

Report of the interim virtual meeting of the NAFO Commission *Ad hoc* Working Group to Reflect on the Rules Governing Bycatches, Discards and Selectivity (WG-BDS) in the NAFO Regulatory Area

Wednesday, 09 July 2025
via Webex

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1. Opening by Chair, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (United States of America)

The Chair, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (United States of America), opened the meeting at 09:04 hours (UTC -3 hours) on Thursday, 09 July 2025 via Webex, and welcomed representatives from Canada, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Japan, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and the United States of America (Annex 1).

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

The NAFO Secretariat was appointed as rapporteur.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted, as outlined in Annex 2.

4. Overview of NAFO's current measures relating to directed fisheries and mitigating bycatch of moratoria species

The Chair opened the discussions by inviting the NAFO Secretariat to present a working paper that was prepared to outline the existing bycatch and move along provisions that are included in the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (CEM). Contracting Parties thanked the NAFO Secretariat for the compilation, noting that it would be beneficial to include the specific CEM article references in the diagrams. The NAFO Secretariat agree to work to update the documents to include the relevant references.

It was noted that many of the measures were put into place to meet specific goals of protecting moratoria species, managing bycatch, and overall quota management, and that it would be important that any changes proposed to the measures ensure that those goals are still being met. In line with that, the NAFO Secretariat was requested to draft a working paper with a review the history of the implementation of each of the measures, including any available scientific and management rationale for assigning the specific percentage limits. It was also noted that many fisheries in NAFO are mixed fisheries, and the quotas for each Contracting Party need to be taken into consideration when doing any sort of analyses of the bycatch measures. Discussions were also had on the importance of noting the differences between the discussions on the directed fishing policy in NAFO in general and the bycatch management provisions.

5. Review of NAFO's Action Plan in the Management and Minimization of Bycatch and Discards

The Chair provided a summary on the work that has been done to date in relation to the BDS Action Plan ([COM Doc. 17-26](#)) and highlighted a compilation of the relevant documents and reports that was prepared by the NAFO Secretariat. The Chair reflected on the number of actions that have been completed in items 1-3 of the action plan, but that there had not been much progress on task 4 relating to the development of management options. Contracting Parties agreed that the action plan is still a relevant document and that NAFO should continue to work towards completing the specific actions outlined in the plan. It was noted that it would be beneficial to update the data analyses that were completed within tasks 1-3 of the action plan to include the most recent data, as the previous analysis included acknowledged data gaps. There were discussions on whether the entire analysis should be re-done, whether specific species / stocks should be looked into, or whether just those stocks that have had recent derogation measures introduced in the NAFO CEM should be analyzed. It was highlighted that STACTIC will be reviewing some of the recent measures that were introduced in the NAFO CEM relating to derogations from the existing bycatch rules, as per the provisions in Articles 6.11 and 6.12 of the NAFO CEM, and while it would be beneficial to have the results of these STACTIC discussions,

expected to occur at the Annual Meeting to facilitate continued discussions in WG-BDS, it was also flagged that the WG-BDS discussions could be more broadly focused on policy and management. In relation to any updated data analyses, the NAFO Secretariat noted that it would not have the time required to have this work completed in advance of the NAFO Annual Meeting.

6. Framing of key issues and decision points for the next meeting of the Working Group

The importance of taking a holistic look at the bycatch measures and the discard policy in NAFO was noted during the discussions, and the NAFO Secretariat was tasked with updating the summary documents to include specific article references, as well as preparing a comprehensive review of the history of the implementation of each of the measures to facilitate discussions at the next WG-BDS meeting. Contracting Parties were encouraged to review the previous analysis that was presented to the WG-BDS meeting in 2021 (COM BDS-WP 21-01 and [COM Doc. 21-04](#)). It was agreed that an updated analysis would be beneficial to facilitate the discussions, but there was no agreement on specific tasks for the NAFO Secretariat with (re-doing the previous analysis, focusing on specific species / stocks, etc.). It was also noted that some analyses are being completed in other bodies (e.g. STACTIC) and that efforts should not be duplicated. The Chair of the Scientific Council noted that members of the Scientific Council are interested in participating in the work of the WG-BDS, and that there could be benefits from converting the working group to a joint Commission–Scientific Council working group. There was also some discussion on a potential questionnaire to be completed by Contracting Parties to obtain feedback on specific experiences with the measures, however there was not an agreement to develop such a questionnaire.

Contracting Parties agreed to continue discussions bilaterally, and during the upcoming joint working group meetings to determine if there would be enough updated information available by 14 September 2025 to merit moving forward with the additional meeting, or if it will need to be rescheduled at a later date. A decision on this will be communicated via correspondence in the coming weeks.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

8. Time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the WG-BDS is tentatively scheduled to take place on 14 September 2025, however this will be confirmed via correspondence in the coming weeks.

9. Adoption of Report

The report was adopted via correspondence following the end of the meeting.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 hours (UTC -3 hours).

Annex 1. List of Participants

CHAIR	Warner-Kramer, Deirdre (USA)
SC CHAIR	González-Troncoso, Diana (European Union)
CANADA	Brown, Dion Fagan, Robert Marsden, Dale Napier, Brent Williams, Todd Zegarmistrz, Justyna
DENMARK (IN RESPECT OF FAROE ISLANDS AND GREENLAND)	Gaardlykke, Meinhard Holm, Jannik Wang, Ulla S.
EUROPEAN UNION	Blazkiewicz, Bernard Babcionis, Genadijus Casarotto, Edoardo Tuvi, Aare Vielmini, Ilaria Wysocka, Malgorzata
JAPAN	Batori, Koji Iwano, Taisuke Mitome, Haruki Moronuki, Hideki Suzuki, Hyoue Taki, Kenji
NORWAY	Bakke, Gunnstein
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Fomin, Konstantin
UNITED KINGDOM	Gawlyk, Joe Sharples, James Smith-Devey, Imogen
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Jaburek, Shannah Kelly, Moira Mencher, Elizabethann Pohl, Katie Provencher, Eric Tyhach, Lea
NAFO SECRETARIAT	Benediktsdóttir, Brynhildur Aker, Jana LeFort, Lisa Perreault, Andrea Thompson, Catherine

Annex 2. Agenda

- 1. Opening by Chair, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (United States of America)**
- 2. Appointment of Rapporteur**
- 3. Adoption of Agenda**
- 4. Overview of NAFO's current measures relating to directed fisheries and mitigating bycatch of moratoria species**

What is the context and structure of NAFO's general bycatch management approach, including specific bycatch limits, move-along provisions, and directed fishing measures? Is there information about changes in NAFO fisheries, implementation challenges, or gaps in the current scheme?
- 5. Review of NAFO's Action Plan in the Management and Minimization of Bycatch and Discards**

How has NAFO progressed against the overarching goals in the Action Plan? Is there new information that would warrant revisiting the actions and priorities specified in the plan? Are the management options listed in section 4 still relevant, and is there interest in revisiting options?
- 6. Framing of key issues and decision points for the next meeting of the Working Group**

What are the priority issues to take up at the September meeting? What additional information, analysis, or actions are needed in advance of that meeting?
- 7. Other Business**
- 8. Time and place of next meeting**
- 9. Adoption of Report**
- 10. Adjournment**