



NAFO Northwest Atlantic
Fisheries Organization

Committed to **Conservation** and **Management** of **Fisheries** and **Ecosystems** in the Northwest Atlantic

2015 Annual Report



NAFO 37th Annual Meeting



Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
21-25 September, 2015



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NORTHWEST ATLANTIC
FISHERIES ORGANIZATION

Annual Report 2015

This Annual Report summarizes and highlights discussions, decisions and events of NAFO during 2015. It does not replace the detailed NAFO meeting reports

(Scientific Council Reports and Meeting Proceedings of the General Council and Fisheries Commission) that are accessible on the NAFO Website.

www.nafo.int



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April 2016

A YEAR IN REVIEW



Fred Kingston,
Executive Secretary

The 2015 Annual Report provides an overview of NAFO's activities and accomplishments for that year, which proved to be very busy.

NAFO has continued to be a leader amongst regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in measures to protect marine ecosystems. At the September 2015 Annual Meeting, held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, NAFO decided to prohibit all bottom fishing on seamounts in the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA). Combined with similar measures already in place to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), about 380,000 square kilometres of the NRA are now closed to bottom fishing. NAFO also made further progress in the development and implementation of its ecosystem approach to fisheries management, including further development of its ecosystem 'roadmap'.

In 2015 there was further evidence that the stocks regulated by NAFO are becoming healthier, although a number of these stocks continue to be under fishing moratoria. At the Annual Meeting it was agreed that the cod and redfish stocks on the Flemish Cap (Div. 3M) and the Witch flounder ('grey sole') stock on the Grand Bank could support an increase in catches over the next two years. Additionally, NAFO has continued to improve compliance and enforcement in the northwest Atlantic by agreeing to the addition of technical measures, such as follow-up to infringements, in the NRA.

Throughout the year, NAFO joint Fisheries Commission (FC) and Scientific Council (SC) Working Groups continued to prove productive. These joint FC-SC meetings have focussed on the development of risk-based management strategies for particular fish stocks, the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, improving the quality of catch statistics and improving the NAFO rules on by-catches, discards and selectivity. In 2015, another joint group was established, the joint FC-SC Catch Data Advisory Group, intended to ensure the representativeness of various sources of data for validating catch and/or developing catch estimates.

This year continues to be one of transition at the Secretariat. NAFO had to say good-bye to its Scientific Council Coordinator, Dr. Neil Campbell, who returned to Scotland after the Annual Meeting after serving NAFO for five years. We thank Neil very much for his dedicated service to NAFO, particularly the Scientific Council, and wish him every success in his future endeavours. Neil's replacement, Mr. Tom Blasdale, also from Scotland, will commence his duties in 2016. NAFO also had to say good-bye to two further members of the Secretariat staff and founding members of STACFEM, Barb Marshall and Cindy Kerr, who decided to retire after over 35 years of dedicated service to the organization. NAFO wishes them all the best. NAFO welcomed two very capable replacements, Jana Aker as NAFO's new Fisheries Information Administrator and Dayna Bell as NAFO's new Scientific Information Administrator.

Other highlights of 2015 include:

- NAFO began preparing for its second Performance Review with the establishment of a working group to determine its terms of reference and timing. All but two of the recommendations from NAFO's first Performance Review in 2011 have been addressed;
- In the context of increasing oil and gas activity in the NAFO Regulatory Area, NAFO accepted in principle an information exchange mechanism to ensure the smooth co-existence of these activities with fishing activities and fisheries research in the NRA;
- NAFO published an update to its *Coral, Sponge and Other Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Indicator Identification Guide, NAFO Area*;
- NAFO has managed to be about \$80,000.00 under budget.
- NAFO continues to participate actively in various initiatives of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) including co-hosting in Halifax in October 2015, with Dalhousie University's School of Management Studies, the annual meeting of the Advisory Board of Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA), for which the FAO provides the Secretariat. NAFO's Executive Secretary also chaired the first Project Steering Committee meeting in Rome in December 2015 of the partners of the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Deep Seas Project.



OFFICERS

CONTRACTING PARTIES OF NAFO



GENERAL COUNCIL



President of NAFO
General Council Chair
Veronika Veits (EU)
(Sep 2011–Sep 2015)



GC Vice-Chair
Stéphane Artano
(France-SPM)
(Sep 2012–Sep 2016)



STACFAD Chair
Deirdre Warner-Kramer
(USA) (Sep 2012–Sep 2016)



STACFAD Vice-Chair
Elise Lavigne (Canada)
(Sep 2015–Sep 2017)

FISHERIES COMMISSION



Fisheries Commission
Chair - Sylvie Lapointe
(Canada)
(Sep 2011–Sep 2015)



Fisheries Commission
Vice-Chair - Temur Tairov
(Russian Federation)
(Sep 2012–Sep 2016)



STACTIC Chair
Gene Martin (USA)
(Sep 2012–Sep 2015)



STACTIC Vice-Chair
Aronne Spezzani (EU)
(Sep 2012–Sep 2016)

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL



Scientific Council Chair
Don Stansbury (Canada)
(Sep 2013–Sep 2015)



SC Vice-Chair &
STACREC Chair
Katherine Sosebee (USA)
(Sep 2013–Sep 2015)



STACFIS Chair
Brian Healey (Canada)
(Sep 2013–Sep 2015)



STACFEN Chair
Andrew Cogswell
(Canada)
(Sep 2014–Sep 2016)



STACPUB Chair
Margaret Treble (Canada)
(Sep 2011–Sep 2016)

At the Annual Meeting, NAFO expressed its appreciation to Veronika Veits (EU), Sylvie Lapointe (Canada), Don Stansbury (Canada) and Gene Martin (United States of America) the outgoing Chairs of the General Council (GC), Fisheries Commission (FC), Scientific Council (SC) and the Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC) respectively, who together

skillfully managed to conduct this year's meeting in record time (along with all of the other Chairs). NAFO also welcomed Stéphane Artano (France in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) as the new GC Chair, Temur Tairov (Russian Federation) as the new FC Chair, Katherine Sosebee (United States of America) as the new SC Chair and Judy Dwyer (Canada) as the new STACTIC Chair.



