



SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL - 2024

The Commission's Request for Scientific Advice on Management in 2025 and Beyond of Certain Stocks in Subareas 2, 3 and 4 and Other Matters

(From NAFO/COM Doc. 23-09)

Following a request from the Scientific Council, the Commission agreed that items 1, 2, 3 and 7 should be the priority for the June 2024 Scientific Council meeting subject to resources.

1. The Commission requests that the Scientific Council provide advice for the management of the fish stocks below according to the assessment frequency presented below. In keeping with the NAFO Precautionary Approach Framework (FC Doc. 04/18), the advice should be provided as a range of management options and a risk analysis for each option without a single TAC recommendation. The Commission will decide upon the acceptable risk level in the context of the entirety of the SC advice for each stock guided and as foreseen by the Precautionary Approach.

Yearly basis	Two-year basis	Three-year basis	Interim Monitoring Only
Cod in Div. 3M	Redfish in Div. 3M Thorny skate in Div. 3LNO Witch flounder in Div. 3NO Redfish in Div. 3LN White hake in Div. 3NO Yellowtail flounder in Div. 3LNO Northern shrimp 3LNO Northern shrimp in Div. 3M	American plaice in Div. 3LNO American plaice in Div. 3M Northern shortfin squid in SA 3+4 Redfish in Div. 3O Cod in Div 3NO	SA 6 Alfonsino SA 2-3 Roughhead Grenadier Capelin in 3NO

Advice should be provided using the guidance provided in **Annexes A or B as appropriate**, or using the predetermined Harvest Control Rules in the cases where they exist (currently Greenland halibut 2+3KLMNO). For 3M shrimp supplementary advice in terms of fishing-days could also be considered as appropriate.

To implement this schedule of assessments, the Scientific Council is requested to conduct a full assessment of these stocks as follows:

- In 2024, advice should be provided for 2025 for: Cod in Div. 3M and Redfish in Div. 3LN.
- In 2024, advice should be provided for 2025 and 2026 for: Redfish in Div. 3M, Thorny skate in Div. 3LNO, Witch flounder in Div. 3NO, and Northern shrimp in 3M.



- With respect to Northern shrimp in Div. 3M, Scientific Council is requested to provide its advice to the Commission prior to the 2024 Annual Meeting based on the survey data up to and including 2024.
- In 2024, advice should be provided for 2025, 2026 and 2027 for: American plaice in Div. 3LNO.

The Commission also requests the Scientific Council to continue to monitor the status of all other stocks annually and, should a significant change be observed in stock status (e.g. from surveys) or in bycatch in other fisheries, provide updated advice as appropriate.

2. The Commission requests the Scientific Council to monitor the status of Greenland halibut in Subarea 2 + Div 3KLMNO annually to compute the TAC using the most recently agreed HCR and determine whether exceptional circumstances are occurring. If exceptional circumstances are occurring, the exceptional circumstances protocol will provide guidance on what steps should be taken.
3. The Commission requests that Scientific Council continue to advance work on the 2+3KLMNO Greenland halibut and 3LN redfish MSE processes during 2023-2024, as per the approved 2024 workplan [COM-SC RBMS-WP 23-06 (Rev. 3)]:
 - a. For the Greenland Halibut MSE: test Candidate Management Procedures (CMP) performance against established management objectives and initial discussions on exceptional circumstances protocol.
 - b. For the 3LN Redfish MSE: (1) review and finalize Operating Models, (2) review any further work on performance statistics; (3) select the CMP(s) for RBMS consideration and potential testing against established management objectives.
4. The Commission requests that the Scientific Council continue to work on tiers 1 and 2 of the Roadmap, specifically to:
 - a. Annually provide catch information in relation to 2TCI, including recent cumulative catch levels and a scoping of expected cumulative catch levels;
 - b. As practicable and taking into account Scientific Council capacity constraints, develop stock summary sheets for NAFO managed stocks that are evaluated using HCR or MSE processes.
5. In relation to the habitat impact assessment component of the Roadmap (VME and SAI analyses), the Commission requests that Scientific Council:
 - a. Support the Secretariat in developing a centralized data repository using ArcGIS online to host the data and data-products for scientific advice;
 - b. Continue working with WG-EAFFM towards developing operational objectives for the protection of VMEs and biodiversity in the NRA; and
 - c. Work towards the reassessment of VMEs and impact of bottom fisheries on VMEs for 2026.
6. The Commission requests Scientific Council to continue progression on the review of the NAFO PA Framework in accordance to the PAF review work plan approved in 2020 and revised in 2023 (NAFO COM-SC RBMS-WP 23-19 (Revised)), specifically to undertake testing of the Provisional Draft PA Framework (COM-SC RBMS-WP 23-20 (Revised)).
7. The Commission requests Scientific Council to update the 3-5 year work plan, which reflects requests arising from the 2023 Annual Meeting, other multi-year stock assessments and other scientific inquiries already planned for the near future. The work plan should identify what resources are necessary to successfully address these issues, gaps in current resources to meet those needs and proposed prioritization by the Scientific Council of upcoming work based on those gaps.
8. The Commission requests that any new Canadian stock assessments for Cod 2J3KL and Witch flounder 2J3KL, and any new ICES stock assessments for Pelagic *Sebastes mentella* (ICES Divisions V, XII and XIV; NAFO 1) be included as an annex to the Scientific Council's annual report.

