
The objectives of NAFO, as set out in Article II of the Revised NAFO Convention, are to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the NAFO Convention Area, and in doing so, to safeguard the marine ecosystems in which these resources are found. The preamble to this document states that NAFO is committed to applying an ecosystem approach to fisheries management in the Northwest Atlantic that includes safeguarding the marine environment, conserving its marine biodiversity, minimizing the risk of long term or irreversible

Recognizing the need for a more integrated and ecosystem-based approach to, further study of and the promotion of measures for enhanced cooperation, coordination and collaboration relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction,

Reaffirms the need for States, individually or through competent international organizations, to urgently consider ways to integrate and improve, based on the best available scientific information and the precautionary approach and in accordance with the Convention and related agreements and

Climate change and ocean acidification

Reiterates the need to strengthen the regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment in order to enhance the scientific basis for policymaking;

The NAFO Scientific Council has a Standing Committee of Fisheries Environment (STACFEN) whose tasks are to:

- x develop and recommend to the Scientific Council policies and procedures for the collection, compilation and dissemination of environmental information from oceanographic investigations;
- x provide reviews of environmental conditions and advise the Scientific Council on the effects of the environment on fish stocks and fisheries in the Convention Area; and
- x encourage and promote cooperation among Contracting Parties in scientific research designed to fill the gaps in knowledge pertaining to the effects of the environment on fish stocks and fisheries as identified by the Scientific Council.

STACFEN climate summaries are presented annually to scientific meetings where stock assessment is being undertaken. Scientific advice and management decisions use both the adopted precautionary approach and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

Ecosystem Approach

Encourages competent organizations and bodies that have not yet done so to incorporate an ecosystem approach into their mandates, as appropriate, in order to address impacts on marine ecosystems;

Welcomes the holding of the first and second meetings of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group

Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG FMS EAFFM) to consider the work of Scientific Council and provide recommendations to Fisheries Commission on management measures.

Since 2012 the NAFO Secretariat has been involved with the FAO "VME database" project, in support of UNGA Resolution 61/105.

Developing states and taxonomy

Encourages States and international organizations, including through bilateral, regional and global cooperation programmes and partnerships, to continue in a sustainable and comprehensive way to support, promote and strengthen capacity-building activities, in particular in developing countries, in the field of marine scientific research, taking into account, in particular, the need to create greater taxonomic capabilities;

Recognizing the difficulties in collection of data and enforcement of regulations relating to rare and vulnerable organisms, NAFO publishes waterproof field guides of sponges and corals of the