



Serial No. N7226

NAFO/COM Doc. 21-16
[Adopted]

43rd ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2021

Measure to Protect Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

Explanatory Memorandum

In 2021, the Scientific Council completed its five-year re-assessment of the risk of Significant Adverse Impacts (SAIs) from bottom fishing activities on VMEs in the NRA, taking into account all 6 FAO criteria and with greater special resolution than previous reviews (from 5km to 1km). The SC noted that this greater spatial resolution from this assessment resulted in more precise and generally larger estimates of the area and biomass protected by the current VME closures, relative to the 2020 review of VME closures. The SC concluded that small gorgonian, black coral, erect bryozoan, and sea squirt VMEs have a high overall risk of SAI, whereas the large-sized sponges and large gorgonian coral VMEs have a low overall risk of SAI with the current VME closures. The sea pen VME was assessed as having an intermediate risk of SAI. To note, at last year's Annual Meeting, NAFO contracting parties agreed by consensus to add black coral to the list of VMEs in need of protection. The SC subsequently recommended improving the protection of VMEs, including extension of existing closed areas and closure of new areas.

This proposal reflects the WG-EAFFM recommendation (NAFO/COM-SC Doc. 21-04) to maintain the existing closed areas for an additional five years, through 2026. The proposal further recommends closure of five new areas (1a, 2a, 8a, 9a, and 10a), and that these areas be reviewed in 5 years' time, as part of the 2026 VME/SAI assessment. Additionally, this proposal recommends the closure of four new areas (7a, 11a, 14a, and 14b) for an interim period of 2 years; during that time, the SC is requested to re-examine the boundaries of these areas, taking into account any bottom fishing activity from the 2020 and 2021 3M shrimp fisheries.

The proposal also recommends amended the sub-chapter heading, "*High Sponge and Coral Concentration Area Closures*" to "*Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Area Closures*" to better reflect the range of VMEs NAFO is managing.

The co- proposers take note of the important work that NAFO has done since 2008 to protect vulnerable habitats from threats from bottom fishing. These efforts have been acknowledged by the United Nations' General Assembly thru its bottom fishing review process, which is scheduled to meet again in August 2022. In closing these proposed areas, NAFO is greatly increasing protection for black corals and sea pens while maintaining protections for large gorgonians and sponges, thereby supporting NAFO's commitment to conserving marine biodiversity and minimizing the risk of long term or irreversible adverse effects of fishing activities.



Proposal

Re-affirming NAFO's commitment to the precautionary approach and to implementing an ecosystem approach to fisheries management as well as adaptive approach to management, and

Noting the work of the Scientific Council to address the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas.

Thereby recommends that Chapter II, Article 17 "*Area Restrictions for Bottom Fishing for Activities*", paragraph 3 "*High Sponge and Coral Concentration Area Closures*", be amended as follows:

~~"High Sponge and Coral Concentration Area Closures"~~ **"Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Area Closures"**

3. *"Until 31 December-2021 2026, no vessel shall engage in bottom fishing activities in areas 1-13 illustrated in Figure 5 and defined by connecting the coordinates specified in Table 7 in numerical order and back to coordinate 1"*


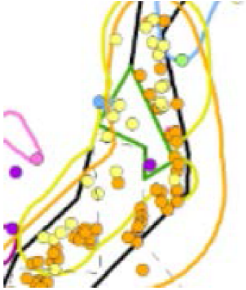

(Secretariat to update Table 7 and Figure 5 with coordinates from closed area 1a, 2a, 8a, 9a, and 10a. Existing area 1 should be amended to include the new coordinates from Area 1a, Area 2 with the new coordinates from 2a, etc. Coordinates for these new additional areas are listed in Annex 1)


"3.bis. Until 31 December 2023, no vessel shall engage in bottom fishing activities in the areas illustrated in Figure xx and defined by connecting the coordinates specified in Table XX in numerical order and back to coordinate 1.


(Secretariat to develop new table and figure to reflect closures for areas 7a, 11a, 14a, and 14b. Coordinates for these areas are listed in Annex 2)

The Scientific Council will be requested to conduct a re-assessment of its previously recommended closures of 7a, 11a, 14a and 14b, incorporating catch and effort data for fisheries of shrimp from 2020 and 2021 into the fishing impact assessments. This work is to be completed by the 2023 Scientific Council meeting. Additionally, the Scientific Council will take into consideration proposed areas 2b, 4a, 15a, 16, 17, and 18 as part of its next five-year VME/SAI reassessment, scheduled for 2026. CPs will provide any relevant information to that process.