9. The Commission requests the SC to monitor and provide regular updates on relevant research related to the potential impacts of activities other than fishing in the Convention Area, subject to the capacity of the Scientific Council.
10. The Commission requests that the Scientific Council at its 2024 meeting: summarize the information it currently has available regarding the current and future impacts of climate change on NAFO-managed stocks, non-target species, and associated ecosystems; and identify any consequential data gaps, research needs and opportunities for productive research.



ANNEX A: Guidance for providing advice on Stocks Assessed with an Analytical Model

The Commission request the Scientific Council to consider the following in assessing and projecting future stock levels for those stocks listed above. These evaluations should provide the information necessary for the Fisheries Commission to consider the balance between risks and yield levels, in determining its management of these stocks:

1. For stocks assessed with a production model, the advice should include updated time series of:
 - Catch and TAC of recent years
 - Catch to relative biomass
 - Relative Biomass
 - Relative Fishing mortality
 - Stock trajectory against reference points
 - And any information the Scientific Council deems appropriate.

Stochastic short-term projections (3 years) should be performed with the following constant fishing mortality levels as appropriate:

- For stocks opened to direct fishing: $2/3 F_{msy}$, $3/4 F_{msy}$, $85\% F_{msy}$, $90\% F_{msy}$, $95\% F_{msy}$, F_{msy} , $0.75 X F_{status\ quo}$, $F_{status\ quo}$, $1.25 X Status\ quo$, $F=0$; TAC Status quo, $85\% TAC\ Status\ quo$, $90\% TAC\ Status\ quo$, $95\% TAC\ Status\ quo$
- For stocks under a moratorium to direct fishing: $F_{status\ quo}$, $F = 0$.

The first year of the projection should assume a catch equal to the agreed TAC for that year. In instances where Scientific Council expects catches to be significantly different from the agreed TAC, an additional projection could be provided based on the best available catch estimation.

Results from stochastic short-term projection should include:

- The 10%, 50% and 90% percentiles of the yield, total biomass, spawning stock biomass and exploitable biomass for each year of the projections
- The risks of stock population parameters increasing above or falling below available biomass and fishing mortality reference points. The table indicated below should guide the Scientific Council in presenting the short-term projections.

F in 2025 and following years	Yield 2024 (50%)	Yield 2025 (50%)	Yield 2026 (50%)	Limit reference points						P(F>F _{msy})			P(B<B _{msy})			P(B2026 > B2024)
				P(F>F _{lim})			P(B<B _{lim})									
				2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026	
2/3 F _{msy}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
3/4 F _{msy}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
85% F _{msy}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
90% F _{msy}	t	t	t													
95% F _{msy}	t	t	t													
F _{msy}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
0.75 X F _{status quo}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
F _{status quo}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1.25 X Status quo	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
F=0	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
TAC Status quo																
85% TAC Status quo																
90% TAC Status quo																
95% TAC Status quo																



2. For stock assessed with an age-structured model, information should be provided on stock size, spawning stock sizes, recruitment prospects, historical fishing mortality. Graphs and/or tables should be provided for all of the following for the longest time-period possible:

- historical yield and fishing mortality;
- spawning stock biomass and recruitment levels;
- Stock trajectory against reference points

And any information the Scientific Council deems appropriate

Stochastic short-term projections (3 years) should be performed with the following constant fishing mortality levels as appropriate:

- For stocks opened to direct fishing: $F_{0.1}$, F_{max} , $2/3 F_{max}$, $3/4 F_{max}$, $85\% F_{max}$, $75\% F_{status\ quo}$, $F_{status\ quo}$, $125\% F_{status\ quo}$,
- For stocks under a moratorium to direct fishing: $F_{status\ quo}$, $F = 0$.

The first year of the projection should assume a catch equal to the agreed TAC for that year.

Results from stochastic short-term projection should include:

- The 10%, 50% and 90% percentiles of the yield, total biomass, spawning stock biomass and exploitable biomass for each year of the projections
- The risks of stock population parameters increasing above or falling below available biomass and fishing mortality reference points. The table indicated below should guide the Scientific Council in presenting the short-term projections.

F in 2025 and following years*	Yield 2024	Yield 2025	Yield 2026	Limit reference points						P(B2026 > B2024)								
				P(F > F _{lim})			P(B < B _{lim})				P(F > F _{0.1})			P(F > F _{max})				
				2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026		2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026		
F _{0.1}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
F _{max}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
66% F _{max}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
75% F _{max}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
85% F _{max}	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
0.75 X F ₂₀₁₈	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
F ₂₀₁₈	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1.25 X F ₂₀₁₈	t	t	t	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%



ANNEX B. Guidance for providing advice on Stocks Assessed without a Population Model

For those resources for which only general biological and/or catch data are available, few standard criteria exist on which to base advice. The stock status should be evaluated in the context of management requirements for long-term sustainability and the advice provided should be consistent with the precautionary approach.

The following graphs should be presented, for one or several surveys, for the longest time-period possible:

- a. time trends of survey abundance estimates
- b. an age or size range chosen to represent the spawning population
- c. an age or size-range chosen to represent the exploited population
- d. recruitment proxy or index for an age or size-range chosen to represent the recruiting population.
- e. fishing mortality proxy, such as the ratio of reported commercial catches to a measure of the exploited population.
- f. Stock trajectory against reference points

And any information the Scientific Council deems appropriate.