

Northwest Atlantic



Fisheries Organization

Serial No. N2280

NAFO/FC Doc. 93/4

15TH ANNUAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 1993

Operation of the NAFO Observer Scheme  
Pilot Project

Preliminary Assessment

by

Canadian Delegation

1.0 Introduction

At the 14th Annual NAFO Meeting (September 14-18, 1992) the Fisheries Commission endorsed the implementation of an 18-month pilot project to test operation of a NAFO Observer Scheme in the NAFO Regulatory Area commencing on January 1, 1993.

2.0 Observer Scheme

The NAFO Observer Scheme is designed to primarily monitor regulatory compliance with the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures. Specifically, observer responsibilities include:

- Recording and reporting upon the fishing activities of vessel(s)
- Verifying the position of vessel(s)
- Observing and estimating catches, including the identification of species composition, discards, by-catches, and quantities of undersized fish
- Recording gear type, mesh size, and attachments
- Verifying logbook entries (catch and haul reports)
- Sampling in accordance with a Scientific Council workplan

3.0 Application

Contracting Parties whose operations in the NAFO Regulatory Area are anticipated to exceed 300 fishing days shall:

- Deploy trained individuals (from respective nations or third party nations, if agreed bilaterally) on their vessels to monitor compliance with the Conservation and Enforcement Measures.
- Deploy these individuals in a manner that ensures an overall 10% coverage level with observations across as many fisheries as possible.
- Advise the NAFO Secretariat of the vessels on which observer are on board.
- Provide a report at a special meeting of the Fisheries Commission to be held in 1994 at the conclusion of a 12-month period assessing the effectiveness and costs of the program.

## Preliminary Review (January-June 1993)

4.0 Deployments on Canadian Vessels

Typically, Canadian activity in the NAFO Regulatory Area rarely exceeds the 300 days required for participation in the NAFO Observer Scheme. However, in 1993, a developmental shrimp fishery by Canadian vessels commenced in Division 3M. As Canada has a domestic observer deployment policy requiring 100% coverage in all shrimp fisheries, this policy was extended for the developmental shrimp fishery in Division 3M.

During the April 30 to June 30, 1993 period, a total of 12 Canadian vessels fished for shrimp in the NAFO Regulatory Area. These vessels were:

Aqviq	Kinguk
Arctic Sea	Mersey Venture
Atlantic Champion	Mersey Viking
Atlantic Enterprise	Newfoundland Otter
BCM Atlantic	Newfoundland Osprey
Fame	Ocean Prawns

Total fishing effort (and observer sea-days) was 300 days resulting in shrimp catches of approximately 3300t. The principle by-catch, redfish, was caught at rates ranging from 5-48% on a weekly basis. All redfish by-catch was discarded. Shrimp discards were less than 2.5%.

To June 30, 1993 there were no observer reports of apparent infringements of the Conservation and Enforcement Measures. Biological sampling followed the standard program for shrimp fisheries inside Canadian Fisheries Waters.

The total cost of these observer deployments (100% coverage) was \$108,000.

Given that Canada has maintained a domestic Observer Program since 1979, no administrative or logistical difficulties were encountered with these deployments.

An additional 30 days were spent in the NAFO Regulatory Area by domestic vessels fishing groundfish species. Due to the random and sporadic nature of these fishing trips, observers could not be deployed on these vessels.

4.0 Deployments on Other Contracting Party Vessels

The Baltic States joined NAFO at the 14th Annual Meeting (September 1992) and, therefore, did not have the necessary infrastructure in place to participate in all NAFO enforcement programs. As such, the Baltic States and Canada agreed bilaterally to use Canadian observers on Baltic State vessels in 1993 fisheries.

During the May 13 to June 30, 1993 period, a total of 6 Canadian observers, acting on behalf of Baltic State governments, were deployed to cover Baltic State vessels fishing redfish in Division 3M. In total, these observers spent 32 days on board four vessels. An additional 61 observer days were utilized during the deployment process. If the bilateral arrangement between Baltic States and Canada continues for the remainder of the 18-month pilot project, it is anticipated that the number of observer days required for the deployment process will be reduced significantly.

The total cost of these observer deployments (approximately 5% coverage) was \$40,000.

The Baltic States were provided with all original observer documentation and, therefore, may wish to submit a separate report on the results of these observer deployments.