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Action Plan in the Management and Minimization of Bycatch and Discards

This Action Plan builds on the version adopted by the NAFO Fisheries Commission (FC) in September 2015¹. The Action Plan below, if adopted, will conclude the initial objective of the ad-hoc NAFO WG on By-catch, Discards and Selectivity (WG-BDS). However, the FC may re-convene WG-BDS ad-hoc, as required to support implementation of the Action Plan;

The Action Plan will initially focus on stocks included in Annexes IA and IB of the NCEMs, as well as, other stocks, as identified by the Working Group (i.e. 3M Witch flounder and 3M Thorny skate). Unless otherwise directed by the Commission, stocks regulated by NAFO will be the priority for the development of management options. In addition, other species of living marine resources that may be impacted by NAFO fisheries might be considered. The Action Plan will ensure that there is a systematic and horizontal consideration of the overarching objectives set out below across NAFO bodies, at least up to 2021. NAFO bodies identified will take the lead for each of the specified actions, but are expected to involve other bodies and coordinate with them regularly.

The Action Plan will require support from the NAFO Secretariat for the analysis of by-catch data, notably haul-by-haul data. This would be carried out in consultation with other NAFO bodies, such as the WGBDS, SC and STACTIC.

A. Overarching objectives

1. Effective management and the minimization of by-catch and discards, and improvement of selectivity, in fisheries of the NRA.
2. Accurate reporting of target, non-target and incidental catch.
3. Account for total catch (retained and non-retained) in scientific assessments and management measures.
4. Management measures are adaptive and address changing fishery conditions over time, or differences among areas and fleets.
5. Management measures reflect the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management.
6. Identify priority areas for by-catch management, in particular areas where there is a risk of causing serious harm to by-catch species.
7. Ensure linkage to other NAFO bodies doing work related to by-catch management (e.g. STACTIC, WG-EAFFM, WG-ESA, WG-CR).

¹ FC Doc. 15-22 Rev (Annex 13 to the Fisheries Commission report on the 37th NAFO Annual Meeting in 2015).



B. Actions, actors, timing

1. Data management

What	Expected result	NAFO body	Timeline
1.1. Standard formats, data collection and data transmission	Ensure that all forms and data used to report catch and effort are standardized according to existing NCEM provisions, including observer data.	Secretariat/STACTIC	AM 2019
1.2. Logbook data	Haul-by-haul data is available for NAFO bodies, with relevant breakdown for catches by species, retained and non-retained.	Secretariat	AM 2019
1.3. Data completeness and identification of gaps	<p>Identify gaps in information on by-catch, whether retained or not retained, i.e. is NAFO (1) capturing all the information it needs to assess by-catch, selectivity and discards and (2) are NCEM rules on reporting of by-catch being complied with?</p> <p>The Working Group should review data gaps identified by the Secretariat. If appropriate may also consider recommending updates to the species included in the Annex I.C of the CEM</p>	Secretariat/WG	AM 2019
1.4. Data sharing	Improve information sharing with other international bodies (e.g. NEAFC) and sharing best practices related to by-catch discards and selectivity among Contracting Parties.	STACTIC/ CPs	AM 2019

2. Ongoing analysis and monitoring

What	Expected result	NAFO body	Timeline
2.1. Trends, patterns and anomalies	<p>a) Annual mapping of by-catch in NAFO from 2016 forward using haul by haul data</p> <p>b) Secretariat to continue to analyze trends, patterns anomalies in reported catch of identified non Annex Ia and Annex Ib species (3M Witch flounder, 3M Thorny Skate)</p>	Secretariat	AM 2020
2.2. Specific issues by time, area, depth, fleet and fishery	<p>Specific issues identified as part of the work under 2.1.</p> <p>Secretariat to compile data on discards in the NRA</p> <p>Identification of species under NAFO catch or effort limits with high survivability rates.</p>	Secretariat SC	AM 2020

3. Identification of priorities

What	Expected result	NAFO body	Timeline
3.1. Moratoria species	Identify moratoria stocks where the level of bycatch/discards may be impeding recovery	SC (with BDS)	AM 2021
3.2. Areas where there is a risk of causing serious harm to by-catch species	Identify areas, times and fisheries where by-catch and discards, notably of moratoria species, that have a higher rate of occurrence.	SC (with BDS)	AM 2021
3.3. High rates of discards	Identify the species with the highest rate of discards in the NRA	Secretariat	AM 2021

4. Development of management options

What	Expected result	NAFO body	Timeline
4.1. Time-area management	For NAFO fisheries identified as priorities under Action group 3, assess the merit of time-area management measures and/or new move-on rules.	WG-BDS STACTIC	AM 2021
4.2. Fishery-specific solutions	For NAFO fisheries identified as priorities under Action group 3, assess the merits of specific solutions per fishery, including the development and assessment, with the Scientific Council, of selectivity tests.	WG-BDS STACTIC SC	AM 2021
4.3. Identification of best practices	Best practices / possible mitigation measures to avoid by-catch per time, area, depth, fleet and fishery.	BDS SC	AM 2020

3. Review

No later than 2022, this Action Plan should be reviewed and assessed, if appropriate by including it expressly in the scope of a NAFO Performance Review.