

RE: Recommendations by ELDFA on NAFO 2014 (revised summary)

I) Northern shrimp - 3LN & 3M.

General recommendations: This year there are strong signs of a change of environmental factors for both 3LN and 3M shrimp stocks. There was much more ice west of Newfoundland early this year than seen in decades. The icing is an important factor as it creates favorable conditions for the northern shrimp. The retreat in the increase of cod biomass in area 3M is another positive sign for the NAFO shrimp stocks.

One shrimp stock in Canada? During the International Cold Water Prawn Forum (ICWPF), held in London November 21 2013, Professor Michaela Aschan at the Arctic University of Norway stated only one "Pandalus Borealis" shrimp stock exists in Canadian waters! Professors Aschan confirmed it was the same scenario regarding shrimp as is with the Greenland halibut. This information is important as it fully undermines all discussion about decrease of shrimp quotas in 3LN.

ELDFA suggest applying a normal exploitation rate to all NAFO's shrimp reserves, similar to the rates used in other harvesting areas in the North Atlantic (by Norway, Greenland, Canada and Iceland

Recommendation 3L shrimp: 20-25% exploitation rate if applied to the total average biomass estimates.

II) 3M Northern Shrimp (and moratorium).

The stock situation is not as well-known as it could be because the input from commercial vessels is missing. The area has been fully closed for 4 years and if the state of the stocks remains poor it is clear the regression of the stock is not connected to a modest commercial fishing effort.

Today the stakeholders cannot see what is going on and nobody gets timely information about the recovery process. The only information available is the annual survey mainly focusing on the ground-fish in 3M. The annual survey is not informative enough in terms of shrimp.

Recommendation: Shrimp fishery in 3M should be allowed at a minor scale, 100 days or so, subject to a participation of a scientific observer to collect more data.

III) 3LNO yellowtail & by-catch.

Estonian vessel tried to fish yellowtail at the beginning of the year but had to end its attempts because the by-catch of American Plaice exceeded the 15% limits set in the NCEM. It remains a mystery how Canadian vessels can target the yellowtail flounder within the by-catch limits that are in force. The by-catch limits must be set realistically, and should not prevent from targeting a healthy stock as the yellowtail is.

Recommendation: To increase the by-catch harvesting limits for American Plaice from 15% up to 25%, or to place a moratorium on yellowtail till the American Plaice stock has recovered.

On behalf of the Estonian Long Distance Fishing Association (ELDFA).

Kind regards,



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