 2024.