



Press Release

NAFO HOLDS 48th ANNUAL MEETING IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VILNIUS, LITHUANIA, 25 September 2026-The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) held its 48th Annual Meeting in Vilnius. This meeting marked the first time that the NAFO Annual Meeting has been hosted in Lithuania by the European Union. NAFO delegates were welcomed to Vilnius on the first day of the meeting, 21 September, by the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, Genovaitė Beniulienė, and by the NAFO President and Chair of the Commission, Joost Paardekooper.

“For almost fifty years, NAFO has been developing and implementing measures for the conservation and sustainable management and use of marine resources in the Northwest Atlantic. Much of that work is closely aligned with the objectives and principles of the BBNJ Agreement. In that sense, NAFO has already been part of this journey for many years,” remarked the NAFO President.

During the meeting, NAFO accepted the terms of reference for a third performance review, officially beginning the review process. This performance review will be focused on assessing the scientific process within NAFO.

NAFO reopened the Northern shrimp fishery in Division 3L of the Regulatory Area and adopted management measures for Atlantic halibut in Divisions 3LMNO.

NAFO also agreed to extend the current VME (vulnerable marine ecosystem) area closures for an additional two years, until the end of 2028.

NAFO established a collaborative mechanism within the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures to allow for the joint recognition of at-sea inspections to Contracting Parties whose inspectors participate in an inspection from an inspection platform from another Contracting Party. This mechanism will incentivize joint deployments, preserve data integrity and transparency for use in NAFO's monitoring, control and surveillance systems.

NAFO agreed to initiate the process for benchmark assessments of both Divisions 3NO cod and Divisions 3LNO American plaice following the proposed workplans provided by the NAFO Scientific Council. These benchmark assessments will provide a forum for peer review to update and evaluate the science and assessment methods for each stock.

NAFO continued to implement new reference points for fish stock assessments following the Revised NAFO Precautionary Approach, with now 11 of the 17 stocks managed by NAFO, and for 3 of the 6 Coastal State stocks, having reference points for biomass and fishing mortality.

Additionally, Dale Marsden (Canada) was nominated as the new Chair, and Molly Weiland (United Kingdom) as the Vice-Chair, of the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration. Diana González Troncoso (European Union) was re-elected for a one-year term as Chair of the Scientific Council and Rick Rideout (Canada) was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Scientific Council and Chair of the Standing Committee on Research Coordination. Irene Garrido Fernández (European Union) was elected as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries Environment.

The 49th Annual Meeting will take place, 20-24 September 2027, in the United Kingdom.

The total allowable catches and quotas for 2027 can be found [here](#). Meeting reports for the NAFO Commission and the Scientific Council will be made available on the NAFO website at a later date.

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