

# Coalition Clean Baltic

10 August 09

## **CCB proposals and comments on TACs for Baltic Sea fisheries for 2010**

### *Cod, Western Baltic*

CCB hesitate, but can support the ICES advice for an increase of the TAC with 8,6 %. CCB hesitate on the increase because the positive predictions are mainly based on just one strong year class from 2008. It is problematic to see that such approach, depending on only one year-class, really is precautionary, when also considerable removal of cod in recreational fisheries is not included in the ICES assessment. The stock is still described as “overfished” related to potential long-term yield. Any higher TAC-level is not acceptable.

### *Cod, Eastern Baltic*

The stock biomass (SSB) is still historically low, but the stock is no longer classified as “overfished”. But as SSB (Spawning Stock Biomass) unfortunately no longer is a goal in the cod management plan, CCB support the ICES advice for 15 % increase of the TAC, corresponding to catches of 56 800 tons (with the Russian quota included). It is very important that the Russian and EU cod quota together will be limited to this level.

### *Herring*

CCB supports the proposals from ICES. The ICES advice for an decrease of the herring quota in Central Baltic *with 28 %*, corresponding to a TAC less than 103 000 tons is of special importance in relation to the recocery of the Eastern cod stock, as a growing cod stock would increase the predation mortality of herring the coming years. The precautionary approach proposed by ICES should therefore be followed.

### *Sprat*

ICES classifies the stock at risk of unsustainable harvesting. CCB fully supports the proposal from ICES to decrease the TAC for sprat with 23 %, to less than 306 000 tons in 2010. ICES proposed already last year a substantial decrease of the TAC, which unfortunately was not followed in the decision by the Fisheries Council. Fishing industry should accept the approach with the need to decrease the TAC in relation to an expanding Baltic cod stock. The multi-species management approach must be applied. It is not possible to have expanded stocks for both cod and sprat in the future. The abstention and precautionary approach should be applied.

*Salmon, Main Basin and Gulf of Bothnia*

ICES assessment describes the post-smolt survival, that increased in 2007, now is back on the lowest level ever recorded (< 15 %) for wild salmon (and corresponding to the low levels in 2004-2006). Corresponding post-smolt survival level for hatchery-reared salmon is < 10 %. Such figures raise strong concerns for CCB for the long-term survival of Baltic salmon.

These facts must also be of great concern for all stakeholders, and especially for commercial and recreational fisheries interests in the Baltic region, as such conditions threaten the long-term possibilities for future salmon fisheries.

These facts must have a major influence to apply a strong precautionary approach for Baltic salmon management for 2010.

ICES highlight that the low sea survival of salmon in 2004-2006 together with the recent high harvest rate has delayed the recovery of wild stocks.

These conditions call for no expansion of the landings compared to year 2008.

Proposals for recommendations from CCB to EC and Baltic Member States:

(most of the CCB recommendations have clear scientific backing with ICES advice)

- to recommend for 2010; primarily a TAC of not more than 133 000 salmon (in accordance with ICES advice) to follow a true precautionary approach (taking into account existing weak salmon stocks, re-established stocks and M74 mortality variations) or, if such level would not be possible to propose, a TAC that always will be limited to the landings of 2008, corresponding to 193 000 salmon. River fisheries should also be included in the total salmon TAC.

-Baltic EU Member States (mainly Swe, Lith and Lat) with possibilities to harvest its TAC both in open-sea or in coastal/river areas in the Main basin/Southern Baltic should via national regulations strictly restrict the mixed stock fisheries and move fisheries towards stock-specific harvesting in estuaries and rivers.

- Recommend EU Member States (Swe, Est, Lith), in accordance with ICES advice, to develop individual Salmon River Management Plans (incl. measures for habitat restoration, fisheries restrictions, control measures etc) in 2010 for the the weak salmon populations in the rivers of Emån, Pärnu, Nemunas basin, Rickleån and Öreälven.

- Recommend EU Member States, in accordance with ICES advice, to decrease and further introduce seasonal harvest rules to limit exploitation along the spawning migration routes of the weak salmon stocks from the rivers of Emån, Pärnu, Nemunas basin, Rickleån and Öreälven.

The following MS should introduce further restrictions to limit mixed stock fisheries

- \* in Aaland and Bothnian Sea (for Swe and Fin) for salmon from Rickleån and Öreälven
- \* in coastal waters of Gulf of Riga (for Est and Lat) for salmon from Pärnu river
- \* in coastal waters around the Öland island (for Swe) for Emån salmon
- \* in coastal waters of Curonian lagoon (for Lith), for Nemunas basin salmon

-Recommend EC and EU Member States, in accordance with ICES advice, require better Baltic salmon tagging data from Member States, so all information on tagging data will be reported to ICES (e g from Sweden where tagging data have not been available in recent years) as such information is of most importance to monitor the post-smolt survival.

*Salmon, Gulf of Finland*

Proposals for recommendations from CCB to EC and Baltic MS:

- To recommend the same TAC-level in 2010 as last year, for salmon fisheries in Gulf of Finland, 15 000 salmon, if the following recommendations also will be included:
  - \* The TAC of 15 000 salmon will be set as the maximum TAC for all salmon fisheries in the Gulf of Finland. The total EC and Russian TACs will be limited to 15 000 salmon.
  - \* Recommend MS Estonia to prohibit salmon harvest in coastal fisheries on the migration paths of wild salmon, and to prevent fishing in rivers and river mouths supporting wild stocks, to minimise catches of wild migrating salmon
  - \* Recommend MS Estonia to take additional measures to minimise salmon poaching in Estonian rivers

CCB also recommends EC to negotiate similar restriction as for Estonian salmon fisheries in Russian salmon fisheries in Gulf of Finland, to protect the salmon natural resource in Gulf of Finland.