

**AGREED RECORD OF FISHERIES CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN NORWAY, THE UNITED
KINGDOM AND THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR 2025**

28 NOVEMBER 2024

- 1 A Norwegian Delegation headed by Ms Ann Kristin WESTBERG, a United Kingdom Delegation headed by Mr Colin FAULKNER and a European Union Delegation headed by Ms Adela REY met in the periods from 4th to 7th November in Brussels and 25th to 28th November in Oslo to consult on mutual fisheries relations including the management of shared stocks for 2025.
- 2 The Heads of Delegations agreed to recommend to their respective authorities the fishery arrangements for 2025 as outlined in this Agreed Record, including Annexes I to IX 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 acknowledged the lack of progress in concluding a trilateral framework agreement, the aim of which is to provide the basis for their future cooperation and to ensure the long-term sustainability and optimum use of their shared stocks. The Delegations confirmed their ambition to conclude that agreement in 2025.
- 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 or early June 2025, the aim of which will be, amongst other things, 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 the UK will exercise the role as chair for 2025, followed by the EU in 2026 and Norway in 2027. 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 in early February 2025 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 2025, to consider cod, haddock, herring, plaice, saithe and whiting to be jointly managed stocks. Each Party's share of each stock for 2025 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 using 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 2025, 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 2025 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 2025 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 2025.

14.2 The Delegations agreed to request ICES to advise on a long-term management plan for saithe in Subareas 4 and 6 and in Division 3.a (North Sea, Rockall and West of Scotland, Skagerrak and Kattegat). This request is outlined in Annex IV.

15 COD

- 15.1 The Delegations noted ICES advise that, when the MSY approach is applied for the Southern sub-stock and precautionary considerations to protect the Southern sub-stock are applied to the Northwestern and Viking sub-stocks, the TAC for Northern Shelf cod should be no more than 15,511 tonnes for 2025.
- 15.2 The Delegations noted the difficulties of translating that advice into the four TAC management areas, because ICES state that the sub-stock advice cannot be considered an area-based advice due to unknown levels of mixing between the sub-stocks.
- 15.3 The Delegations noted that ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 23.7% of total catch (by weight) in 2023. ICES projects a discards rate of 16.4% of total catch (by weight) in 2024.
- 15.4 Noting this ICES advice, the delegations discussed the wide variety of management measures already in place or which otherwise require implementation in order to manage the stock.
- 15.5 First, the Delegations agreed that the quota allocation to Division 6.a should continue to be determined in this trilateral forum, as was the case in 2024, noting that 6.a forms part of the Northern Shelf cod advice.
- 15.6 Second, the Delegations recalled that in the Agreed Record for 2024 they agreed that they would seek to devise a methodology that better aligns ICES sub-stock based advice with effective TAC area management. They also recalled that they had requested ICES to move towards, to the extent possible, providing area-specific catch advice for Northern Shelf cod.
- 15.7 In relation to this objective, the Delegations welcomed the presentation of the GenDC project by DTU Aqua, which aims to develop standardised genetic sampling protocols and procedures to enhance data integration with stock assessments and existing databases for Northern Shelf cod as well as for other stocks. The project will support the work under the joint request to ICES on genetic and other data that can help ICES move towards providing area-specific catch advice for Northern Shelf cod.
- 15.8 Third, the Delegations recalled that they had established a Working Group of experts from each party, chaired by UK, to provide an overview of current spatial, seasonal and technical measures that promotes the sustainable management of the Northern Shelf stock. The Delegations agreed that the work should be conducted at pace and that the Working Group should report back to the Parties in February 2025 on points 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference outlined in Annex VI. Furthermore, it was agreed that the next steps, including work on points 3 to 5 of the Terms of Reference and on possible improvements or modifications to relevant measures, will be considered and confirmed by the Parties after receiving the report mentioned above.
- 15.9 Fourth, the Delegations agreed with respect to their work on monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) on the importance of continuing to promote a culture of compliance within their respective fisheries, and that future work on MCS should have a particular focus on cod-related fisheries.
- 15.10 Fifth, to continue to support ongoing improvements in the sustainable management of the stock, the Delegations agreed to continue the closures of spawning grounds as described in Annex III.