ANNUAL MEETING

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada - 21-25 September

NAFO's 37th Annual Meeting was held at the Westin NovaScotian in Halifax, Nova Scotia in September 2015. The Deputy Mayor of Halifax, Ms. Lorelei Nicoll, and the President of NAFO, Veronika Veits (EU), welcomed delegates to Halifax.

The main results of the meeting are contained in NAFO's press release, found at this link: <http://www.nafo.int/about/media/press/press-2015-AM.pdf>



Heads of Delegation – left to right; back row: Konstantin Drevetnyak (Russia), Sung Ho Kim (Korea), Kevin Stringer (Canada), John Bullard (USA), Stéphane Artano (France-SPM), Kenro Iino (Japan), Fred Kingston (Executive Secretary).

Front row: Jóhanna Lava Kötllum (Greenland-DFG), Elin Mortensen (Faroe Islands-DFG), Sigrun Holst (Norway), Veronika Veits (President of NAFO and GC Chair; EU), Nora Yong Mena (Cuba), Brynhildur Benediktisdóttir (Iceland), Yarema Kovaliv (Ukraine).



Left to right: Dayna Bell (NAFO Secretariat) Fred Kingston (Executive Secretary) Veronica Veits (President of NAFO and GC Chair) Lorelei Nicoll (Deputy Mayor of Halifax Regional Municipality)



Veronika Veits (President of NAFO and GC Chair)
Fred Kingston (Executive Secretary)



General Council in session, 37th Annual Meeting,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



GENERAL COUNCIL

FINANCIAL STATUS UPDATE

The **Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD)** oversees the budget and administrative matters of the Organization. At the Annual Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Deirdre Warner-Kramer (USA) led the committee throughout its deliberations.

STACFAD was pleased to report that the overall financial affairs of the Organization continue to be in a very good financial position. The NAFO budget for 2015 was increased to \$1.981 million as additional supplementary payments were required to pay down the NAFO Pension Plan deficit. The Secretariat has been working prudently to stay within the approved budget and ended the 2015 fiscal year approximately \$80,000 under budget. Operating cash at year end was also at a high level with only one membership contribution of \$31,880 outstanding. The Committee put forward a budget proposal for the 2016 fiscal year of \$1.997 million, representing an increase of 0.8% over the 2015 approved budget.

W|B|L|I Chartered Accountants performed the audit of the 2014 financial records for the fourth year and the statements were approved by the Organization at the September 2015 Annual Meeting.

At the 2014 NAFO Annual Meeting, the General Council tasked STACFAD to review the existing NAFO Secretariat classification scheme, including salary scales and relevant employment benefits' to improve efficiency and support the priorities of the Organization and its Contracting Parties. Stephen MacDermott, SJM Consulting, was selected to perform the review and presented a draft report to the Committee. The Committee and NAFO Staff Association requested additional detail and analysis and recommended a revised report be presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

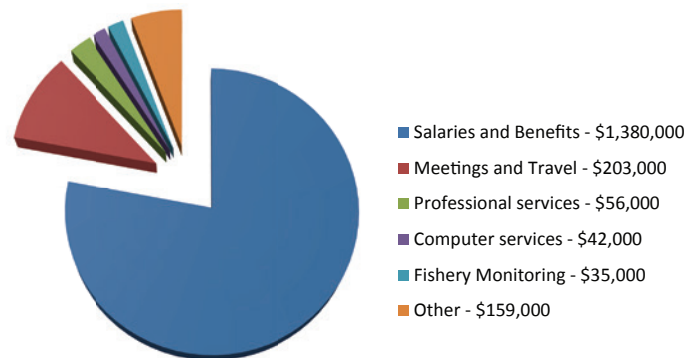
The next meeting of STACFAD will be held during the 2016 Annual Meeting of NAFO in Varadero, Cuba.



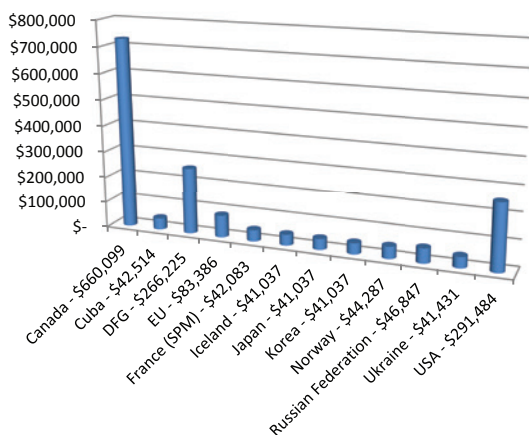
STATUS OF RATIFICATION

In 2015, seven Contracting Parties had completed the ratification process for the NAFO amended Convention. NAFO needs nine of the twelve Contracting Parties to ratify the amended Convention in their own parliaments before it can become a legally binding instrument.

2015 Budget - \$1,875,000



2015 Membership Contributions - \$1,679,772



STACFAD, Annual Meeting 2015 - Left to right: Yulia Badina (Russian Federation), Herbert Schuller (EU), Lisa LeFort (Secretariat), Deirdre Warner-Kramer (Chair, USA), Élise Lavigne (Vice-Chair, Canada), Esben Ehlers (Denmark in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), Stan Goodick (Secretariat), Elizabethann English (USA).



