



NAFO Northwest
Atlantic
Fisheries
Organization

Committed to
Conservation and **Management** of
Fisheries and **Ecosystems** in the **Northwest Atlantic**

Future Collaboration regarding Human Impacts on the Sargasso Sea Fisheries

Presentation to the Workshop – Next Steps to
Strengthen Stewardship of the Sargasso Sea

Fred Kingston -- Executive Secretary of NAFO

Bermuda – 14 March 2019



Outline

- About NAFO
- NAFO's Mandate for international cooperation
- NAFO's 2018 Performance Review
- NAFO's 'Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management'
- Examples of NAFO's current cooperation
- Concluding remarks

NAFO

Northwest Atlantic
Fisheries Organization

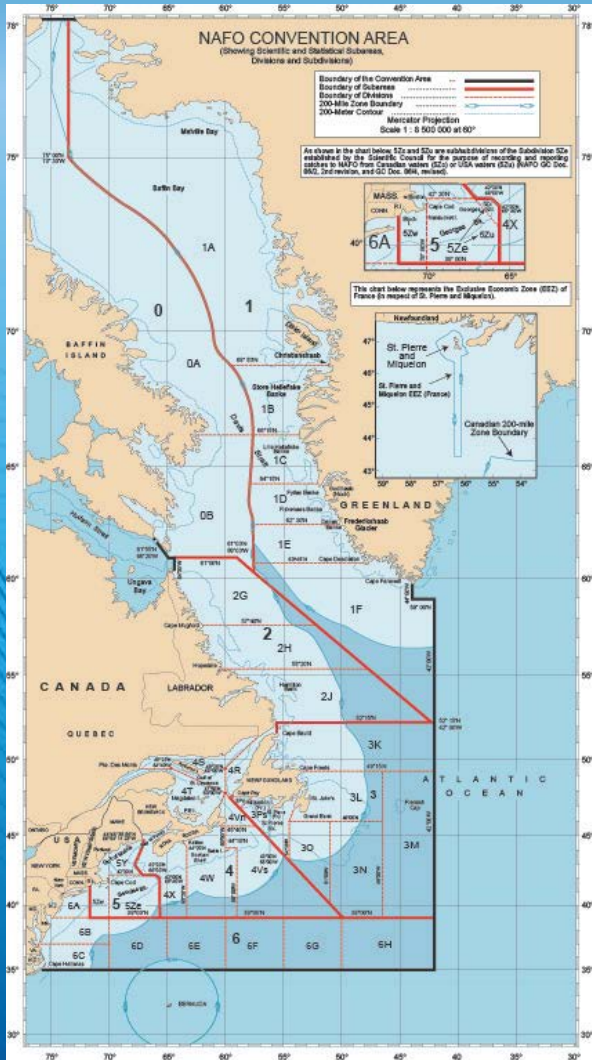
- NAFO is an international regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) established by treaty in 1979
- International cooperation in fishery science and fishery management
- Manages the fishery in the international waters of the Northwest Atlantic
- Four coastal States – Canada, USA, France (St. Pierre et Miquelon) and Denmark (Greenland)



Objective

“ ... to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Convention Area and, in so doing, to safeguard the marine ecosystems in which these resources are found. ”

NAFO Jurisdiction



- NAFO Convention Area is the entire Northwest Atlantic
- NAFO Regulatory Area is the international waters outside of the EEZs of Canada, Denmark (Greenland), France (St. Pierre et Miquelon), USA and Bermuda
- This one of the few places where the continental shelf extends beyond 200-miles
- NAFO fisheries are mainly bottom trawling

12 Contracting Parties (CPs)



Canada



Cuba



Denmark (in respect of
Faroe Islands & Greenland)



European Union (EU)



France (in respect of
Saint Pierre et Miquelon)



