



**Surveillance Report**  
**Osprey Trawlers North Sea ICES IVb twin-rigged plaice Fishery**

Certificate No.: MML-F-079

**Intertek Moody Marine**  
19<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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## 1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scope against which the surveillance is undertaken:** MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing as applied to the Osprey Group - North Sea (ICES IVb) twin-rigged plaice fishery

**Species:** Plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*)

**Area:** ICES IV: Central North Sea territorial waters between the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Norway, and excluding the Plaice Box

**Method of capture:**

To comply with effort management measures under the cod recovery plan, vessels in the UoC operate different cod-end mesh sizes depending on the location fished; 95-100 mm in the designated flatfish area (south of 55°/56°N), and 110 – 130 mm to the north of this.

The UoC is therefore a demersal otter trawl operating cod-end mesh sizes of 95-130 mm that are rigged as follows:

- Twin rigged
- 220m wire sweeps with 70mm rubbers and every 50m a 200mm rubber
- The fishing line (foot rope) has large diameter rubbers increasing to a maximum diameter of 150mm
- A maximum of 4 tickler chains with up to 13mm diameter links
- 120mm square-meshed panel SMP (knotless mesh) positioned in the top panel of the extension 3m in front of the choker of the cod end. Panel is at least 3m long.
- Double-twined cod ends
- Low headline height 1.5 – 2m

<b>Date of Surveillance Visit:</b>	<b>19th September 2013</b>			
<b>Initial Certification</b>	<b>Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010</b>		<b>Certificate Ref: MML-F-079</b>	
<b>Surveillance stage</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>
<b>Surveillance team:</b>	<b>Lead Assessor:</b> R. Cappell <b>Assessor(s):</b> P1: R. Millner, P2: M. Pawson, P3: R. Cappell			
<b>Company Name:</b> <b>Address:</b>	Osprey Group, Urk Netherlands			

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## 2.0 RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report contains the findings of the third surveillance cycle in relation to this fishery.

The client's response to the Conditions of Certification was set out in a Client Action Plan (CAP), which was appended to the Public Certification Report. Progress associated with the actions set forth in the CAP was examined as a part of this surveillance audit. For each Condition, the report sets out progress to date. This progress has been evaluated by the Intertek Moody Marine (IMM) Audit Team (set out below as 'Observations' and 'Conclusion') against the commitments made in the CAP. This assessment includes a re-evaluation of the scoring allocated to the relevant Performance Indicators (PIs) in the original MSC assessment. Where the requirements of a Condition are met, the PI is re-scored at 80 or more and the Condition is "closed out".

The surveillance audit methodology, as defined in the current version of the MSC Certification Requirements, is followed in this audit as are the MSC criteria for determining the level of surveillance audit that the fishery requires (see Annex 3).

### Information Sources:

#### Meetings

(NB all stakeholder from the full assessment were contacted prior to the surveillance audit taking place)

- C. de Boer (Client) OSPREY Group
- B. Keus, Agonus consultants

#### Reports

Agonus, 2013: ANNUAL SURVEILLANCE REPORT OF THE OSPREY GROUP NORTH SEA (ICES IVB) TWIN RIGGED OTTER TRAWL PLAICE FISHERY. FISHING SEASONS 2012 AND 2013

Coers, A., Miller, D. C. M., and Poos, J. J. 2012. Evaluation of Proposed Amendments to the North Sea Flatfish Multiannual Plan. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:70.

ICES 2011. Report of the Working Group on the assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak (WGNSSK). 4-10 May 2011 Copenhagen. ICES CM 2011/ACOM:13

ICES 2012. Request from the Netherlands on the North Sea flatfish Management Plan. Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2012. ICES Advice, 2012. Book 6, Section 6.3.3.4.

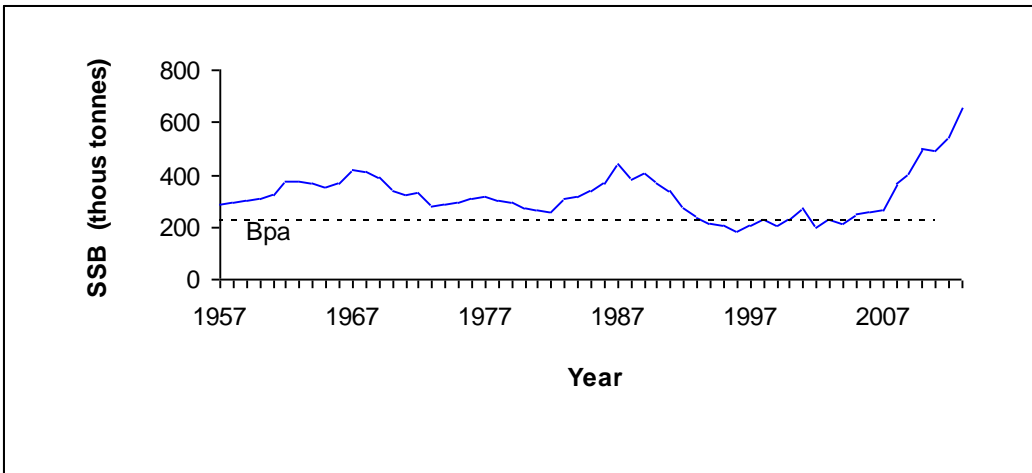
ICES 2013a. Advice on Plaice in Subarea IV. ICES Advice 2013. Book 6 Section 6.4.18, pp 1-13.