- 15.11 Furthermore, the Norwegian Delegation informed the EU and UK Delegations that three areas had been closed in the southeastern part of the Norwegian Economic Zone (NEZ) from 1 July to 31 December 2024 in order to protect juveniles and small cod. The measure will be evaluated before a decision to continue such closures in 2025 is taken. 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. They also explained that if the intermixture of juveniles (including cod) is above the legal limit, vessels are obligated to change fishing ground.
- 15.12 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.
- 15.13 The UK informed the Norwegian and EU Delegations that, as an additional measure to extend restrictions on catches of cod in the 7.d management area, the UK's quota for this area would be set as bycatch only.
- 15.14 The EU Delegation informed the UK and Norwegian Delegations that it intends to continue in 2025 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.
- 15.15 The Delegations agreed that their intention is to set fishing opportunities consistent with the ICES MSY approach, aiming to reduce overall fishing pressure, increase the SSB across the sub-stocks, and enhance the protection of the Southern sub-stock. The Delegations further noted the importance of the stock within the mixed fishery (taking into account fishing patterns and the interdependence of stocks) and the necessity of avoiding a choke effect that would lead to the premature closure of other demersal fisheries, and/or increased unreported discarding.
- 15.16 Noting the measures set out above which aim to bring about sustainable management of the stock, and following considerations of the scenarios provided for each sub-stock, the Delegations agreed to set a TAC for the whole Northern Shelf cod stock of 25,028 tonnes. This figure reflects the headline advice for the Southern sub-stock, and the ICES FMSY scenarios for the Northwestern and Viking sub-stocks. This means that the TAC for Division 6.a should be 1,114 tonnes, the TAC for Subarea 4 19,910 tonnes, the TAC for Skagerrak (Subdivision 20) 2,846 tonnes, and the TAC for Division 7.d 1,158 tonnes.

16 HADDOCK

- 16.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2025 should be no more than 112,435 tonnes. This represents a decrease of 25 % in the advice compared to 2024. ICES estimates that discards, BMS landings and industrial bycatch are at 33.3% of total catch (by weight) in 2023. ICES projects a combined discards and industrial bycatch rate of 19.7% of total catch (by weight) in 2024.

- 16.2 The Delegations agreed to set a TAC for 2025 of 112,435 tonnes. This is a decrease of 5.5% compared to 2024.
- 16.3 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 (85.26%) is 95,862 tonnes, the TAC for Subdivision 20 (5.24%) is 5,892 tonnes and the TAC for Division 6.a (9.50%) is 10,681 tonnes.

17 HERRING

- 17.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches of North Sea autumn-spawning (NSAS) herring in 2025 in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, and eastern English Channel should be no more than 410,707 tonnes. This represents a decrease of 22.8% in the advice compared to 2024.
- 17.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2025 for the A fleet of 388,542 tonnes. This is a decrease of 23.9% compared to 2024.
- 17.3 They also agreed that bycatches of herring in other fisheries (the B fleet) should be limited to 7,716 tonnes in 2025.
- 17.4 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 2025. The Delegations further noted that that agreement set out the TACs for the C and D fleets, which respectively should not exceed 22,793 tonnes and 6,659 tonnes.
- 17.5 The Delegations noted that ICES has advised a zero catch of Western Baltic spring-spawning (WBSS) herring since 2019. They also noted the decision by the EU to establish a TAC for 2025 of 788 tonnes for WBSS herring in Subareas 22-24 exclusively used for bycatch in the Baltic Sea.
- 17.6 The EU and UK Delegations informed the Norwegian delegation of their bilateral arrangement for 2025 on the subject of inter-area quota flexibility, as set out in the Written Record of fisheries consultations between the UK and the EU for 2025.
- 17.7 The Delegations recalled that the North Sea herring Working Group delivered an extensive report in 2022. The report left the discussion of new management models for exploitation of NSAS herring to the managers. In 2023, this was discussed by the Delegations with the aim of a sustainable and simplified management model. They agreed that the management of NSAS herring should be based on a single TAC but acknowledged the need for further work to succeed.
- 17.8 The Delegations acknowledged the joint request to ICES on the evaluation of a new harvest control rule for NSAS herring (Annex VII), and noted that ICES is likely to submit its response by 1 May 2025.
- 17.9 The EU Delegation also recalled its separate request to ICES for advice on additional elements of a long-term management plan for NSAS herring, including WBSS herring.
- 17.10 The Delegations agreed to meet early in 2025 to start the discussions on a new management model for NSAS herring. These consultations should also incorporate the development of

a new long-term management plan when the response from ICES is available. The aim should be to have a new regime, based on a single TAC, in place for 2026 and onwards.