Iceland



Japan



Korea, Republic of



Norway



Russian Federation



Ukraine



United States of
America

11 species currently under management



Short-finned
squid



Capelin



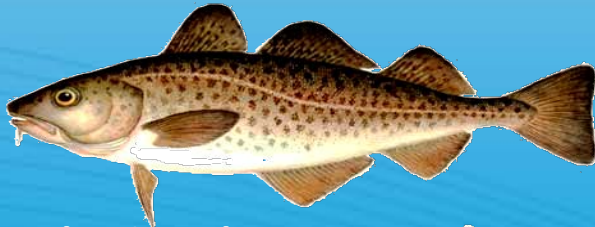
Shrimp



White hake



Redfish



Atlantic cod



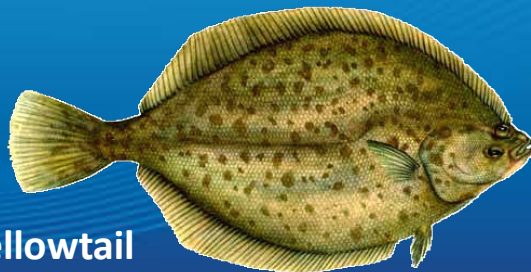
American
plaice



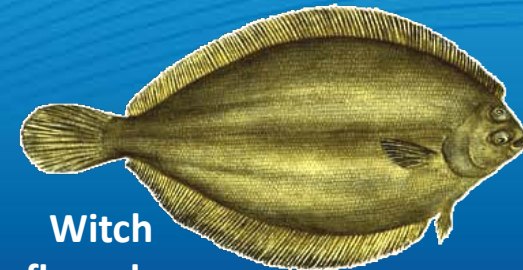
Thorny
skate



Greenland
halibut



Yellowtail
flounder



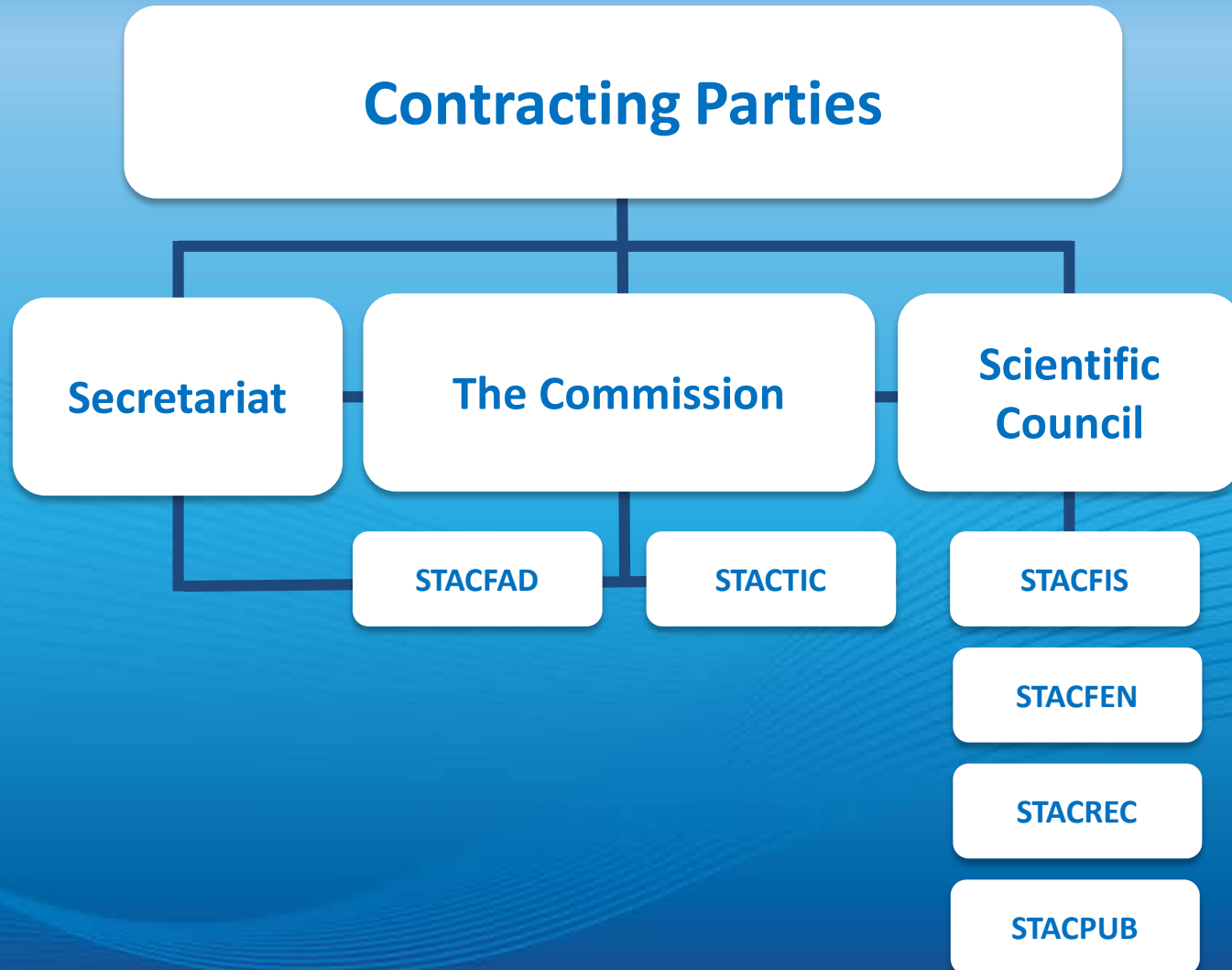
Witch
flounder

The NW Atlantic Fishery in 2018

- 43 vessels
- About 54 000 tonnes of catches* of NAFO regulated species
- Approximate value is CDN\$156 million (or about 100 million euro) – unprocessed catch
- Approximately 1,000 industry jobs directly linked to NAFO fisheries

*Preliminary estimate based on Daily CATs in the NAFO Regulatory Area only

NAFO Structure



Mandate for International Cooperation

NAFO Convention Article XVII

The Organization shall:

- Cooperate with FAO, with other UN specialized agencies and with other relevant organizations;
- ***“Seek to develop cooperative working relationships” ... with IGOs that can contribute to its work and have competence for ensuring “the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living resources and their ecosystems”; and***
- Cooperate with other relevant RFMOs.

International Cooperation

Excerpt of the 2016 Report of the NAFO Annual Meeting:

- Agreed that “the NAFO Secretariat *maintain dialogue with relevant organizations* and *explore mechanisms to improve the exchange of information*. The ... Commission and Contracting Parties may consider other means to facilitate active monitoring, planning processes and actions taken in other fora in order to identify and, if needed, respond to issues concerning NRA fisheries, fisheries resources, and biodiversity”.
- In addition to already-established links with the FAO and UNDOALOS, some Contracting Parties stressed that the CBD Secretariat and the ISA (International Seabed Authority) were of “particular relevance”.

NAFO's 2018 Performance Review

NAFO Performance Review

- 2006 UNGA Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries (61/105)
- 2011 – Report of NAFO’s first Performance Review – all 225 recommendations were implemented or addressed
- 2018 – Report of NAFO’s second Performance Review Panel with **36 recommendations**
- 2019 – development of an Action Plan to address 2018 Performance Review recommendations

NAFO's 2018 Performance Review

Four recommendations directly concerning international cooperation:

1. Strengthen cooperation with RFMOs and other relevant IGOs;
2. Assess how it can contribute its expertise to international developments, in particular the completion of the Aichi Targets and the BBNJ;
3. Participate in capacity building initiatives for developing countries; and
4. Monitor relevant research related to the potential impact of activities other than fishing in the Convention Area and how they may impact the stocks and fisheries as well as biodiversity in the NAFO Regulatory Area.

NAFO's Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management

Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management - the Roadmap

It is not that complicated: the Roadmap in 5 basic conceptual steps

Identify an Ecosystem level Management Area (only needs to be done once, after that only revisions)