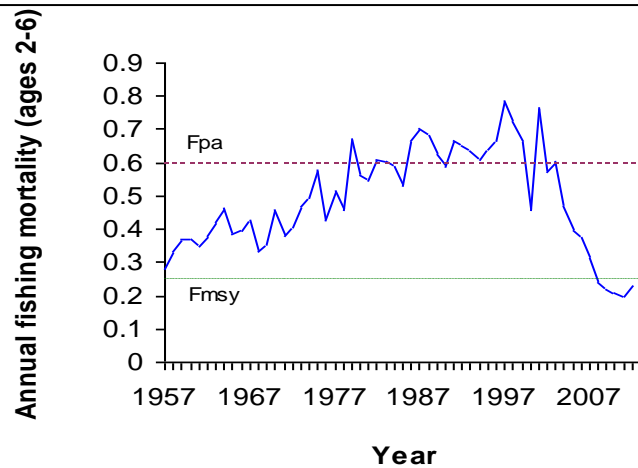
ICES 2013b. EU request on interannual quota flexibility for plaice in the North Sea. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2013. ICES Advice, 2013. Book 6, Section 6.3.5.3.

### Standards and Guidelines used:

1. MSC Principles and Criteria
2. MSC Certification Requirements v1.3
3. Guidance to the MSC Certification Requirements, v 1.1

**Stock status and Catch Data**

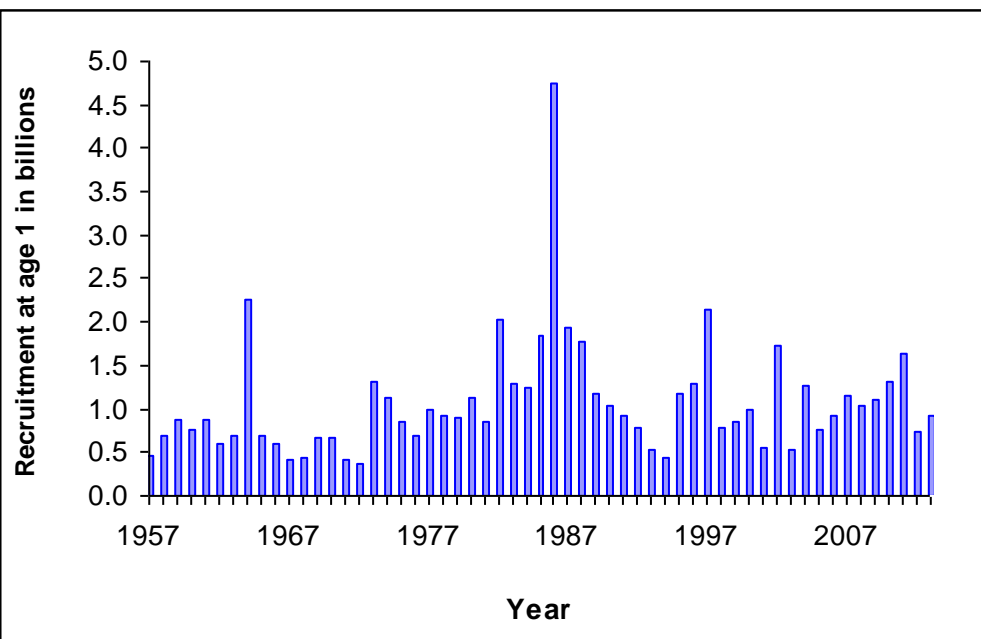
<b>Update on Sock Status</b>	<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>The North Sea plaice stock is considered to be at its highest level since at least 1957 (ICES 2013a). Based on data up to and including 2012, SSB in 2013 was estimated to be around 663,000t and was expected to reach over 735,000t at the start of 2014, which is more than double the long-term average level. Fishing mortality is estimated to be at an historic low and to be below the long-term target <math>F</math> of 0.3, which is consistent with <math>F_{msy}</math> (ICES 2011). ICES classifies North Sea plaice as being harvested sustainably and having full reproductive capacity.</p> <p><b>Stock status</b></p> <p>a) Spawning stock biomass (SSB)</p> <p>The trend in SSB is shown below. The stock declined sharply during the 1990s from a peak of over 400,000t in 1987 and fell below Bpa (the level of SSB that should avoid recruitment failure with a high degree of certainty) of 230,000t during a number of years in the period 1994-2004. In recent years the stock has shown a strong recovery and the SSB at the start of 2014 is estimated at above 735,000t by ICES (2013a). This is a record high level for the stock. The increase in the stock has occurred under average recruitment conditions and is not caused by a higher productivity of the stock. The main reason for the increase is considered by ICES to be the reduction of fishing mortality under the present management plan. The perception of SSB is consistent with last year's assessment.</p>  <p><b>Figure 1. Spawning Stock Biomass of North Sea plaice for the period 1957 to 2013 with the precautionary reference level Bpa shown (source: ICES 2013a).</b></p> <p>b) Fishing mortality</p> <p>Total fishing mortality, which includes both human consumption and discard mortality, showed a steady increase over the forty year period up to 1997, after which it started to decline with the exception of a brief increase between 2001 and 2003. Since 2003 it has decreased considerably, reflecting the reduction in effort by the fishing fleet. It is estimated to have fallen below the precautionary reference level of 0.6 since 2005 and to be below the long-term management objective of <math>F_{0.3}</math> since 2008. In recent years, fishing mortality has been estimated to be below <math>F_{msy}</math> (0.25).</p>
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**Figure 2. North Sea plaice total fishing mortality for landings plus discards. The reference points  $F_{pa}$  and  $F_{msy}$  are derived in relation to total mortality (source: ICES 2013a).**

