

## Virtual Coffee Meeting: Management Team + BALTFISH Polish Presidency

**DATE: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 TIME: 09.00 – 9:30 CEST**

### Report

#### PRESENT:

POLISH Presidency: Filip Podgórski, Barbara Lewkowska

BSAC: Jarek Zieliński, Nils Höglund, Lise Laustsen, Teija Aho, Glenn Douglas, Guillaume Carruel, Ewa Milewska.

APOLOGIES Teija Aho

**The BSAC ExCom Chair** welcomed all participants and thanked the Polish BALTFISH Presidency for accepting the invitation to the meeting on the AGRIFISH Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and the decisions on 2024 TACs.

**The representative of the Polish BALTFISH Presidency** referred to the Council decisions on 2024 TACs, stock by stock.

For **Bothnian herring**, the Council decided that the 2024 TAC will be set at a level 31% lower than in 2023. The rationale is that the stock is just below  $B_{trigger}$  and there is no need to close targeted fishery, as proposed by the Commission. Additional national remedial measures will be applied by Sweden and Finland.

For **western herring**, the Council decided to set the 2024 TAC as a rollover of the 2023 TAC.

For **Central herring**, the Council decided to set the 2024 TAC at a level 43% lower than in 2023, with some additional remedial measures, including closures of pelagic trawl fishery in SD 25-26 in April, in SD 27 and 28.2 from 16 April to 15 May, and in SD 29-32 in May, in order to protect herring during spawning. The closures are to be applied in different periods in different parts of the Baltic depending on the spawning time of herring. **The Presidency representative** explained that similar closures have been applied in the Gulf of Riga where the herring stock is in good condition. The Commission will seek ICES advice on the closure times. There will be no exemptions to these closures.

For **Gulf of Riga herring** the Council followed the ICES advice (-17% decrease as compared to 2023 TAC)

For **eastern cod**, the Council followed the Commission's proposal to rollover the bycatch 2023 TAC.

For **western cod**, the Council decided to set the bycatch TAC at 340 t (a 30% decrease of the 2023 TAC instead of -72% decrease proposed by the Commission), in order to cover unavoidable bycatches.

For **plaice**, the Council decided to rollover the 2023 TAC, along with the Commission's proposal.

For **salmon in the Gulf of Finland**, the Council decided on a 7% increase of the 2024 TAC as compared to 2023 TAC, along the Commission's proposal.

For **the Main Basin salmon**, the 2024 TAC was set at a level 15% lower than in 2023<sup>1</sup> (**53,967 salmon**), in accordance with the Commission's proposal. The Commission, Sweden and Finland signed a declaration concerning management of salmon fisheries in sub divisions 29N and 30.

The Commission will request ICES to provide scientific advice on the management measures that Finland and Sweden are ready to put in place for salmon fisheries in subdivisions 29N and 30. **The representative of the Polish BALTFISH Presidency** informed that in addition to the abovementioned TACs, the Council also agreed on **specific measures**, including:

- limiting the **recreational fishing of salmon** to no more than one specimen of adipose fin-clipped salmon retained per fisher per day. After catching the first specimen, recreational fishers will have to stop fishing salmon for the remainder of the day
- prohibiting the **recreational fishing of cod** in subdivisions 22-26

Referring to the implementation of relevant Articles of the Baltic MAP on fixing the fishing opportunities, **the representative of the Polish BALTFISH Presidency** explained that the Member States had decided to ask the Commission to revise the Baltic MAP<sup>2</sup>, in order to clarify its interpretation.

In addition, the Council agreed to keep Article 7 - derogation for trawling fisheries catching pelagic from 1st May to 31st August for human consumption. It is believed that this won't affect the spawning that should be finished at the end of April in SD 25-26.

With regard to Article 7 of the TAC Regulation, **the BALTFISH Presidency representative** explained that derogation for pelagic fishery for human consumption has already been applied in 2023 in SD 24 where western herring occurs and in SD 25 herring spawning is taking place before May. The closures (remedial measures) applied to pelagic fishery in 2024 in SD 25-32 are aimed at protecting herring during spawning and roll-over of article 7 won't affect that spawning.

Referring to the question asked by the **EBM WG Chair** on whether eel will be discussed by BALTFISH in a dedicated meeting, **the BALTFISH Presidency representative** replied that eel will be discussed by BALTFISH at a later stage, probably before the Council meeting in December. Under the Polish Presidency, BALTFISH will also continue discussing additional protection measures for harbour porpoise.

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<sup>1</sup> fishing this quota is permitted for Union fishing vessels in ICES subdivision 31 in areas within four nautical miles measured from the baselines during the period from 1 May to 31 August.

<sup>2</sup> Article 4.6 Fishing opportunities shall in any event be fixed in such a way as to ensure that there is less than a 5 % probability of the spawning stock biomass falling below the limit spawning stock biomass reference point (Blim) set out in particular in Annex II, column B.

**The Executive Secretary** informed that according to the information received from EFCA, the Baltic compliance evaluation report is delayed to spring 2024. He also referred to the visit of EFCA patrol vessel to Gdynia, planned for 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023. EFCA is planning to invite BALTFISH and BSAC to visit the new vessel. The BSAC is ready to organise a meeting with BALTFISH and EFCA at this occasion.

**The BSAC ExCom Chair** underlined that the visit of the new patrol vessel to Gdynia could be a good occasion for the BSAC to hold a meeting with EFCA to exchange of views on the role of EFCA. He stated that this issue will be discussed during the ExCom meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October.

**The representative of the Polish BALTFISH Presidency** replied that he will contact control experts to inform on this event.

**The BSAC ExCom Chair** thanked the BALTFISH Presidency for the meeting and the information shared with the BSAC.