



REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK

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Getting to know the new RSN Chair

STEFÁN ÁSMUNDSSON

Secretary of NEAFC and RSN Chair

In 1998 Stefán Ásmundsson graduated with distinction from Lancaster University, with a Masters degree (LLM) in international law and international relations. In his studies he placed an emphasis on the international legal framework of fisheries. He then worked until 2009 in the Icelandic Ministry of Fisheries, as a Director from 2003, working on various fisheries related issues, mainly involving international aspects and including being Iceland's Head of Delegation to NEAFC. [Continue...](#)

The new RSN Secretariat

PIERO MANNINI

Senior Fishery Liaison Officer and RSN Secretary

Piero graduated in Biological Sciences in 1987 and in 1998 he obtained a Ph.D. in Fisheries Ecology from the University of Hull, United Kingdom. His early work with FAO (1990-1997) included project management and the implementation of research activities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. Since 1999 Piero has worked as Fishery Monitoring Expert within the framework of the FAO fishery projects in the Mediterranean. [Continue...](#)

MARCO BOCCIA

Fishery Liaison Officer

Mr Boccia has had a strong and consistent interest in ocean governance, with a special focus in sustainable fisheries for more than ten years. He has worked with various international organizations, serving as a Special Assistant to the President and Mission Adviser to the United Nations for the International Ocean Institute (IOI), [Continue...](#)





News from the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

Adoption of Best Practice Measures to Avoid Incidental Mortality of Seabirds in Fishing Operations

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) works collaboratively with a large number of fisheries management organizations to support their efforts to minimize the incidental catch of seabirds in fishing operations through the adoption of best practice bycatch mitigation measures. [Continue...](#)



News from the Bay of Bengal

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News from the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

Member countries of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) agreed on a range of new and revised measures to conserve Antarctica's marine living resources during their recent annual session held in Hobart from 20 to 31 October 2014. [Continue...](#)



Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between CPPS and OSPESCA and the enactment of the Regional Regulation OSP-08-14 on IUU Fishing

Memorandum between CPPS and OSPESCA

A Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between the CPPS (Permanent Commission for the South Pacific) and OSPESCA (Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus) has been signed. [Continue...](#)



New FFA/USP Fisheries course takes training to the next level

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The Regional Conference on “Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: developing sustainable aquaculture for food security”, held from 9 to 11 December 2014, was organized by the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, together with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the FAO and in cooperation with the European Commission. [Continue...](#)

News from the International Whaling Commission



The IWC reinforced its links with SPREP by holding an information event at SPREP's 25th Annual Meeting in the Marshall Islands. Following the recent entanglement training, David Mattila, the IWC Technical Advisor, welcomed the opportunity to outline IWC conservation and management initiatives, and also to explain the relevance of recent Scientific Committee work to complete its comprehensive assessment of South Pacific humpback whales. [See IWC newsletter...](#)



News from the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)

This year, NAFO is continuing its recent trend of holding joint meetings of its Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council. This trend was reinforced by NAFO's 2011 Performance Review Panel that noted the usefulness of increasing communication between the NAFO bodies. The issues being addressed at the meetings this year include the development of risk-based management strategies and the ecosystem approach framework to fisheries management. [Continue...](#)



News from the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)

New initiatives to conserve and restore wild Atlantic salmon

A major focus at NASCO's Thirty-first Annual Meeting held in Saint-Malo, France in early June was to evaluate progress in implementing NASCO's agreements relating to the management of salmon fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities. [Continue...](#)



COFI 31 and RFBs

During the Thirty-first session of COFI, RFBs were explicitly mentioned in the following paragraphs of the adopted report:

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FAO and RFBs/RFMOs

RFBs Performance Reviews

The FAO Fisheries Circular "The Implementation of Performance Review Reports by Regional Fishery Bodies, 2004-2014" is being finalized and is expected to be published in the course of 2015. This Circular provides a history, description and overview of the performance review process of regional fishery bodies (RFBs), and the implementation measures that the RFBs in question have taken, following the reviews. [Continue...](#)



RFBs fishery statistics in FishStatJ

The FishStatJ system is utilized by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department to disseminate global and regional fisheries statistics. FishStatJ is the current version of the very successful FishStat Plus system that first allowed desktop analysis of fisheries time-series data in the MS Windows environment. [Continue...](#)