#### c) Recruitment

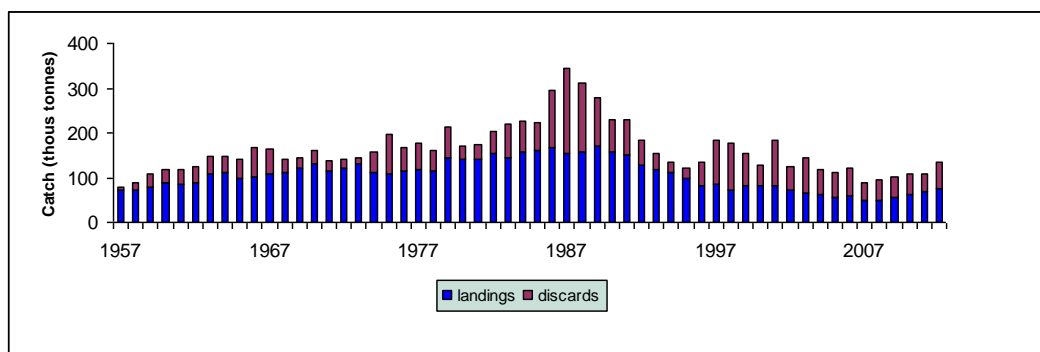
Figure 3 shows the pattern of recruitment of juvenile plaice at age 1 into the stock over the period 1957-2012. There was an increase in recruitment during the 1980s with the 1985 year-class being the largest recruitment in the time series and with other strong year classes in 1981, 1984, 1986 and 1987. The strong recruitment led to a temporary increase in stock abundance despite the high level of fishing mortality. During the early 1990s, the stock declined rapidly following a period of poor recruitment and under continuing high fishing pressure. In recent years, recruitment has varied around the long-term average of around 1 billion. At the same time there has been a very strong stock recovery indicating that it has been driven mainly by the reduction in fishing mortality rather than by strong recruitment.



**Figure 3. Recruitment of North Sea plaice at age 1 in billions (source: ICES 2013a).**

#### d) Catch and Landings

The trend in catch (landings plus discards) is shown in Figure 4. Landings in 2012 were 73,830t from a TAC of 84,410t. Discards have been a high proportion of the total catch, peaking at over 50%, but have declined in recent years.



**Figure 4. Landings and discards of North Sea plaice in thousands of tonnes (source: ICES 2013a).**

#### Management Plan

North Sea plaice has been managed under a long-term plan for the management of both plaice and sole stocks. European Council Regulation (EC) No. 676/2007 of 11 June 2007 established a multi-annual plan (LTMP) for fisheries exploiting plaice and sole in the North Sea. Paragraph 5 of that plan states that *‘The objective of the plan is to ensure, in a first stage, that stocks of plaice and sole in the North Sea are brought within safe biological limits, and in a second stage and after due consideration by the Council on the implementing methods for doing so that those stocks, are exploited on the basis of maximum sustainable yield and under sustainable economic, environmental and social condition’*.

For plaice, Article 2 of the plan defines safe biological limits as (a) spawning stock biomass exceeding 230,000t and (b) the average fishing mortality rate on ages two to six years is less than 0.6 per year.

Article 3 sets out the procedure for returning the stocks to safe biological limits by reducing fishing mortality on plaice and sole by 10% each year with the constraint that the TAC should not be allowed to vary by more than 15% per year.

Objectives of the second phase of the EU management plan are defined under article 4 which states that:

- 1. The multiannual plan shall, in its second stage, ensure the exploitation of the stocks of plaice and sole on the basis of maximum sustainable yield.*
- 2. The objective specified in paragraph 1 shall be attained while maintaining the fishing mortality on plaice at a rate equal to or no lower than 0.3 on ages two to six years.*

Up to 2011, there was a potential discrepancy between the long-term management  $F=0.3$  for plaice and the ICES advice which implied an  $F_{msy}$  of 0.20. The value of 0.3 was determined by the ICES *ad hoc* Group on Long Term Management Advice (AGLTA) and was adopted by the EU in its multi-annual plan for plaice and sole. ICES has since reviewed the estimate of  $F_{msy}$  for plaice and proposed a range of values between 0.2-0.3



(ICES 2011). As a result, the target F for plaice is now considered to be consistent with MSY.

#### Transition to Stage two of the LTMP

Once both stocks have been within safe biological limits for two years, arrangements for the transition to management under stage two of the plan are set out under article 5. This allows the Commission to propose amendments to article 4(2) and 4(3) on the target fishing mortality for plaice and sole, article 7 and 8 for setting the TACs for plaice and sole and article 9 on fishing effort limitation, with a view to permit the exploitation at MSY. The plaice stock has been within safe biological limits as defined by the plan since 2005. The sole stock has been within safe biological limits in terms of fishing mortality since 2008, while sole SSB has been slightly fluctuating around the biomass limit ( $B_{pa}=35\,000$  tonnes) since 2008. ICES concluded that the objectives of stage one have been met, but the implementation of the second stage has not yet been defined.

In 2012, ICES evaluated a proposal by the Netherlands for an amended management plan, which could serve as stage 2 of the LTMP (Coers et al., 2012). The amendments included changing the target F for sole to 0.25 from its current level of 0.4 and to cease the annual reductions of fishing effort. ICES concluded that the plan – subject to those amendments – is consistent with the precautionary approach and the principle of MSY (ICES, 2012). None of these amendments would affect the current TAC advice for plaice as the proposed changes were aimed at the target F for sole, and ceasing reductions in effort. However, in the absence of agreement on stage 2, these changes have not yet been implemented.

A further option considered by ICES to allow greater flexibility in future under the LTMP was to look at the effects on long-term yield and the risk of allowing an inter-annual quota flexibility of up to 10% for plaice (ICES, 2013b). ICES concluded that the existing management plan is robust to inclusion of quota flexibility in terms of the probability of the SSB falling below  $B_{lim}$ , and without causing substantial changes in average yield. This conclusion is conditional on the inter-annual quota flexibility being suspended when the stock is estimated to be outside safe biological limits.

#### Management Advice

The advice in June 2013 (ICES 2013A) was provided as a series of options based on:

- The EU management plan.
- MSY approach
- Transition to MSY
- The Precautionary Approach

The EU Management plan based on an F of 0.3 would result in a TAC increase of more than 15% compared with 2013. If the TAC constraint of 15% is applied (as required by the EU LTMP) this would lead to a TAC for 2014 of no more than 111,631t, based on an F of 0.26. This is expected to lead to an SSB of 737,000t in 2015.

MSY framework results in an  $F_{(2-6)}$  of 0.25 with projected landings of 106,226t leading to an SSB in excess of 743,000t in 2015.