FISHERIES COMMISSION

MANAGEMENT

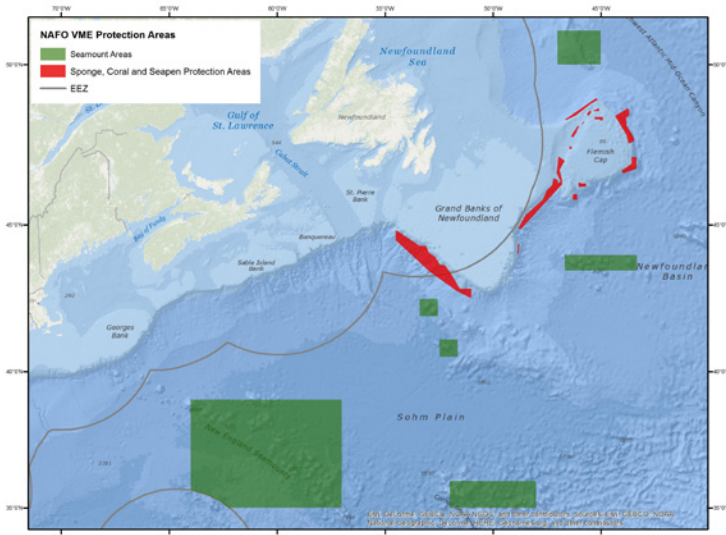


Fig. 1. The NAFO Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) Protection Areas

Sponge/CORAL AND SEAMOUNT PROTECTION AREA

In 2015, the Fisheries Commission removed the possibility of conducting exploratory bottom fishing in the seamount protection areas, thereby making all NAFO protective areas closed to all kinds of bottom fishing activity (Fig. 1).

JOINT FISHERIES COMMISSION-SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

In 2013, three joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Groups (FC-SC WGs) were established in response to the 2011 Performance Review recommendations. Not only do these Working Groups provide a forum for an improved dialogue between fishery managers and scientists, but they address major issues concerning ecosystem approach to fisheries management, risk-based management strategies and catch reporting in a more holistic manner. In 2015, these WGs continued to meet and provided recommendations to FC and SC relating to the general objective of long term conservation, sustainable use of fishery resources and the safeguard of the marine ecosystems.

Documents and reports from the joint WGs are archived in a new series of documents entitled FC-SC Documents.

OTHER WORKING GROUPS

In addition to the joint WGs mentioned above, the *ad hoc* Fisheries Commission Working Group on Bycatches, Discards and Selectivity (WG-BDS) met and developed an Action Plan to address bycatch issues, which was adopted by Fisheries

Commission. Within the Standing Committee on International Control, two *ad hoc* WGs were created. The *ad hoc* WG to Review the NAFO Observer Scheme (STACTIC) met to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Observer Scheme; and the *ad hoc* WG on Port State Control Alignment met to revise and align the exiting port State measures with the *FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing*.

TAC TABLE 2015 AND 2016 (metric tons)

Based on scientific advice, existing moratoria were extended to allow rebuilding of depleted stocks, and quotas for other stocks were set by the Fisheries Commission.

Stock/Year	2015	2016
3L Cod	*	*
3M Cod	13 795	13 931
3NO Cod	*	*
3LN Redfish	10 400	10 400
3M Redfish	6 700	7 000
3O Redfish	20 000	20 000
Sub-Area 2 and Div. 1F+3K Redfish	0	0
3LNO American plaice	*	*
3M American plaice	*	*
3LNO Yellowtail flounder	17 000	17 000
3L Witch flounder	*	*
3NO Witch flounder	1 000	2 172
3NO White hake	1 000	1 000
3NO Capelin	*	*
3LNO Skates	7 000	7 000
3LMNO Greenland halibut	11 543	10 966
Sub-areas 3+4 Squid (Illex)	34 000	34 000
3L Shrimp	*	0
3NO Shrimp	*	*
3M Shrimp	*	*

*Moratorium



FISHERIES COMMISSION

FISHERY TRENDS

NAFO identifies three main fisheries in its Regulatory Area: groundfish (GRO – primary in Divs. 3KLMNO), shrimp (PRA – traditionally in Divs. 3L and 3M), and pelagic redfish fisheries (REB – primarily in Divs. 1F and 2J). The last two have been under moratorium. Limited effort on pelagic redfish fishery was exerted by one Contracting Party which formally objected to the pelagic redfish fishery moratorium.

In 2015, there were 57 fishing vessels spending a total of 4 209 days in the NAFO Regulatory Area (Table 1) and 138 trips were identified. Groundfish fisheries accounted for 98% of the fishing effort (in terms of fishing days in the NRA) (Fig. 2).

For the period 2004–2015, the overall fishing activities in the NRA show a declining trend, from 134 active vessels in 2004 to 57 in 2015. The decline in terms of overall fishing days was a decrease for the same period from 16 480 days in 2004 to 4 209 days in 2015. The average number of days each vessel operates in the NAFO Regulatory Area also declined from 123 days in 2004 to 74 days in 2015.

Figure 3 illustrates the changes described above for each of the major fisheries. The general decline in fishing effort since 2004 is observed for the three fisheries, with pelagic redfish fishery being close to disappearance in 2009 and resurging in 2012 with a slight decline in 2014 and 2015. NAFO fisheries remain dominated by the groundfish category.

Table 1. A summary of the fishing effort (measured in days) and the number of fishing vessels in the NAFO Regulatory area in 2014 and 2015, with the percent change between the two years. GRO = Groundfish, PRA = Shrimp, REB = Pelagic Redfish.

		GRO	PRA	REB	Total
Effort (Fishing Days)	2014	4 699	67	56	4 822
	2015	4 144	0	65	4 209
	% Change	-11.8%	-100.0%	16.1%	-12.7%
Number of Vessels	2014	52	3	5	59
	2015	53	0	4	57
	% Change	-1.9%	-100.0%	20.0%	-3.4%