17.11 The EU Delegation noted the need to prioritise within the tasks of a future MCS WG cooperation on control of NSAS herring bycatches in other fisheries with a view to share and recommend best practice 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 2025 should be no more than 176,593 tonnes. This represents an increase of 14.2% in the projected catches of plaice in Subarea 4 and Subdivision 20 compared to 2024. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 62.7% of total catch (by weight) in 2023, and ICES projects discard rates of 57.9% of total catch (by weight) in 2024.

18.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2025 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Subdivision 20 (Skagerrak) of 176,593 tonnes. This is an increase of 14.2% compared to 2024.

18.3 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 155,755 tonnes (88.20%) and the TAC for Subdivision 20 is 20,838 tonnes (11.80%).

19 SAITHE

19.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach, catches in 2025 should be no more than 79,071 tonnes. This represents an increase of 7.1% compared to the advice for 2024. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 5.5% of total catch (by weight) in 2023. ICES projects discard rates of 4.2% of total catch (by weight) in 2024.

19.2 The Delegations agreed to establish a TAC for 2025 in ICES Subareas 4 (North Sea) and 6 (Rockall and West of Scotland), and Division 3.a (Skagerrak and Kattegat) of 79,071 tonnes. This is an increase of 7.1% compared to the TAC for 2024.

19.3 The Delegations agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 and Division 3.a is 71,638 tonnes (90.60%), and the TAC for Subarea 6.a is 7,433 tonnes (9.40%).

20 WHITING

20.1 The Delegations noted that according to the ICES MSY approach catches in 2025 should be no more than 188,148 tonnes. This represents an increase of 68% compared to the advice for 2024. ICES estimates that discards and BMS landings are at 33.2% of total catch (by weight) in 2023, and ICES projects discard rates of 25.8% of total catch (by weight) in 2024.

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 in the catch options table of the ICES advice. This resulted in a TAC for 2025 in ICES Subarea 4 (North Sea) and Division 7.d (Eastern Channel) of 139,425 tonnes. This is an increase of 46% compared to the TAC for 2024.

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 2025. Taking into account that methodology, they agreed that the resulting TAC for Subarea 4 is 111,861 tonnes (80.23%), and the TAC for Division 7.d is 27,564 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 recalled that during the fisheries consultations for 2022 they had established 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. The Delegations noted that the Working Group is expected to submit its report in early 2025.
- 21.3 The Delegations recalled that during fisheries consultations in 2022 they had established a Working Group of experts to collect and collate data on the distribution of anglerfish in Subareas 4 and 6 and in Division 3.a. The report is now finished and was presented by representatives from the Working Group. The Delegations welcomed the report and agreed to meet during 2025 to start discussions about all aspects of joint management, including, but not limited to, sharing.

22 CATCH INFORMATION

- 22.1 Catch information was submitted by all Parties and is included in Table 2 and Table 3.

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

- 23.1 The Delegations agreed that comprehensive management regimes require efficient and trustworthy MCS measures, and that strategic and operative MCS cooperation between the inspections services of the Parties is a prerequisite to continuously improve compliance and achieving 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, in particular the work carried out by the North Sea MCS Working Group (NS MCS WG).
- 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 Northeast Atlantic) where the parties agreed to apply the arrangements outlined in that Agreed Record at the latest from 1 January 2026. The Delegations noted that there are ongoing consultations on control measures for pelagic stocks in the North-East Atlantic. The Delegations agreed that monitoring, control and surveillance of North Sea herring is covered by the control measures concluded within the Stand Alone Agreement, without prejudice to other measures discussed and agreed in trilateral consultations.
- 23.3 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 and noted that the Working Group delivered its final report in June 2024 and that the report was presented during the annual consultations on 5 November in Brussels. The Working Group was able to recommend best practice in several areas.

- 23.4 The Delegations welcomed the report and discussed how to follow it up in a suitable way and concluded that more time was needed to consider the outcomes and next steps.
- 23.5 To ensure this important area of work is progressed, the Delegations agreed to develop a draft terms of reference (ToR) for a North Sea MCS Working Group. When developing a ToR the outcomes of the NS MCS WG report should be considered with a view to identify tasks that will further develop MCS on jointly managed stocks in the North Sea, particularly in relation to cod-related fisheries. To facilitate this work, the Delegations agreed to nominate relevant MCS experts that will meet in the first quarter of 2025. The draft ToR should be presented for agreement at the 2025 intersessional meeting.

