



COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS
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Revision of ICES area definitions within FAO major fishing area 27
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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following ICES ACOM meeting in December 2015, where various area-related questions were revised based on international and internal needs for revision of scientific definition of ICES statistical areas and request by DG Mare for better data collection and request from European Commission for aligning definitions of ICES statistical areas, this document presents an outcome of the meeting.

B. ISSUE 1. NEW SUB-DIVISIONS WITHIN DIVISION 27.3.A

Introduction

Skagerrak and Kattegat are two important areas as regards fishing activities and advisory processes.

There are several stocks in ICES Advice that refer to Skagerrak or Kattegat separately. In the meantime, fishing data are reported for the whole ICES statistical division 27.3.a, or at times per statistical rectangle, which is not precise enough.

Therefore, ICES is requested by DG MARE and EUROSTAT with reference to discussions with Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, to define (based on the best scientific approach) ICES statistical sub-divisions that would correspond to Skagerrak and Kattegat. DG MARE, Member states, and other interested parties are to be informed of ICES decision, so the new area references could be implemented in data collection and reporting.

Background information

Denmark in cooperation with other Member states operating in the Skagerrak and Kattegat areas has raised an issue about precision of reporting fishing activities in these areas. FAO

hosting area definitions for the major fishing areas stated that it is the regional regulative bodies that decide on the related statistical areas. In case of Northeast Atlantic it is ICES and NEAFC. NEAFC confirmed that NEAFC is not involved in formulating the definition and denomination of FAO and ICES areas. Therefore, it is ICES that is responsible for formalizing statistical area definitions.

In 2012, ICES received a proposal from Eurostat and DG MARE for splitting the division 27.3.a. Emphasizing being the non-political organization, ICES forwarded the request to DG MARE to solve any possible political implications with the member countries. Proposal was further discussed by DG MARE and Member states, and followed by the EUROSTAT fisheries statistics sub-group meeting of representatives from ICES, DG MARE, and Norway at on the 16th of April 2015. Proposal presented at the meeting had an altered western border for Skagerrak, which could not be approved by the ICES representative at the meeting. DG MARE and member countries agreed that data collection and reporting is out of political discussions, and it is solely up to ICES to denominate the most scientifically correct borders for statistical areas Skagerrak and Kattegat. Therefore, ICES was requested to derive a scientifically correct decision on borders for the statistical areas of Skagerrak and Kattegat, and to inform all parties interested.



Figure 1. Division 27.3.a borders from EUROSTAT presentation 2013

1. Continuous red line: IHO border. Dotted red line: TAC border
2. Dotted blue line: border between FAO 27.III. and 27.IV. Continuous blue line: Border of Skagerrak defined by TAC & IHO



Figure 3. Border lines from the DG MARE proposal (16th of April 2015) based on the TAC borders

ICES ACOM Decision

ACOM established a subgroup that included representatives of all countries interested in the areas to address this issue.

The subgroup revised and considered all facts and arguments, and suggested that a) the split between the Kattegat and the Skagerrak should be according to the EC TAC border; b) the split between North Sea and Skagerrak should be changed to the diagonal line (not the ICES rectangle delimitation). This should be in force after 1st January 2016.

ACOM endorsed the suggestion from the subgroup. It was also agreed that new area references will be: 27.3.a.20 (Subdivision 20) for the Skagerrak and 27.3.a.21 (Subdivision 21) for the Kattegat.

So the border lines should follow the lines as follows.

Skagerrak (27.3.a.20): The geographical area bounded on the west by a line drawn from the Hanstholm lighthouse to the Lindesnes lighthouse and on the south by a line drawn from the Skagen lighthouse to the Tilstlarna lighthouse and from this point to the nearest point on the Swedish coast.

Kattegat (27.3.a.21): The geographical area bounded on the north by a line drawn from the Skagen lighthouse to the Tilstlarna lighthouse and from this point to the nearest point on the Swedish coast and on the south by a line drawn from Hasenøre Head on the east coast of Jutland thence across the Great Belt to Griben Point on the west coast of Zealand, thence along the north coast of Zealand to Gilbjerg Head; thence across the northern approaches of the Øresund to the Kullen on the coast of Sweden.

Border line and area definition for sub-area 27.4 and divisions 27.4.a and 27.4.b should be adjusted accordingly.

C. ISSUE 2 REVISION OF DIVISION AND SUB-DIVISION DEFINITIONS FOR THE IIIB AND IIID BORDER

Introduction

Tim Lemmens, Coordinator for Operational Data Management in the European Commission addressed ICES to solve the irrelevance in area definitions of the divisions IIIb/IIIc and III d compare to the separate sub-divisions 22 and 24. ICES, as the local regulative body for the area definitions in the Northeast Atlantic is requested to align the definitions and to inform all interested parties.

