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COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

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AGENCY REPORT

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NAFO PRESENTATION TO COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

Agency Programmes in Fishery Statistics

STATLANT Issues

Nations fishing in the NAFO area are required to submit catch and effort data in STATLANT 21A and B formats. At NAFO Secretariat, however, statistical data are collected from Contracting Parties at various levels (e.g. Hail reports, monthly reports, observer reports, STATLANT reports). While STATLANT data are published, most other data are for Conservation and Enforcement use only; provisional catch data by stock are reported to Contracting Parties in a monthly circular. Over the last two years observer reports from the 100% coverage by the NAFO Observer Programme have become a focus of attention to the Scientific Council (see below).

Data dissemination in the public domain is based on only STATLANT reports. By NAFO practice, the 21A data (catch) reports are considered preliminary. With the submission deadline of **15 May** the Scientific Council uses these and data from other sources for stock assessments at its June meetings. The 21A data are kept under revision until finalized 21B data (catch and effort) are submitted (usually much later than 30 June deadline). The updated 21A and 21B data are then available for publication in the *NAFO Statistical Bulletins*.

Timely submission of data have improved, with the exception of individual instances (such as due to a major reorganization of the USA database) which have resulted in significant delays. The Secretariat continued to publish the *Statistical Bulletin*. After a significant delay (after Vol. 43 in 1999) the Scientific Council decided to publish the volumes without the USA data. The Statistical Bulletin Vol. 44 was printed in December 2000 and Volumes 45 to 49 are due to completion in mid 2001. The absence of USA data resulted in some tabulations being incomplete.

The NAFO Secretariat continues to publish and maintain the updated STATLANT 21 data on the NAFO website – www.nafo.ca - for public access. Data for the years 1960 to 2000 are available on the web as text files, while the Secretariat also continues to attend to individual requests.

With respect to the divergence between official nominal catches reported in STATLANT forms and those from other sources used in stock assessments, the NAFO Scientific Council agreed notes will be appended to the appropriate sections of documents reporting STATLANT data, that those catches for some species/stocks may differ from those reported in the document. As recommended by the Scientific Council in June 2001, the NAFO Secretariat compiled a document (NAFO SCS Doc. 01/5) that compared the STATLANT 21 reported catches against other sources catch statistics used for stock assessments. This comparison was found very useful, and it was noted that divergences were not too serious.

Observer Programme Data

The NAFO Pilot Observer Programme introduced in 1994 has evolved, where now Contracting Parties provide 100% coverage of their fisheries. The data collection with respect to format and information, however, has been the responsibility of each Contracting Party. The information base and format were therefore developed by Contracting Parties, and these data were usually submitted to the Secretariat as hard copies. The data remain uncomputerized.

NAFO managers and scientists have recognized the importance of these data. Over the last 2 years the Fisheries Commission and the Scientific Council have worked closely to develop the NAFO Observer Protocol, and in September 2000 the Scientific Council Proposal specifying a harmonized data system was adopted. Scientific Council is currently addressing the need to formally incorporate the protocols (as specified in the NAFO SCS Doc.

00/23) in the Conservation and Enforcement Measures for the NAFO management guidelines, and be able to access the extensive trawl-by-trawl database. An observer manual for standardized data is also being considered.

Other NAFO Documents Relevant to Statistics

Note: NAFO scientific publications are now published electronically. The new electronic publication scheme, introduced in June 2000, produces attractive, high quality, citable publications on the NAFO website –www.nafo.ca – **within weeks of editorial acceptance**. The hard copy prints continue to be produced subsequently. The NAFO *Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science* Vol. 26, 27 and 28 were published electronically.

These are some publications relevant to CWP:

- Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science Vol. 26 – Miscellaneous papers
- Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science Vol. 27 – Symposium on Pandalid Shrimps
- Journal of Northwest Atlantic Fishery Science Vol. 28 – Historic review of cod fisheries of Greenland.
- NAFO Scientific Council Reports 2000, published January 2001
- NAFO Statistical Bulletin, Vol. 44, Fishery Statistics for 1994, published December 2000
- Index of Meeting Documents, 1995-99, published December 2000
- Inventory of Sampling Data, 1990-1994, published October 1999

Scientific Council Summary Documents are compiled on an annual basis with information from various sources being compiled and updated. These include – tagging reports, lists of biological sampling data, statistical information, survey activities by stock.

Other information is also published on the NAFO website (www.nafo.ca). This includes Annual Report and Conservation and Enforcement Measures and other major NAFO information reports, statistical information, Meeting Reports and Documents.

Elasmobranch Statistics

In 2000 NAFO added 4 new species of skates to the list of species to be reported on STATLANT questionnaires. In addition, following the recent publication of a revision to the genera of several species of skates, NAFO amended the list of names to reflect these taxonomic revisions. The decision to go forward with the new scientific names for these skate species was based primarily on the paper by McEachran and Dunn (1998). The primary author of this paper is an authority on skate systematics, and the American Fisheries Society (AFS) has accepted these revisions as well. The revised edition of Catalog of Fishes (Eschmeyer, 1998, revised in November 2000) has also accepted these changes.