24 ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF 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 United Nations Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (UN/FLUX standard) on 15th January 2024. This date marked 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 UN/FLUX standard. Furthermore, the Delegations noted that the bilateral agreements on exchange of electronic vessel positions data between the EU and Norway and between Norway and the UK have been revised and completed to facilitate exchange of data based on UN/FLUX standard.
- 24.2 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 fishing activities (ERS) and notifications and authorisations data. The Delegations noted that the discussions and work need to be intensified by the Parties to follow this timeframe, whilst recognising the technical challenges that need to be overcome.
- 24.3 Furthermore, the Delegations noted the progress made at technical level to develop a template (i.e. common principles) for an electronic notification and authorisation scheme based on the UN/FLUX standard with the intention to establish bilateral data exchanges, as appropriate. They also noted the ongoing technical work on fishing activities (ERS) data based on the UN/FLUX standard and agreed to continue the development in a trilateral setting to establish a template (i.e. common principles) with the intention to establish bilateral data exchanges, as appropriate.
- 24.4 The Delegations agreed to seek suitable arrangements within the scope of the Working Group on electronic exchange of data as outlined in Annex IX. The Delegations noted the progress made on the electronic exchange of data. The parties noted the implementation of Vessel Position data over FLUX bilaterally between the EU and Norway and the UK and Norway has been completed. Work is ongoing on an agreement between the EU and the UK on exchanging Vessel Positions over FLUX.
- 24.5 The EU hosted the Working Group meeting in Brussels in June 2024 and the UK will host the next meeting early in 2025.

28 November 2024

For the Norwegian Delegation

Ann Kristin WESTBERG

For the United Kingdom Delegation

For the European Union Delegation

Colin FAULKNER

Adela REY

CONDITIONS FOR FISHERIES BY THE PARTIES IN 2025

I. JOINT STOCKS

1. The Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for the stocks mentioned in Table 1 for 2025 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)

JOINT REQUEST TO ICES REGARDING A LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT FOR SAITHE

Request from	Joint EU/Norway/UK request
Committee making the request	
Contact within organisation	Colin Faulkner (Colin.Faulkner@defra.gov.uk)
Content contact person	
Request announced	
Request received	
Outcome of request required by client	<p>An evaluation report describing the performance of a set of Harvest Control Rules described in the request below.</p> <p>The outcome of this request will be the basis for making an informed choice regarding an agreed Long Term Management Strategy for SAITHE IN SUBAREAS 4 AND 6, AND IN DIVISION 3.a (North Sea, Rockall and West of Scotland, Skagerrak and Kattegat).</p>
Request code (client)	
Request code (ICES)	[completed by ICES]
Details of request	
<p>Request from Norway, UK and EU regarding a long-term management strategy for saithe</p> <p>The Parties will formally consult on implementation of a long-term management strategy for saithe in Subareas 4, 6 and Division 3a after ICES evaluates the strategy consisting of the following elements:</p> <p>Objective</p> <p>The Parties agree to manage fishing opportunities, based on a fishing pressure that maximises sustainable yield from the stock given additional elements regarding stability, the use of a biomass buffer and while being consistent with a precautionary approach.</p> <p>The following describes a range of management measures that will impact the stock and the fishery to a varying degree.</p>	

1. The Harvest control rule (HCR)

$$F = F_{target} \cdot \frac{SSB}{B_{trigger}} \quad SSB < B_{trigger}$$

$$F = \frac{F_{target}}{SF} \left(1 - \frac{SSB}{B_{trigger}} (1 - SF) \right) \quad B_{trigger} \leq SSB \leq B_{high}$$

TAC held constant at that obtained at B_{high} $SSB > B_{high}$

The second equation introduces the Stability Factor (SF). When $SSB \geq B_{trigger}$ $SF=1$ corresponds to a constant $F=F_{target}$, while $SF<1$ corresponds to a linear reduction in F with increasing SSB . The $SF<1$ creates a limitation on F which results in the F decreasing with increasing SSB in order to provide a more stable catch. The corresponding TAC would increase and reach a maximum before starting to decline. This maximum is defined as B_{high} and TAC should be kept constant for SSB above that level.