Transition to MSY. ICES noted that, as the current (2012) estimate of fishing mortality is slightly below  $F_{msy}$ , there is no need to follow a transition scheme towards this reference value.

The Precautionary Approach is based on an  $F_{(2-6)}$  of 0.6 with projected landings of 222,529t leading to an SSB of over 577,000t in 2015, which remains well above the precautionary biomass level of 230,000t.

	<p>The TAC for 2014 will be decided following the Council of Ministers meeting in December 2013.</p> <p><b>Conclusion on Stock Status</b></p> <p>North Sea plaice SSB is currently at an historic high in the long-term time series dating back to 1957. It is expected to be above 735,000t at the start of 2014, which is more than double the long term average. Total fishing mortality has been steadily reduced since 2003 and has been below Fmsy in recent years. The management of the North Sea plaice stock is currently sustainable and well within safe biological limits both for SSB and fishing mortality. It is fully compliant with all reference points for MSY, the Precautionary approach and the EU Management plan.</p>
<b>Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in most recent fishing year</b>	97,070 tonnes
<b>Unit of Certification share of TAC</b>	2.7%
<b>Client share of TAC</b>	2.7%
<b>Green Weight<sup>1</sup> of catch taken by client group</b>	<p>Most recent calendar year (2012): 2,621t</p> <p>Previous year (Y-1): (2011) 2,000t</p>

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<sup>1</sup>The weight of a catch prior to processing

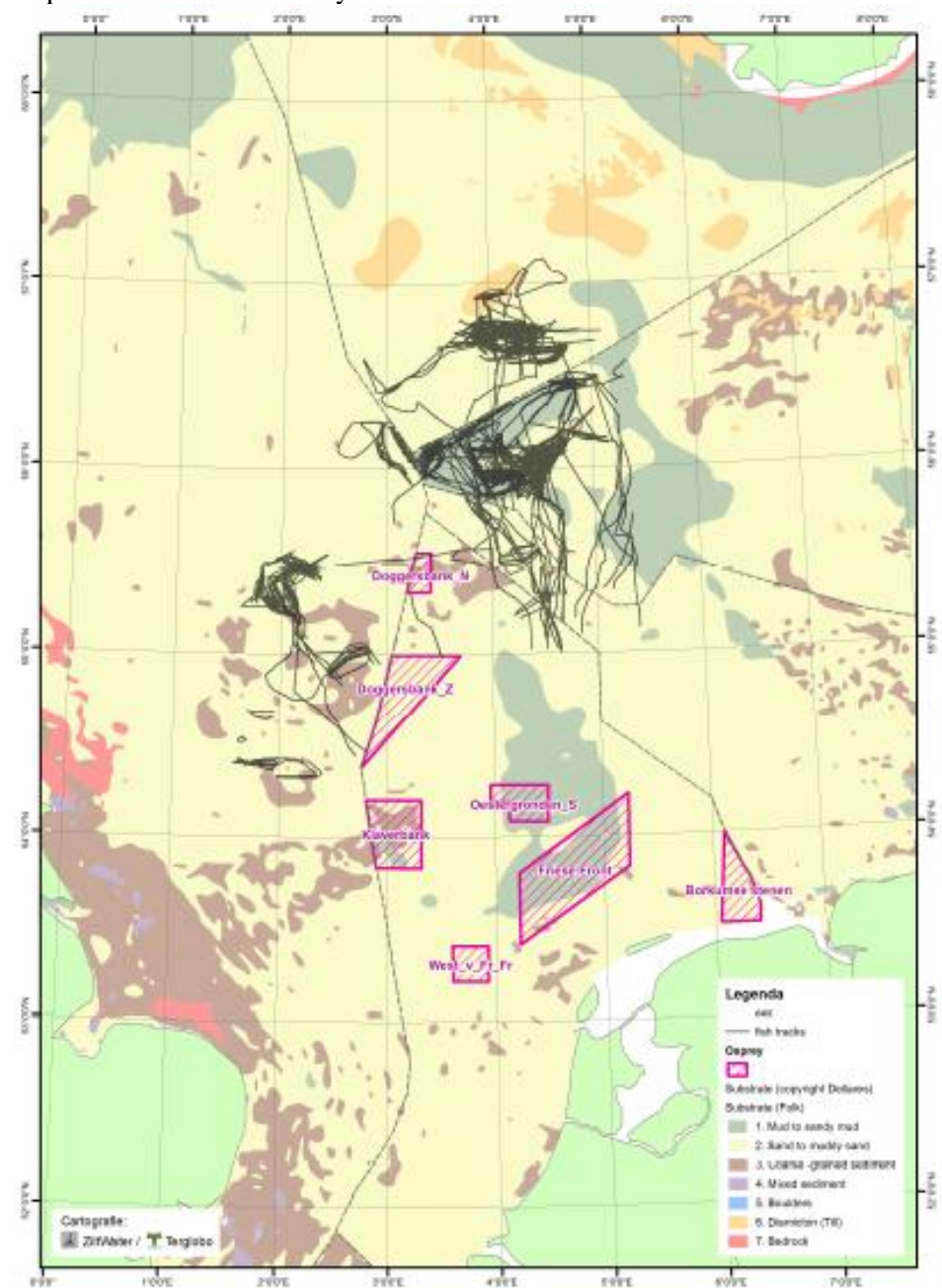
<b>Condition</b>	<b>1. Collect Relevant information to support the harvest strategy</b>
<b>PI</b>	1.2.3, 2.1.1, 2.2.3 (A combined condition was set when first assessed, this is no longer the procedure laid out, but continue to be assessed on this basis)
<b>SG 60</b>	See annex 4 for scoring guideposts
<b>SG 80</b>	See annex 4 for scoring guideposts
<b>SG 100</b>	See annex 4 for scoring guideposts
<b>Score</b>	80
<b>Scoring Rationale</b>	Score of 80 achieved last year condition is therefore closed.
<b>Client Action Plan</b>	<p>1.1. In 2010 the vessels of Osprey Group cannot be included in the IMARES discard monitoring programme. Osprey Group therefore will undertake its own discard sampling consistent with the IMARES programme. IMARES has sent the protocols and sample list consistent with the IMARES discard programme to Osprey Group on 25 March 2010.</p> <p>1.2. The current IMARES protocol only includes plaice, dab and cod discard monitoring. Therefore Osprey Group will additionally undertake a self sampling programme for all species caught.</p> <p>1.3. Osprey Group Skippers will be instructed to sample two fishing hauls (at 4pm each Tuesday and Thursday) during each fishing trip following the IMARES protocol. The number and weight of all discards (in the sample taken) will be recorded on an amended IMARES sample list.</p> <p>1.4. The skippers and crew of the Osprey Group vessels will be instructed and trained in the use of the amended IMARES sample list. At least one crew member on board of each of the Osprey Group vessels will be trained to identify all species caught to species level. To help with identification each vessel will be provided with species guides on both fish species and bottom fauna. Of each specimen in the catch that cannot be identified to species level a digital photograph will be taken to allow identification by a specialist.</p> <p>1.5. The skippers and crew of the Osprey Group vessels will be instructed and trained in the identification of Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species. All interactions with ETP species will be recorded on a special ETP interactions recording sheet.</p> <p>1.6. The collected data will be sent to IMARES on a monthly basis for analysis. The analysis will include a regular comparison of the data from Osprey vessel with vessels in the IMARES discard sampling programme.</p> <p>1.7. Osprey Group will contract IMARES (or another recognized scientific institution like ILVO) to conduct two observer trips on board of Osprey Group vessels. During these trips discards of all species (including plaice) will be recorded.</p> <p>1.8. The scientific institution contracted by Osprey Group will analyze all data collected and present the results annually in a report.</p> <p>1.9. The analysis by the scientific institution will include a simple model that shows the impact of the UoC total cod catches (retained and discarded) on cod recovery.</p> <p>1.10. At the first surveillance audit the data and analysis of the first year of recording of discard data will be presented to the assessment team. Following review of this information at the first surveillance audit, the discard recording will be continued and the results will be presented to the assessment team at the subsequent audits.</p>