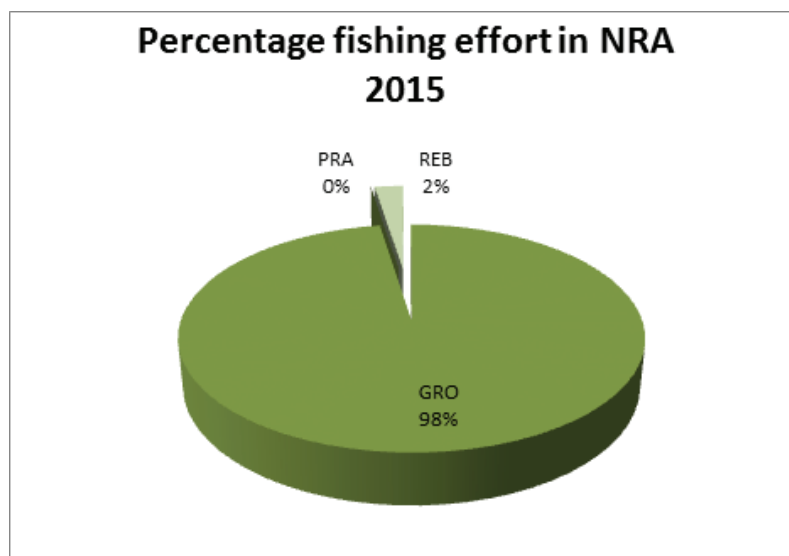


Fig. 2. The percentage of fishing effort (based on the number of days) in the NAFO Regulatory Area in 2015.



FISHERIES COMMISSION

COMPLIANCE

The Joint Inspection and Surveillance Scheme is implemented to ensure compliance of NAFO-registered fishing vessels in the NAFO Regulatory Area. Inspectors are appointed by Contracting Parties and assigned to fishery patrol vessels tasked to carry out inspection duties at sea. In 2015, Canada and the European Union continued to deploy inspection vessels in the NRA.

In all, 110 at-sea inspections were conducted on the vessels in 2015. From these inspections, only one Apparent Infringement (AI) was detected. It concerned retaining on-board a quantity of moratorium species above the allowable limit. As required by the NAFO *Conservation and Enforcement Measures* (NCEM), the Contracting Party of which the vessel belongs reported that it initiated the court proceedings on this AI case.

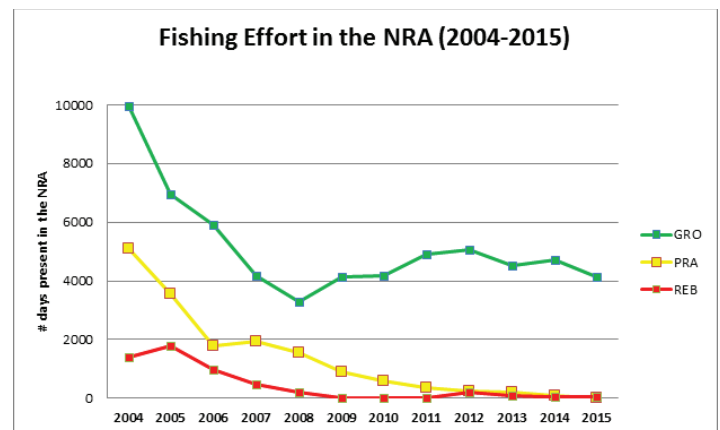
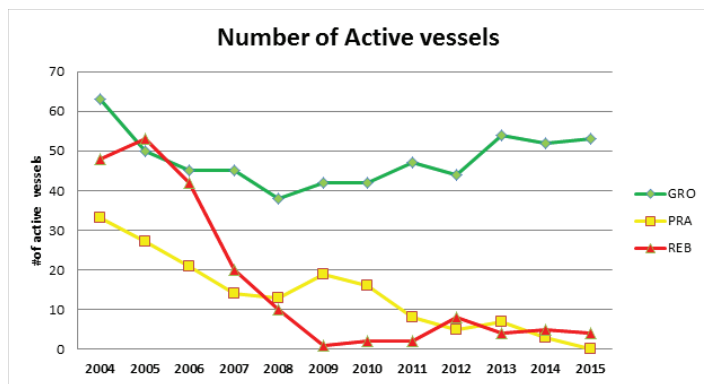


Fig. 3. The number of active vessels (top graph) and the fishing effort (bottom graph) trends from 2004 to 2015 for the groundfish (GRO) and pelagic redfish (REB) fisheries. There was no effort on shrimp (PRA) fisheries in 2015.



STACTIC, Annual Meeting 2015

Visit
www.nafo.int/publications/frames/fisheries.html
 for complete information



SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

STOCK STATUS

NAFO's Scientific Council met during 29 May–11 June 2015 at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, to produce advice to the Fisheries Commission and Coastal States on the status of fish stocks, the implementation of NAFO's Roadmap to an Ecosystem Approach, significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the issue of fisheries on seamounts.

On the Flemish Cap, assessments of cod and redfish revealed both stocks to be in a healthy condition. On the Grand Bank, an analytical assessment of the Witch flounder stock was adopted, allowing the development of precautionary reference points for fishing mortality and biomass of this stock. The stock of cod on the south of the Grand Bank continues its long road to recovery. Despite signs of an upturn in recent years, poor recruitment of young fish to the population is now holding back recovery and this cod stock remains well below its precautionary reference level. The Council also considered the work done by the **Working Group on Ecosystem Science and Assessment (WG-ESA)**. This year, WG-ESA developed indicators of primary productivity for bioregions of the northwest Atlantic, and from those inferred "catch ceilings" which such levels of productivity would support.

In September, the Council met in St. John's, Newfoundland to advise on the status of shrimp stocks. Shrimps on the Grand Bank and Flemish Cap continue to be at low levels, with little sign of any recovery. The group paid tribute to its former member, Dave Orr, who sadly passed away over the summer.

FISHERIES & ENVIRONMENT

The North Atlantic Oscillation index (NAO), a key indicator of climate conditions over the North Atlantic, returned to a strongly positive phase in 2014 (anomaly of 11.5 mbars or 1.3 Standard Deviations (SD) above normal) representing a strong arctic air outflow in the northwest Atlantic during the winter months and consequently lower than normal winter air temperatures. The annual mean air temperature at Nuuk Weather Station in West Greenland was -0.6°C in 2014, 0.8°C above the long term mean (1981–2010). During the winter convection season, surface air temperatures in the Labrador Sea were $1\text{--}3^{\circ}\text{C}$ above normal but late winter was below normal. There was a significant decrease in winter air temperatures (-0.6 to -1.0 SD below normal) over much of the NL region compared to 2013. Annual air temperatures over Labrador (at Cartwright) were near normal and slightly above normal (0.4 SD) over Newfoundland (at St. John's). 2014 was ranked as the 15th warmest year (air temperature) for the 115 year time series for the Scotian Shelf and Gulf of Maine. With the exception of Boston (-0.3°C and 0.4 SD) all other sites experienced warmer annual temperatures than normal, from just slightly positive in St. John's.



