

**PART A. REPORT OF THE FISHERIES COMMISSION AND SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL *AD HOC*
WORKING GROUP ON CATCH REPORTING, 3-4 FEBRUARY 2014**

Contents

1. Opening	3
2. Appointment of Rapporteur.....	3
3. Adoption of Agenda	3
4. Review of Terms of Reference	3
5. Review and follow-up to the Peer Review Expert Panel 2013 Recommendations	3
6. Evaluation of potential approaches and data sources (e.g. daily catch data, tow by tow data, log books, etc.) to validate STATLANT 21 data and/or provide catch estimates	3
7. Prioritization of stocks for initial consideration	4
8. Consideration of terms of reference (governance, participation) if it is advised that this ad hoc WG continues	4
9. Recommendations to forward to the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council	4
10. Other Matters.....	5
11. Adoption of the Report	5
12. Adjournment.....	5



**Report of the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council Ad hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting
(FC-SC Doc. 14/1)**

3-4 February 2014

1. Opening

The Scientific Council (SC) Chair Don Stansbury (Canada), opened the meeting at 1000 hrs on Monday, 3 February 2014 at Prince George Hotel in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The Fisheries Commission (FC) Chair, co-Chair of this ad hoc working group (WG), could not attend. It was determined that for this inaugural meeting an election of a substitute co-Chair would not be necessary.

Representatives from Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Japan, Norway, and USA were in attendance. The presence of the newly appointed Executive Secretary of NAFO, Fred Kingston was acknowledged (Part J, this volume).

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

Neil Campbell and Ricardo Federizon of the NAFO Secretariat were appointed co-Rapporteurs.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda as previously circulated was adopted. Under item 10 - Other matters, discussion on the roles and responsibilities of national scientific observers compared to the current NAFO observer programs was proposed (Part J, this volume).

4. Review of Terms of Reference

The terms of reference (ToR) of this ad hoc WG as stipulated in FC Doc 13/24 were reviewed. There was no need to revise the ToR. Concerning ToR 4 it was clarified by the representatives of the Scientific Council (SC) and the presiding Chair that this WG shall report to SC during the June meeting and not necessarily only during September Annual Meeting.

5. Review and follow-up to the Peer Review Expert Panel 2013 Recommendations

A review of the Peer Review Expert Panel 2013 Recommendations, which are documented in GC Doc 13/04 Rev, was conducted. In FC-SC CR WP 14/6 Rev which is presented in Annex 3, the NAFO bodies responsible to follow-up, the actions to date and further actions to consider are presented. The reference to SC documents in Annex 3 indicates that specific recommendations addressed to SC have already been addressed. Further responses and details are expected from SC following from its meeting in June 2014.

Some CPs felt that more in-depth discussions on the substance of Annex 3 (FC-SC Doc. 14/1) were required. However, this did not occur due to time constraints. The working paper presented in Annex 3 (FC-SC Doc. 14/1) therefore should be considered preliminary and will be finalized by the WG at a later time.

6. Evaluation of potential approaches and data sources (e.g. daily catch data, tow by tow data, log books, etc.) to validate STATLANT 21 data and/or provide catch estimates

The Secretariat described the different catch databases housed at the Secretariat: Monthly Provisional Nominal Catches, at-sea inspection reports, port inspection reports, observer reports, vessel transmitted information (VTI), and STATLANT 21.

The WG evaluated the data sources and discussed their individual limitations and potentials for utility to validate catch data and/or generate catch estimates. It was noted that these data sources are currently collected for fishing compliance purposes and with the exemption of daily catch reports (CAT) as part of VTI, are not available for scientific purposes. Under Article 28.9 of the NCEM, the SC could request such data from the Executive Secretary. Future discussion on possible utilization of the various data sources requires consideration of issues such as accessibility and confidentiality.

Notable in the discussions was how these data can be used in the cross validation of the catch estimates. It was highlighted that for scientific purposes, fishing related data for the whole geographical distribution of the straddling stocks managed by NAFO is desirable. It was subsequently noted that in some cases NAFO data can be complemented by coastal States which can provide information related to fishing in their EEZ. Issues of tow-by-tow logbook data and data from NAFO observers as well as scientific observers were also extensively discussed.



Regarding tow by tow logbook data, fishing masters are required to record the entries but are not required to forward them to the Secretariat. There was general agreement among participants on the potential usefulness of tow-by-tow data for catch estimation, however, some CPs have indicated that there are some practical reasons why these logbooks are not forwarded (e.g. paper submissions are in practice very difficult and for CPs having an Electronic Recording System in place the electronic standards are not defined/compatible with the system at the NAFO Secretariat). It was recognized that future discussions of tow-by-tow data would need to consider practical approaches to make the data available recognizing that it needs to be anonymized and does not necessarily need to be transmitted in real-time to the Secretariat. Regarding the observers data, it was acknowledged that the current NAFO observer program was established primarily for compliance purposes, although there is no formal distinction between “scientific” and “compliance” observers recognized in the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (NCEM). The level of details in the historical observer’s reports is not consistent. Even if there were complete compliance in submitting the reports, the observer data might be of limited utility to the SC.

