



**NAFO STRENGTHENS ITS PROTECTION MEASURES FOR HABITATS AND SPECIES
IN THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VARADERO, CUBA, 23 SEPTEMBER 2016- The 38th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) took place from the 19-23 September. The delegates were welcomed by the Cuban Minister of Food Industry, Ms. Maria del Carmen Concepción González. NAFO continued to make progress in further developing its implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. Along with the traditional total allowable catch (TAC) and quota decisions, significant decisions were made regarding the following:

- **NAFO agreed to undergo its second performance review.** This performance review will be completed by the next Annual Meeting in September 2017. It will address: conservation and management; compliance and enforcement; governance; science; international cooperation; financial and administrative issues. The previous NAFO performance review took place in 2011. All of those recommendations have been addressed. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has called on all Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to undergo regular performance reviews to ensure that they are following best practices.
- **NAFO has agreed to align its port State control measures with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement** which recently came into force. The proposed changes will help to further prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU). The FAO port State measures are internationally recognized in the fishing industry and NAFO's alignment will further increase consistency amongst port States.
- In continuation of its protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) **NAFO closed an additional 239 km² of its Regulatory Area to protect significant concentrations of sea pens.** Sea pens are considered a VME indicator species. This brings the total area of the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA) protected from bottom fishing to about 380,511 km², representing around 15% of the NRA.
- **NAFO will launch a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for Greenland halibut** for completion at the next Annual Meeting in September 2017
- **NAFO has put rules in place to prohibit the removal of shark fins on board vessels.**
- NAFO's Executive Secretary, Mr. Fred Kingston, was renewed for a second four-year term ending at the end of 2021.

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BACKGROUNDER:

NAFO is an intergovernmental fisheries science and management body. NAFO was founded in 1979 as a successor to ICNAF (International Commission of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries) (1949-1978). NAFO's overall objective is to contribute through consultation and cooperation to the optimum utilization, rational management and conservation of the fishery resources of the NAFO Convention Area.

The NAFO Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries applies to most fishery resources of the Northwest Atlantic except salmon, tunas/marlins, whales, and sedentary species (e.g. shellfish). Currently, NAFO manages 19 stocks [comprised of 11 species]. NAFO has 12 Contracting Parties (Canada, Cuba, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Iceland, Japan, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Ukraine and United States of America. These Contracting Parties meet in September each year to decide conservation and management measures for the following year and intersessionally throughout the year.

NAFO is comprised of the following:

- General Council – Responsible for internal affairs and external relations,
- Fisheries Commission – Responsible for the management and conservation of the fishery resources of the Regulatory Area (waters outside the EEZs). It annually decides on the NAFO fisheries regulations, TACs and quotas (NAFO *Conservation and Enforcement Measures*),
- Scientific Council – Gives advice upon request on the status of fish stocks in the NAFO Convention Area to Fisheries Commission and Coastal States; and
- NAFO Secretariat – Headquarters located in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

For more information on NAFO, or to view all of NAFO's reports, please visit www.nafo.int.

