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**Report of the Joint Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council  
Ad hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting**

20-21 April 2015  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada

NAFO  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada  
2015

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## **Report of the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council Ad hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting**

20-21 April 2015  
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### **1. Opening**

The Working Group co-Chairs Sylvie Lapointe (Fisheries Commission Chair) and Don Stansbury (Scientific Council Chair) opened the meeting at 1000 hrs on Monday, 20 April 2015 at the NAFO Headquarters in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Representatives from Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Norway, the Russian Federation and USA were in attendance (Annex 1).

### **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 (Annex 2).

### **4. Review of Status of the WG Recommendations from the February 2014 Meeting**

The recommendations, documented in FC-SC Doc. 14/01, were adopted by the Scientific Council (SC) during the Scientific Council Meeting held June 2015 in Halifax, Nova Scotia and the Fisheries Commission (FC) during the 36<sup>th</sup> NAFO Annual Meeting held September 2014 in Vigo, Spain. A broad recommendation is the establishment of a process for catch estimation using a suite of available data housed at the NAFO Secretariat and any other available data.

In addressing this recommendation, a framework for the validation of the NAFO catch data and generation of catch estimates was discussed (see agenda item 5).

### **5. Development of a framework for the validation of NAFO catch data and generation of catch estimates**

A review of the available NAFO fisheries catch databases housed at the Secretariat was conducted. The catch databases (metadata) in their current form and contents, as well as other sources such as dockside monitoring, were evaluated in terms of their potential usefulness and limitations in catch estimation and validation. The tabulated evaluation would be considered a "living document" as it would be used as a guide and would be regularly reviewed and updated during the exercise of catch estimation and validation (see Appendix of Annex 3).

It was noted that among the NAFO data sources, the VMS and CAT database and the haul-by-haul logbook data information are considered the primary source for catch validation information, the latter also for effort validation information.

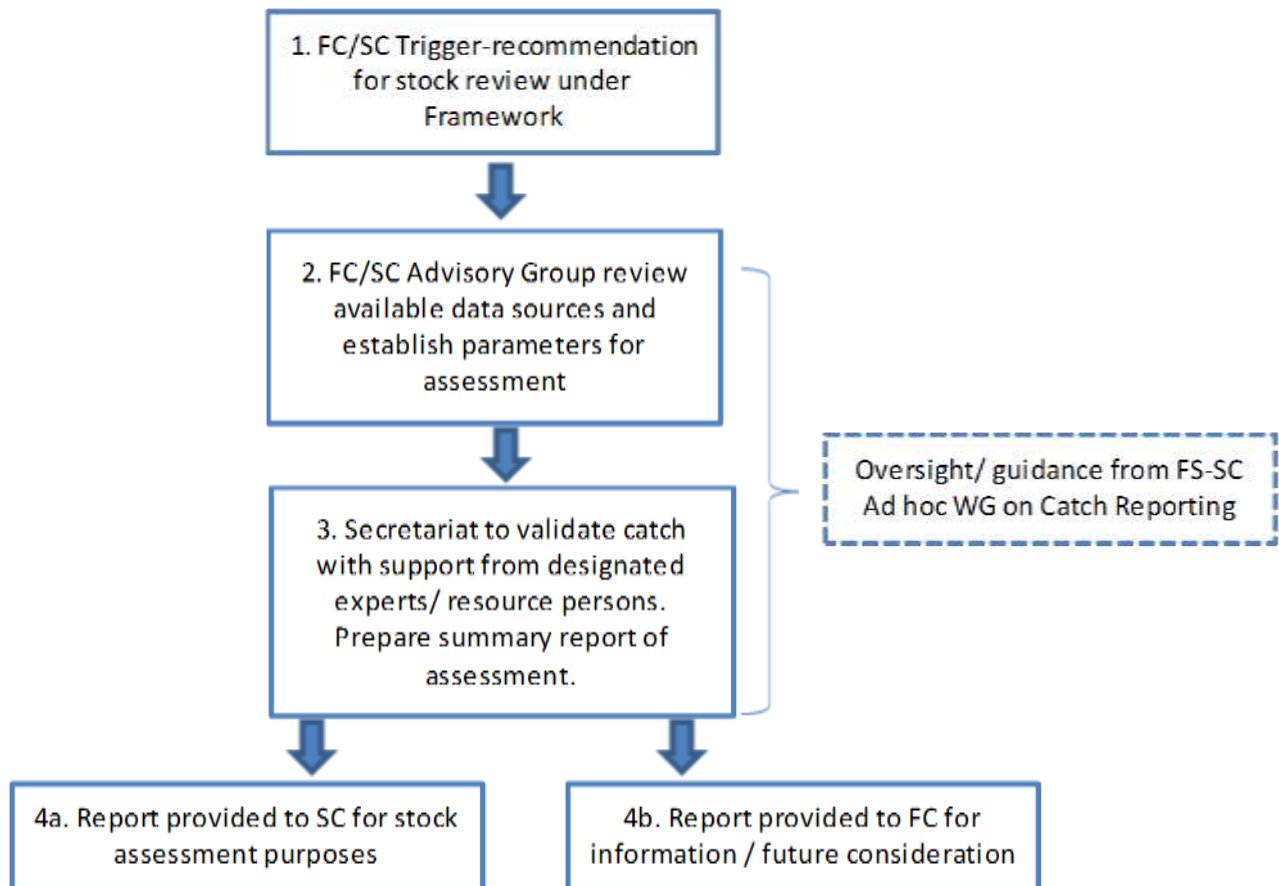
Regarding the VMS and CAT data, the Secretariat reported and the WG noted that this data source can be considered reliable due to the vessels' high level of compliance to the reporting requirement and to the quality of the reports received.