<b>Client Progress</b>	Condition is closed. Ongoing commitment to reporting under this condition.
<b>Observations</b>	<p>A summary of all landings and sampling is presented in the Client Surveillance Report (Agonus, 2013, attached). A total of 104 hauls were sampled from three vessels over 16 weeks of the fishery (18 weeks in total), from which discard percentages of plaice, dab and lemon sole were calculated using the landing data of the 2013 fishing season. Average discard percentages were 1.9 % for plaice, 10.9 % for dab and 2.1 % for lemon sole, equivalent to 28,132 , 5,028 and 1,639 kg of these species respectively.</p> <p>No undersized specimens of turbot, brill or grey gurnard were encountered in the samples (no discards) whilst the few starry ray recorded in samples were discarded.</p> <p>The three UoC vessels landed 5,225 kg of cod in the 2013 season (until 6 September, some 0.32 % of total landings (compared with 0.8 % in 2012). Crews were asked to collect and record all cod in sampled hauls. A total of 63.8 kg of cod was recorded in the 104 hauls sampled, which when raised to the approx. 800 hauls made during the 15 weeks of sampling represents landings of about 500 kg, well below the expected estimate (c. 5,000kg). It was concluded that the new approach of asking the crew to collect all cod in the sampled hauls did not work. Otherwise, discard etc. sampling appears to be operating well.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	Condition is closed. The Osprey group continue to provide full catch profiles for the vessels fishing under the certificate and are therefore compliant with the ongoing aspects of the condition.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>2. Improve ETP species information and monitoring</b>
<b>PI</b>	2.3.3
<b>SG 60</b>	Information is <u>adequate</u> to <u>broadly understand</u> the impact of the fishery on ETP species. Information is adequate to support <u>measures</u> to manage the impacts on ETP species <u>Information</u> is sufficient to <u>qualitatively</u> estimate the fishery related mortality of ETP species.
<b>SG 80</b>	Information is <u>sufficient</u> to determine whether the fishery may be a threat to protection and recovery of the ETP species, and if so, to measure trends and support a <u>full strategy</u> to manage impacts.  <u>Sufficient data</u> are available to allow fishery related mortality and the impact of fishing to be <u>quantitatively</u> estimated for ETP species.
<b>SG 100</b>	Information is <u>sufficient</u> to <u>quantitatively</u> estimate outcome status with a high degree of certainty. Information is adequate to support a <u>comprehensive strategy</u> to manage impacts, minimize mortality and injury of ETP species, and evaluate with a high degree of certainty whether a strategy is achieving its objectives.  <u>Accurate and verifiable information</u> is available on the magnitude of all impacts, mortalities and injuries and the consequences for the status of ETP species
<b>Score</b>	80
<b>Scoring Rationale</b>	Score of 80 achieved last year and the condition is therefore closed.
<b>Client Action Plan</b>	2.1. The skippers and crew of the Osprey Group vessels will be trained in the identification and handling of Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species. 2.2. A protocol for the handling of ETP species will be developed and included in the Code of Conduct. 2.3. A manual (list of species and identification tools) will be developed and kept on board of each Osprey Group vessel. 2.4. All interactions with ETP species will be recorded on a special ETP interactions recording sheet. 2.5. Where significant interactions with an ETP species are identified the management of the Osprey Group will take appropriate actions to reduce or avoid these interactions. Measures will be implemented through the Code of Conduct. 2.6. A digital photograph of each unidentified ETP species caught will be taken and stored in a computer file. 2.7. At the yearly surveillance audits the records of interactions with ETP species and the management responses will be presented to the assessment team.
<b>Client Progress</b>	Condition closed. Client continues to conduct monitoring as per condition.
<b>Observations</b>	The ETP list has been revised to only contain species that are recognised by national legislation and/or binding international agreements. The only ETP species encountered were (13) dead (rotting) Harbour porpoises. Though spurdog was not included in the ETP list it was one of the sharks that had to be recorded when encountered: a total of 6 spurdog in 104 sampled hauls.  A total of 181 kg of rays were landed (until 6 September 2013) by the three UoC vessels (compared with 480 kg in 2011 and 434 kg in 2012 from 4 vessels). It is not possible to determine from the auction data which species were landed, but the ETP recordings and sample data show that only starry rays (all discarded) and

