



**37<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Recommendations from the WG-EAFFM to forward to FC and SC**

The Joint FC-SC Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management met 15-17 July 2015 in Halifax, Nova Scotia and agreed on the following recommendations:

**In relation to Progress of the Workplan on SAI in support of reassessment of bottom fisheries in 2016:**

1. that Scientific Council should take into account the protection afforded to VME areas outside the NAFO fisheries footprint in the calculation of the VME area and biomass at risk of bottom fishing impact;
2. that Scientific Council refine VME kernel density analysis polygon boundaries, taking into account current understanding of distribution patterns in relation to environmental variables.

**In relation to Removal of closed areas from scientific surveys:**

3. that Scientific Council consider options to expedite a risk assessment of trawl surveys impact on VME in closed areas, and the effect of excluding surveys from these areas on stock assessments;

**In relation to activities other than fishing:**

4. that Fisheries Commission request the General Council to identify other international organizations (e.g. International Maritime Organization, International Seabed Authority) with areas of mutual interest and instruct the Secretariat to explore the establishment of mechanisms for dialogue and engagement;

**In relation to impacts of mid-water trawls on benthic VME indicator species and habitats:**

5. that Fisheries Commission or STACTIC amend the NCEM to broaden the scope of application of the meaning of 'midwater trawl', as referred to in Article 13.2.f, to apply to midwater trawls in the seamount areas referred to in Article 17.

**In relation to NCEM Articles 17.1 - 17.3 (Seamounts):**

6. that FC revise Article 17 to remove the possibility of exploratory bottom fishing in seamount areas
7. that FC revise NCEM to require reporting of all quantities of all VME indicator taxa catches (Annex I.E.VI), in seamount areas (Article 17) for instance through logbooks or observer reports.

**In relation to Other matters:**

8. that Scientific Council consider widening the scope of the NAFO coral and sponge identification guides to include other relevant species on seamounts.
9. that Fisheries Commission revise Article 24 as follows:

**"The provisions of this Chapter shall be reviewed by the Fisheries Commission at its Annual Meeting no later than 2020".**