United Nations General Assembly

Informal consultations on the draft resolution on Oceans and the law of the sea and Sustainable fisheries

Each year in December, the General Assembly adopts two annual resolutions on oceans issues – the annual resolution on oceans and the law of the sea (known informally as the “omnibus resolution”) and the resolution on sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea [Continue...](#)



International Ocean Institute (IOI) Training course

With the support of Dalhousie University, the International Ocean Institute (IOI) has offered an intensive, interdisciplinary training programme in Canada every year since 1981. In keeping with the vision of IOI’s founder, Elisabeth Mann Borgese, the purpose of this course [Continue...](#)



Getting to know the new RSN Chair

Stefán Ásmundsson – Secretary of NEAFC and RSN Chair

In 1998 Stefán Ásmundsson graduated with distinction from Lancaster University, with a Masters degree (LLM) in international law and international relations. In his studies he placed an emphasis on the international legal framework of fisheries. He then worked until 2009 in the Icelandic Ministry of Fisheries, as a Director from 2003, working on various fisheries related issues, mainly involving international aspects and including being Iceland's Head of Delegation to NEAFC. He served as President of NEAFC 2007-2009. Stefán worked as a Policy Officer in the European Commission 2009-2011, working on the reform of the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy. He took up the post of Secretary of NEAFC on 1 July 2011.

Getting to know the new RSN Secretariat

Piero Mannini – Senior Fishery Liaison Officer and RSN Secretary

Piero graduated in Biological Sciences in 1987 and in 1998 he obtained a Ph.D. in Fisheries Ecology from the University of Hull, United Kingdom. His early work with FAO (1990-1997) included project management and the implementation of research activities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. Since 1999 Piero has worked as Fishery Monitoring Expert within the framework of the FAO fishery projects in the Mediterranean. Then he was Programme Coordinator with the Fisheries Management and Conservation Service (2005-2008) with coordination responsibilities for five projects operating in the Mediterranean and Arabian Sea. In 2008 Piero has been appointed Senior Fishery Officer at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo (Egypt), also covering the responsibilities of Secretary of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI). He has authored and co-authored more than 90 scientific and technical publications. Starting from July 2014 Piero is Senior Liaison Officer with the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division in FAO, Rome.

Marco Boccia – Fishery Liaison Officer

Marco has had a strong and consistent interest in ocean governance, with a special focus in sustainable fisheries for more than ten years. He has worked with various international organizations, serving as Special Assistant to the President and Mission Adviser to the United Nations for the International Ocean Institute (IOI), Policy Assistant in the European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and an Associate in the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) - where he also performed the functions of Deputy-Secretary of the General Assembly Informal Consultations on the resolution on Sustainable Fisheries. He took up the post of Fishery Liaison Officer in FAO in February 2014.



News from the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

Adoption of Best Practice Measures to Avoid Incidental Mortality of Seabirds in Fishing Operations

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) works collaboratively with a large number of fisheries management organizations to support their efforts to minimize the incidental catch of seabirds in fishing operations through the adoption of best practice bycatch mitigation measures. In February this year ACAP attended the Second Meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) in an effort to support the development and adoption of its first seabird conservation measure. The meeting agreed to adopt a *Conservation and Management Measure for minimizing bycatch of seabirds in the SPRFMO Convention Area, CMM 2.04*, which incorporates ACAP's best practice advice for minimizing seabird bycatch in demersal long-line and trawl fisheries.

Most of the key RFMOs whose fisheries overlap with the distribution of seabirds listed under ACAP have now adopted seabird conservation measures that incorporate ACAP's best practice advice. The challenge remaining is to see that these conservation measures are implemented effectively. Due to the operational challenges of providing observers for distant water fishing fleets the level of observer coverage is typically very low, making it difficult to determine what level of implementation is occurring. ACAP recently attended an E-Monitoring and E-Reporting workshop held by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission in the Solomon Islands. The workshop demonstrated that the use of E-monitoring, which involves the use of video cameras to monitor fishing operations, can provide a cost-effective supplement to observer programmes. As the cameras operate throughout the fishing operation they are capable of capturing a large volume of information that can be used to assess how effectively conservation management measures are being implemented. E-monitoring systems are already in use in a number of fisheries areas and their use is being actively considered in many others.