	<p>spotted rays where recorded.</p> <p>As with cod, the crew were asked to record all rays and sharks that were caught in sampled hauls, unless there were too many starry rays in the sampled haul when the crew need only record the starry ray encountered in the sample. The data show that starry rays were present in all sampled hauls (and were recorded only in the samples by two vessels), averaging 11 individuals per haul. A total of 41 sharks were recorded from 104 sampled hauls (33 starry smooth hound, 6 spurdog and 3 lesser spotted dogfish). No spurdog were landed.</p> <p>It appears that ETP species sampling is working well, and information that would not be available at auction is being collected.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	The condition was closed at yr1, but the client continues to implement a reporting system and refine this where necessary.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>3. Mapping of fishing/habitat interactions activity</b>
<b>PI</b>	2.3.3
<b>SG 60</b>	Information is <u>adequate</u> to <u>broadly understand</u> the impact of the fishery on ETP species. Information is adequate to support <u>measures</u> to manage the impacts on ETP species <u>Information</u> is sufficient to <u>qualitatively</u> estimate the fishery related mortality of ETP species.
<b>SG 80</b>	Information is <u>sufficient</u> to determine whether the fishery may be a threat to protection and recovery of the ETP species, and if so, to measure trends and support a <u>full strategy</u> to manage impacts.  <u>Sufficient data</u> are available to allow fishery related mortality and the impact of fishing to be <u>quantitatively</u> estimated for ETP species.
<b>SG 100</b>	Information is <u>sufficient</u> to <u>quantitatively</u> estimate outcome status with a high degree of certainty. Information is adequate to support a <u>comprehensive strategy</u> to manage impacts, minimize mortality and injury of ETP species, and evaluate with a high degree of certainty whether a strategy is achieving its objectives.  <u>Accurate and verifiable information</u> is available on the magnitude of all impacts, mortalities and injuries and the consequences for the status of ETP species
<b>Score</b>	80
<b>Scoring Rationale</b>	The condition was closed at yr1, but the client continues to collate and interpret data on vessel activity in relation to closed areas and reported this to the surveillance team.
<b>Client Action Plan</b>	<p>3.1. Osprey Group will contract a scientific institution or specialist to produce an overlay map with lesser and more sensitive habitats (sediment types), the spatial distribution of the UoC fishing activities (Fishing tracks, GPS and VMS data) and the extent of proposed Natura 2000 SACs. After review during the first surveillance visit an updated overlay map will be presented to the audit team at subsequent surveillance visits.</p> <p>3.2. Until the moment that management plans for the proposed Natura 2000 SACs are implemented Osprey Group will avoid fishing in the areas that are marked on the attached map. (These are the same areas that are currently avoided by of the Ekofish North Sea (ICES IVb) twin-rigged otter trawl plaice fishery.)</p> <p>3.3. The overlay map will be updated at a regular basis, When evaluation of the data that are integrated in the overlay map show significant interactions of the UoC fishery with especially sensitive habitats the management of the Osprey Group will take appropriate management action in order to avoid fishing in areas with these habitats. Measures will be implemented through the Code of Conduct and communicated to the audit team at each surveillance visit.</p> <p>3.4. Osprey Group will liaise with their fishing industry representatives and government agencies to cooperate with the development of management plans for fishery in Natura 2000 SACs. Osprey Group will provide these fishing industry representatives and other relevant statutory agencies with detailed (VMS/GPS) information of on the spatial and temporal extent of their fishing activities (in proposed Natura 2000 SAC areas).</p>

	Map 1. Areas that will be avoided by the Osprey Group (cross-hatched pink Ekofish areas).
<b>Client Progress</b>	The condition was closed at yr1, but the client continues to collate and interpret data on vessel activity in relation to closed areas and reported this to the surveillance team.
<b>Observations</b>	<p>The maps provided by Osprey (below &amp; additional close-ups within Agonus, 2013) illustrate that this condition continues to be met and that there is good compliance with the voluntary closed areas.</p>  <p><b>Figure 1 Map showing Osprey group vessel tracks and habitats, 2013</b></p> <p>It was, however, questioned whether the habitat mapping used is an accurate representation of ground conditions. Osprey suggested that some ground conditions were substantially different to those portrayed in the map. This illustrates the importance of incorporating fishery knowledge into such exercises. It is relevant here that the Osprey Group have been testing semi-pelagic doors on one</p>



	UoC vessel since August, which will be adopted by all vessels in 2014. This should reduce ground impact.
<b>Conclusion</b>	Condition is closed

