

12th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the WaddenSea

Tønder, 5 February 2014

Ministerial Council Declaration, Annex 3

Framework for Sustainable Fisheries

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Framework for Sustainable Fisheries

Natural capital and ecosystem services can not be replaced by other forms of services and capital (financial, economic, social). This does not mean that no biomass may be taken from the system.

Fishing is only possible if it can be demonstrated that it will not adversely affect the integrity and function of the ecosystem and in the case of the Wadden Sea also fully complies with the Guiding Principle.

Principles of sustainable fisheries

The Wadden Sea Board has identified the following catalogue of principles, required for the implementation of sustainable fisheries:

Appropriate assessment

The use of regular appropriate assessments (or equivalent impact assessments) should be applied to all fisheries in the Wadden Sea. These assessments must be based upon nature conservation objectives, specified to the extent possible, scientifically robust, trilaterally comparative and transparent. The use of regular impact assessments by all Wadden Sea regions would also level the playing field and may facilitate the dialogue between the fishery managers, the industry and environmental NGOs at a trilateral level.

Fishing gear/best practice

The application of appropriate fishing gear and best practices is another essential element in operationalizing sustainable fisheries, in particular with the aim of reducing impacts on the bottom and reducing by catch. Best practice is understood to be a combination of fishing techniques and fishing effort, leading to the lowest possible impact. A detailed analysis of fishing gear (application, site specific impact) should be part of the dialogue with the stakeholders. The fishing industry should be encouraged to develop more sustainable techniques and practices.

Closed areas

Closed areas are a management option for sustainable fisheries in the Wadden Sea Conservation Area, in particular to allow natural processes to proceed in an undisturbed way, to achieve the conservation objectives and biodiversity and in cases where there is insufficient knowledge about impacts. Sufficiently large closed areas can also serve as reference and recovery areas.

Monitoring/control/black box

This includes monitoring of fishing activities and the status of fished and non-fished areas. The fisheries sector is co-responsible for monitoring. Black boxes, or equivalent systems, are an important precondition for co-management, including nature protection.

Stock assessment

Regular stock assessments must be carried out as a basis for fisheries management. This is an essential element for sustainable fisheries. Fishing

impact should be such that stable food webs are restored and maintained, supporting natural populations of predators.

Appropriate knowledge<>responsibility of all parties involved

In the process of operationalizing sustainable fisheries, use must be made of best available knowledge. There is a responsibility of all parties involved in supporting knowledge about the status of the ecosystem.

Best practice pilots (learning by doing)

Transition towards sustainable fisheries also implies that there must be ample possibilities for testing new methods and practices. Knowledge gained in pilots must be spread among all parties involved.