



Serial No. N 6095

NAFO/FC Doc. 12/21
(Adopted)

34TH ANNUAL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 2012

**Standardization of Conversion Factors in the
NAFO Regulatory Area**

Background

Conversion factors are used to determine the live weight of fish by applying the factor to processed catch. Inaccurate conversion factors could contribute to inconsistencies in fish removal estimates. In addition, consistent conversion factors are required to ensure accuracy in the sharing of quotas. The fishing industry has questioned why there is a variance in the conversion factors in the NRA.

It was agreed at the STACTIC intercessional meeting in May 2012 that CP's would provide a list of their domestic conversion factors to the Secretariat for further discussion at the annual meeting in September. The Secretariat has compiled a list of Conversion Factors by Contracting Party. (STACTIC WP 12/25 rev.1)

A preliminary analysis of the conversion factors has identified that there is a variation in the case of many fisheries. For example, for GHL Guttled, Head Off, Tail Off, the variation is from 1.39 – 1.50. In the case of skate wing the range was from 2.09 to 4.0.

Notwithstanding domestic conversion factors supplied by the Contracting Parties, the NAFO Conservation & Enforcement Measures state that when completing an inspection report "...when comparing entries in the production logbook with entries in the fishing logbook the inspector shall convert production weight into live weight guided by conversion factors used by the master." Inspectors have noted during inspections a variance in conversion factors for the same product. A difference in conversion factors when extrapolated over large amounts of catch could result in significant discrepancies in catch estimates.

Therefore to ensure accuracy of recorded catch it is important to use accurate and consistent conversion factors when converting product weight to live weight.

This was discussed in STACTIC at the annual meeting with the intent of finding a way forward in establishing consistent and accurate conversion factors. The discussion reflected that the range and variations are diverse and there is currently no basis to arrive a standard set of conversion factors. Domestic conversion factors may vary for many reasons and were not necessarily calculated using fish populations in the NRA. Furthermore, it appears that there hasn't been any recent sampling to determine conversion factors which may indicate that some of the more modern processing techniques have not been incorporated into current conversion factors.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Fisheries Commission provide approval to STACTIC to develop a project to conduct scientific based, independent, and structured sampling of catches and product types in the NRA. The intent is to establish a recommendation for standard conversion factors for the primary species

harvested. For example, participating Contracting Parties could provide independent observers to collect the preliminary data.

Canada volunteered to undertake the development of the methodology and framework for the project and present to STACTIC at the intercessional meeting in 2013. If approved at the STACTIC intercessional meeting the project would proceed without further Fisheries Commission consideration and STACTIC will provide a status report to the FC at the next annual meeting.

Note: STACTIC is not seeking funding support from NAFO for this project