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Management of Bycatch and Nonretained Catch in Canada


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Management of Bycatch and Discards in Canada

Increased International Attention on Bycatch and Discards

- Effective accounting for all catch including bycatch and non-retained catch is a key to sustainable fisheries and an ecosystem approach.
- Concerns persist that levels of fishing mortality on bycatch in some of the world's fisheries is threatening fish stocks and biodiversity.
 - In 2004, FAO estimated that discarded global catch was 7 million tonnes
- This has led the FAO to develop International Guidelines for Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards (2011). Canada endorsed the guidelines.



Management of Bycatch and Discards in Canada

Bycatch Management is Part of Canada's Sustainable Fisheries Framework

- Canada is committed domestically and internationally to implementing conservation and management measures to address bycatch and discards.
- Canada is implementing an overarching policy framework – the Sustainable Fisheries Framework – to manage the impacts of fishing on
 - Target catches
 - Bycatch and discards
 - Seafloor habitats
- In 2013, Canada introduced a policy on managing bycatch, which builds on the successes and best practices in Canadian fisheries and elsewhere.



Management of Bycatch and Discards in Canada

Bycatch Management: Best Use of a Range of Measures and Tools (1)

- Bycatch and discard issues, where they occur, are generally fishery-specific, and require fishery-specific solutions.
- Experience shows that the most durable and effective solutions are those developed with harvesters.
- Canada works with harvesters to tailor solutions to the specific problem, with the aim of managing the fishery so that the total catch and any discards are within conservation limits.
- Measures include avoiding bycatch, and managing bycatch when unavoidable. At-sea monitoring helps ensure measures are achieving the desired results.



Management of Bycatch and Discards in Canada

Bycatch Management: Best Use of a Range of Measures and Tools (2)

Measures to avoid bycatch:

- time and area closures to limit bycatch of small fish and species or stocks of concern
- gear and fishery modifications to improve selectivity, such as
 - the *Nordmore* grate in the shrimp trawl fishery significantly reduce bycatch of groundfish
 - Minimum mesh size to avoid high catches of juvenile fish
 - Gear restrictions on midwater trawl (e.g., attachments)
 - Limits on bycatch amounts including move-away rules
- transferable quotas to access non-target catch and reduce discards



Management of Bycatch and Discards in Canada

Bycatch Management: Best Use of a Range of Measures and Tools (3)

Where bycatch is unavoidable:

- Required release of species at risk and others for conservation reasons
 - Fish are returned to the sea for various reasons; not all discards are the same
 - Required live release of fish less than minimum size (e.g., Atlantic cod)
 - Live release of species at risk
- Limits to keep bycatch within conservation
- Discard bans
- Practices to maximize post-release survival
- Accurate reporting of total catch (retained and unretained)



Case Examples: Canada's Atlantic Groundfish Fishery

- Temporal / spatial closure in response to high levels of American plaice bycatch in Greenland halibut fishery (30 day closure of Management area 3Ld)
- Seasonal spawning closure for yellowtail flounder developed in consultation with industry and science

Thank you