News from the Bay of Bengal



India is a traditional shark fishing nation. Shark, skates and rays are caught in both targeted and non-targeted fisheries. While the Government of India has banned fishing of shark species considered endangered (*Carcharhinus hemiodon*, *Glyphis gangeticus*, *G. glyphis* and *Rhincodon typus*), fishing is allowed for other species of sharks. The northwest coast, contributes to about 58 percent of the shark landings, comprising mostly small-sized spadenose shark and *Scoliodon laticaudus*. The southeast coast contributes to about 25 percent of the total shark landings consisting of larger and high-value carcharhinids. In the last couple of years, shark fishery in India is shifting from coastal areas to oceanic fishery and fishermen are using drift gillnets and hooks and lines. These gears contribute to about 95 percent of the shark landings. However, while elsewhere in the world shark conservation is driven mostly by NGOs and environmentalist, in India, the traditional shark fishers of Southern India have taken it upon themselves to ensure sustainable shark fishing. “Shark

fishing has brought us all this prosperity and our identity and we want to continue this fishing in the most sustainable manner,” said Mr Albert, a shark fisher from Thoothoor in southern Tamil Nadu. On their part, the community has already diversified the fishing practices and is now targeting other deep sea species, such as tuna. A long distance away from Thoothoor, fishers of Veraval in Gujarat echo the same sentiments. Once famous for whale shark fishing, Veraval has now nearly moved away from targeted shark fishing. The Veraval fishers feel that financially also shark fishing is not that attractive now, as it used to be. Amid reports of rising concerns and falling demand for shark fin soup in Hong Kong and China¹, their assessment is quite understood. The Government of India has also recently issued an advisory on shark finning, which has been welcomed by fishers from both Thoothoor and Veraval.

In India, fishers mostly land whole sharks as there is demand for shark meat in the local market. The fins are later separated, dried and mostly sent to Chennai for export. Shark fin traders in Chennai on the other hand do not have much option. They are engaged in shark fin trade for years and even over generations. Although, most of them are tight-leaped to divulge the trade details, one of

them informed that his revenues have declined five times since 2004-05 to 2013-14, on account of declining volume of export. The Association of Deep Sea Going Artisanal Fishermen (ADSGAF), representing Thoothoor fishers, organized the First National Mission Meeting on Shark Conservation on 25 March 2014. According to Mr Vincent Jain, Chief Executive of ADSGAF, the Association has taken a proactive role in conservation of sharks and has encouraged its members to diversify their fishing. He said that a National Plan of Action for Management of Shark Fisheries (NPOA-Sharks) is an urgent requirement for India and ADSGAF feels they can, as a community of deep sea fishermen, contribute and participate in both preparation of the NPOA-Sharks and also its implementation. The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-



¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/10/shark-fin-hong-kong-wwf_n_5127370.html?utm_hp_ref=world&ir=World

Governmental Organization and the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project are collaborating in developing the NPOA-Sharks for India.



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News from the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

Thirty-third Annual Session of CCAMLR

Member countries of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) agreed on a range of new and revised measures to conserve Antarctica's marine living resources during their recent annual session held in Hobart from 20 to 31 October 2014.

After considering a body of submissions based on the best available scientific data, the world's leaders in Antarctic marine science and policy achieved alignment on a number of significant issues. Outcomes of the 33rd annual meeting of the Commission include:

- the setting of catch limits for CCAMLR-managed fisheries
- agreement on a range of research to improve knowledge of toothfish biology and its ecosystem to support the precautionary management of toothfish fisheries
- confirmation of a staged process to develop a feedback management procedure to manage the krill fishery in the southwest Atlantic
- significant enhancement of the Catch Documentation Scheme to enable better monitoring of the movement of toothfish from point of landing through to market
- additional efforts to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing including a trial to use satellite-based synthetic aperture radar to monitor vessel presence in the Convention Area
- agreement to share vessel monitoring data, provided by fishing vessels to the CCAMLR Secretariat, with relevant Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres to improve search and rescue operations in the Southern Ocean
- agreement to hold a symposium in Chile in 2015, marking CCAMLR's 35th anniversary, to consider the principal challenges for CCAMLR and how the organization may respond to them.