The seven species were formerly considered to be in the genus *Raja*. The new names are as follows: little skate – *Leucoraja erinacea*; arctic skate – *Amblyraja hyperborea*; barndoor skate – *Dipturus laevis*; winter skate – *Leucoraja ocellata*; spinytail skate – *Bathyraja spinicauda*; thorny skate – *Amblyraja radiata*; and smooth skate – *Malacoraja senta*.

NAFO considers these revised genera to represent the most up-to-date information on skate taxonomy and agreed that FAO should be requested to incorporate these revisions on the STATLANT 21 forms. The following table represents the list of elasmobranch species to be reported on STATLANT 21 forms.

Code	Short name	Common name	Scientific name	Abbreviation	Category
452	Spiny dogfish	Spiny (picked) dogfish	<i>Squalus acanthias</i>	DGS	3
460*	Sand tiger	Sand tiger shark	<i>Carcharias taurus</i>	CCT	3
462	Porbeagle	Porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>	POR	3
464	Shortfin mako	Shortfin mako shark	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	SMA	3
470	Sharpnose shark	Atlantic sharpnose shark	<i>Rhizoprionodon terranovae</i>	RHT	3
467*	Dusky shark	Dusky shark	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>	DUS	3
468*	Blue shark	Great blue shark	<i>Prionace glauca</i>	BSH	3
473	Boreal shark	Boreal (Greenland) shark	<i>Somniosus microcephalus</i>	GSK	3
472	Black dogfish	Black dogfish	<i>Centroscyllium fabricii</i>	CFB	3
474	Basking shark	Basking shark	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>	BSK	3
480	Little skate	Little skate	<i>Leucoraja erinacea</i>	RJD	3
482*	Arctic skate	Arctic skate	<i>Amblyraja hyperborea</i>	RJG	3
484	Barndoor skate	Barndoor skate	<i>Dipturus laevis</i>	RJL	3
487	Winter skate	Winter skate	<i>Leucoraja ocellata</i>	RJT	3
490	Spinytail skate	Spinytail (Spinetail) ray	<i>Bathyraja spinicauda</i>	RJQ	3
488	Thorny skate	Thorny skate (starry skate)	<i>Amblyraja radiata</i>	RJR	3
489	Smooth skate	Smooth skate	<i>Malacoraja senta</i>	RJS	3

* Additions since 1999.

Interagency Data Harmonization (NAFO/FAO)/Dissemination

The Scientific Council reported that although in the last 2 years there had been no formal exercise to detect discrepancies between NAFO and FAO databases, the close collaboration between the Secretariats of the two organizations and the exchange of data between them has contributed significantly to the harmonisation of the data. NAFO continues to maintain and publish data for Area 21, and the *NAFO Statistical Bulletin* (catch and effort data) continues to be published with 21B data while 21A data are compiled on the NAFO Website (www.nafo.ca).

The Scientific Council noted that, following the CWP initiative at its intersessional meeting at ICES Headquarters in February 2000, the catch data from the various Atlantic agencies for the period 1950-98 had been integrated in a single file in the FAO FISHSTAT Plus format. Wherever possible the data at the level of the STATLANT A questionnaires (annual data by species, by country and by statistical sub-division) had been included. This file is now available for downloading from the FAO website (<ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/stat/windows/fishplus/atlant.zip>) for use with the FAO FISHSTAT Plus program (available from ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/stat/windows/fishplus/fst_plus.zip). Although the basic data had been obtained from the various agency websites, notes with the data file recognizes that EUROSTAT was assigned the task of the reformatting and presentation of the data.

Vessels

VMS. The vessel monitoring system (VMS) has concurrently developed at NAFO. This VMS is also evolving with the latest computer designs to capture valuable fisheries data on a real time basis. The system to be used at the NAFO Secretariat is currently being installed with new hardware and software and it is targeted to be operational by July 2001. This system is intended to provide uninterrupted reports 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from vessels themselves or from Contracting Parties conducting fishing activities in the NAFO area. Types of reports on this system include, entry reports, departure reports, movement reports, zonal reports, transshipment reports and position reports. This information will be relayed to Contracting Parties with an inspection presence in the Regulatory Area on a real time basis.

Use of GRT vs. GT in recording effort data. The Scientific Council reviewed a paper presented by David Cross (NAFO SCR Doc. 01/5) demonstrating that the Gross Tonnage (GT)(London Convention, 1969) of a vessel was significantly greater than the Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT)(Oslo Convention, 1947). This change from GRT to GT was taking place at different rates in different countries and was generally spread over a number of years. NAFO Contracting Parties were requested to submit on the STATLANT 21B questionnaire catch and effort data by

tonnage classes of fishing vessels and the change in the method of measuring tonnage of vessels brought into doubt the comparability of catch and effort data for individual vessel tonnage classes over time.

The NAFO Scientific Council recognized this as a problem, and it was proposed that other agencies be consulted to see if or how they had resolved it. In the meantime the Scientific Council agreed it was important that the potential risks of interpreting catch/effort data should be brought to the attention of users of the current database.