

Contribution of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) to NAFO input to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, as mandated by UNGA resolution 76/72 of 09 December 2021, 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 thirteen (13) 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, European Union, Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. 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 for the species under its mandate. NAFO's mandate covers the fishery resources (all fish,



- 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.

In 2014, the NAFO Commission and Scientific Council established a joint working group on ~~risk~~ risk management strategies, inter alia, to further enhance the development and application of the Precautionary Approach Framework to fisheries management in line with Annex II of the 1995 UN Fish Stock Agreement. This joint working group developed the management strategy evaluation (MSE) to the Greenland halibut stock, which is currently under application, and will be considering an MSE on an important redfish stock.

In 2014, the NAFO Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council established a joint working group on its ecosystem approach framework to fisheries management to, inter alia, promote the understanding of the functioning and dynamics of NAFO marine ecosystems including species interactions. This Working Group, supported by advice from the Scientific Council developed through the ongoing work of its Working Group on Ecosystem Science Assessment (WESA), provides the primary guidance and recommendations to the Commission regarding the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach to the management of fisheries. The Working Group's responsibilities include the development and application of the Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries (EAF) Roadmap and recommendations on mitigation strategies and measures to avoid significant adverse impacts of bottom fishing activities on vulnerable marine ecosystems, including the evaluation of associated risks.

NAFO also has a Standing Committee on Research Coordination (STACREC) whose activities include:

- x develop and recommend to the Scientific Council policies and procedures for the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistical and sampling information on the living resources and fisheries in the Convention Area;

x

NAFO is one of the active RFMO collaborating partners in the development of the FAO Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Database project which was established in response to the UN General Assembly Resolution 61/105.

A 2008 Resolution that was agreed to by Contracting Parties, follows the 2007 amendments to the

for concern. NAFO has implemented measures (Articles 13.10 to 13.14 of NAFO's Conservation and Enforcement Measures) requiring vessels to make efforts to retrieve lost gears and report any which cannot be recovered to the Secretariat.

NAFO has implemented an ecosystem approach to fisheries management in support of UN General Assembly Resolution 61/105, under which consideration is given to activities, other than fishing, which may impact upon commercial fish stocks of the northwest Atlantic. In 2013, NAFO's Scientific Council made some steps to consider the impact of microplastics, however these were judged to be