

46th ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2024

Extension of Timeline for Yellowtail flounder Measures (Article 6)

Background

At the 45th Annual Meeting of NAFO in 2023, the Commission adopted a measure related to bycatch of American Plaice in the 3LNO Yellowtail flounder fishery. This measure was meant to be reviewed by STACTIC in 2024 to “assess if the provisions in paragraphs 6.3(g) and 8 bis led to an increase on American plaice bycatches or directed fishery on American plaice”.

Canada notes the very limited level of fishing activity for 3LNO Yellowtail flounder over the past year. Therefore, it is Canada’s view that the measure should be rolled over for one year, and that the review should be instead undertaken in 2025, if and when there is more data to be considered. To affect this change, minor amendments are proposed.

Amendments (noted in red)

Article 6 – Bycatch Retention on Board of Stocks Identified in Annex I.A as Bycatch when No Directed Fishery is Permitted

Limits for Species Listed in Annex I.A Retained on Board as Bycatch

3. Each Contracting Party shall ensure that its vessels, including vessels chartered in accordance with Article 26, shall limit the retention of on board species classified as bycatch to the maxima specified below:

(...)

(g) while conducting a directed fishery for yellowtail in Divisions 3LNO: 15% of American plaice; otherwise bycatch provisions in Article 6.3(d) apply. Until December 31, **2025**, if a vessel is conducting a directed fishery for yellowtail in Divisions 3LNO, and is carrying an observer:

(i) this maxima shall be 2 900 kg or 15% of American plaice, whichever the greater;

(ii) a vessel may exceed the maxima referred to in Article 6.3(g)(i) for bycatch of American plaice retained on board during the first 9 fishing days in the Regulatory Area provided that American plaice bycatch represents 15% or less by the end of that period or when the vessel leaves the Regulatory Area, whichever occurs first.

(iii) each Contracting Party shall inspect 100% of landings of fishing vessels that have conducted directed fishery for yellowtail in Divisions 3LNO.

Exceeding Bycatch Limits in Any One Haul

8 bis. Until December 31, **2025**, where a vessel is carrying an observer and is conducting a directed fishery for yellowtail with a legal mesh size appropriate for that fishery, the first two times on a fishing trip that catches of American plaice comprise the largest percentage by weight of the total catch in a haul, they shall be considered as incidental catch, but the vessel shall immediately move as specified in paragraph 6.

- 8 ter. Until December 31, **2025**, by way of derogation from Article 6.6.b(ii), if the American plaice bycatch limits are exceeded again, instead of leaving the Division for at least 60 hours, the vessel may move a minimum of 10 nautical miles from any position of the previous tows in up to three consecutive hauls in which the American plaice bycatch limit is exceeded. If the bycatch limits are exceeded again, the vessel shall leave the Division and not return for at least 60 hours, in accordance with Article 6.6.b(ii).

Implementation

11. In **2025**, STACTIC shall:
- (a) assess if the provisions in paragraphs 6.3(g) and 8 bis led to an increase on American plaice bycatches or directed fishery on American plaice; and
 - (b) review paragraphs 6.3(g) and 8 bis.
- ~~12. This measure shall become binding on each Contracting Party seven days following the date of transmittal by the Executive Secretary, with no bearing on the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article XIV.~~