Tier 1

Estimate fisheries production in area identified above and set a global TAC

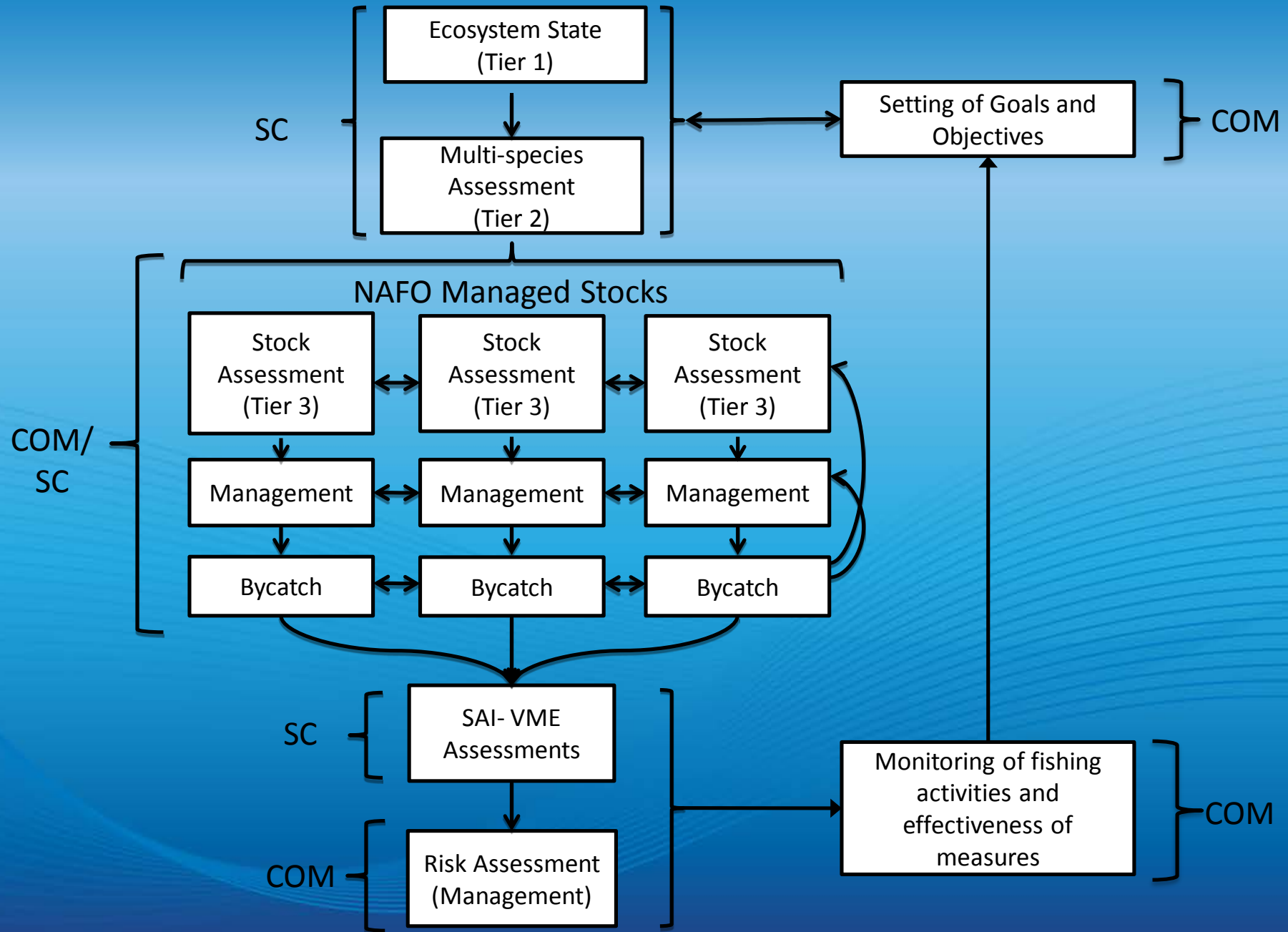
Tier 2

Taking into account species interactions and other trade-offs, allocate the global TAC to individual stocks (stock TAC)

Tier 3

Verify at the single species level that the stock TAC is sustainable.

Identify benthic areas of special concern, and set up management measures to mitigate/avoid fishing impacts on these areas.



External impacts on ecosystem productivity

- Climate change
- Oil and Gas
- Other factors

Key requirements:

- Ecosystem units
- Production at ecosystem unit level

Lead groups:

- SC (STACFEN and WGESA)

Timeline

- Medium and long-term

VMEs and impacts from bottom fishing

- Protection of VMEs
- Assessment of SAIs on VMEs

Key requirements:

- VME areas
- Fishing effort

Lead groups:

- SC (WGESA, STACFEN and WGEAFFM)
- COM (WGEAFFM)

Timeline

- VMEs: Immediate to short-term (2020 review of closures)
- SAIs on VMEs: short-term (2016 assessment on bottom fishing activities)

Multispecies interactions

- Predator-prey relationships
- Multispecies models

Key requirements:

- Ecosystem units
- Diets and food consumption estimates

Lead groups:

- SC (WGESA)