Stakeholders from around the world have been eagerly awaiting the outcome of discussions on marine protected areas (MPAs). One proposal was jointly submitted by Australia, the European Union and France and covers an area of 1 million km² in East Antarctica. The other, submitted by New Zealand and the United States, covers 1.3 million km² in the Ross Sea region.

Consensus was not reached on either of the proposed MPAs. Several Members requested additional time to consider issues associated with:

- justification for the sizes of the proposed areas
- the proposed duration of the MPAs, and
- the process to support research and monitoring within MPAs and the implications for fisheries.

As CCAMLR operates on a decision-making model that requires consensus, the agreement of all 25 Members is required before a proposal is adopted and implemented.

A range of views and national interests on complex issues such as MPAs in international waters creates a challenging environment for reaching consensus,' says CCAMLR Executive Secretary Andrew Wright.

Research and collaboration continue around the establishment of other MPAs (e.g. in the Weddell Sea) as part of CCAMLR's representative system of Antarctic MPAs. These and other conservation issues will be considered at future meetings of CCAMLR.



Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between CPPS and OSPESCA and the enactment of the Regional Regulation OSP-08-14 about IUU Fishing

Memorandum between CPPS and OSPESCA

In order to promote and ensure the sustainable use of fisheries and aquaculture resources of mutual interest and agreement in the South-eastern Pacific, considering among others the ecosystem approach, the precautionary principle and international instruments aimed at the protection of seas and oceans, while respecting national policies and mechanisms applicable in each country, a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between the CPPS (Permanent Commission for the South Pacific) and OSPESCA (Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus) has been signed.

The Memorandum is expected to build a framework of cooperation on issues and activities that allow a sustainable management of fisheries, as well as the promotion of initiatives in aquaculture, conducting fisheries and aquaculture research, capacity building and strengthening of partnerships and cooperation with other organizations.

SICA countries implement regulations against illegal fishing

The countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA), namely Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican Republic, have put into effect, as of January of this year, the Regional Regulation 08-2014 to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, in order to encourage the adoption of harmonic measures aimed to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

This regulation foresees the harmonization of rules to ensure legal fishing, updating regulations in force in coordination with national and regional bodies competent in monitoring, control and surveillance, as well as with regional fisheries management organizations.



New FFA/USP Fisheries course takes training to the next level

USP IMR, FIJI, Tuesday 27th October 2014. – When 24 fisheries officers take the stage at the University of the South Pacific (USP) this Friday they will be creating historical memories for themselves – and making history for the Pacific.

The officers, set to close off a month of gaining new skills in monitoring fishing activity in the region, are the inaugural intake of FFA's Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Officers' training course. From next year, the course becomes part of the USP's vocational training stream through its Centre for Vocational and Continuing Education with assistance from the Institute of Marine Resources.

"This new and exciting partnership with a regional learning venue already familiar to our FFA members, meets an emerging need which our previous MCS training efforts have identified. It represents a welcome synergy which we look forward to in the critically important area of watching over fishing activity in the region, and has definitely taken our regional previous training efforts to the next level," says FFA Director-General James Movick.

The partnership with USP to ensure the course is now part of the training offered by the university has not been the only swing away from 'traditional' hotel conference room formats for MCS training. They have had to put in 9 hour-days, six days a week, hand in homework, and sit competency assessments to ensure they earn their certificates.

"I want to congratulate all the individuals who have spent a month away from home, family and jobs to take on this intensive training programme. They and their countries will not be disappointed at their formal accreditation, and skills gained."

FFA Training Officer Megan Streeter worked with FFA staff and consultants to align areas of focus from FFA's MCS training programmes with USP, coordinating the development of competency standards, a curriculum and teaching resources for the MCS Officers' course.

USP's Director of the Institute of Marine Resources, Dr Colin Shelley, has also welcomed the new step. "This course is one of the first steps in partnering with FFA in terms of the provision of vocational level training, in addition to the graduate and post-graduate studies that USP has traditionally provided to service the needs of the region's fishing and natural resource management sectors."