Left to right: Brian Healey (Canada, STACFIS Chair), Neil Campbell (SC Coordinator), Margaret Treble (Canada, STACPUB Chair), Kathy Sosebee (USA, Vice-Chair SC & Chair of STACREC), Don Stansbury (Canada, SC Chair), and Andrew Cogswell (Canada, STACFEN Chair).

ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

The **Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Science and Assessment (WG-ESA)** met for their 8th meeting, 17–26 November, at the NAFO Headquarters in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, to address requests for advice and its standing terms of reference. Over the course of the meeting many items were addressed including the ecosystem "roadmap" and the assessment of impacts other than fishing, as well as significant adverse impacts (SAI) on vulnerable marine ecosystems.

The Coral, Sponge, and Other Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Indicator Identification Guide, NAFO Area was released in October 2015. This comprehensive guide is a follow-up to both the 2009 NAFO Coral and 2010 NAFO Sponge Identification Guides.

These guides are a part of the *NAFO Scientific Council Studies*



Coral, Sponge, and Other Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Indicator Identification Guide, NAFO Area





Scientific Council, June 2015



Scientific Council, September 2015



Left to right: Neil Campbell (SC Coordinator), Brian Healey (Canada, STACFIS Chair), Don Stansbury (Canada, SC Chair) Kathy Sosebee (USA, Vice-Chair SC & Chair of STACREC).

Visit
www.nafo.int/publications/frames/sci-reports.html for
complete information



MEETINGS

NAFO MEETINGS

JANUARY–DECEMBER 2015

- 16–20 February 2015, **Joint ICES/NAFO Working Group on Deep-water Ecology**, Horta, Azores, Portugal
- 14–16 April 2015, **International Fisheries Commissions Pension Society Annual Meeting**, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
- 14 April 2015, **Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC) Editorial Drafting Group of the NAFO CEM (EDG)**, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 15–16 April 2015, **Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC) Observer Program Review Working Group**, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 20–21 April 2015, **Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting (WG-CR)**, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 22–24 April 2015, **Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Risk-Based Management Strategies (WG-RBMS)**, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 4–5 May 2015, **Ad hoc Working Group on Port State Control Alignment**, Tallinn, Estonia
- 6–8 May 2015, **Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC) Intersessional Meeting**, Tallinn, Estonia
- 20–21 May 2015, **Joint Advisory Group on Data Management (JAGDM)**, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 29 May–11 June 2015, **Scientific Council and its Standing Committees**, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 13–14 July 2015, **Fisheries Commission Ad Hoc Working Group on Bycatches, Discards and Selectivity (WG-BDS)**, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 15–17 July 2015, **Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries (WG-EAFFM)**, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 9–16 September 2015, **Scientific Council and NAFO/ICES Pandalus Assessment Group**, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada
- 21–25 September 2015, **NAFO 37th Annual Meeting**, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 16 November 2015, **Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Catch Data Advisory Group (CDAG)**, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 17–26 November 2015, **Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Science and Assessment (WG-ESA)**, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 8–10 December 2015, **STACTIC Observer Program Review Working Group**, Reykjavik, Iceland



Working Group on Catch Reporting (WG-CR), 20–21 April 2015



Working Group on Risk-Based Management Strategies (WG-RBMS)
22–24 April 2015



Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries
(WG-EAFFM), 15–17 July 2015

Reports of all NAFO meeting are finalized following the meeting end and are posted on the NAFO website. (www.nafo.int/publications/general.html)

cont'd on p. 12



MEETINGS

cont'd from p. 11



Scientific Council and NAFO/ICES Pandalus Assessment Group (NIPAG), 9–16 September 2015



Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Catch Data Advisory Group (CDAG), 16 November



Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Science and Assessment (WG-ESA), 17–26 November 2015,

EXTERNAL MEETINGS

Workshop on Linking Global and Regional Levels in the Management of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

Executive Secretary, Fred Kingston, attended the **Workshop on Linking Global and Regional Levels in the Management of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction** in Rome, Italy during the 17–20 February. During the meeting, Mr. Kingston delivered a presentation on NAFO's development of its ecosystem approach framework to fisheries management.

FAO FIRMS Steering Committee Meeting—9th Session

The 9th session of the **FIRMS Steering Committee** took place in Namibia 23–27 February, where Secretariat staff member, Neil Campbell (NAFO SC Coordinator), was elected Chair, replacing Barbara Marshall (NAFO's Senior Information Officer). FIRMS is now focusing on encouraging additional memberships in order to have a worldwide coverage, and additionally, to revamp current outreach. The next meeting aims to take place in early 2016 with the location still to be determined.

FAO CWP on Fishery Statistics—25th Session

This **Coordinating Working Party (CWP)** of the FAO held an intersessional meeting of the fisheries group for fishery statistics during the 23–27 February in Namibia. The CWP developed a new focus for the working party as a repository for standards in fisheries statistics. A strategy to ensure that the next meeting (April 2016) is quorate has been developed. During the meeting, there was also a focus on the clarification of fishery commodity codes to align with World Customs Organisation Central Product Classification Codes, and on the identification of fisheries, in conjunction with FIRMS.

FAO ABNJ Project—Workshop on VME Process and Practices

In 2013, NAFO was invited to partner in the **FAO-Global Environment Facility (GEF) Project**, “Sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation of deep-sea living marine resources and ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)”.

This year, a meeting was held 2–4 March in Namibia under the auspices of the FAO ABNJ Deep Seas project, that aimed to identify and document best practices surrounding VMEs in RFMOs. Participants from the Secretariats and scientific bodies of CCAMLR, SPRFMO, NEAFC, NAFO, GCFM and SIOFPA attended, including two members of the NAFO Secretariat.