The Parties want to compare the performance of sets of HCRs defined by varying the parameters $B_{trigger}$, F_{target} and SF . For the HCRs with $SF=1$ the performance should also be explored with the traditional TAC stability clause added (limiting the TAC change to no more than 25% up or 20% down compared to the previous year's TAC advice (without the stability constraint) as long as the stock is above $B_{trigger}$). The difference between basing the stability constraint on the previous year's TAC advice with and without the stability constraint should be investigated.

2. Varying the parameters in the HCR

- a) Setting $B_{trigger}$ to 1.0, 1.2, 1.4 and 1.6 times the ICES MSY $B_{trigger}$
- b) For each of these, estimate an F_{target} (conditional on the choice of $B_{trigger}$) that maximises long-term yield and an F_{target} that produces 95% of the conditional maximum long-term yield
- c) For each of the $B_{trigger}$ and F_{target} pairs above set $SF=1, 0.9, 0.8$ and 0.7 .

Parameters		Sets
$B_{trigger}$	1.0, 1.2, 1.4 and 1.6 times the ICES MSY $B_{trigger}$	4
F_{target}	"Maximum" F_{target} and F_{target} producing 95 % of maximum yield	2
SF	1, 0.9, 0.8, 0.7	4

3. Banking and borrowing

The Parties recognises that banking and borrowing is difficult to simulate. The Parties will ask ICES to check if a worst-case scenario of banking and borrowing when the stock is above $B_{trigger}$ still can be considered precautionary following the approach in WKNSMSE 2019.

Evaluation

ICES is requested to evaluate the performance of the described management measures and to what degree they contribute to meeting the stated objectives.

ICES is asked to tabulate the long-term yield, long term SSB, inter annual TAC variability, the fraction of years with SSB below $B_{trigger}$ and the risk of SSB falling below B_{lim} , for the range of combinations described above.

ICES is in addition requested to evaluate the risks and potential loss in yield by applying the 25%/20% stability clause.

Additional information	
<p>For background information, the impact of changing the exploitation pattern towards older fish in steps of 0.5, 1.0 and 1.5 years should be explored for a few HCR sets to answer the question: “How much may a change in exploitation pattern result in increased yield?”. This task is not part of the regular evaluation of the HCR and is instead an analysis that can be used as basis for a potential future decision to improve on the exploitation pattern.</p>	
Intended use of the request output	The evaluation report will facilitate the comparison of different choices regarding HCR's and additional elements.
Planning ICES	
Request (budget) accepted	[completed by ICES]
ICES contact person	
WG(s) involved	
Preparation timing	[completed by ICES]
Review group	[completed by ICES]
Advice drafting group	[completed by ICES]
ACOM Web-conference	[completed by ICES]
Release date	

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 THE TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT OF NORTHERN SHELF COD (GADUS MORHUA) IN SUBAREA 4, DIVISIONS 6.A AND 7.D, AND SUBDIVISION 20 (NORTH SEA, WEST OF SCOTLAND, EASTERN ENGLISH CHANNEL, AND SKAGERRAK)

The objective of the working group is to provide an overview of the current spatial, seasonal, and technical measures that promotes the sustainable management of the Northern Shelf cod stock and to identify the potential effects of such measures. This will include a focus on possible improvements or modifications to such measures that could provide additional protection to the sub-stocks identified by ICES. These measures should be developed with due regard to the level of mixing between the sub-stocks.

The Northern Shelf Cod Management Working Group should:

1. Exchange experiences and work collaboratively to build a shared understanding of existing management across the area.
2. Produce a shared report which details existing management measures with a focus on operational and technical measures, in a format which is clear and transparent to all parties. This report shall also include a shared understanding of where and when Northern Shelf cod are caught, including historic catches, and by which fisheries and country. The report should be presented to the three parties by February 2025.
3. Identify evidence gaps which, if filled, could provide necessary evidence to support the development of management measures.
4. Use the above report to identify the potential effects of existing measures such as:
 - a. Spatial measures, including real-time closures
 - b. Seasonal closures
 - c. Gear selectivity measures
 - d. Reporting requirements.
5. Identify best management approaches.

