

**Contributions of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) to the  
UN Secretary-General's report on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to  
UNGA resolution 73/124 of 11 December 2018, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea"**

**Background**

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) is an intergovernmental fisheries science and management body. NAFO was founded in 1979 as a successor to ICNAF (International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries). NAFO has twelve (12) Contracting Parties, namely four (4) coastal States Canada, United States of America, France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) and Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), as well as Cuba, the European Union, Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The international fisheries managed by NAFO take place outside the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the four coastal State Contracting Parties and Bermuda.

NAFO's constituent bodies are the Commission, Scientific Council and the Secretariat. The NAFO Scientific Council provides scientific advice to the NAFO Commission, which adopts conservation measures ferptobleneuea (cie)3.9 (n)1.2 (d)a (cie)t.6 (r)16.9 9(t)-5 5 (y)51 (N)1.2 4AOnea (c8.7 (e) Tc 0.17 (v)9

NAFO cooperates extensively with other international organizations, and routinely shares information with other fishery organizations and UN bodies such as FAO and the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN-DOALOS).

#### **IV. Peaceful settlement of disputes**

Article XIII (1) of the NAFO Convention provides that, as a general rule, decision making within the



*doing so adopt measures to minimize harmful impacts on living marine resources and marine ecosystems; and take due account of the need to preserve marine biological diversity”.*

NAFO also has adopted an Action Plan in the Management and Minimization of Bycatch and Discards in 2017. The Action Plan will ensure that there is a systematic consideration of the overarching objectives set out below across NAFO bodies. The Action Plan has the following overarching objectives:

1. Effective management and the minimization of by-catch and discards, and improvement of selectivity, in fisheries of the NRA.
2. Accurate reporting of target, non-target and incidental catch.
3. Account for total catch (retained and non-retained) in scientific assessments and management measures.
4. Management measures are adaptive and address changing fishery conditions over time, or differences among areas and fleets.
5. Management measures reflect the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management.
6. Identify priority areas for by-catch management, in particular areas where there is a risk of causing serious harm to by-catch species.
7. Ensure linkage to other NAFO bodies doing work related to by-catch management.

Since its creation, the timeline prescribed in the Action Plan is being followed by the NAFO bodies. The management and minimization of bycatch and discards cover not only fish species of commercial interests but also benthic VME species and sharks which include the Greenland shark.

## **X. Marine biodiversity**

Since 2008, NAFO has been closing areas to bottom fishing to protect, corals, sponges, sea pens and seamount ecosystem. In total, 21 areas have been closed. In addition, work is on-going to review other potential areas and all closed areas will be reviewed in 2020. NAFO has also developed a comprehensive list of VME indicator species. The FAO Guidelines were used extensively in the identification of candidate areas of vulnerable marine ecosystems.

The “*Roadmap for Developing an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries for NAFO*” lays out the organizing framework to develop an Ecosystem Approach Framework. The “*Roadmap*” is proceeding but there are still gaps that need to be addressed. An extensive agenda along with limited human and resource capacity will require a practical and effective implementation based on priorities and short, medium and long-term objectives.

Work is also on-going by NAFO to identify spatial management units as well as multispecies assessments.

In 2018, NAFO continued its commitment to the conservation of marine biodiversity in NAFO waters by implementing measures to prohibit the directed fishing of Greenland shark and for Contracting Parties to report on efforts to minimize incidental catches and mortalities.

## **XI. Marine science**

NAFO Contracting Parties continue to collaborate to try to improve understanding and knowledge of the oceans and the deep sea, including, in particular, the extent and vulnerability of deep sea biodiversity and ecosystems, by increasing their marine scientific research activities. Many NAFO Contracting Parties take part in scientific research and analyses of fisheries data through various NAFO Committees. NAFO has established a framework to manage a fund to continue to support