

**43<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2021****Measure to Revise NAFO CEM Article 4 to  
Limit Scientific Catches of 3M Cod and 3M Shrimp in 2022****Explanatory memorandum**

In order to pursue NAFO's primary objective of conservation and sustainable use, a fundamental requirement is that removals by all Contracting Parties remain within agreed limits. This obligation is especially critical in the context of stocks that are on a declining trajectory and are at risk of falling below  $B_{lim}$ . In 2020, the Commission agreed to a TAC of 1500t for 3M cod for 2021, a sharp reduction from the previous year in the face of biomass declines.

In 2021, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, or DFG) initiated a longline survey using a commercial vessel in division 3M to provide information on cod and other species. At the 2021 NAFO Annual Meeting, DFG reported in NAFO SCR Doc. 21/039 that this survey had caught 630.6t of 3M cod, which is almost double, and in addition to, its quota for 2021 of 335t.

This significant overharvest is deeply troubling in its implications for the sustainability of the stock. However, it also points more broadly to a gap in Article 4 of NAFO's Conservation and Enforcement Measures (CEM), which does not provide adequate mechanisms to ensure that harvests taken in the context of scientific surveys are in fact taken for scientific purposes, that they are no larger than generally required for those purposes, and that they do not undermine other management measures aimed at ensuring sustainable harvests.

Developing mechanisms to manage scientific catches will require care to ensure they provide ample space for legitimate scientific work to be conducted, while at the same time ensuring that science needs cannot be confused with large harvests that may have a more commercial motivation. While work to develop such mechanisms is undertaken over the coming year, an interim measure is required to ensure that any 3M cod survey undertaken in 2022 is aligned with the agreed TAC for the stock and with sound fisheries management principles more generally.

Since the Commission agreed in 2021 to a moratorium for 3M Shrimp in 2022 given the stock's decline to a level below  $B_{lim}$ , similar caution is required for scientific work relating to the 3M Shrimp stock. This interim measure therefore covers both 3M cod and 3M shrimp.

**Proposal**

*Recognizing* that the NAFO Convention's objective includes "to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Convention Area;"

*Concerned* that a scientific survey conducted in NAFO Division 3M took an amount of cod disproportionate to what would be reasonably required or expected for purely scientific purposes;

*Noting* the Commission's wish to prevent excessive scientific catches while a permanent mechanism to manage these catches is developed;



Thereby recommend that Article 4 be amended to include new subparagraphs c and d in Paragraph 2:

2. A research vessel shall not:

[...]

c. in 2022 take 3M cod in excess of 15 metric tonnes. Should a research vessel's catch exceed this amount, the excess shall be counted against the allocation to the vessel's flag State Contracting Party. Furthermore, if the allocation to the Contracting Party for 3M cod is exhausted, it shall not authorize its vessels to undertake further research activities. Any research activities underway must be stopped as soon as 15t have been caught.

d. in 2022 take 3M shrimp in excess of 10 metric tonnes. Given no directed fishery is authorized on 3M shrimp in 2022, a Contracting Party must stop research activities on 3M shrimp once 10t have been caught.