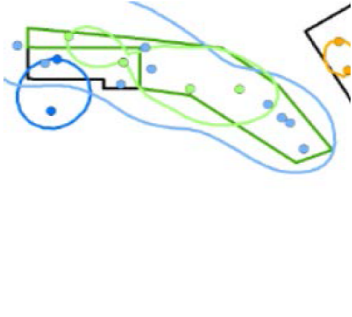

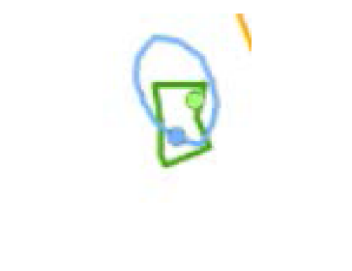

Annex 1. Maps and coordinates to be included in revised Chapter II, Article 17, paragraph 3 (1a, 2a, 8a, 9a, and 10a)

<p style="text-align: center;">Area 1a</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>44.04850 N</td> <td>48.88119 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>44.04828 N</td> <td>48.81930 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>43.99931 N</td> <td>48.82402 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>44.00031 N</td> <td>48.89132 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>44.04850 N</td> <td>48.88119 W</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Latitude	Longitude	44.04850 N	48.88119 W	44.04828 N	48.81930 W	43.99931 N	48.82402 W	44.00031 N	48.89132 W	44.04850 N	48.88119 W		
Latitude	Longitude														
44.04850 N	48.88119 W														
44.04828 N	48.81930 W														
43.99931 N	48.82402 W														
44.00031 N	48.89132 W														
44.04850 N	48.88119 W														
<p style="text-align: center;">Area 2a</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>46.50617 N</td> <td>47.18415 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46.67800 N</td> <td>47.05130 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46.40669 N</td> <td>46.85639 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46.35133 N</td> <td>46.98139 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46.44222 N</td> <td>46.98139 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46.50617 N</td> <td>47.18415 W</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Latitude	Longitude	46.50617 N	47.18415 W	46.67800 N	47.05130 W	46.40669 N	46.85639 W	46.35133 N	46.98139 W	46.44222 N	46.98139 W	46.50617 N	47.18415 W
Latitude	Longitude														
46.50617 N	47.18415 W														
46.67800 N	47.05130 W														
46.40669 N	46.85639 W														
46.35133 N	46.98139 W														
46.44222 N	46.98139 W														
46.50617 N	47.18415 W														
<p style="text-align: center;">Area 8a</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>48.61528 N</td> <td>45.52108 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>48.63553 N</td> <td>45.32553 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>48.59900 N</td> <td>45.32553 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>48.57319 N</td> <td>45.43858 W</td> </tr> <tr> <td>48.61528 N</td> <td>45.52108 W</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Latitude	Longitude	48.61528 N	45.52108 W	48.63553 N	45.32553 W	48.59900 N	45.32553 W	48.57319 N	45.43858 W	48.61528 N	45.52108 W		
Latitude	Longitude														
48.61528 N	45.52108 W														
48.63553 N	45.32553 W														
48.59900 N	45.32553 W														
48.57319 N	45.43858 W														
48.61528 N	45.52108 W														

Area 9a	Latitude	Longitude
	48.45850 N	45.57789 W
	48.26863 N	45.76336 W
	48.28661 N	45.79036 W
	48.20183 N	45.90358 W
	48.50508 N	45.66178 W
	48.45850 N	45.57789 W

Area 10a	Latitude	Longitude
	47.82819 N	46.38003 W
	47.85837 N	46.43767 W
	48.15374 N	46.15862 W
	48.13325 N	46.09395 W
	47.82819 N	46.38003 W
	47.82819 N	46.38003 W

Annex 2. Maps and coordinates to be included in new Chapter II, Article 17 paragraph 3bis (7a, 11a, 14a, and 14b)

