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Provision of VMS Data to NAFO Constituent Bodies

Considering that following specific requests from the Fisheries Commission to the Scientific Council, VMS data is currently available in a summary form to the Scientific Council (NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, Article 26.10(d));

Mindful that although VMS data is primarily collected for MCS purpose, it is also a useful source of information for scientific and statistical purposes;

Recognizing that VMS data has previously been used by NAFO to meet a range of management and science needs including delineation of NAFO's fishing footprint and the modeling of by-catch thresholds for the management of VME species in the NRA;

Noting that the Performance Review panel recommended that NAFO should consider rules to govern the use of VMS data, specifically how and why VMS data should be used, while avoiding overly-restrictive usage conditions;

Seeking to make access and use of NAFO VMS data efficient in order to it meet the needs for both scientific advice and compliance monitoring, as recommended by the *Expert Panel Regarding Assessment of the Methodology Used by NAFO Scientific Council to Estimate Catches for NAFO Stocks*;

Recalling that the General Council Action Plan for the Implementation of the Performance Review Recommendations encourages the use of VMS data by Scientific Council for preparation of advice;

Conscious of the need to maintain industry confidentiality of VMS data (i.e. commercial sensitivity of detailed fishing location);

It is recommended that Article 26.10 (d) be amended as follows:

(d) makes VMS data available in a summary form, that does not include the vessel's identification, to the Scientific Council and other NAFO Constituent bodies to allow them to carry out their mandated responsibilities.