White hake in Divisions 3NO

Recalling that White hake came under quota regulation when NAFO, at its Annual Meeting in 2004, set a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 8,500 t for 2005-2007 in Divisions 3NO

Further Recalling that the TAC for white hake in Divisions 3NO was reduced to 6,000 t for 2010 and 2011, with subsequent reductions to 5,000 t (2012) and 1,000 t (2013);

Noting the 2013 Scientific Council Advice which indicates that:
- the stock biomass remains at relatively low levels;
- recruitment has been low since 2000;
- fishing mortality is low; and
- catches of White hake in Div. 3NO in 2014-15 should not exceed their current levels;

Further noting that the assessment is considered data limited and as such associated with a relatively high uncertainty;

Considering that recruitment was higher in 2011 but not comparable to the high recruitment observed in 2000;

Mindful that adjustments of the TAC should be based upon scientific advice

It is recommended that:

1. The overall TAC for 3NO White hake be maintained at 1,000 t for 2014

2. The current provision (NCEMs Footnote 27) which allows for the in-season adjustment of the TAC be revised to state:

   Should a Contracting Party experience higher than normal catches per unit of effort (CPUE) and conclude that a shift to high availability levels of white hake during the fishing season – such as what was apparently the case in 2002 and 2003 – is taking place, then that Contracting Party shall notify the Executive Secretary and submit a summary of evidence for its conclusion (higher than normal CPUE and any other additional relevant information) within one month. On this basis, a mail vote will be submitted to the Fisheries Commission as to whether an exceptional increase in the availability of fish occurs. The TAC shall remain at 1,000 t until the results of the vote are complete and the catch limitation provided for in Annex 1 A of the NCEM will apply. In case of a positive vote, the TAC is confirmed to be 2,000 metric tons. In the case of negative vote, the TAC shall remain at 1,000 metric tons.