

47th ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2025

Management of Northern Shrimp in Divisions 3LNO in the Regulatory Area

Canada is transitioning to a new science and management framework for Northern shrimp. The development of this framework started with a review of science of Northern shrimp as a forage species and its role in ecological relationships in a changing environment. It included the development of a new science model to assess the Precautionary Approach status of the stock. As a result, the way Northern shrimp stocks are assessed has changed to reflect two biological regions in this stock complex, North and South. SC has endorsed this stock delineation, and recognizes that the previous assessment of 3LNO shrimp as a distinct stock can no longer occur.

A new Canadian stock assessment model has been peer-reviewed and adopted for the new stock area. Accordingly, this has changed the approach Canada uses to evaluate the health and status of these stocks. NAFO Divisions 3L, 3N and 3O as part of the *South Stock Assessment Region (SSAR)*, which has been determined to be in the Healthy Zone of the Canadian Precautionary Approach Framework.

This model is based on fall scientific survey data which necessitates that the peer review process be conducted in the Winter months. As a result, Canada's management year for Northern Shrimp starts on April 1 of each year.

In Canada, 2025-26 is a transition year as we finalize implementation approaches within the management area framework to account for the new format of science advice. In addition, Canada is actively undertaking a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process, expected to be completed by 2026, which NAFO recognizes as a robust tool for fisheries management.

The new model and associated survey data demonstrate that less than 2% of the SSAR is found outside of Canada's Exclusive Economic Zone, within the NRA. Because the vast majority of the biomass is found in Canada's (EEZ), Canada sees it as appropriate that based on the best available and peer-reviewed science, Canada's management approach is applied to the entirety of the stock area, including the NRA portion. Canada's current domestic harvest decision rule is a 20 per cent exploitation rate when in the Healthy Zone, consistent with the Precautionary Approach Framework.

The NAFO Convention, Article VI, paragraph 11 states that (a) "in exercising its functions pursuant to paragraph 8, the Commission shall seek to ensure consistency between:

- (i) any measure that applies to a stock or group of stocks found both within the Regulatory Area and within an area under national jurisdiction of a coastal State, or any measure that would have an effect through species interrelationships on a stock or group of stocks found in whole or in part within an area under national jurisdiction of a coastal State; and
- (ii) any actions taken by a coastal State for the management and conservation of that stock or group of stocks with respect to fishing activities conducted within the area under its national jurisdiction."

The NAFO Convention also enables Canada to conduct a fishery for Shrimp in 3LNO within waters under its national jurisdiction.

The Commission decided there will be no directed fishing in the NRA for Northern shrimp in 2026.

Moving forward, Canada expects to establish a TAC for 2026-27 as the first year of a multi-year management strategy developed through its MSE process. Canada would limit its fishing activity to its established share of this TAC of 83.3% under NAFO.

The assessment model and MSE will be shared with NAFO Scientific Council. Canada looks forward to NAFO adopting a consistent approach.