



## COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

### Intersessional Meetings of Aquaculture and Fisheries Subject Groups

#### Seventh Meeting of the Aquaculture Subject Group (AS) and Twenty-eighth meeting of the Fisheries Subject Group (FS)

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### NEAFC activities report to CWP

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## 1. Introduction

The main objectives with this report is to highlight NEAFC's activities progress relevant to CWP and that support the SDG 14. The North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) is the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) for the North-East Atlantic. NEAFC's objective is to ensure the long-term conservation and optimum utilisation of the fishery resources in the Convention Area, providing sustainable economic, environmental, and social benefits. Recommendation adopted by NEAFC are legally binding. NEAFC has adopted conservation and management measures for fisheries for tens of different fish stocks, although three major stocks constitute the bulk of the overall catches, these being blue whiting, herring, and mackerel.

While NEAFC adopts management and control measures for target fish stocks, it also adopts measures to protect other components of the marine ecosystem (including biodiversity) from the potential negative impacts of fisheries. NEAFC thereby contributes to the ecosystem approach to fisheries and the protection of marine biodiversity. This includes preventing significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems through area-based conservation and management measures. In that context, NEAFC has closed large areas to bottom fisheries, and implements strict restrictions for other areas. NEAFC's conservation and management measures, including those related to other parts of the marine ecosystem, do not rely on NEAFC undertaking any scientific work, but rather rely on the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) for scientific advice.

## 2. The Working Group on Fisheries Statistics (WGStats) and Collection of Statistical Information

The WGStats was established in 2008 with the aim to ensure that the catch statistics collected and produced centrally by NEAFC were regularly updated and accessible through the year. The WGStats

function, among others, is thus: To ensure that NEAFC has available at all times the most complete and ‘real time’ statistics concerning fishing activities and quota uptake in the Regulatory and Convention Area by developing harmonised and comprehensive procedures for the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of fisheries statistics within NEAFC; and to the extent possible work by correspondence and the Secretariat shall propose solutions, which allow the optimum use of electronic communication and the NEAFC website.

In regard to collection of statistical information and in accordance with the NEAFC Convention, article 9, the Commission may by a qualified majority make recommendations providing for the collection of statistical information relating to fisheries conducted beyond areas under the jurisdiction of Contracting Parties. The Commission may also make recommendations providing for the collection of statistical information relating to fisheries conducted within an area under the jurisdiction of a Contracting Party, provided that the recommendation receives the affirmative vote of that Contracting Party.

In this regard, NEAFC at its Annual Meeting in November 2012 adopted a recommendation amending recommendation 2:2011 providing for the collection of statistical information relating to fisheries beyond and under the fisheries jurisdiction of NEAFC’s Contracting Parties. Recommendation 2:2011, as amended, requires each Contracting Party, within 30 days following the calendar month in which the catches were landed, or transhipped, report to the Secretary, in computer readable format, provisional monthly statistics of catches from stocks listed in Annex I of the recommendation and species listed in Annex IV of the recommendation, whether the catch is taken in international waters or in waters under the jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties. These reports shall be made in accordance with the specifications and format set out in annex II and III to the recommendation. This includes the following information: The Contracting Party (CP); the year/month (YM); the stock (SS); the fishing grounds either international waters or EEZs (ZO); the monthly catch (CA) and; the cumulative catch (CC). The Secretary shall, within 10 days following the monthly deadline for receipt of the provisional catch statistics, collate the information received and circulate it to the Contracting Parties. Annual catch data shall be submitted not later than 1 July of the following year.

Please find the most recent recommendation 2:2011, as amended here: [https://www.neafc.org/system/files/Recomm-02-2011\\_Monthly-Statistics%28as-amended-by-Recommendations-17-2021\\_23-2020\\_13-2016\\_17-2015\\_14-2013%29\\_0.pdf](https://www.neafc.org/system/files/Recomm-02-2011_Monthly-Statistics%28as-amended-by-Recommendations-17-2021_23-2020_13-2016_17-2015_14-2013%29_0.pdf)

The final and confirmed annual catch data is published on the public NEAFC website. Please see here: <https://www.neafc.org/catch>

### **3. The Monthly Catch Application**

The establishment of the WGStats and the implementation of Recommendation 2:2011 as amended, mentioned above, has resulted in a vast improvement in the reporting of statistics in NEAFC. In the beginning, the catch tables were to be sent to the Secretariat, on a monthly basis, using MS Excel. In 2015 the Secretariat began developing catch statistics database (web based application) on the NEAFC restricted website. This application would allow those CPs, wishing to do so, the possibility to upload their monthly and annual catch data directly into the application and download catch tables as needed. Due to some unforeseen reasons and the fact that the preparatory work on NEAFC’s new Electronic Reporting System (UNCEFACT FLUX mentioned here below), had priority, not all CPs were uploading data directly into the statistics database until 2019. The Secretariat was thus enable to collate the information received via the catch application and circulate it to the CPs in one harmonised aggregated catch table, for the different stocks, in accordance with recommendation 2:2011. However, this involved human intervention on part of the Secretariat, as the Secretariat had to copy the uploaded CPs monthly reports manually into the aggregated monthly catch tables, circulated to the CPs. In 2021,

the Secretariat built an automatic report function in this regard, allowing the Secretariat and NEAFC's CPs to extract CPs uploaded catch tables into one aggregated catch table in accordance with recommendation 2:2011, in an automatic way. This function prevents any human error.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the WGStats have submitted a proposal to NEAFC's 2021 Annual Meeting, for a recommendation on a so called Web based "one-stop-shop" and quota and catch tables under national conservation measures. This proposal aims to have in one place NEAFC's catch statistics and the allocated quotas according to relevant Coastal States' Agreements. The WGStats sees this as an important step to be able to see an automatic and real time update on the status of quota and uptake of catches (an automated web based application which integrates catch statistics and coastal States quota allocations).

#### **4. The implementation of UN/CEFACT FLUX standard**

NEAFC's binding regulations include management measures, the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement (the Scheme). The Scheme also includes the NEAFC Port State Control procedures. Thus, the Scheme is a key element of the measures implemented by NEAFC containing the detailed monitoring, control and surveillance provisions. This covers all potential fisheries activity within NEAFC's competence. The Scheme thus establishes a comprehensive number of requirements and procedures for the CPs (as the relevant flag States) and for vessel operators. Most procedures are automated using the North Atlantic Format data strings (NAF) that has been used since the year 2000, sent from database to database between national FMCs and vessel operators. This process takes place in real time. All the messages and reports foreseen in the Scheme are forwarded from the national FMCs to the Secretariat via so the https gateway. The NAF is a slash delimited format, and is computer readable but can also be read as a text.

NEAFC is however in the process of moving from the NAF format towards a new Electronic Reporting System or global standard for electronic exchange of fishery data by implementing the UN CEFACT FLUX standard. FLUX provides a harmonized message standard that allows automated access to the electronic data that are generated from the Electronic- logbooks, from the fishing vessels. This information includes vessel and trip identification, fishing operations (daily catch or haul by haul information), and fishing data such as (catch area, species and quantity, date and time and gear used), plus of course the VMS positions and tracks. NEAFC's new ERS system will give access to all of these information inside the NEAFC Regulatory Area in a web based user interface, which will provide enhanced visualisation of all the fishing activity and catch data, including via live and historical maps.