Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

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(Adopted)

34th ANNUAL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 2012

Skates in Divisions 3LNO

Concerned that the NAFO skate total allowable catch (TAC) has been set in excess of the advice from the Scientific Council since its establishment, and is now more than twice current advice;

Noting that total skate catch in 2010 and 2011 was substantially less than quotas established, suggesting that it is not necessary to set TACs in excess of scientific advice based on existing fishing capacity;

Recalling that, at the 2010 annual meeting, the European Union, Canada, and the United States committed to adopt the scientific advice for skates;

Contracting Party	2009 Quotas (metric tons)	2009 Catch (metric tons)	2010 Quotas (metric tons)	2010 Catch (metric tons)	2011 Quotas (metric tons)	2011 Nominal Catch (metric tons)
Canada	2250	435	2,000	50	2,000	129
Russian Federation	2250	10	2000	91	2,000	7
European Union	8500	5234	7556	5223	7,556	5251
Others	500	42	444	-	444	13
Total	13,500	5721	12,000	5,364	12,000	5400

Considering that the NAFO Scientific Council has reported in FC Working Paper 12/1 that:

- Skate catches in NAFO Divisions 3LNO should not exceed recent catches (5495 mt from 2009 – 2011);
- Thorny skates have very low reproductive capacity due to slow growth and few offspring;
- Thorny skate biomass in Div. 3LNO remains at a low level, with no signs of recovery since NAFO brought this stock under management;
- While the Canadian research vessel indices appear stable at low levels, the European Union-Spain Division 3NO index has been declining since 2007;
- Biomass has remained low despite above average recruitment in 2010 and 2011;
- Thorny skate density in Division 3LNO is still predominately on the southern Grand Banks; and
- Historically, thorny skate had been widely distributed throughout the Grand Bank.

The U.S. therefore proposes that NAFO Contracting Parties set the 2013 and 2014 TAC for Skates in Division 3LNO at 7,000 metric tons, as advised by the Scientific Council.