



Serial No. N5493

NAFO/FC Doc. 08/2

FC INTERSESSIONAL MEETING – APR-MAY 2008

Supplementary Request to Scientific Council

At the 2007 Annual Meeting, Fisheries Commission requested Scientific Council advice as follows:

10. Recognizing the initiatives on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) Fisheries Commission requests the Scientific Council to:
- a) Develop initial methodologies for the identification of VME and assessment of individual fishing activities, drawing on relevant international information and objective standards and guidelines as may have been developed, as deemed appropriate for this work;
 - b) Assess, at least on a preliminary basis, using the best available scientific information and assessment methodology, whether individual bottom fishing activities would have significant adverse impacts on identified vulnerable marine ecosystems, with a view to reporting these findings to the Fisheries Commission and ensuring that additional conservation and management measures, where required, are recommended, through a Working Group of Fishery Managers and Scientists on Ecosystems Management, to the Fisheries Commission at its September 2008 meeting;
 - c) Develop appropriate scientific methods for the longer term monitoring of the health of VME.

Fisheries Commission further requests the Scientific Council to provide supplementary advice with respect to commitments related to UNGA Resolution 61/105 by:

For the NAFO Regulatory Area and using existing information:

1. Identifying vulnerable species and habitat-forming species that are documented/considered sensitive and likely vulnerable to deep-sea fisheries.
2. Identifying areas (mega-habitats) which are topographical, hydro-physical or geological features (including fragile geologic structures) known to support vulnerable species, communities, or habitats.
3. This identification process should draw on relevant international information as may have been developed and as deemed appropriate for this work.
4. Mapping locations of vulnerable marine ecosystems, if any, as well bottom substrate features contained therein.

Additionally, the following VME Data Collection Protocol is referred to Scientific Council for review and advice.

Completion of this work is requested by September 2008 to facilitate a meeting of the Working Group of Fishery Managers and Scientists on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems.

Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) Data Collection Protocol

1.0 Observers on fishing vessels in the NAFO Regulatory Area who are deployed pursuant to Chapter III, Article 24 shall:

- i. Monitor any set for evidence of VME and the presence of vulnerable marine species.
- ii. For VME generally, record Species Code, Trip#, Set#, Vessel Name, Gear Type, Latitude/Longitude, Depth, Date and Name of Observer on datasheets, if possible,
 - Live animals should be measured and released, dead animals measured and sexed
 - Samples may be collected and frozen (eg: gonads from dead specimens), when requested by Scientific Council or the scientific authority in a Contracting Party
- iii. For deep-sea coral species, also collect as many samples as practicable for use in confirmation of species identification, genetic and geochemistry composition:
 - Collect a small (~5 cm) piece of each coral species and freeze in plastic bag, with a pre-printed waterproof label indicating Species Code, Trip#, Set#, Vessel Name, Gear Type, Latitude/Longitude, Depth, Date and Name of Observer.
 - For species with large skeletons (*Primnoa*, *Paragorgia*, *Paramuricea*, *Bathypathes*), collect as large a piece of the coral as possible, label with total weight and sub-sample weight, and freeze.
- iv. Samples should be provided to the scientific authority in a Contracting Party at the end of the fishing trip.

Observer and masters should refer to the NAFO Coral Species Identification Guide and other material provided by Scientific Council.