**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: $F = F_{target} * SSB / B_{trigger}$
- 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

Request from	Joint EU/Norway/UK request
Committee making the request	
Contact within organisation	Colin Faulkner (Colin.Faulkner@defra.gov.uk)
Content contact person	
Request announced	8 January 2024
Request received	8 January 2024
Outcome of request required by client	<p>The outcome of this request is to provide data that supports ICES in providing the area-specific catch advice of the Northern Shelf complex. This should include a comprehensive experimental design including a sampling protocol and methodological specifications for the genetic analysis of the Northern Shelf cod stock complex.</p> <p>Subject to the findings of the research, the outcome of this request should aim to provide data that supports ICES in providing advice for the three sub-stocks separately.</p>
Request code (client)	
Request code (ICES)	[completed by ICES]
Details of request	
<p>Request from Norway, UK and EU regarding genetic work on Northern Shelf Cod sub-stocks</p> <p>The Northern Shelf cod advice from ICES¹ establishes a new stock definition merging West of Scotland cod with North Sea cod making a single assessment unit with three sub-stocks: Northwestern, Viking and Southern. The advice stated that ICES is not in a position to provide area-specific catch advice without additional genetic data sampled routinely from both commercial fisheries and scientific surveys.</p> <p>The Norwegian, UK and EU Delegations consequently agreed that the way forward in the management of these stocks would include additional sampling of genetic and other data sources and the exchange of information regarding ongoing relevant research on the topic. Moreover, the Delegations recommended that</p>	

¹ <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21840765.v1>

	<p>this workstream should be taken forward as a priority and agreed that they would approach ICES for guidance.</p> <p>Hence, ICES, as the coordinating body, is requested to provide guidance for the area-specific catch advice of the Northern Shelf complex. This should include a comprehensive experimental design aimed at enhancing understanding of sub-stock dynamics, especially stock-mixing throughout the year and including a sampling protocol and methodological specifications for the genetic analysis and related data for the Northern Shelf cod stock complex, which the Parties could implement as a priority.</p>
<p>Intended use of the request output</p>	<p>Subject to the findings of the research, the outcome of this request should aim to provide data that supports ICES in providing advice for the three sub-stocks separately.</p>
<p>Planning ICES</p>	<p>This planning is towards an operational (area-based) advice for Northern shelf cod. A comprehensive genetic sampling methodology for Northern shelf cod cannot be delivered promptly. However, after consultation with the experts, ICES is in a position to propose the following process towards guiding the area-specific catch advice:</p> <p>ICES suggests a process consisting of two workshops:</p> <p>A broader/scoping workshop focusing on the understanding of sub-stock dynamics, especially stock-mixing throughout the year and how this can be integrated into potential stock assessment models, enabling provision of advice which can guide area-specific management. This first workshop will outline which genetic data and other data sources would be needed to inform stock-assessment and the tempo-spatial resolution needed for Northern Shelf cod. The workshop will as well evaluate existing sampling data on genetics for the Northern Shelf cod stock complex and work on standardization and harmonization procedures.</p> <p>The results from the workshop will be shared with several ICES working groups focused on the application of genetics in fisheries management (WGAGFA, SIMWG, others) as well as the EOSG and WGNSSK to further specify the ToRs for the second workshop, combining the data needs with survey methodology. ICES will draft and execute the database infrastructure needed based on these discussions, by creating the format, exerting quality assurance and checks, providing data download, as well as linking the data to existing ICES databases. This will then be fed into the second workshop subsequent to an ACOM review of the workshop outcome.</p> <p>The second workshop will further establish the specific sampling protocols as well as the methodology recommended for working with genetic data. The output will be a report including a survey manual, providing an experimental design, including a detailed sampling protocol and methodological specifications, for genetic analysis of the Northern Shelf cod stock complex providing data applicable to the stock assessment of this stock complex.</p> <p>There is a need for having established a genetic baseline for the Southern component that will inform whether Northern and Southern populations can be separated genetically and at what resolution prior to the workshop as this will have implications in sampling design due to uncertainty in the range of difference</p>