Executive Secretary, Fred Kingston, has also agreed to be the liaison for NAFO for the **ABNJ Project's Community of Practice on Fisheries, Biodiversity and Climate Change**.



International Fisheries Commissions Pension Society (IFCPS) Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the **International Fisheries Commissions Pension Society (IFCPS)** was hosted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada during 14-16 April 2015 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. The meeting was attended by representatives of the seven International Fisheries Commissions with headquarters located in Canada and the United States of America. Also attending the meeting were the IFCPS directors appointed by the Governments of Canada and the United States. NAFO was represented by Fred Kingston, Executive Secretary, and Stan Goodick, Deputy Executive Secretary/Senior Finance and Staff Administrator. Discussions focused on the performance of the pension plan investments which for 2014 was 12.5% (gross of fees). This was well in excess of the 5.5% return target. The 2016 annual meeting of the IFCPS will be hosted by the International Pacific Halibut Commission during 19-21 April 2016 in Seattle, Washington, USA.

JASCO Applied Sciences

In July, the Executive Secretary and the Fisheries Information Administrator from the Secretariat met with JASCO Applied Sciences in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

JASCO is an acoustic monitoring company that is currently deploying several acoustic sensors throughout the NAFO Convention Area, one of which has been deployed in the NAFO Regulatory Area during the summer of 2015. The sensors deployed are part of a Canadian **Environmental Studies Research Fund (ESRF) project** that is funding research with the purpose of determining seasonal locations of marine mammals and potentially detecting groundfish spawning areas.

The Secretariat briefed JASCO about NAFO and JASCO will remain in contact with the NAFO Secretariat throughout the remainder of the project.

ASFA

The 44th Annual Meeting of the **Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA)** Advisory Board was co-hosted by NAFO and Dalhousie University's EIUI group, and took place from 5-9 October 2015 at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The meeting was opened by Mr Fred Kingston, Executive Secretary, NAFO, and Dr. Bertrum MacDonald, Acting Dean, Faculty of Management, Dalhousie University. The Meeting was attended by 33 participants, representing 26 ASFA Partners and four observers. Mr Pettman (Freshwater Biological Association) chaired the meeting and the agenda was completed on time. The main rapporteur was Ms. Wibley (FAO-ASFA Secretariat) and Ms. Pacey (NAFO) was assistant rapporteur.

All of NAFO's publications and documents are indexed in the ASFA Database, which provides the most comprehensive information to a



ASFA Meeting, 5-9 October 2015

global audience for abstracting and indexing services in the aquatic and fisheries field. ASFA's ability to provide deep indexing, links to full text and the indexing of 'grey literature', ensures documents, publications and general information pertaining to aquatic sciences and fisheries is available to a wide audience.

ABNJ Deep Seas Project Inception and Project Steering Committee Meeting

Over 15-16 December, Executive Secretary, Fred Kingston, and Senior Fisheries Commission Coordinator, Dr. Ricardo Federizon, attended the **ABNJ Inception and Deep Seas Project Steering Committee** meeting in Rome, Italy. Executive Secretary, Fred Kingston was named Chair of the Project Steering Committee.



FAO ABNJ Deep Seas Project Committee Meeting, 15-16 December



SECRETARIAT **ACTIVITIES**

Secretariat Staff Members 2015

For the period of January – December 2015, the Secretariat was comprised of the following employees:



Executive Secretary	Fred Kingston
Deputy Executive Secretary and Senior Finance and Staff Administrator	Stan Goodick
Senior Fisheries Commission Coordinator	Ricardo Federizon
Scientific Council Coordinator	Neil Campbell
Executive Assistant to the Executive Secretary	Lisa LeFort
Senior Information Officer	Barbara Marshall (to 31 March 2015)
Scientific Information Administrator	Dayna Bell (from 04 May 2015)
Senior Fisheries Information Manager	Cindy Kerr (to 31 March 2015)
Fisheries Information Administrator	Jana Aker (from 23 Feb 2015)
IT Manager	Matthew Kendall
Publications Manager	Alexis Pacey
Database Manager	Mark Harley
Office Administrator	Sarah Guile



Left to right, back row: Fred Kingston, Matt Kendall, Ricardo Federizon, Neil Campbell, Dayna Bell, Mark Harley, Jana Aker

Front row: Sarah Guile, Lisa LeFort, Alexis Pacey, Stan Goodick,

Snowed in 2015... marked a record year for snow



FAREWELL & HELLO

This year, the Secretariat said goodbye to two long-term employees. After 36 dedicated years at NAFO, Barbara Marshall, Senior Information Officer, and Cindy Kerr, Senior Fisheries Information Manager, retired. NAFO also said goodbye to Scientific Council Coordinator, Dr. Neil Campbell, after serving five years at the Secretariat. All three Secretariat members will be missed and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors. This left three open positions, and in 2015, two new employees joined the Secretariat, Jana Aker and Dayna Bell. Additionally, in 2016, the new Scientific Council Coordinator, Mr. Tom Blasdale, will be arriving at the Secretariat from Scotland.



Top left photo: Neil Campbell and Barb Marshall



Top right photo: Cindy Kerr, Fred Kingston and Barb Marshall

Middle right: Cindy Kerr and Ricardo Federizon



Jana Aker joined the NAFO Secretariat as the Fisheries Information Administrator in February 2015. Her main responsibilities are to monitor and compile information related to the NAFO fisheries. Jana's recent work experience includes Fisheries and Oceans Canada where she was an Oceans Biologist, GIS Technician/Spatial Analyst. She holds a Masters in Marine Management and Bachelor of Science with Honours in Biology.



Dayna Bell joined the NAFO Secretariat as the Scientific Information Administrator in May 2015. Dayna supports the Scientific Council meetings and its subsidiary bodies. She also is the first point of contact for the media and other interested public. She attended Mount Saint Vincent University for both a Master of Arts Communication and a Bachelor of Science (Science Communication) degree.

