

Northwest Atlantic



Fisheries Organization

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Part VI - Pilot Project for a NAFO Observer Scheme

The Fisheries Commission

Noting that Canada has a program under which there is extensive observer coverage on board vessels fishing in its waters;

Considering that the placement of fisheries observers on board Contracting Party vessels fishing in the Regulatory Area may be a useful and cost effective method of monitoring compliance with the provisions of the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures and that the observers might also provide sampling information for use by the Scientific Council;

Therefore:

1. Endorses implementation of an 18-month pilot project to test operation of a NAFO Observer Scheme in the NAFO Regulatory Area by January 1, 1993.

Observers would monitor a vessel's compliance with the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures. Observers will record and report upon the fishing activities of the vessel observed and will verify the position of the vessel when engaged in fishing, observe and estimate catches taken with a view to identifying catch composition, monitor discarding, by-catches and the taking of undersized species, record the gear, mesh sizes and attachments employed by the skipper and verify entries made to the logbook (catch quantities and haul reports). In particular, observers should collect catch and effort data on a set-by-set basis. These data should include location (latitude/longitude), depth, time net on the bottom, catch composition and discards.

The role envisaged is strictly an observer one and shall be confined to the Regulatory Area, but could include for example the collection of samples. Any "quasi" scientific role would have to be defined on the advice of the Scientific Council.

2. Requests that the Scientific Council recommend a work plan for fisheries observers that are authorized to obtain biological sampling data from Contracting Party vessels fishing in the Regulatory Area.

The Scientific Council has recommended that length sampling of the main species of the daily catch should be set out accordingly to the NAFO standard procedures actually in use in the national sampling programs. Training should be done on a national basis and in conjunction with research institutes in charge of the sampling at sea, and a manual should be provided.

3. Calls on all Contracting Parties that anticipate their fishing operations to exceed 300 fishing days on ground in 1993 to:

- (a) Deploy on their vessels fishing in the Regulatory Area trained individuals from their own countries, or from other NAFO members where agreed bilaterally, to monitor compliance with the provisions of the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures in accordance with criteria agreed by STACTIC and approved by the Fisheries Commission;

- (b) Deploy those observers appropriately to ensure that a minimum of 10 percent of the Contracting Party's total estimated fishing days on ground for 1993 are subject to observation across as many fisheries in the NAFO Regulatory Area as possible;
- (c) Pay all costs associated with their observers;
- (d) Advise the Executive Secretary of the vessels on which observers are deployed for subsequent transmission to Contracting Parties with an inspection presence in the Regulatory Area;
- (e) Table at a special Fisheries Commission meeting to be held in 1994 at the conclusion of 12 months of the pilot program a report assessing the effectiveness and costs of the program and outlining administrative and operational problems while also considering the continuation and possible future expansion of the program.

4. Requests all Contracting Parties to authorize observers on board their vessels fishing in the Regulatory Area:

- (a) To monitor their assigned vessel's compliance with the provisions of the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures and, if approved by the Contracting Party which receives the observer, to conduct sampling in accordance with technical guidelines and a work plan developed in accordance with paragraph 2.
- (b) To prepare a report of their findings at the termination of the observer period. These reports shall be forwarded to the competent authorities of the Contracting Party providing the observer. The said competent authorities shall examine these reports with a view to preparing an overall evaluation of the findings presented during the entire period of the pilot project.

These findings shall be presented to the Fisheries Commission at its special session in 1994.