	<p>between the sub-stocks. This information will be available from the GenDC project by mid-2025 at the earliest. ICES is subcontracted for an EU- funded project (GenDC, EMFAF-2023-PIA-FisheriesScientificAdvice) to develop new standardized sampling protocols and procedures for integrating genetic data with stock assessment and existing databases to strengthen the implementation of the CFP.</p> <p>Timeline: WK1; Winter 2025 WK2; May 2025</p>
Request (budget) accepted	[completed by ICES]
ICES contact person	Lara Salvany (lara.salvan@ices.dk) and Cecilia Kvaavik (cecilia.kvaavik@ices.dk)
WG(s) involved	WGNSSK, WGAGFA, SIMWG, EOSG groups
Preparation timing	[completed by ICES]
Review group	[completed by ICES]
Advice drafting group	[completed by ICES]
ACOM Web-conference	[completed by ICES]
Release date	End of June 2025

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF DATA FOR
2025**

The Delegations agreed that the Working Group on Electronic Exchange of data should meet as appropriate in 2025 under the Terms of Reference described below. The necessary technical scoping exercises can be conducted within the same Terms of Reference before the Working Group meets.

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

The Working Group shall:

1. Establish templates (i.e. common principles) for electronic exchange of notification and authorisation data with the intention to revise the current bilateral arrangements between the Parties.
2. Establish templates (i.e. common principles) for electronic exchange of fishing activities 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 fishing activities 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 fishing activities data.

The Working Group should submit its report to the Parties well in advance of the annual consultations for 2026. Reports from possible technical scoping exercises should also be submitted to the Parties well in advance of the annual consultations for 2026.

TABLE 1

**2025 QUOTAS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED SHARED STOCKS IN THE
NORTH SEA**

Species	ICES Area	TAC	Sharing					
			Norway		EU		UK	
			%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes
Cod	4	19,910	17	3,385	35.69	7,106	47.31	9,419
Haddock	4	95,862	23	22,048	12.19	11,686	64.81	62,128
Saithe	4, 3.a	71,638	52	37,252	35.52	25,446	12.48	8,940
Whiting	4	111,861	10	11,186	23.82	26,645	66.18	74,030
Plaice	4	155,755	7	10,903	66.53	103,624	26.47	41,228
Herring	4, 7.d	388,542	29	112,677	50.25	195,242	20.75	80,623

TABLE 2

2023 CATCH STATISTICS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED SHARED STOCKS IN THE NORTH SEA²

Species	ICES area	EU catches ³				Norway catches ⁴				UK catches ⁵			
		Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total
		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK	
Cod	4	1,264	3,822	900	5,986	14	1,924	1,525	3,463	28	1,648	9,737	11,413
Haddock	4	3,093	952	1,304	5,349	11	2,178	212	2,401	123	3,448	28,063	31,635
Saithe	4, 3.a	676	4,577	12,509	17,761	14	22,950	5,102	28,066	0	1,276	6,772	8,048
Whiting	4	1,084	183	874	2,141	30	949	35	1,014	134	686	10,710	11,529
Plaice	4	10,442	2,086	1,501	14,028	1	38	1	40	2,311	1,069	1,404	4,783
Herring	4, 7.d	18,055	3,015	177,176	198,247	31	94,542	18,960	113,534	363	0	78,026	78,390

² Some figures may not add up due to rounding.

³ Aggregated catch data based on landed weight.

⁴ Landing notes.

⁵ Landing declarations.

TABLE 3

2024 PROVISIONAL CATCH STATISTICS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED SHARED STOCKS IN THE NORTH SEA⁶

Species	ICES area	EU catches ⁷				Norway catches ⁸				UK catches ⁹			
		Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total	Fisheries jurisdiction			Total
		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK		EU	Norway	UK	
Cod	4	612	3,292	727	4,631	7	1,625	1,315	2,947	13	1,427	9,047	10,486
Haddock	4	2,236	585	2,113	4,934	10	1,522	619	2,151	80	3,199	25,098	28,378
Saithe	4, 3.a	1,025	5,501	8,894	15,421	51	17,896	7,835	25,782	0	1,069	5,267	6,336
Whiting	4	1,028	168	961	2,157	6	244	34	283	216	561	7,469	8,246
Plaice	4	7,298	1,363	734	9,396	0	30	5	35	2,549	394	778	3,721
Herring	4, 7.d	6,354	1,705	197,687	205,747	277	111,282	17,003	128,562	389	0	93,039	93,428

⁶ Some figures may not add up due to rounding.

⁷ Aggregated catch data based on landed weight – January – 31 October.

⁸ Landing notes – January – 31 October.

⁹ Landing declarations – January – 31 October.