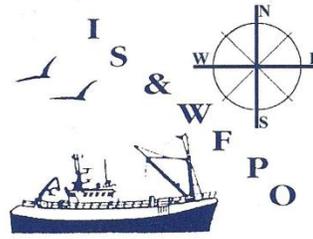


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PRESS RELEASE

“ Irish Fishing Industry on the Brink ”

Eibhlin O’Sullivan, CEO of the **Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO) Ltd.**, today expressed the frustration and fear of fishermen around the coast in response to the ICES Advice for Whitefish and Herring stocks for 2014 which was recently published.

“We are extremely concerned for the viability of the Fishing Industry if the Commission and Member States choose to act on some of the advice provided by ICES in relation to a number of key stocks in the Celtic Sea such as Cod, Haddock, Whiting, Monk and Megrin. The Commission have requested that ICES provide advice for 2014 on the basis of reaching MSY (Maximum Sustainable Yield) by 2015 and this is one of the main reasons for some of the huge reductions proposed in the advice” explained Eibhlin O’Sullivan, CEO, IS&WFPO Ltd.

“In addition, there are fundamental differences between the Fishing Industry’s perception of certain stocks and what the scientific advice is saying. For example, fishermen around the coast are reporting an abundance of Cod, Haddock and Monk on the ground but there are significant reductions proposed for these stocks with the advice for example a 30% reduction in the quota for Cod in the Celtic Sea, a 75% reduction in the quota for Celtic Sea Haddock and a 20% reduction for Monk in Area 6” continued Ms. O’Sullivan.

“In relation to Cod we are advised that the reduction is due to perceived lower recruitment however, we are aware that the majority of the data used to compile this advice comes from French landings as they have the majority of this quota and we are all aware that the size of the French Fleet has decreased considerably in recent years. Haddock is a bust and boom fishery, two years ago ICES recommended an increase in or around 130% but the Commission chose to implement a much smaller increase of 25%, now that ICES are recommending a 75% decrease will the Commission choose to adopt the same approach and implement a lower reduction or will, as the fishing industry has repeatedly experienced they choose to implement the reduction in full! The Monk advice for Area 6 is based on a rule proposed by the Commission which has no scientific basis, involving comparing the average of the estimated size of the stock for the last two years against the previous three years. For 2014 this results in a 20% reduction even though the most recent estimated stock size shows an increase in comparison to previous years. This underlines the lack of confidence that the fishing industry has in scientific advice.”

“Given the limited quota available to Irish fishing vessels in the first instance (for example Ireland only receives 15% of the Celtic Sea Cod Quota, 22% of Celtic Sea Haddock Quota and 10% of the Quota for Monk in Area 6 and 8% of the Monk Quota in Area 7) the impact of any proposed reductions on Irish fishermen is magnified exponentially. During 2013 fishermen have suffered severe economic hardship due to the limited availability of quota and if the proposed reductions for 2014 are implemented we will undoubtedly and unfortunately see Irish fishermen leaving the Industry. When there are dramatic reductions in quotas such as those proposed fishermen receive no compensation unlike farmers despite the fact that a 30% reduction in quota is a 30% reduction in a fisherman’s turnover. No business whether fishing or otherwise can survive when there is a continual reduction in their income. It is particularly ironic that this comes in the wake of BIM’s recently announced 5 year strategy to increase seafood sales as if the current situation continues this strategy will only benefit those exporting seafood to Ireland!” finished Ms. O’Sullivan.

Note:

ICES the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea is requested each year to give advice on specified fish stocks by the European Commission. On the 1st of July they published their advice in relation to a number of demersal and Herring stocks.

The ICES advice is available on the following link:

<http://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/Latest-Advice.aspx>

ENDS

5th September, 2013.

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