Timeline

- Medium-term

By-catch and discards

- NAFO managed species
- Other species

Key requirements:

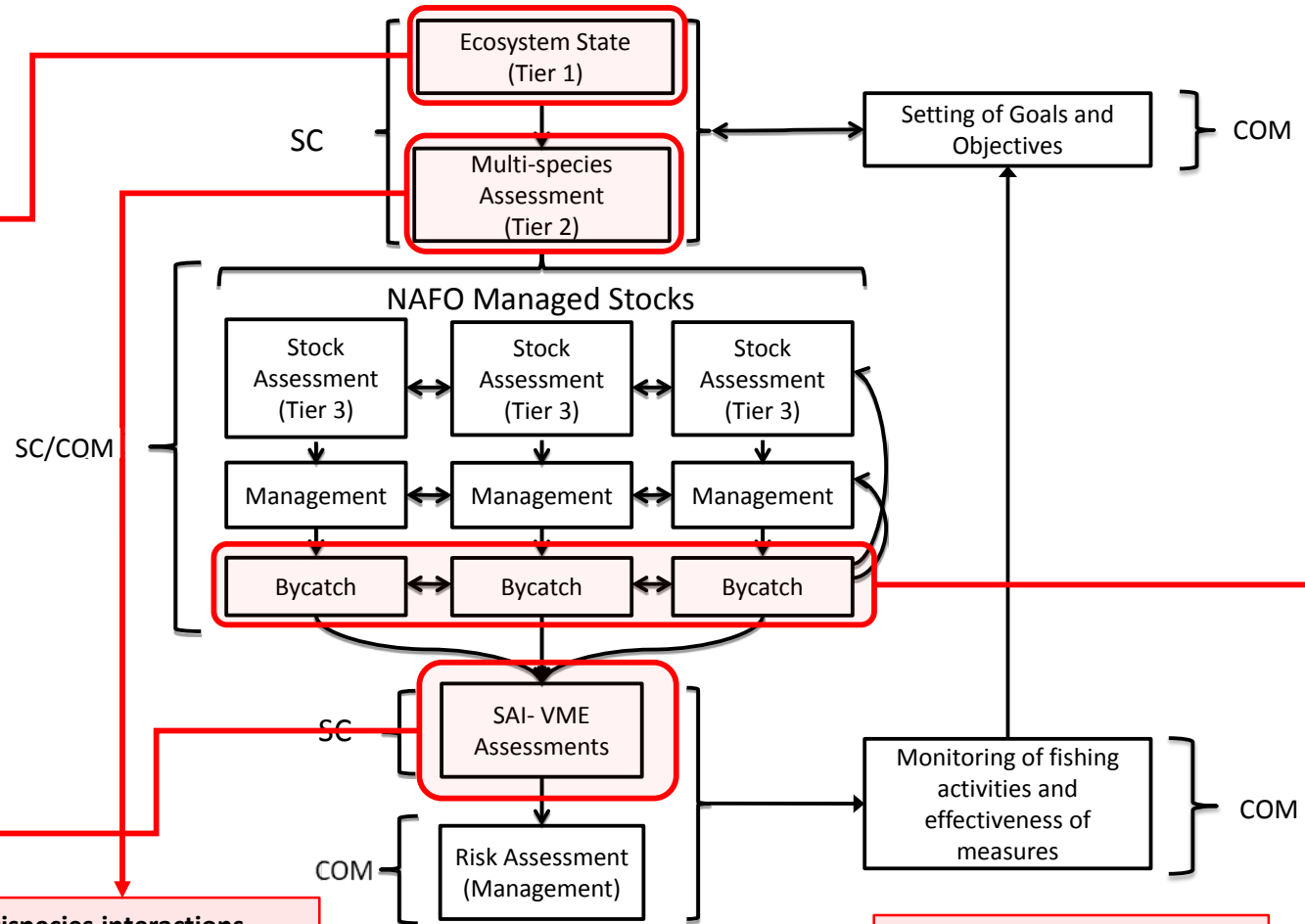
- Reliable estimates of catches

Lead groups:

- COM (By-catch ad hoc WG)

