



45th ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2023

Squid Fishery

Background

- (1) A serious infringement could be identified with respect to paragraph 1 of Article 38 of NECM, if the non-targeted stock unintentionally comprises the largest percentage in weight in a situation where the mesh size required for the targeted stock under paragraph 2 of Article 13 is not complied with. It is understood that the targeted stock is the stock for which a vessel conducts “directed fishery” defined in paragraph 2 of Article 5 of NECM.
- (2) For example, when fishing for squid with the legal mesh size (60 mm), however, in reality, there might be a possibility that redfish can be by-caught accidentally and it comprises the largest percentage in weight. Since the mesh size requirement for the redfish fishery is no smaller than 90 mm or 130 mm, this fishery operation could be identified with infringement against the mesh size requirement.
- (3) As Japanese vessels have not fished for squid since many years ago, they could not have confidence that they can avoid the above situation. The uncertainty unreasonably deprives them of their fishing opportunity to fish for squid.
- (4) In order to address the concern and provide a vessel with strong incentives to minimize the catch of by-catch or non-target species, Japan would like to propose the revision to the relevant part of NCEM. This may contribute to reducing by-catch species in the squid fishery.

Proposed Modifications

Article 11 – Squid

Squid Closure

1. No vessel may fish for squid between 00:01 UTC on 1 January to 24:00 UTC on 30 June in Sub-areas 3 and 4.

Temporal exemption on catch composition rules in squid fisheries

2. A vessel may notify their intent to engage in the squid fishery in Sub-areas 3 and 4 under paragraph 3 when carrying an observer on board and using a mesh size no smaller than 60mm.

Duties of the Master

3. The master shall notify the flag state Contracting Party no later than 3 days before the start of the specified period. The following information shall be included in the notification:
 - (a) the name and call sign of the vessel;
 - (b) the period between 1 July and 31 December when it will conduct hauls targeting squid, including the start and end dates and times in UTC;



(c) the Division in which hauls targeting squid will be conducted; and

(d) the minimum mesh size to be used.

4. The period specified in 3(b) shall be limited to ~~two~~ weeks at maximum.

5. During the period notified in paragraph 3(b), if any Annex I.A species other than squid comprises the largest percentage, by weight, of the total catch in the haul, it shall not be considered as being taken in a directed fishery for the stock concerned per Article 5.2, or as fishing with a mesh size smaller than prescribed by Article 13.2 and 13.4.

In such scenario, the vessel shall immediately move a minimum 10 nautical miles from any position of that tow/set and not return to any such position for targeting squid for the remainder of the calendar year, and the master of the vessel and the observer onboard shall immediately report the following information to the flag State Contracting Party:

(a) the date and time (UTC) of the start and end of the haul;

(b) the depth at the start and end of the haul;

(c) the position at the start and end of the haul; and

(d) the catch composition of the haul by weight.

6. If a directed fisheries haul described in paragraph 5 occurs three times during the notified period, the vessel shall cease fishing for squid for the remainder of the calendar year.

Duties of the flag State Contracting Party

7. The flag State Contracting Party shall:

(a) transmit without delay the notification and the information referred to in paragraphs 3 and 5 to the Executive Secretary; and

(b) ensure that no exemption is granted to its vessels before the notification referred to in paragraph (a) is submitted to the Executive Secretary.

Duty of the Executive Secretary

8. The Executive Secretary posts without delay the notification and information provided in accordance with paragraph 7 to the NAFO MCS website.

Implementation

9. The exemption referred to in paragraphs 2 to 8 shall apply during 2024 and be reviewed by STACTIC in 2024.