



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN INFLUENCING EUROPEAN FISHERIES DECISION MAKING?

The North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (NWWRAC) is currently seeking members from Environmental NGOs, consumers, traders' organisations and other interested parties to help inform the European Commission in making important decisions related to European fisheries management for marine resources in Atlantic waters.

After a recent General Assembly meeting, three seats remain vacant in the NWWRAC for Environmental NGOs, consumers, aquaculture producers or recreational and sport fishermen and we would now like to encourage anyone with an interest in improving the management of fisheries in European waters to become members of the NWWRAC.

The NWWRAC is the principal stakeholder group which is consulted by the EU Commission and the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) on a regular basis on all matters related to fishing in the adjacent waters to Ireland (ICES areas VI and VII).

Established by the EU Commission in September 2005 to advise on EU Policy for Fisheries Management, the NWWRAC is one of seven RACs which have been set out in EU legislation. It has 57 full members which include fishing organisations from across Ireland, UK, France, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as environmental and other interest groups and approximately 100 active observers including scientists and Member States' representatives. The NWWRAC Secretariat is based in Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), the Irish Sea Fisheries Board in Dublin.

Essentially, the NWWRAC is an open forum for the fishing industry and Environmental NGOs, consumers and other interested parties to come together to discuss, debate and develop proposals and opinions agreed by consensus on EU fisheries related management issues. Meetings are held 10-12 times a year to discuss a wide variety of horizontal and regional issues within its scope of action such as quota management, conservation measures and discarding, marine spatial planning and Natura 2000 sites, joint fishing industry-science partnerships projects and the assessment of socio-economic effects of fisheries regulations.



In 2009, a number of consultations will take place within the NWWRAC on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, reform of the system of control, designation and implementation of Marine Protected Areas in different Member States, and development and implementation of fishery management plans for species such as hake and cod among other relevant matters.

The NWWRAC is expected to deliver sound advice and practical results to the Commission. To date, the NWWRAC has successfully provided a number of solutions to a variety of Fisheries issues of great importance to the local and regional fishing communities, including:

- a change of minimum landing sizes in the Japanese clam fishery in France
- an amendment of the maximum length size of hake gillnets
- better and more proactive involvement of industry in consultations on offshore marine protected areas
- improved data collection schemes in the Celtic and Irish Sea
- improved conservation measures such as the Trevoise closure

The European Commission has a high regard for the RAC's, stating that the 'RACs have delivered better access to information and better understanding of decisions taken at European level.. In addition, they have also helped create regional networks where experiences and ideas circulate more readily'

If you feel you would like to get more involved in the decision making process on fisheries management and make a real difference, please contact the NWWRAC Secretariat at nwwrac@bim.ie. Alternatively, all relevant information in relation to formal opinions, meetings, and background on our work can be reviewed on the NWWRAC website: www.nwwrac.org

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