

WORKING METHODOLOGY

The Group's objectives have been outlined by the Chairman in his opening remarks

1. As all parties represented round the table will appreciate very well the question of mixed stock salmon fisheries is both complex and sensitive. There has been a long history of debate and discussion against a background of serious threats to the stocks on which so many depend, for their livelihood or for the opportunity for sport and recreation. The task of the Group is to work together to find an agreed way forward to recommend to Government.
2. The Chairman is therefore concerned that we base our work on the best evidence that we can draw from all the available sources and that – as we move towards conclusions – we do so on the basis of consensus. The attached proposed working methodology, timetable and list of issues for consideration reflect this approach.

The Group's working methodology should therefore be to:

- Gather evidence from a range of sources. The secretariat will need to have all evidence available in time to copy to all members of the Group for their consideration, prior to scheduled meetings
- Review and discuss the evidence placed before it at each meeting
- Reach consensus about the meaning and implications of the evidence considered
- Identifying specific areas where pressures from active mixed stock fisheries are believed to be high
- Identify specific situations where there does not appear to be sufficient objective evidence to be able to reach a consensus on a particular area of debate (see paper MSFWG08/04)
- Make recommendations for further work to improve the evidence-base, wherever relevant
- Consider the economic, social and financial aspects of the issues on the basis of a thorough analysis
- Consider the different approaches to management on the basis of evidence of their effectiveness
- Identify opportunities for recommending early action

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- Consider opportunities to deliver or recommend interim outcomes during the course of the next 15 months
- Make recommendations for a strategy and appropriate policy actions that are based upon the evidence that has been reviewed
- Be prepared to make recommendations (interim or otherwise) that seem appropriate but where the current evidence base is still equivocal, based upon the precautionary approach
- Contribute to the drafting and editing of a final report, summarising the work and recommendations of the Group