

1.6.1.2 EU request on new information regarding the impact of fisheries on other components of the ecosystem

Advice summary

ICES has reviewed new evidence for the occurrence of vulnerable marine ecosystems in North Atlantic waters of the EU. No new locations of habitats sensitive to fishing activities were found.

Request

EC requests ICES to provide any new information regarding the impact of fisheries on other components of the ecosystem including small cetaceans and other marine mammals, seabirds and habitats. This should include any new information on the location of habitats sensitive to particular fishing activities.

Elaboration on ICES advice

A total of 510 new records that indicate the presence of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) were submitted to ICES in 2015.

Rockall Bank

The two research cruises undertaken in 2014 by Marine Scotland Science found VME indicators within the UK EEZ region of Rockall Bank. VME indicators included cup corals, stony corals, sponges, and sea pens, but were not found in large quantities.

Rosemary Bank

New data on VME indicator species were collected on a research cruise by Marine Scotland Science in 2014. Data were collected from a combination of trawl survey bycatch and video tow transects. Trawl bycatch were identified to species level where possible and included small numbers of VME indicators such as stony corals, black corals, gorgonians, and sea pens, alongside large numbers of sponges such as *Thenea* sp., *Geodia barretti*, and *Radiella* sp. Video tows showed extensive areas of the VME habitat type 'deep-sea sponge aggregations', and potentially also the habitat subtype 'Ostur sponge aggregations'.

Faroe–Shetland Channel

New data on VME indicator species were collected on a research cruise by Marine Scotland Science in 2014. Data were collected from a combination of trawl survey bycatch and video tow transects. Survey bycatch data included the sea pen *Umbellula encrinus*; various soft coral species, and a large number of sponge species from the orders Poecilosclerida, Hadromerida, Spirophorida, and Halichondrida, amongst others. Video tow seabed imagery is still in the process of being analysed.

ICES does not propose any further fisheries measures on the basis of these records.

Sources and references

ICES 2015. Report of the ICES/NAFO Joint Working Group on Deep-water Ecology (WGDEC), 16–20 February 2015, Horta, Azores, Portugal. ICES CM 2015/ACOM:27. 110 pp.