

Developing a Management Plan for the Anchovy Fishery in the Bay of Biscay

Uriarte A, P. Abaunza, O. Guyader, L. Ibaibarriaga, S. Sanchez, L. Pawlowski, R. Prellezo, B. Roel, I. del Valle, Y. Vermard, B. Villamor

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In the last years there is a movement in Europe from the management based on the precautionary approach principle to that based on the maximum sustainable yield, basically through the development of long term management plans for different fish stocks. Recent development of management strategy evaluation tools is facilitating the testing of alternative harvest control rules to identify the most suitable rule for each stock. In this paper we summarise the process of development of a management plan for the Bay of Biscay anchovy stock led by the European Commission and in consultation with the South Western Waters Regional Advisory Committee. The failure of the fishery since 2005 made evident the unsuitability of the previous management and the need for such a plan. Three candidate harvest control rules have been tested by STECF. Uncertainty to different population dynamic models have been evaluated and economical indicators have been incorporated into the decision making process. In addition, political considerations such as TAC allocation between countries and seasons have also been taken into account. The process of dissemination of the evaluation of harvest control rules and associated levels of risks is discussed. Finally the participation and communication among stakeholders, managers and scientists along the process of definition of the LTMP is discussed.

Keywords: Anchovy; participation; harvest control rule; long-term management plan; management strategy evaluation; risk.