<p style="text-align: center;">Area 7a</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>48.16916 N</td><td>44.26527 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.13845 N</td><td>44.38627 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.30190 N</td><td>44.73967 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.31908 N</td><td>44.91058 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.41728 N</td><td>44.91058 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.41728 N</td><td>45.28789 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.46450 N</td><td>45.28868 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.43927 N</td><td>44.90961 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.41587 N</td><td>44.63289 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.32513 N</td><td>44.44400 W</td></tr> <tr><td>48.16916 N</td><td>44.26527 W</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Latitude	Longitude	48.16916 N	44.26527 W	48.13845 N	44.38627 W	48.30190 N	44.73967 W	48.31908 N	44.91058 W	48.41728 N	44.91058 W	48.41728 N	45.28789 W	48.46450 N	45.28868 W	48.43927 N	44.90961 W	48.41587 N	44.63289 W	48.32513 N	44.44400 W	48.16916 N	44.26527 W
Latitude	Longitude																								
48.16916 N	44.26527 W																								
48.13845 N	44.38627 W																								
48.30190 N	44.73967 W																								
48.31908 N	44.91058 W																								
48.41728 N	44.91058 W																								
48.41728 N	45.28789 W																								
48.46450 N	45.28868 W																								
48.43927 N	44.90961 W																								
48.41587 N	44.63289 W																								
48.32513 N	44.44400 W																								
48.16916 N	44.26527 W																								
<p style="text-align: center;">Area 11a</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>47.50040 N</td><td>46.45919 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.62746 N</td><td>46.27531 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.57767 N</td><td>46.20109 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.54136 N</td><td>46.27405 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.53611 N</td><td>46.24163 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.47439 N</td><td>46.26826 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.46008 N</td><td>46.35658 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.50040 N</td><td>46.35658 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.50040 N</td><td>46.45919 W</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Latitude	Longitude	47.50040 N	46.45919 W	47.62746 N	46.27531 W	47.57767 N	46.20109 W	47.54136 N	46.27405 W	47.53611 N	46.24163 W	47.47439 N	46.26826 W	47.46008 N	46.35658 W	47.50040 N	46.35658 W	47.50040 N	46.45919 W				
Latitude	Longitude																								
47.50040 N	46.45919 W																								
47.62746 N	46.27531 W																								
47.57767 N	46.20109 W																								
47.54136 N	46.27405 W																								
47.53611 N	46.24163 W																								
47.47439 N	46.26826 W																								
47.46008 N	46.35658 W																								
47.50040 N	46.35658 W																								
47.50040 N	46.45919 W																								
<p style="text-align: center;">Area 14a</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>47.75679 N</td><td>44.05179 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.79843 N</td><td>44.05179 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.83648 N</td><td>44.05958 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.83635 N</td><td>43.97472 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.79843 N</td><td>43.98983 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.76533 N</td><td>43.96915 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.74572 N</td><td>44.04486 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.75679 N</td><td>44.05179 W</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Latitude	Longitude	47.75679 N	44.05179 W	47.79843 N	44.05179 W	47.83648 N	44.05958 W	47.83635 N	43.97472 W	47.79843 N	43.98983 W	47.76533 N	43.96915 W	47.74572 N	44.04486 W	47.75679 N	44.05179 W						
Latitude	Longitude																								
47.75679 N	44.05179 W																								
47.79843 N	44.05179 W																								
47.83648 N	44.05958 W																								
47.83635 N	43.97472 W																								
47.79843 N	43.98983 W																								
47.76533 N	43.96915 W																								
47.74572 N	44.04486 W																								
47.75679 N	44.05179 W																								
<p style="text-align: center;">Area 14b</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Latitude</th> <th>Longitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>47.58938 N</td><td>43.94725 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.62598 N</td><td>43.88236 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.50133 N</td><td>43.80515 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.45969 N</td><td>43.80515 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.45969 N</td><td>43.86676 W</td></tr> <tr><td>47.58938 N</td><td>43.94725 W</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Latitude	Longitude	47.58938 N	43.94725 W	47.62598 N	43.88236 W	47.50133 N	43.80515 W	47.45969 N	43.80515 W	47.45969 N	43.86676 W	47.58938 N	43.94725 W										
Latitude	Longitude																								
47.58938 N	43.94725 W																								
47.62598 N	43.88236 W																								
47.50133 N	43.80515 W																								
47.45969 N	43.80515 W																								
47.45969 N	43.86676 W																								
47.58938 N	43.94725 W																								