

<http://archive.nafo.int/open/sc/2014/scs14-17.pdf>

xii) Impacts of removing candidate VME closures from survey design (Item 14)

Recognizing the work done in NAFO to prevent significant adverse impacts to vulnerable marine ecosystems, and the need for effective stock assessments;

Further recognizing that modifications to survey designs occur on regular basis in fisheries surveys in many cases,

Fisheries Commission requests that Scientific Council investigate the impacts of removing the closed areas from the survey design for relevant stock surveys for consideration in the review of closed areas in 2014.

Scientific Council responded:

In 2012, Scientific Council recognized the issue of scientific surveys sampling in closed areas. This led to the following recommendation:

“Scientific Council **recommended** that *before design of survey sampling schemes are changed, more work be conducted in order to examine the trade-off between scientific sampling needs and potential impact on VMEs.*” (SC Report 2012)

There was no progress on this recommendation in 2013 or 2014, and, no analysis available at this meeting to evaluate the FC request to investigate the impacts of removing the closed areas from the survey design for relevant stock surveys, for consideration in the review of closed areas in 2014.

Scientific Council requests WGESA to cooperate with the Secretariat to produce a footprint of trawl surveys and how these overlap with current closures, and to determine the percentage of each survey stratum within closed areas.

However, noted that there may be scope to lessen the impact on VME by considering some practical guidance which may already be built into survey protocols. In any case, until such an impact analysis is available by survey, the Council suggests that consideration be given to the following:

- (1) Survey tows in strata overlapping closed areas be conducted with the minimum acceptable time on bottom as dictated by the survey protocol.
- (2) Consideration be given to conducting the minimum number of tows per stratum.
- (3) Avoid creating new survey footprints, by reusing precisely those already used.
- (4) Moving a randomly pre-selected sampling station as far as necessary if the position has been identified as a hotspot for a VME.