"This is one of a range of similar targeted fisheries training courses that FFA has developed, that we hope to transition to USP over the next few years for delivery. We are also intending to work with FFA and the Centre for Vocational and Continuing Education at USP and put these courses through the university's accreditation system, and in time incorporate many of them into a training framework providing opportunities for regional staff to gain internationally recognised qualifications."

From the basics of fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) to applying good governance and 'social principles' to their learning, participants gained technical and practical skills to use in their work. Fisheries management, compliance theory and behaviour, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing were also part of the coursework. Presenters also walked officers through an understanding of their powers as fisheries officers, the legal frameworks and the conventions and treaties covering the Pacific Fishery, and the role of data in monitoring work.

Support for the inaugural MCS training partnership with USP came from AusAID and the EU-funded FFA/SPC DevFish II project aimed at ensuring Pacific people gain a fairer slice of the benefits from Fisheries.



GFCM: A Regional Conference to boost aquaculture simplification, growth and sustainability in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (9–11 December 2014, Bari, Italy)

The Regional Conference on “Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: developing sustainable aquaculture for food security”, held in Bari from 9 to 11 December 2014, was organized by the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, together with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the FAO and in cooperation with the European Commission.

At a time when aquaculture is called to play a major role for food security, employment and economic development at the global level, there is a need to make substantial progress towards harmonious growth at the regional level. In fact, this promising and fast-growing sector is today at a crossroads and priorities are no longer a matter of single countries. These call for the implementation of coordinated strategies to ensure sustainable and responsible growth in the sector, taking into account the regional and local specificities of Mediterranean and Black Sea countries and also bearing in mind Blue Growth as a whole.

The main objective of the Conference was to take stock of the progress made by aquaculture in the region and to address the main governance, economic, social and environmental challenges for its sustainable development. It aimed to renew political commitments among all actors concerned towards sustainable aquaculture development in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The Regional Conference comprised a two-day technical event with panel discussions addressing the most salient issues of the aquaculture sector, on 9–10 December, followed by a one-day High-level Conference, on 11 December.

Information on the background of the Conference can be found at <http://www.aquaculture2014.org/>.



News from the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)

Ongoing activities and the new NAFO Executive Secretary



This year, NAFO is continuing its recent trend of holding joint meetings of its Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council. This trend was reinforced by NAFO's 2011 Performance Review Panel that noted the usefulness of increasing communication between the NAFO bodies. The issues being addressed at the meetings this year include the development of risk-based management strategies and the ecosystem approach framework to fisheries management.

NAFO is also addressing potential increased oil and gas activity in its Regulatory Area. In April, NAFO submitted comments to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board on its draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Eastern Newfoundland Offshore Area that overlaps with the NAFO Regulatory Area. In its submission NAFO wanted to bring to the attention of the Board that there is extensive fishing

activity taking place beyond Canada's 200-mile limit, that some of the proposed oil and gas licensing areas could overlap with already-recognized Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) protection areas within the NAFO Regulatory Area and that some oil and gas activities could affect ongoing fishery research.

The NAFO Secretariat is also adapting to its new Executive Secretary, Fred Kingston, who started on 1 January 2014, replacing Dr. Vladimir Shibanov. Mr. Kingston is Canadian, but previously worked for several years for the European Union's diplomatic representation to Canada. He has also been associated with NAFO for a long time, particularly on matters pertaining to finance and administration, including serving as Chairman of NAFO's Finance and Administration Committee for ten years (1998 – 2007).

Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of NAFO

NAFO's 36th Annual Meeting was held in Vigo, Spain in September 2014. The Mayor of Vigo, Mr. Abel Caballero Alvarez, the Conseilleira do Medio Rural e do Mar of the Xunta de Galicia, Mrs. Rosa Quintana Carballo, the Secretary-General of Fisheries from the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Mr. Andres Hermida Trastoy and the President of NAFO, Veronika Veits (EU), welcomed delegates to Vigo. The main results of the meeting are contained in NAFO's press release, found at:

www.nafo.int/about/frames/press.html.

Although the state of health of the different commercial fish stocks in the NAFO Regulatory Area remains mixed, evidence continues that these stocks are on the whole rebounding. In particular, witch flounder was deemed to have sufficiently recovered to be reopened with a 1,000 tons TAC for 2015. This stock had been under a 20-year moratorium. Moreover, the 2015 TAC for redfish on the northern Grand Bank was increased by almost 50%. On the other hand, a new fishing moratorium was decided for the northern shrimp stock.