In 2013, an observer template was adopted by the Fisheries Commission and it was made as a requirement beginning 2014 for the observers to use in reporting. It is hoped that this will considerably improve the quality of the observer reports in terms of utility of the SC. The new observer template includes the collection of length frequencies. However, SC representatives noted that without concurrent age samples, length frequencies collected are of limited utility for stock assessments. Some also reported issues with the use of this new template by compliance observers. On some vessels, scientific observers and compliance observers are now doing the same task. It was noted that the evaluation of the observer template is in the purview of the Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC) and not this WG. It was also noted that Article 30 of the NCEM currently allows SC to request additional scientific work, e.g. length frequency data collection, be conducted by observers deployed in the NAFO Regulatory Area. All CPs which deploy scientific observers were encouraged to analyze and provide their information as a source of data.

A summary of discussions on the catch databases are also contained in the working paper FCSC CR WP 14/1 Rev presented in Annex 4(FC-SC Doc. 14/1). Some CPs felt that more in-depth discussions were still required. The working paper therefore should be considered preliminary and will be finalized by the WG at a later time.

The Secretariat made two presentations concerning approach in usage of the STACTIC data in complementing STATLANT 21: 1) methods to compare catch estimates --- STATLANT 21 vs STACTIC, and 2) analysis of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and VTI (daily CATCH reports) data (Annex 5) (FC-SC Doc. 14/1). In the former, it is recognized that in their respective current form, VTI data is the most useful because of the high level of compliance of the fishing vessels in submitting the daily catch reports and the level of detail which they provide – daily catch by species and by Division (CATs). The latter presentation is a more detailed approach in making quantitative analysis using the VTI-CAT reports. The WG recognized the utility of the STACTIC data and the usefulness of the proposed approach. The SC was encouraged to pursue this further in the stock assessment work, in particular, as a pilot for catch estimation of 3M Cod.

7. Prioritization of stocks for initial consideration

In consideration of the importance of the stock to the fishing industry, of the development or update of Conservation Plan and Rebuilding Strategy (CPRS) of certain stocks, and the need for scientific data for stock assessment, the following stocks were identified as priorities: 3M cod, 2 + 3KLMNO Greenland halibut , and 3LNO American plaice (see item 9).

8. Consideration of terms of reference (governance, participation) if it is advised that this *ad hoc* WG continues

This WG would operate at least for another year under the same goals and objective as stipulated in FC Doc 13/24. A recommendation to this effect will be forwarded to FC and SC for consideration (see item 9).

9. Recommendations to forward to the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council

It is recommended

1. that this WG continues, with the same goals and objectives, for another year. At the 2015 Annual Meeting FC and SC give consideration to prolonging this joint working group
2. that this WG should meet, either by correspondence or at another meeting preceding the 2014 Annual Meeting, to continue moving towards a transparent and robust method for producing estimates of catch

3. that if agreed by FC and SC the work would continue on priority stocks for the June 2015 SC meeting, and again report at the 2015 Annual Meeting.
4. that a process for catch estimation be constructed by continuing dialogue within this working group, using a suite of available data considered in Annex 4, and any other data, such as scientific observer reports. The process should be fully documented and transparent, including documentation of data selection and validation and tools for data synthesis.
5. that in a timely manner, SC, with assistance from the Secretariat, conducts a pilot exercise to explore and document the use of all available data, focusing on VMS & VTI for all flag states operating in this fishery, for catch estimation of Div. 3M Cod.
6. Results of this exercise may guide the work of this group in the future, especially on other priority stocks, e.g. 2 + 3KLNMO Greenland halibut and Div. 3LNO American plaice.
7. to encourage Contracting Parties to reflect upon the discussions of this working group and be prepared to offer revisions to the existing CEM to improve catch reporting at future FC meetings.

The WG recommends FC give further consideration to:

1. the need for development of best practice/guidelines for data collection and clarification of roles/responsibilities for observers
2. make NAFO Observer catch and biological sampling information, in anonymized form, available to Scientific Council and working groups of FC and SC to support catch validation and development of catch estimates for stock assessment.
3. the provision of NAFO logbook data (NCEM Annex II.A) to the Secretariat by electronic means, and to making it available to Scientific Council and working groups of FC and SC for the purpose of supporting catch validation and development of catch estimates for stock assessment.
4. the available data for straddling stocks which may contribute to the assessment of catch estimates.
5. exchange of catch on entry and exit information with NEAFC to improve reliability, noting the specific role of Joint NEAFC-NAFO Advisory Group on Data Management in this matter.

10. Other Matters

The discussion on the overlap of duties between NAFO and Scientific Observer Programmes is reflected in item 6 and in Annex 4 (FC-SC Doc. 14/1).

11. Adoption of the Report

This report was adopted through correspondence after the meeting.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1830 hrs, Tuesday 4 February. The presiding Chair thanked the Secretariat for the support and the meeting participants for their cooperation and input. The participants likewise expressed their thanks and appreciation to the presiding Chair for his leadership.



