



Fishermen and Conservationists to Provide Recommendations to EU Policy-makers

Second meeting of North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council in Paris

A sixty-strong delegation of representatives from the fisheries, environmental, angling and consumer sectors met in the French National Fisheries Committees offices in Paris on Monday November 7 and Tuesday November 8 2005 to consider issues and a way forward for fisheries and the environment in north western European waters.

The second meeting of the North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (NWWRAC) brought together representatives from the six member states, fishing these waters, to provide agreed recommendations in advance of the all-important Council of Ministers meeting on fish stocks in December.

These working group meetings examined in detail the latest advice from ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas. This advice forms the basis of the annual TAC and quota allocation of stocks in European waters each year. The aim of the NWWRAC is to provide their own recommendations to the EU on issues such as TAC and quota allocation with due consideration to the views of all stakeholders participating on the advisory council.

The NWWRAC is an EU-established body, which for the first time in the history of the Common Fisheries Policy brings together all stakeholder groups from the Irish, UK, Spanish, French, Dutch and Belgian fisheries sectors. BIM, the Irish Sea Fisheries Board provides the secretariat to the Council.

Sam Lambourn, Chairman of the NWWRAC, welcomed all attendees and said: *“I am extremely encouraged by everyone’s desire to participate at these meetings. We have representatives from all sectors with an interest in the waters of the North West of Europe and there is a real sense of cooperation’*. He also stated that he *‘looked forward to bringing the views and recommendations expressed in these meetings forward to the Commission’*.

Lorcan Ó Cinnéide, head of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation was elected Chairman of the Irish Sea Working Group. Commenting at the end of the two-day working group meetings he stated: *“I am very happy to see frank, direct and relevant discussions between all the stakeholders at these meetings. There is a strong and evident will to tackle the enormous difficulties being faced both in fisheries and conservation terms”*.



Bertie Armstrong of the Scottish Fishermen’s Federation, and Chairman of the West of Scotland Working Group welcomed the input provided by scientists of CEFAS and IFREMER at the meetings and stated that, *“One issue that really came to the fore was the difficulties presented to scientists each year in trying to produce sensible stock assessments. I truly believe that this is an area where the RAC can focus their work and one where the industry can work directly with scientists to ensure that sensible, credible and understandable assessments of the stock are produced”*

The reports from the meetings will be published in English, French and Spanish on the NWWRAC website: www.nwwrac.org. The recommendations will be forwarded to the Commission in time for the November and December Council. The next meeting of the working groups will be held in early spring of 2006.

For further information please contact the secretariat of the North Western Waters RAC at nwwrac@bim.ie or +353- 2144278

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