The meeting also focused on measures to implement the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. A review of closed areas for protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) was carried out this year and the current 12 closures were extended until 2020 and two new closed areas were adopted. Exploratory fishing protocols for seamounts were maintained. Fishery managers and scientists will also continue to work together in the coming year in their respective working groups on Risk Based Management Strategies (RBMS), Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (EAFFM) and Catch Reporting (CR). The working groups on By-catches, Discards and Selectivity and Ecosystem Stock Assessment will also continue.

Because of increasing oil and gas activity in the NAFO Regulatory Area, the NAFO Secretariat was also directed to work with the appropriate Canadian authorities to develop an “information exchange mechanism” intended to promote coordination between oil and gas interests and fishing interests and the avoidance of overlapping activities.



The meeting noted continued progress on the implementation of the recommendations of NAFO’s 2011 Performance Review. Most of the actions developed in response to the recommendations have been completed or are ongoing. Next year NAFO is expected to begin discussions towards the launch of the next NAFO Performance Review.

IGO observers to the meeting included the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (IMCS) Network, CCAMLR, NEAFC and NPAFC. FAO gave an update to General Council on the GEF Project “Sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity

conservation of deep-sea living marine resources and ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)” in which NAFO is a partner. FAO also updated the Scientific Council on the FAO’s VME Database project. NGO observers present were Ecology Action Centre (EAC), International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), PEW Environmental Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).





News from the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)



New initiatives to conserve and restore wild Atlantic salmon

A major focus at NASCO's Thirty-first Annual Meeting held in Saint-Malo, France in early June was to evaluate progress in implementing NASCO's agreements relating to the management of salmon fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities. Each NASCO Party/jurisdiction has developed a plan detailing the actions to be taken over a five-year period (2013 – 2018). The first Annual Progress Reports on these plans had been evaluated by a Review Group, comprising representatives of the Parties and NASCO's accredited NGOs, and in Saint-Malo the Parties/jurisdictions responded to the questions posed by that Group.

A new development for NASCO was to hold a one-day Theme-based Special Session with the intention of allowing for a more detailed exchange of information among representatives of the Parties, IGOs and NGOs. The topic was *Management of single and mixed-stock fisheries with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit*. The Steering Committee has drawn a number of conclusions from the session and its report will be published shortly.

NASCO's second performance review was conducted in 2012. An Action Plan for taking forward the Review Panel's recommendations was adopted in 2013 and progress was reviewed. Many recommendations have already been fully implemented and others are ongoing. A further evaluation will be made at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

There were no negotiations for regulatory measures in Saint-Malo as previously agreed multi-annual measures applied to the fisheries in 2014 but preparatory work will be undertaken inter-sessionally prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting, when new measures will be considered for the salmon fisheries at West Greenland and the Faroe Islands. ICES advice indicates that marine survival indices remain low and that factors other than marine fisheries, acting in freshwater and in the ocean (e.g. marine mortality, fish passage, water quality) are contributing to continued low abundance of wild Atlantic salmon. Building on research undertaken through the SALSEA Programme to better understand the distribution and migration of salmon at sea and the factors influencing them, NASCO's International Atlantic Salmon Research Board endorsed the need for an international acoustic tracking programme with the aim of partitioning mortality of salmon at sea.

There will also be inter-sessional work to develop a new classification system to indicate stock status relative to conservation limits, or where these have not been established other reference points or indicators of abundance, inter alia, for use in an interactive database of salmon rivers (see http://www.nasco.int/rivers_cm.html). Further details of NASCO's work are available at <http://www.nasco.int/fisheries.html>.