Background information

Area definitions currently used for divisions IIIb,c and d are originating from the ICES C.M 1987/D:22 Statistics Committee report “An updated description of the ICES statistical area (North), statistical sub-areas, divisions, and sub-divisions”.

Descriptions for divisions in question are presently as follows [FAO Area 27 list:

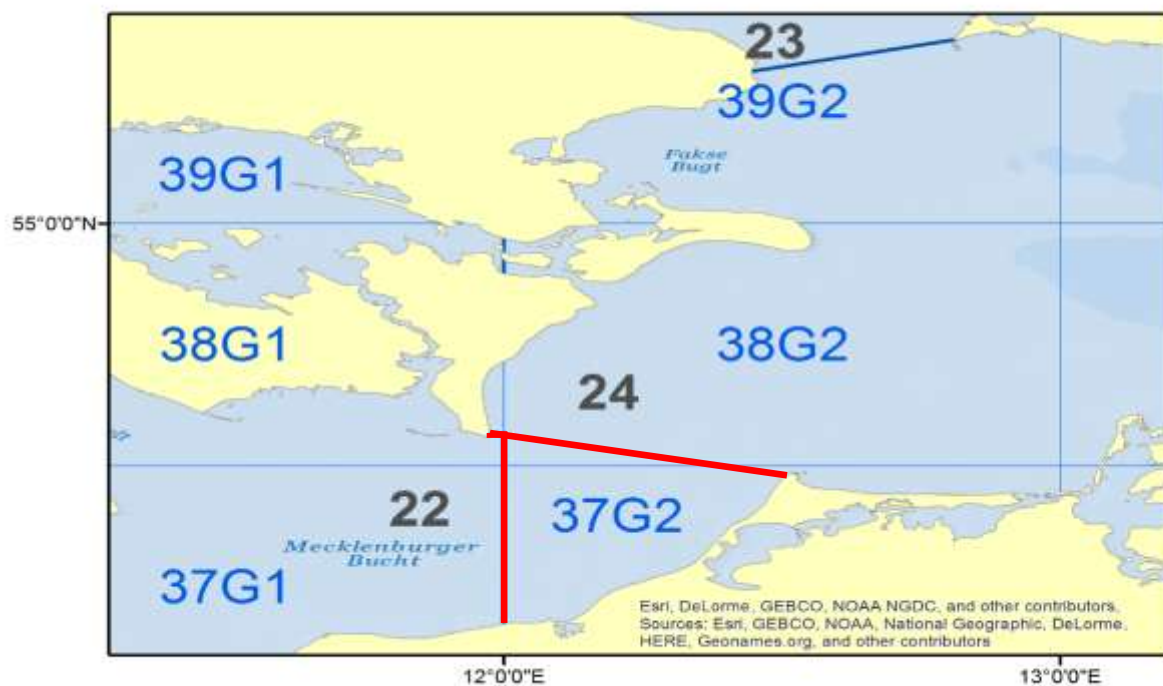
<http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/Area27/en#str>]:

Sound and Belt Sea or the Transition Area (Divisions IIIb, c)

The waters bounded by a line from Hasenøre Head on the east coast of Jutland to Griben Point on the west coast of Zealand to Gilbjerg Head; thence across the northern approaches of the Øresund to the Kullen on the coast of Sweden; thence in a southerly direction along the coast of Sweden to Falsterbo Light; thence across the southern entrance of the Øresund to Stevns Light; thence along the southeast coast of Zealand; thence across the eastern entrance of the Storstrøm Sound; thence along the east coast of the island of Falster to *Gedser Odde*; thence to *Darsser Ort on the coast of the German Democratic Republic*; thence in a southwesterly direction along the coasts of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany and the east coast of Jutland to the point of beginning.

Baltic Sea (Division III d) [Defunct]

The waters of the Baltic Sea and its dependent gulfs, bights, and firths bounded to the west by a line from Falsterbo Light on the southwest coast of Sweden across the southern entrance of the Øresund to Stevns Light; thence along the southeast coast of Zealand; thence across the eastern entrance of the Storstrøm Sound; thence along the east coast of the island of Falster to *Gedser Odde*; thence to *Darsser-Ort on the coast of the German Democratic Republic*.



