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46th ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2024

Re-Convene the Ad hoc Working Group on Bycatch, Discards and Selectivity for the purpose of considering the current definition of directed fishery and associated bycatch provisions

The concept and definition of directed fishery in the NAFO context is central to the management of all regulated stocks. As such, it is at the heart of the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (CEMs), with the deliberate intent of strictly controlling bycatch, in particular of moratoria species. Given evolutions in both NAFO fisheries and CEMs over the past two decades, a re-assessment of this central theme, with the view to evaluating its alignment with the current needs of the organization and modern fisheries management practices, is warranted.

Noting that at the Annual Meeting in 2022, the Commission decided to maintain the option to reconvene the Ad hoc Working Group on Bycatch, Discards and Selectivity (WG-BDS) if Contracting Parties determined it to be necessary, it is recommended this ad hoc working group be reconvened for this purpose.

The ad hoc working group will consider NAFO's current measures relating to directed fisheries and mitigating bycatch of moratoria species; consider updates or alternate approaches; consider recent specific bycatch, move-along, and directed fishing measures relating to 3LNO Yellowtail flounder, 3M cod, and 3+4 squid; in order to develop recommendations to clarify and/or update the definition of directed fishing and/or associated by-catch measures for consideration by the Commission at its 2025 Annual Meeting. The working group will continue to take into account the work already done or ongoing by NAFO on these matters, especially in STACTIC.

These discussions would benefit from a broad range of management, enforcement and science expertise. Contracting Parties are strongly encouraged to include managers, scientists, compliance experts, and industry advisers in their delegations.

Invitations to participate will be extended to the chair of the Scientific Council and the chair of STACTIC. The chair of the Commission will serve as the Chair of BDS. Recognizing workload concerns, the ad-hoc working group could meet in conjunction with other meetings.

To enable effective and productive discussions, CPs are encouraged to submit working papers 30 days in advance of the meeting date.