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Bycatch limits during Quarter 1 closure – NAFO CEM Article 5.5.j

Background

The Total Allowable Catch for cod in Division 3M established for 2021 by the NAFO Scientific Council represented a sharp decline compared to 2020. In view of the status of the stock, measures in addition to the TAC were put in place, including a Quarter 1 closure, the use of size-selective sorting grid in directed fishery to reduce the fishing mortality of juveniles and a 100% port inspection benchmarks for vessels with more than 1,250 kg of 3M cod catches on board.

The Q1 closure under Article 5(5)(j) of the NAFO Control and Enforcement Measures (CEM) was a temporal measure for 2021. In view of the status of the stock this measure should apply during Q1 2022 and it should ensure a homogeneous application of the permitted level of bycatches.

Proposal

It is proposed to amend Article 5(5)(j) to change the wording of the closure for Q1 2022 so that it is clear that all Contracting Parties shall limit their bycatches in line with Article 6(3)(a) and observe the move-on provisions in Article 6.6(b):

- (j) *close its directed fishery for cod in Division 3M between **2400:00 UTC 31 ~~December~~ January 2022~~0~~** and 24:00 UTC 31 March 2022~~1~~. **During this period, all Contracting Parties shall ensure that its vessels limit the catches retained on board and in any one haul of this stock in line with Article 6.3(a) and observe the move-on provisions in Article 6.6(b).***