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Address perverse incentive identified.</b>
<b>PI</b>	3.1.4
<b>SG 60</b>	The management system provides for incentives that are consistent with achieving the outcomes expressed by MSC Principles 1 and 2.
<b>SG 80</b>	The management system provides for incentives that are consistent with achieving the outcomes expressed by MSC Principles 1 and 2, and seeks to ensure that perverse incentives do not arise.
<b>SG 100</b>	The management system provides for incentives that are consistent with achieving the outcomes expressed by MSC Principles 1 and 2, and <u>explicitly considers</u> incentives in a <u>regular review</u> of management policy or procedures to ensure that they do not contribute to unsustainable fishing practices.
<b>Score</b>	80
<b>Scoring Rationale</b>	<p>A ‘perverse incentive’ had arisen in overlapping effort management measures under the cod recovery plan and the North Sea flatfish LTMP. As days at sea are allocated to particular gear sizes, vessels in the UoC are encouraged to fish with a smaller mesh than they would choose to fish with.</p> <p>Osprey vessels are no longer affected by this perverse incentive as the vessels have fished under the English effort allocation system, which awarded additional effort to vessels able to illustrate low levels of cod by-catch (below 3%). The vessels therefore all fished with 110mm+ mesh sizes without a need to reduce mesh size. The overall management system has therefore adapted to address the perverse incentive.</p>
<b>Client Action Plan</b>	<p>4.1. Osprey Group will undertake its own discard sampling monitoring as described in 1.1 – 1.9.</p> <p>4.2. Osprey Group will have the discard data analyzed by a qualified scientist (see 1.8.).</p> <p>4.3. The analysis will include an analysis (comparison) of the levels of discarding with 95-110 mm cod end and 110-130mm cod end.</p> <p>4.4. The Osprey group will provide the relevant authorities with data and information in order to encourage management revisions) to remove the negative incentive (smaller mesh sizes resulting in more days at sea).</p> <p>4.5. Osprey Group will provide the audit team with evidence of the actions taken to encourage the relevant authorities to remove the negative incentive at the first surveillance visit.</p> <p>4.6. In case the negative incentive to use 95-110mm mesh size is not removed before the first surveillance audit the management of Osprey Group will implement alternative measures to reduce discard levels to 110+mm mesh size or better. These measures can include the avoidance of areas with higher discard percentages and alternative gear set up.</p> <p>4.7. The Osprey Group will provide the audit team with evidence of the reduction of discard levels at the third surveillance visit,</p>
<b>Client Progress</b>	Condition was closed following previous surveillance.
<b>Observations</b>	For some fisheries the perverse incentive remains, but this is not due to a lack of effort on the part of Osprey in engaging with representatives and management authorities.
<b>Conclusion</b>	Condition is closed

**Any complaints against the certified operation; recorded, reviewed and actioned.**

At the time of the audit, Osprey trawlers were appealing against a fine imposed by Norwegian authorities relating to alleged reporting and discarding offences, which appear to be trivial. The details of these charges were provided to the audit team and are judged not to represent frequent or systematic non-compliance by UoC vessels.

Danish, German and UK authorities also inspected UoC vessels with no infringements reported.

**Any relevant changes to legislation or regulation.**

The certificate variation granted to Osprey means that the UoC vessels must comply with Norwegian regulations (including a discard ban) when fishing in the Norwegian zone.

**Any relevant changes to management regime.**

The certification variation request involved fishing in the Norwegian sector in which a discard ban is in place and vessels must fish with 120mm+ mesh.

One of the vessels engaged in the flyshoot fishery changed UK P.O. during the fishing season due to the allocation of shared quota across the year. There have been no changes in management that would detrimentally affect the performance of this fishery against the MSC standard.

**Overall Conclusions.**

All conditions are now closed.

Osprey continues to report on their ongoing sampling, data collection and reporting requirements.

The reported infringements in the Norwegian sector were being appealed at the time of the audit. They do not represent evidence of frequent and systematic non-compliance by UoC vessels.

No changes in management have taken place that would detrimentally affect the performance of this fishery against the MSC standard and the fishery continues to meet the requirements of the MSC Standard.

MSC Certification should therefore continue with on-site surveillance audit & recertification visit in year 4 (see Annex 3 for surveillance frequency determination).

## **Annex 1**

### **Written stakeholder submissions to the surveillance audit and IMM responses to points raised.**

None received.

**Annex 2****Notification of surveillance audit**

# **Osprey Trawlers North Sea twin rigged plaice fishery**

## **MSC Certification Certification Body: Intertek Moody Marine**

### **Year 3 Surveillance Audit**

Following certification of this fishery, we are now continuing the process of annual surveillance audits of the fishery. These audits have two principal functions:

1. To review any changes in the management of the fishery, including regulations, key management or scientific staff, or stock evaluation
2. To evaluate the progress of the fishery against any Conditions of Certification raised during the Main Assessment

During the audit, or at separate meetings, we shall be speaking with representatives of the fishery and fishery management organisations. We expect to carry out meetings on **19<sup>th</sup> September**. Meetings will be held in **the Netherlands** and attended by Audit Team members

The surveillance audit will be carried out by a mix of original and replacement assessment team members

<b>Rod Cappel</b>	<b>Coordinator / LA/P3</b>	<b>On site</b>
<b>Mike Pawson</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>On site</b>
<b>Richard Milner</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>Conducting work remotely</b>

(see details of the team membership below).

Should you have any information on this fishery that you feel should be considered in the assessment, please advise us. We may be available to meet with stakeholders as appropriate. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please advise us of:

- a) your name and contact details
- b) your association with the fishery
- c) the issues you would like to discuss (in order for us to arrange appropriate representation)
- d) where and when you would like to meet

Please respond with the above details by 17.00 GMT on **4<sup>th</sup> September** at the latest.

Yours

Rod Cappel  
Lead Assessor  
14.8.13  
E-mail: [rod.cappel@consult-poseidon.com](mailto:rod.cappel@consult-poseidon.com)

**Audit Team members:****Richard Milner** (Principle 1)

Richard was on the original Osprey assessment team and involved with previous surveillance audits. He also assessed the CVO North Sea Plaice and Sole fisheries. Richard is a fisheries biologist with 34 years experience working for the UK government as an advisor on fish stocks. He has wide experience of flat fish and inshore fisheries around the UK. He has been a member of ICES working groups on flatfish and demersal stocks in the North Sea and was chairman of the ICES Beam Trawl Survey Working Group. He has carried out MSC peer reviews on a number of fisheries assessments including Hastings trammel and trawl fisheries for sole and twin-rig trawling for plaice in the North Sea. He has published on flatfish fisheries and the biology and growth of flatfish.

