



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/C1/AK/dsb/Ares(2021)

Subject: BSAC's recommendations for the western Baltic cod and Baltic salmon TACs for 2022

Dear Mr Sverdrup-Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 1 October 2021 by which you informed me about the recommendations of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) for the fisheries of western Baltic cod and Baltic salmon in 2022. We are grateful that the BSAC provided the Commission with its input on this important matter before the October Council. I am replying to you now as the Council on 12 October 2021 took its decision on the Baltic fishing opportunities for 2022.

As you know, the Commission adopted its proposals on the above-mentioned stocks in the course of September. The Commission has tried to find a balanced approach, which is fully based on the scientific advice while taking into account socio-economic aspects to the extent possible.

The situation of these stocks is very difficult and the fact that BSAC was not in a position to agree on a common position illustrates this. Like pointed out in several previous letters, I would like to recall that the Commission cannot take into consideration recommendations which are not in line with the legal framework. Under the rules of the Baltic MAP, the maximum for the total commercial and recreational catches of western Baltic cod is 698 tonnes in 2022. Setting a commercial TAC of 4.461 tonnes as recommended by BSAC would therefore not be in line with the applicable law.

The Council decided to set the TAC for commercial catches of western cod in 2022 at 489 tonnes, hence leaving an amount of 209 tonnes for recreational catches. This corresponds to a split of respectively 70% for commercial and 30% for recreational catches as mentioned by ICES. The Council followed the Commission proposal regarding accompanying measures, except for the addition of an exemption from the spawning closure for mussels fisheries in SD 22 and the deletion of the provision on recreational catch-and-release practices.

Mr Esben Sverdrup-Jensen
Chair BSAC Executive Committee
es@pelagisk.dk
Axelborg Axeltovej 3,
DK-1609 Copenhagen V
DENMARK

As regards main basin salmon the Council followed the Commission proposal for commercial catches. As regards recreational fisheries, the Council broadened the exemption from the prohibition to all types of recreational fisheries.

Regarding the other stocks, the Council followed the Commission proposal except in the following cases. A derogation from the by-catch limitation was introduced for small-scale coastal fisheries fishing with certain passive gears for western herring. The TAC for central herring was reduced by 45% (instead of 54%), sprat was increased by 13% (instead of a roll-over) and plaice by 25% (instead of a roll-over) since BaltFish agreed on a joint recommendation for the mandatory use of more selective flatfish gears in the main distribution area of cod. For the TAC for Gulf of Finland salmon surviving discards were not deducted and the TAC was therefore set at +6% (instead of +4%).

I understand from my collaborators that some members of the BSAC were disappointed by the initial Commission proposal as they felt that it was too conservative as compared to the ICES advice. Let me explain that the motivation for our proposal was to avoid ending up in similar situations like those of eastern cod and western herring if ever ICES were to find next year that another stock's biomass has slipped below the limit level. We have all seen what can happen in such cases, namely that ICES advises to stop all fishing. This would have a detrimental effect for the fishers and their families and we want to avoid this as much as possible.

I hope that I was able to clarify the matter for you and look forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Sally Clink sc@bsac.dk
Ewa Milewska em@bsac.dk