

**Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization****2005 Annual Meeting Press Release****23 September 2005****NAFO Starts a Reform Process**

TALLINN, ESTONIA – Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) has launched a review of the NAFO Convention, especially with a view to incorporating more integrated oceans management approaches, reforming decision-making processes, and examining the current structure of NAFO.

The decision was made at the 27th Annual Meeting of NAFO held in Tallinn, Estonia, 19-23 September 2005.

In the context of modernization, NAFO bodies were asked to make recommendations to strengthen NAFO monitoring, control and surveillance measures through modifications in the areas of sanctions, role of observers and follow-up on infringements.

First steps towards an ecosystem approach

NAFO scientists were tasked to look into areas of marine biological and ecological significance for NAFO. In addition, NAFO fishing vessels will collect, on a voluntary basis, data on seamounts in the NAFO area. These undersea mountains are viewed as potentially vulnerable ecosystems that might warrant special protection.

Ecosystem studies have long been a part of the work of the Scientific Council. In 2006, NAFO will hold a symposium to advance knowledge of the Northwest Atlantic ecosystems.

During the past year NAFO began discussions of applying the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. An important milestone was made in 2004 when NAFO adopted and began to implement a framework for the Precautionary Approach. Progress continues to be made in the application of the Precautionary Approach to stock assessments.

NAFO bans shark finning

In keeping with its ecosystem approach, NAFO adopted measures banning finning, and the transshipment and landing of shark fins to improve the protection of sharks in the NAFO area. These measures are consistent with those adopted by regional tuna commissions (ICCAT, IATTC).

Blacklist for IUU vessels

NAFO has created a procedure to blacklist non-NAFO member vessels involved in Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Northwest Atlantic. This is an important step for global cooperation. In addition, NAFO will automatically share information about these IUU fishing activities with other regional fishery bodies and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The meeting was attended by 200 delegates from eleven Contracting Parties - Canada, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, Russia, Ukraine and United States of America.

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Additional highlights of the meeting can be found in the attached backgrounder.

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2005 Annual Meeting (19 – 23 September 2005)

Backgrounder

The **General Council** was chaired by David Bevan (Canada), and looked into administrative matters.

The **Scientific Council** under the chairmanship of Dr. Joanne Morgan (Canada) conducted assessments of stocks in the NAFO Convention Area during the past year and its advice was presented to Fisheries Commission. The scientific assessments concluded that yellowtail flounder in Div. 3LNO and northern shrimp on the Flemish Cap and the Grand Bank remain bright spots with healthy populations. NAFO scientists also advised that directed fisheries continue on two stocks of redfish, white hake, thorny skate and Greenland halibut. However, Scientific Council recommended that moratoria be maintained for 8 of the 15 fish stocks assessed by NAFO.

The Scientific Council also coordinates research on a variety of subjects including studies on fishing gear, oceanography, and a range of biological issues on various marine species in the Northwest Atlantic.

NAFO Fisheries Commission, chaired by Dean Swanson (USA) adopted the recommendations made by the Scientific Council. In addition, NAFO agreed on a number of measures to maintain and increase NAFO's ability to protect the fishery resources of the Northwest Atlantic (a complete list of these measures will be available in the meeting reports). **Attached is the table of Total Allowable Catches (TAC) and quotas agreed at this session.**

The following points represent additional highlights from the Annual Meeting:

More fishing opportunities for shrimp in 3L

The increased growth of the shrimp stock in Div. 3L allowed NAFO to raise the TAC to 22,000 tons following the scientific advice.

NAFO Compliance Review

The second NAFO Annual Compliance Review was adopted. This review summarizes issues regarding compliance with the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures and will be available on the NAFO website (www.nafo.int).

Reduced TAC for straddling oceanic redfish

The oceanic redfish stock that straddles the Northwest and the Northeast Atlantic is managed jointly with the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). In accordance with a decision taken earlier by NEAFC to reduce its TAC, NAFO reduced its TAC for oceanic redfish.

Protection of Greenland halibut continues

Following the 15-year rebuilding plan for Greenland halibut adopted in 2003, NAFO confirmed the reduction for the TAC in 2006.

Greenland halibut is estimated to be at its lowest level since 1975. Fishing mortality is high and prospects for the rebuilding of this stock in the short term are poor.

Combating fishing by non-NAFO member vessels

NAFO was informed that seven vessels flagged to Dominica had been sighted by Canadian aerial surveillance in the NAFO Regulatory Area in 2004 and 2005. Following diplomatic demarches made to Dominica by several NAFO members, Dominica cancelled the registration of seven of the vessels in question.



2006 NAFO Symposium

The Scientific Council is sponsoring a symposium entitled “*Environmental and Ecosystem Histories in the Northwest Atlantic – What Influences Living Marine Resources?*”. This Symposium will take place in conjunction with the NAFO 28th Annual Meeting in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada, on 13 to 15 September 2006.

Election of Officers

The following NAFO officers were elected in 2005:

General Council

Chair: David Bevan (Canada)

Vice-Chair: Terje Lobach (Norway)

Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD)

Chair: Fred Kingston (EU)

Vice-Chair: Frederik Schmidt (Denmark in respect of Faroe Islands & Greenland)

Fisheries Commission

Chair: Vladimir Shibanov (Russian Federation)

Vice-Chair: Kolbeinn Arnason (Iceland)

Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC)

Chair: Höskuldur Steinarsson (Iceland)

Vice-Chair: Mads Nedergaard (Denmark in respect of Faroe Islands & Greenland)

Scientific Council

Chair: Antonio Vázquez (EU-Spain)

Vice Chair: Konstantin Gorchinsky (Russian Federation)

Standing Committee on Research Coordination (STACREC)

Chair: Konstantin Gorchinsky (Russian Federation)

Standing Committee on Fisheries Science (STACFIS)

Chair: Don Power (Canada)

Standing Committee on Fisheries Environment (STACFEN)

Chair: Eugene Colbourne (Canada)

Standing Committee on Publications (STACPUB)

Chair: Manfred Stein (EU-Germany)

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the following NAFO meetings were held during 2005: (1) Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC) (Reykjavik, Iceland, 13-15 April) and (2) Scientific Council Regular Meeting (Dartmouth, N.S., Canada, 1-15 June).

NAFO Executive Secretary

23 September 2005, Tallinn, Estonia

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