Compare to the descriptions for sub-divisions:

Belt Sea (Subdivision 22)

The waters bounded by a line from Hasenøre Head (56°09' north latitude, 10°44' east longitude) on the east coast of Jutland to Griben Point (56°01' north latitude, 11°18' east longitude) on the west coast of Zealand; thence along the west and south coasts of Zealand to a point at 12°00' east longitude; thence due south to the island of Falster; thence along the east coast of the island of Falster to *Gedser Odde* (54°34' north latitude, 11°58' east longitude); thence due east to 12°00' east longitude; thence due south to the coast of the German Democratic Republic; thence in a southwesterly direction along the coasts of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany and the east coast of Jutland to the point of beginning.

And

Baltic West of Bornholm (Subdivision 24)

The waters bounded by a line from the Stevns Light (55°18' north latitude, 12°27' east longitude) on the east coast of Zealand through the southern entrance to the Sound to the Falsterbo Light (55°23' north latitude, 12°50' east longitude) on the coast of Sweden; thence along the south coast of Sweden to the Sandhammaren Light (55°24' north latitude, 14°12' east longitude); thence to the Hammerodde Light (55°18' north latitude, 14°47' east longitude) on the north coast of Bornholm; thence along the west and south coasts of Bornholm to a point at 15°00' east longitude; thence due south to the coast of Poland; thence in a westerly direction along the coasts of Poland and the German Democratic Republic to a point at 12°00' east longitude; thence due north to a point at 54°34' north latitude, 12°00' east longitude; thence due west to *Gedser Odde* (54°34' north latitude, 11°58' east longitude); thence along the east and north coasts of the island of Falster to a point at 12°00' east longitude; thence due north to the south coast of Zealand; thence in a westerly and northerly direction along the west coast of Zealand to the point of beginning.

General Note. Whenever in the text reference is made to the former (i) Federal Republic of Germany, (ii) German Democratic Republic and (iii) USSR, these country names should be intended to refer to the present Germany after unification in 1990 and to the present Russian Federation

The area descriptions in *italic* are the ones in question. Maps used by ICES are aligned with the second description.

ICES ACOM Decision

ICES ACOM agreed that the definition of the line between Divisions 3.b/c and 3.d should be in line with the SD 22 and 24 border line, namely the “line starting at Gedser Odde (54°34' north latitude, 11°58' east longitude); thence due east to 12°00' east longitude; thence due south to the coast of the German Democratic Republic.

D.

E. ISSUE 3. REVISE DIVISION 27.3.D VALIDITY

As seen from the previous issue, FAO area definitions on <http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/Area27/en#FAO-fishing-area-27.3.b,c> refer to **division 27.3.d** as **defunct**, but sub-divisions within it being valid. FAO hosts area references from ICES 2004 document on ICES area definitions [Proposal for additional reporting areas under the STATLANT programme in FAO area 27. 16 March 2004. ICES]. The document in question does not provide details as to why this division is noted as defunct, and does not point that as a target issue for the proposal. As area reference 27.3.d is being in use by ICES and data contributors, it was suggested to change its status to valid. ICES ACOM agreed to the proposal, and agreed that the validity of division 3.d should be restored.

F. ISSUE 4. NORTHEAST ATLANTIC AREA REFERENCING

Information and proposal

ICES is pointed as the regulative body for defining regional statistical area units within the Northeast Atlantic. In the past it was the ICES Statistics Committee that was responsible for area definitions. Later on, this task was taken over by ACOM. At present, ICES area-related decisions are scattered in reports and proposals, and the most advanced and complete description of ICES area definitions is hosted by FAO.

This leads to several issues on area referencing taken up at the ACOM meeting 2015.

For the first, FAO’s general note to ICES area definitions highlights the **outdated country references** in the area descriptions: “Whenever in the text reference is made to the former (i) Federal Republic of Germany, (ii) German Democratic Republic and (iii) USSR, these country names should be intended to refer to the present Germany after unification in 1990 and to the present Russian Federation.” It was decided that the note should be removed, and all the country references updated through all area descriptions respectively.

For the second, major organizations in the Northeast Atlantic use **reference codes** for ICES areas that refer to the complete hierarchical structure: areas, subareas, divisions, subdivisions and units. For example, references like 27.5.b.1.b or 27.3.d.28.1 contain the complete hierarchy information that is easy to track, locate, program and query. Therefore, it was decided to revise ICES historical references with use of Latin numbers and alphabet, and to apply the modern

hierarchy references as above from now on. Internal documents, where reference to the Northeast Atlantic is obvious, might omit the prefix 27.

In addition, it was decided to create an online master document for ICES areas that would include area codes, names, and definitions. The document would also store reference information to reports and proposals leading to any changes in area definitions. Hence, any changes from the proposals above would be published in the same document and visible to all parties with interest in the Northeast Atlantic.