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SECRETARIAT

ACTIVITIES cont'd from p. 15

Internships

Tony Bartulin worked in the Secretariat for a three-month period as part of the internship program.

Toni Bartulin

Toni came to the NAFO Secretariat for a three month internship from late July to early October 2015. He hails from Croatia where he completed a Master of Engineering in Fisheries and Game Management at the Faculty of Agriculture Zagreb.



Outreach

Media

The Secretariat continued to circulate the annual press releases to a dedicated media contact list. This year, a press release was circulated shortly after the publication of the report of the June Scientific Council meeting as well as after the Annual Meeting. This resulted in the distribution of information about NAFO in various fisheries news publications globally and an interview with the Fisheries Broadcast (CBC) in Canada to discuss the outcomes of the June SC Meeting as well as the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management.

External Relations

During the past year, Executive Secretary – Fred Kingston, has participated in meetings to discuss NAFO-related issues, including the following:

- 13 March, paid a courtesy visit to Mike Savage, Mayor of Halifax.
- 14–16 April, met with officials of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Ottawa to discuss a range of issues, including the status of the headquarters agreement and the development of an information exchange arrangement in the context of offshore oil and gas activities.
- 20 May, 16 September, 21 October and 18 November, participated in meetings of the Consular Corps of Nova Scotia in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- 29 May, met with Dr. Peter Hutchinson, Secretary of North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- 25 September, met with the new Russian Ambassador, His Excellency, Alexander Darchiev, after the Annual Meeting.



Fred meeting with the Russian Ambassador, His Excellency, Alexander Darchiev

- 8–9 October, participated in the conference for the 20th anniversary of the FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Vigo, Spain.
- 2 November: NAFO participated in the Marine Affairs Program's internship open house at Dalhousie University. Executive Secretary, Fred Kingston, gave a short presentation that highlighted NAFO as well as presented potential research projects for interns.
- 25 November, met with Ron Hanlon, President of the Halifax Partnership last week to discuss raising the awareness of NAFO within Halifax.
- 3 December, met with the Swiss Honourary Consul.
- 14 December: The Executive Secretary gave a lecture about NAFO to students in the Masters Programme on Sustainable Fisheries Management at the University of Alicante, Alicante, Spain.

Guests to the Secretariat

The Secretariat had several visitors over the past year, including:

On 29 April, the Secretariat was visited by representatives of the EU Delegation and EU Member State Embassies to Canada while they were in the Halifax area. During their time at the Secretariat, they were introduced to NAFO and received a presentation from Executive Secretary, Mr. Fred Kingston, about NAFO. The delegates had the opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the organization.

On 26 May, Karen Wong-Petrie (Acting Director) and Kris Vascotto (Marine Advisor) of the Marine and Coastal Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture met with the Executive Secretary and staff to discuss relations between NAFO and the province's fisheries industry. Karen and Kris were given a presentation about NAFO and had their questions answered regarding procedure and stock assessments.

On 27 May, the Secretariat received a visit from Mr. Morley Knight, newly-appointed Regional Director General of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Maritime Region. This was an opportunity for Mr. Knight to visit the premises and meet the Secretariat staff. Fred Kingston made a follow up visit to Mr. Knight on 25 June at his office at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

On July 21, SAI Global met at the Secretariat to discuss the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification of the 3LN redfish fishery for the Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council (GEAC). At this meeting, representatives attended on behalf of the client group with Secretariat members from both the Scientific Council and the Fisheries Commission.





Left to right: Marc Taconet (FAO), Dayna, Jana, Mark, Stan, Fred and Ricardo

On 5 October, Dr. Marc Taconet, from the FAO, paid a courtesy visit to the Secretariat to discuss NAFO's involvement with FIRMS and BlueBRIDGE.



Fred meeting with David Birdsey, First Secretary of the US Embassy to Canada

2 November, Mr. David Birdsey, First Secretary of the US Embassy to Canada, paid a courtesy visit to the NAFO Secretariat.

3 November, The Deputy Mayor of Halifax, Ms. Lorelei Nicoll, paid a visit to the NAFO Secretariat.

The NAFO Secretariat continues to hold smaller working group meetings in its

boardroom whenever possible as well as offer the use of the space to affiliated groups for a nominal fee. In the past, universities and Fisheries and Oceans Canada have used the space for meetings, including the joint **Working Group on the Northwest Atlantic Regional Sea (WGNARS)** held 23–27 Feb 2015.

International Oceans Day

The NAFO Secretariat continued to participate in World Oceans Day. Two Secretariat staff members attended the local Oceans Day in Halifax, Nova Scotia on Friday, 5 June at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on the Halifax waterfront. This year over 1,000 people attended this Oceans Day event.

In Iona, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia on 7 June at the St. Columba Parish Centre, the Senior Fisheries Commission Coordinator, Ricardo Federizon, spoke about NAFO and its activities during the World Oceans Day presentations.

Dalhousie University Environmental Information: Use and Influence (EIUI) Research Project

NAFO continues its partnership with the School for Information Management at Dalhousie University, led by Prof. Bertrum MacDonald. The EIUI Project is also an accredited Observer to NAFO meetings. In 2015 Suzuette Soomai, PhD doctoral student who had an internship with NAFO in 2013, completed her research and defended her dissertation in the summer of 2015. The relationship between NAFO and the School for Information Management at Dalhousie, due to common interests, has led to co-hosting the annual Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) meeting this past autumn in Halifax, NS.

In addition, Suzuette made a presentation at the WG-ESA meeting highlighting the results of her research regarding the use and policy relevance of marine scientific information.

NAFO will continue to support the EIUI team as new funding from the SSHRC Insight program is approved and new case studies and new students enhance the on-going partnership.