With regards to the haul-by-haul logbook information, the Secretariat reported that provision of the information to the Secretariat is a new requirement for fishing vessels in 2015. Compliance issues concerning timely submissions and compatibility of the report format with NAFO IT system were observed. The WG

emphasized the importance of the format compatibility of the haul by haul reports and considered this as an urgent issue that needs to be resolved as soon as possible. The Secretariat informed the WG that it is working towards an IT solution with the aim of being able to read all report formats. Work should be completed by summer 2015.

Central to the development of the framework is the creation of Catch Data Advisory Group. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the group is presented in Annex 3. The ToR specifies the composition of the group which comprises technical experts who are knowledgeable in the data sources and/or operational practices of the NAFO fisheries, including STACTIC experts. Three stocks 2+3KLMNO Greenland halibut, 3M cod, and 3LMNO American plaice were initially considered as the priority stocks, noting the scheduled full assessment and development of the Management Strategy Evaluation for these stocks.

In the formulation of the ToR of the advisory group, the WG considered: data confidentiality, transparency, participation including roles and responsibilities of NAFO bodies, governance including reporting mechanism, and data requirements. The operation of the Catch Data Advisory Group is described in the flow chart below. The Catch Reporting WG would function as an overseer of the Catch Data Advisory Group, while trying to minimize overlaps and the proliferation of intersessional work for Contracting Parties.



## **6. Recommendations to forward to the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council**

It is recommended:

- 1) that the Ad hoc Working Group on Catch Reporting continues, with the same goals and objectives for at least another year;
- 2) that SC and FC give consideration to the establishment of the Catch Data Advisory Group and adopt its Terms of Reference (Annex 3); and
- 3) that SC and FC or an appropriate subsidiary body review the utility of data collection more generally, noting that some newer data sets provide more reliable and/ or timely information, making others redundant.

## **7. Other matters**

There was no other matter discussed.

## **8. Adoption of the Report**

This report was adopted through correspondence after the meeting.

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1200 hrs noon on Tuesday, 21 April 2015. The Chairs 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 Chairs for their leadership.

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## **Annex 2. Agenda**

1. Opening
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Review of Status of the WG Recommendations from the February 2014 Meeting
5. Development of a framework for the validation of NAFO catch data and generation of catch estimates
6. Recommendations to forward to the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council
7. Other matters
8. Adoption of the report
9. Adjournment



### **Annex 3. Proposed Terms of Reference of the Catch Data Advisory Group** (FC-SC CR-WP15-04)

*Mindful* that the availability of accurate catch data is critical for scientific assessment and the sustainable management of NAFO stocks;

*Concerned* that the reliability of catch data continues to be one of the most significant issues facing NAFO;

*Recognizing* the importance of communication between the Fisheries Commission and the Scientific Council and recent efforts to enhance this dialogue and information exchange through the establishment of joint working groups;

*Recalling* that the Peer-Review Expert Panel highlighted the need for a more coordinated analysis of data (GC Doc 13/4);

*Noting* the positive steps taken by NAFO to improve data accuracy and data-sharing including sharing daily catch reports with the Scientific Council, as well as the establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Catch Reporting

*Further* noting the positive steps taken by the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Catch Reporting during its initial meeting in February 2014, in particular, its review and evaluation of NAFO data sources which may be of utility for the validation of catch data;

*Following* on the instructions of the Fisheries Commission to the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Catch Reporting to develop a framework for the validation of NAFO catch data and generation of catch estimates (FC Doc 14/30)