**Mike Pawson** (Principle 2)

Mike was involved in the previous Osprey & Ekofish surveillance audits and assessed the CVO North Sea Plaice and Sole fisheries and has a wealth of experience on North Sea fisheries. Mike recently retired as senior fisheries advisor at Cefas, Lowestoft, after 39 years carrying out biological research and providing scientific advice to Defra, the EC and other national and international organisations on fish stock abundance (marine teleosts, elasmobranchs, salmonids and eels), technical conservation measures and fisheries management regulations, and on related monitoring, sampling, survey and research programmes. Between 1974 and 1980, he initiated and led acoustic surveys for blue whiting and mackerel, and trawl surveys in the North Sea (1975-1979), and then spent 1 year working as an UNESCO Expert in Ichthyology in Tripoli, Libya. From 1980 to 1990, Mike designed and managed MAFF's coastal fisheries programme, implementing biological sampling, trawl surveys, a fishermen's logbook scheme and socio-economic evaluation of sea bass fisheries, and between 1990 and 2000 he led the Cefas Western demersal team. Mike has provided scientific evaluation, quality assurance and advice to several national and EC-funded projects on fisheries biology, monitoring and assessment, and one of his major roles over the last 15 years has been peer-reviewing papers, reports and manuscripts in preparation. All of Mike's work has been published in refereed Journals, in ICES and EC working group reports, and in contract reports.

**Rod Cappell** (Lead auditor, Principle3)

Rod Cappell was in the original assessment team for Osprey North Sea Twin Rigged Plaice and conducted the previous Osprey surveillance audits. He also conducted the Ekofish surveillance audits and assessed the CVO North Sea Plaice and Sole. Rod is a fisheries management consultant with over 18 years experience in European fisheries. He has a degree in Marine Biology, MSc in Marine Resource Development and a postgraduate certificate in Environmental Economics. Rod is currently working in several areas of European and UK fisheries management including European Commission Regulatory Impact Assessments. Rod has been involved with a number of MSC assessments including English Channel and North Sea flatfish fisheries, which has involved consultation with key stakeholders in the UK and the Netherlands.

Full CVs of team members are available on request from IMM

### Annex 3

#### Determination of surveillance level

A surveillance audit may be conducted as either an “on-site” or “offsite audit”. This is determined by using criteria set out by the MSC:

Criteria	Surveillance Score	Osprey
1. Default Assessment Tree		
Yes	0	0
No	2	
2. Number of Conditions		
Zero Conditions	0	0
1-5 Conditions	1	
>5 Conditions	2	
3. Principle Level Scores		
≥ 85	0	0
<85	2	
4. Conditions on outcome PIs?		
Yes	2	
No	0	0
Total		0

The score for the fishery is used to determine the surveillance level appropriate to the fishery using the table below:

Surveillance score		Years after certification or re-certification			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
2 or more	Normal surveillance	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & recertification visit
1	Remote surveillance	Option 1	Off-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	Off-site surveillance audit
		Option 2	On-site surveillance audit	Off-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit
0	Reduced surveillance	Review new information	On-site surveillance audit	Review new information	On-site surveillance audit & recertification visit

The Osprey twin rig North Sea plaice fishery scores 2 as the Principle 2 score is <85, and so will require an on-site audit next year

**Annex 4 Scoring Guideposts and Performance Indicators associated with Condition 1**

	<b>1.2.3</b>	<b>2.1.1</b>	<b>2.2.3</b>
<b>SG60</b>	<p>Some relevant information related to stock structure, stock productivity and fleet composition is available to support the harvest strategy</p> <p>Stock abundance and fishery removals are monitored and at least one indicator is available and monitored with sufficient frequency to support the harvest control rule.</p>	<p>Main retained species are likely to be within biologically based limits or if outside the limits there are measures in place that are expected to ensure that the fishery does not hinder recovery and rebuilding of the depleted species.</p> <p>If the status is poorly known there are measures or practices in place that are expected to result in the fishery not causing the retained species to be outside biologically based limits or hindering recovery.</p>	<p>Qualitative information is available on the amount of main by-catch species affected by the fishery.</p> <p>Information is adequate to broadly understand outcome status with respect to biologically based limits.</p> <p>Information is adequate to support measures to manage by-catch.</p>
<b>SG80</b>	<p>Sufficient relevant information related to stock structure, stock productivity, fleet composition and other data is available to support the harvest strategy.</p> <p>Stock abundance and fishery removals are regularly monitored at a level of accuracy and coverage consistent with the harvest control rule, and one or more indicators are available and monitored with sufficient frequency to support the harvest control rule.</p> <p>There is good information on all other fishery removals from the stock.</p>	<p>Main retained species are highly likely to be within biologically based limits, or if outside the limits there is a partial strategy of demonstrably effective management measures in place such that the fishery does not hinder recovery and rebuilding.</p>	<p>Qualitative information and some quantitative information are available on the amount of main by-catch species affected by the fishery.</p> <p>Information is sufficient to estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits.</p> <p>Information is adequate to support a partial strategy to manage main by-catch species.</p> <p>Sufficient data continue to be collected to detect any increase in risk to main by-catch species (e.g. due to changes in the outcome indicator scores or the operation of the fishery or the effectiveness of the strategy).</p>
<b>SG100</b>	<p>A comprehensive range of information (on stock</p>	<p>There is a high degree of certainty that retained</p>	<p>Accurate and verifiable information is available</p>



	<p>structure, stock productivity, fleet composition, stock abundance, fishery removals and other information such as environmental information), including some that may not be directly relevant to the current harvest</p> <p>All information required by the harvest control rule is monitored with high frequency and a high degree of certainty, and there is a good understanding of the inherent uncertainties in the information [data] and the robustness of assessment and management to this uncertainty</p>	<p>species</p> <p>Target reference points are defined and retained species are at or fluctuating around their</p>	<p>on the amount of all by-catch and the consequences for the status of affected</p> <p>Information is sufficient to quantitatively estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits with a high degree</p> <p>Information is adequate to support a comprehensive strategy to manage by-catch, and evaluate with a high degree of certainty whether a strategy is achieving its objective</p> <p>Monitoring of by-catch data is conducted in sufficient detail to assess ongoing mortalities</p>
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