Information Requests

The NAFO Secretariat regularly responds to requests from various international sources. During the last year the Secretariat has responded specifically to:

- Request for input to the UN Secretary-General's report for the 2016 Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement.
- Request for input to the UN Secretary-General's report on developments in the field of ocean affairs pursuant to UNGA Resolution A/69/L.29 entitled, "Ocean and the Law of the Sea."
- Contribution to the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN) Newsletters

Throughout the year various requests are made to the Secretariat regarding specific information, procedures of NAFO, etc. by students, educational institutes, RFMOs, CPs representatives or other organizations. These are answered to the best of the ability and as time permits by various members of the NAFO Secretariat.

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SECRETARIAT

ACTIVITIES cont'd from p. 17

IOI- International Ocean Institute

On 10 June, Executive Secretary Fred Kingston, gave a lecture on RFMOs and NAFO to students participating in the International Ocean Institute (IOI)'s 2015 training program on ocean governance at the NAFO headquarters. The 12 IOI students, from various international backgrounds, had the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the practices of NAFO. The students also had the opportunity to liaise with various Secretariat staff to ask questions on different areas of the Organization and its initiatives. Students were also to see the VMS system that NAFO uses to monitor fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area.



Photo courtesy of Chen Ning, International Ocean Institute, 2015.

IT

Security and Auditing Policies

This year, in what is an ongoing process, the Secretariat continued to look at how to secure and safeguard NAFO's data. To increase security, the IT team began with the creation of more documents aimed at data classification. This will ensure that all data is organized to specify the needs of each member and working group.

Server Room

This past year, the Secretariat worked on streamlining backup processes, as well as moving an additional server into the virtualized environment. Additionally, new virtual servers for SharePoint, communicating with the EU and web services were added.

Email

In 2015, the NAFO Secretariat moved to a hosted online email service which helps with backup, business recovery, remote access, budgeting, and security.

Increased use of electronic files

The NAFO Secretariat continues to investigate the best ways to increase the use of electronic files. Electronic files are portable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

Pre-meeting documentation is provided on the NAFO Members' pages and NAFO Meetings SharePoint site in place of paper copies. At the Annual Meeting, pre-meeting documentation was also provided at registration on electronic flash drives.

NAFO Webpages

The NAFO Secretariat web team has undertaken a large project to migrate the NAFO web pages to a content management system (CMS) in order to upgrade the functionality of the website and streamline content. The new website will also have a slightly modified look and feel that will appear modern and up-to-date. The members' pages will be upgraded and overhauled to maximize transparency and ease of use for all CPs. Some CPs offered to be part of the NAFO web team in order to provide feedback on the large project. The website will be unveiled for critical review and feedback at the Scientific Council Meeting in June 2016 and will implement changes that arise from the meeting. Many of the comments and suggestions that the NAFO Secretariat has received from surveys, comments and emails over the past five to six years regarding the current site were taken into account when designing the new platform. The website will be showcased at the 38th Annual Meeting in Cuba for all participants to view and interact with, and hopefully it will have addressed many of the concerns that NAFO members have had in the past with the NAFO web pages.

JNAFS Website

Development of a new website for the *Journal of the Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science* was completed in May 2015 for presentation at the Scientific Council Meeting in June. It was well received and it continues to be modified slightly to enhance the information found on the site.



Publications

In collaboration with the WG-ESA (Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Science and Assessment), the publications department published the *Coral, Sponge, and Other Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Indicator Identification Guide, NAFO Area* in October 2015. This edition is a combination of the 2009 NAFO *Coral Identification Guide* and the 2010 NAFO *Sponge Identification Guide* with the addition of newly discovered VME indicator species. The new book is printed on water resistant and tear-proof paper and inserted in a polyvinyl binder. Any future changes or new species that are discovered can be inserted in the binder.

During the period of January 2015 – December 2015, in addition to the many meeting documents and working papers for NAFO meetings, the NAFO Secretariat prepared, posted to the web and/or printed the publications listed on the right.

Other Projects, Initiatives and Responsibilities

The Senior Publications Manager, Alexis Pacey, in addition to managing the publications at NAFO, also manages the NAFO website. It is an added responsibility that Alexis has undertaken with enthusiasm since Senior Information Office, Barb Marshall, retired in March 2015. If there are any concerns about the NAFO website, please address them to Alexis Pacey: apacey@nafo.int

LIST OF ALL NAFO PUBLICATIONS

NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (178 pages)

NAFO Annual Report 2015
(On-line and a 20 page booklet)

NAFO Meeting Proceedings of GC/FC for 2014/2015
(379 pages)

NAFO Scientific Council Reports 2015 (399 pages)

NAFO Scientific Council Studies Number 47, 2015
(101 on-line)

NAFO Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science
Volume 47, 2015 (104 pages)

Meeting Documentation CD (GC/FC Proceedings 14–155
SC Reports 2014, NAFO Convention, NCEM 2015, Rules of
Procedures, Annual Report 2014)

NAFO Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations booklet
(33 pages)

NEW 2015 - **Coral, Sponge, and Other Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Indicator Identification Guide, NAFO Area**
(water resistant and tear-proof publication inserted in a
polyvinyl binder - 91 pages)

Sponge Identification Guide NAFO Area – a booklet featuring
the various sponges and seamounts in the NAFO area. It is
based on the same style as the *Coral Guide*. (water resistant and
tear-proof coil bound booklet - 52 pages)

Coral Identification Guide NAFO Area – a booklet featuring
the various corals and seamounts in the NAFO area. (water
resistant and tear-proof coil bound booklet - 37 pages)

Early Stages of Fishes in the Western North Atlantic Ocean
by Michael P. Fahay - Two volume monograph.

IN MEMORIAM

NAFO was saddened to hear of the passing of two NAFO members in 2015:

Mr. Vladimir Sokolov, Head of Delegation of the Russian Federation to
NAFO,

and

Mr. David Orr, valued member of Scientific Council
and NIPAG.



EPILOGUE

RANDOMS



STACFEM at the June Scientific Council Meeting



Live entertainment at the Annual Meeting Reception



Fred Kingston (Executive Secretary) Veronika Veits (President of NAFO and GC Chair) Keith Colwell (Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister)



Opening of ASFA meeting



Tacky Christmas sweater or tie day