COFI 31 and RFBs

During the Thirty-first session of COFI, RFBs were explicitly mentioned in the following paragraphs of the adopted report:

- I. paragraph 35 - On the subject of non-FAO RFBs/RFMOs, several Members applauded the practice of conducting performance reviews on a regular basis as a necessary process to show transparency and accountability in their activities, and emphasized the need to implement the recommendations. One Member also suggested that the effectiveness of catch reporting and monitoring should be a part of all performance reviews.
- II. paragraph 36 - On the subject of FAO RFBs, a number of Members expressed concern that FAO RFBs and FAO RFMOs were grouped together in one discussion within the paper. Likewise, some Members requested that the activities of the RFBs be organized in subregions taking into account the criteria of similarities, challenges and development which countries may face. There was support for the idea of FAO RFBs being strengthened on a case by case basis. One Member requested a workplan to revitalize existing FAO RFBs by the 32nd Session of COFI in 2016.
- III. paragraph 40 - Recognizing the role of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) in the concerted fight against IUU fishing, the Committee:

...omissis...

(d) noted that several RFMOs have made provisions for the IMO number to be compulsory in their convention areas;

(e) agreed that States were responsible for the data and its provision to the Global Record, possibly through RFMOs, and

...omissis ...

- IV. paragraph 48 - Some Members noted the important role of FAO's decentralized offices, regional fishery bodies, and basin and river authorities in addressing inland fishery issues and recommended that FAO strengthen those bodies dealing with inland fisheries and increase subregional and regional cooperation.



FAO and RFBs/RFMOs

RFBs Performance Reviews

The FAO Fisheries Circular “The Implementation of Performance Review Reports by Regional Fishery Bodies, 2004-2014” is being finalized and is expected to be published in the course of 2015. This Circular provides a history, description and overview of the performance review process of regional fishery bodies (RFBs), and the implementation measures that the RFBs in question have taken, following the reviews. It is an update for, and an expansion upon, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1072 that reviewed seven organizations’ performance reviews, mostly in the Atlantic Ocean, in 2012. The forthcoming Circular will include the performance review’s implementation of 19 organizations.

Strengthening the assistance and collaboration with and capacity development of RFBs

In order to provide and streamline FAO support to RFBs, particularly FAO RFBs/RFMOs, FAO/FIPI is considering a set of criteria to a) classify/categorize the vast and heterogeneous group of current RFB/RFMO, and b) to prioritize FAO assistance and optimize the use of scarce resources.

With respect to the strengthening of RFBs, particularly but not exclusively FAO-RFBs, a project concept note entitled “Capacity development to improve participation and engagement in regional fishery bodies” has been drafted. With a view to enhancing technical and institutional capacity development in developing States, in the context of specific and clearly identified needs at national and regional levels, and in line with its functions and responsibilities, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of FAO is proposing a project that would support Members of RFMOs/RFBs by strengthening their technical and institutional capacity development through specialized training aimed at improving national decision-making processes. This would assist countries, particularly developing States, in actively engaging in the RFMOs/RFBs decision making process and facilitate the implementation of conservation and management measures (CMMs). This objective will be pursued by building on the efforts and results from FAO’s ongoing activities in this field, and on the cooperation established with the regional and international partners. The proposal includes the development of a program that would guide participants in improving their understanding of national processes to undertake before, during and after a RFMO/RFB’s meeting.

RFBs dealing with inland fisheries will be given special consideration in the aforementioned project proposal that is being formulated to develop Members’ capacity and to improve participation and engagement in their RFBs.

As a follow up to the letter sent by Mr Andrew Wright, former Chairperson of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN) to the incoming Chair of COFI 32 regarding the strengthening of the collaboration between the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and the RFBs, the RSN Secretariat brought the issues raised by the former Chair of the RSN to the attention of the 3rd meeting of the COFI Bureau held on 3 December 2014 and sought its guidance and clarification on the matter. The Bureau took note of the concerns raised by the RSN and agreed to address them.



United Nations General Assembly

Informal consultations on the draft resolution on Oceans and the law of the sea and Sustainable fisheries

Each year in December, the General Assembly adopts two annual resolutions on oceans issues – the annual resolution on oceans and the law of the sea (known informally as the “omnibus resolution”) and the resolution on sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments (known informally as the “sustainable fisheries resolution”). These resolutions are negotiated during informal consultations of the General Assembly.