*Convinced* of the need for a collaborative approach (Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council) to validate STATLANT data and where necessary, generate catch estimates for use in assessments and overall management of NAFO stocks;

It is **recommended** that:

- 1. A Catch Data Advisory Group is established subject to the following Terms of Reference:**

Objectives:

1. to identify and provide guidance to the NAFO Secretariat on specific data inputs, gaps and parameters, in particular ensuring the representativeness of data for validating catch and/or developing catch estimates;
2. to provide oversight and endorsement of catch estimate methodology prepared by NAFO Secretariat;

Structure:

The Group shall be comprised of technical experts from Contracting Parties, with knowledge of data sources and reliability thereof and/or operational practices within the fishery, and the NAFO Secretariat.

Specific Duties:

In responding to requests from the Fisheries Commission or Scientific Council to undertake an assessment of catch for an individual stock(s), with initial priority given to SA2 + Div. 3KLMNO Greenland halibut, Div. 3LNO American plaice and Div. 3M cod, the Advisory Group shall:

- review available data sources with reference to Appendix 1 and establish parameters for catch data review; propose a methodology to be used by the Secretariat;
- Report to the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council

The NAFO Secretariat shall:

- review the information and derive an estimate (possibly with support from designated experts or agreed upon resource persons), ensuring confidentiality of data;
- provide estimates to the Scientific Council for stock assessment purposes

Meetings:

Meetings of the Catch Data Advisory Group may be held at the request of the Fisheries Commission or the Scientific Council, in consultation with Contracting Parties and the NAFO Secretariat. Timing should be decided on a case by case basis, recognizing the need to conduct catch validation in a time frame that will enable its use for stock assessments;

The Advisory Group shall communicate regularly through teleconferences and electronically (WebEx) as required.

Reporting

A summary report, highlighting data sources, parameters of analysis, and subsequent results shall be produced for broad dissemination. Such reports will be limited to aggregate and/or anonymized data/conclusions.

Detailed analytical data and assessments will remain with the NAFO Secretariat for internal use of the Advisory Group to ensure confidentiality.

**Appendix to the Proposed Terms of Reference of the Catch Data Advisory Group:  
Data Sources Useful for Catch Validation**

<b>DATABASE</b>	<b>USEFUL FOR CATCH ESTIMATES?</b>	<b>LIMITATIONS TO USEFULNESS</b>
Monthly Provisional Nominal Catches (MPNC) (NCEM Articles 28.8.a and 28.9.d)	Useful as a secondary tool to supplement CAT reports for straddling stocks. In cases where CAT reports are not available (e.g. in respect of Coastal States fishing within EEZ).	Data is provided monthly rather than in real-time. Potential for human error due to more people involved in manipulating data. Aggregated at CP level rather than flag state. Available by stock/management unit rather than by division. Post-hoc revision of STATLANT data not reflected by this source may complicate its use.
At-Sea Inspection Reports (NCEM Article 36)	Useful as a secondary tool in cases where there may be a problem with particular figures	
Port Inspection Reports (PSC-3) (NCEM Articles 43-46)	Useful as a verification tool to compare reported and observed landings.	Does not include discards and may not include all landings (other than for GHL). Again, data is not reported at a stock/management unit level, only by species and “area of capture” (FAO 21, 3LMNO, etc.).
Observer Reports (Article 30A)	Haul by haul observer data is potentially a very good tool for catch validation,	To date submission of data at the resolution proscribed in the NCEM is not 100%.
VMS and CAT reports (NCEM 28.6.c, 28.8.b, 29.9.e and 29.9.f)	A primary source of catch validation information.	VMS is a proxy for effort and not necessarily reflective of fishing activity, given weather, searching behaviour, etc.
Haul by Haul Logbook Data	The primary source of catch and effort information.	Data is only available from 2015. Work is required to achieve consistency in reporting formats across CPs. Trip duration and the 60-day reporting requirement creates a time lag in data availability.
STATLANT 21	The official NAFO landings database – the baseline statistics which are being validated.	Issues remain around completeness and timeliness of reporting. STATLANT does not include discards.

<b>DATABASE</b>	<b>USEFUL FOR CATCH ESTIMATES?</b>	<b>LIMITATIONS TO USEFULNESS</b>
Other sources of data (e.g. Scientific Observer data, dockside monitoring program, etc.)	<p>Haul by haul observer data is potentially a very good tool for catch validation.</p> <p>Dockside monitoring data is a primary source of catch validation information.</p>	<p>Only covers a limited number of fleets.</p> <p>Data is available from coastal states only. A good source in conjunction with VMS.</p>