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**Shrimp Strengthening Bags**

At present, the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (NAFO/FC Doc. 10/1), Chapter I, Article 13 (6) states that: “vessels shall not use any means or device which would obstruct the meshes or diminish the size of the meshes”. Irrespective of this provision vessels may still attach authorized topside chafers, described in Annex XV, to the upper side of the codend in such a manner that they will not obstruct the meshes of the codend inclusive of any lengthener(s).

Historically, vessels fishing shrimp have used an outer “strengthening bag” over the topside of the codend to provide support to the codend. While the wording within the current NCEMs does not allow for this type of attachment, vessels continue to use them.

It is Canada’s view it is acceptable for shrimp vessels to use strengthening bags. Accordingly, provisions should be inserted into the NCEMs to address the manner in which the strengthening bag must be attached to the trawl.

Possible Amendment

**Use of shrimp strengthening bags in the NRA: effective January 1, 2011.**

In order to ensure the proper attachment of shrimp strengthening bags currently in use in the NRA, Canada would suggest that parameters be documented in the NCEM to ensure that the attachments do not diminish the size of meshes in the codend, obstruct the mesh or sorting grids or grates.

**Annex XV**

**Add the following to Annex XV in reference to vessels fishing for shrimp in the NRA.**

**3. Shrimp Trawl – Codend Strengthening Bag (Figure 1), for vessels directing for shrimp in the NRA**

A strengthening bag is defined as an outer covering of netting that can be used on a shrimp trawl to protect and provide strength to the codend of the shrimp trawl.

- (a) Vessels shall not use a strengthening bag of which the mesh size is less than 130 millimeters.
- (b) The strengthening bag shall not extend forward of the sorting grids or grates or obstruct the sorting grids or grates in any way.
- (c) A strengthening bag shall not be attached in any way that restricts the authorized mesh or obstructs the mesh opening.
- (d) Vessels shall not use a strengthening bag with any other top-side chafers simultaneously.

Figure 1 Shrimp Trawl Codend Strengthening Bag (side view)