This year, the informal consultations on the draft General Assembly resolution on sustainable fisheries were held in a single round, from 11 to 18 November, under the coordination of Ms. Alice Revell of New Zealand. The informal consultations on the draft resolution on oceans and the law of the sea took place in two rounds, from 29 September to 3 October 2014 and from 19 to 25 November 2014, under the coordination of Ambassador Eden Charles of Trinidad and Tobago. The draft resolution on oceans and the law of the sea was tabled by Trinidad and Tobago on 1 December 2014 and is expected to be issued as document A/69/L.29. The draft resolution on sustainable fisheries was tabled by New Zealand on 24 November 2014 and it has been issued as document A/RES/69/109 (<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/647/96/PDF/N1464796.pdf?OpenElement>).



RFBs fishery statistics in FishStatJ

This message was sent to RFBs to seek their possible interest in collaborating with FAO to develop capacity towards disseminating RFB's fisheries statistics through the FishStatJ software. So far some RFBs expressed their interest in participating in this initiative as a testing partner

The FishStatJ system is utilized by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department to disseminate global and regional fisheries statistics. FishStatJ is the current version of the very successful FishStat Plus system that first allowed desktop analysis of fisheries time-series data in the MS Windows environment. FishStatJ is supported for multiple platforms including modern MS Windows operating systems (i.e. Vista, Windows 7), Mac and LINUX environments. Further information about FishStatJ can be found here:

<http://www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/software/fishstatj/en>

Currently, FishStatJ only distributes time-series datasets for the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture department. FishStat Plus was previously used to assist Eurostat and various RFMOs with the distribution of their datasets. The FishStatJ team has developed an administrative console for the creation of time-series datasets but this is in an immature stage with a minimally tested interface and no user manual created.

The FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department would like to locate some volunteer RFBs that would be interested in providing time-series data, reference data and minimal support in assisting the FishStatJ team with improving the 'robustness' of the administrative console. The experience gained from this collaboration would be used to create a 'step-by-step' user manual that could be distributed world-wide to facilitate the publication of future RFMO time-series within FishStatJ.

Inclusion of RFMO time-series datasets within the FishStatJ framework would be beneficial for several reasons such as:

- Enhanced dissemination capacity at RFB level for their time series, FishStatJ software being offered as a service (with maintenance ensured by FAO);
- Standardization of multiple RFMO time-series datasets within the single system;
- Documentation for FishStatJ would be maintained only by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department while RFMOs would only need to produce documentation about their time-series;
- Optionally, the web distribution of RFMO datasets could be supported by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

Please indicate if your Organization would be willing to volunteer in this effort to better facilitate the global distribution of RFB time-series datasets. All other related questions can be sent to Mr Marc Taconet, Chief, Fishery Statistics and Information Branch (FIPS) at marc.taconet@fao.org.



International Ocean Institute (IOI) Training course

With the support of Dalhousie University, the International Ocean Institute (IOI) has offered an intensive, interdisciplinary training programme in Canada every year since 1981. In keeping with the vision of IOI's founder, Elisabeth Mann Borgese, the purpose of this course is to:

- deepen understanding of the ever-increasing importance of the oceans and their resources in world politics and sustainable economic development;
- assist developing countries in the formation of a core of decision-makers fully aware of the complex issues of coastal and ocean management; and,
- maximize benefits to be derived from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea through the proper integration of coastal and ocean management into national and international development strategies.

The course emphasizes the importance of viewing the ocean as a system with varied users and multiple, often competing and conflicting, uses. It also aims to increase awareness of the fact that ocean management requires broad interdisciplinary skills, new institutional and legal infrastructures, and new forms of intergovernmental and non-governmental organization and cooperation at the local, national and international levels.

The training programme, this year taking place in Halifax, NS from 20 May to 17 July 2015, is specifically designed to benefit developing country mid-career professionals who are responsible for some aspect of coastal or ocean governance. Given the under-representation of women in the upper echelons of administration and policy-making, particular emphasis is placed on trying to achieve equal numbers of female and male participants, and on creating a forum where men and women can learn together, sharing different perspectives and examining issues from different viewpoints. The class size for 2015 is likely to consist of approximately 15 participants.

Completed forms should be sent by fax, airmail or courier to arrive **no later than 1st January 2015**. In some circumstances it may be possible to consider late applications – contact IOI-Canada (ioi@dal.ca) to enquire.

More information on the training programme, including the application form, can be found at <http://internationaloceaninstitute.dal.ca/training.htm>.