Timeline

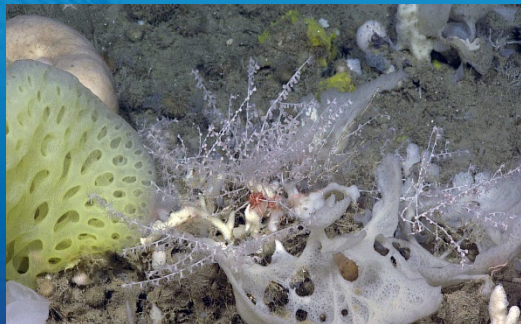
- Immediate (work ongoing)



Protection of VMEs (Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems)

- International obligation to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) is referred to in numerous United Nations General Assembly Resolutions
- VMEs are easily damaged and have a very slow recovery or may never recover, even from occasional disturbances
- VME indicator species include sponges, gorgonian corals, sea pens, bryozoan beds, sea squirts, crinoids and cerianthid anemones
- NAFO measures began in 2007 with effectively a ban on bottom fishing on certain seamounts, including the New England and Corner Rise Seamounts.

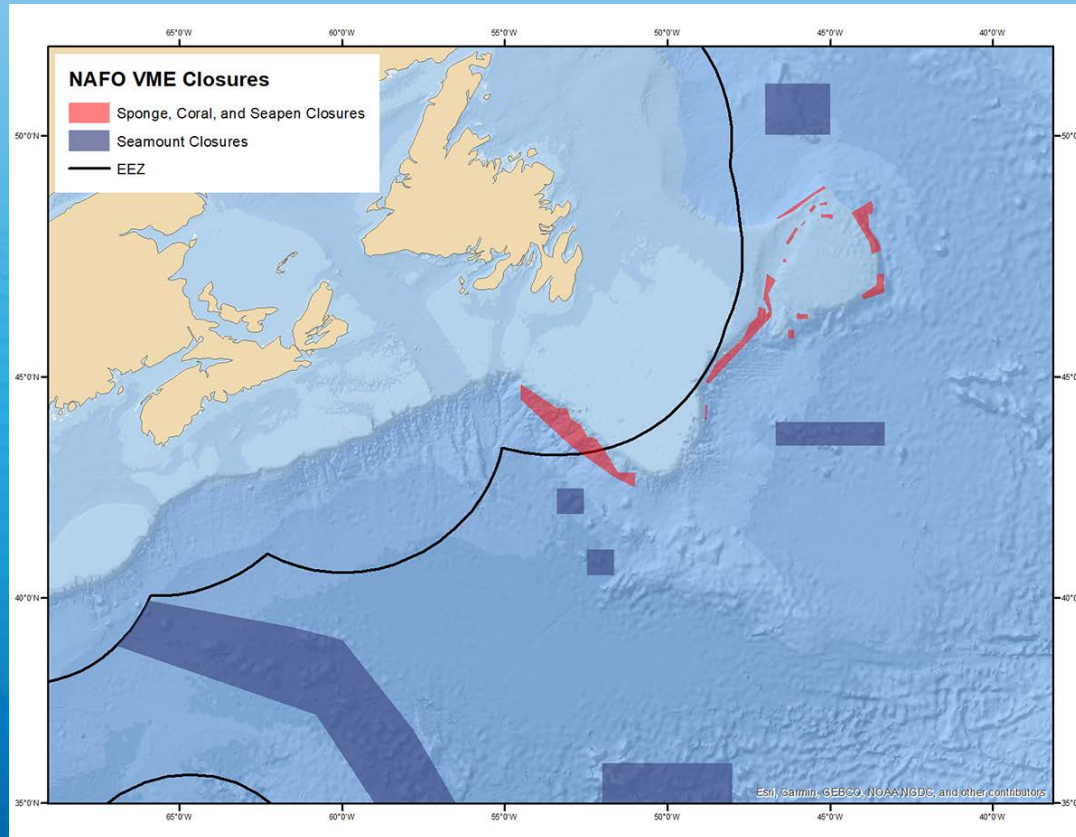
NAFO Measures to Protect VMEs



- Existing bottom fishing areas – “Footprint”
- Closed areas and the scientific justification for closure
- Thresholds for encounters with VMEs within Footprint (“move on” rule)
- Bottom fishing in new fishing areas (Exploratory Fisheries) with scientific justification as a precondition
- Periodic (5 year) reassessment of bottom fishing activities

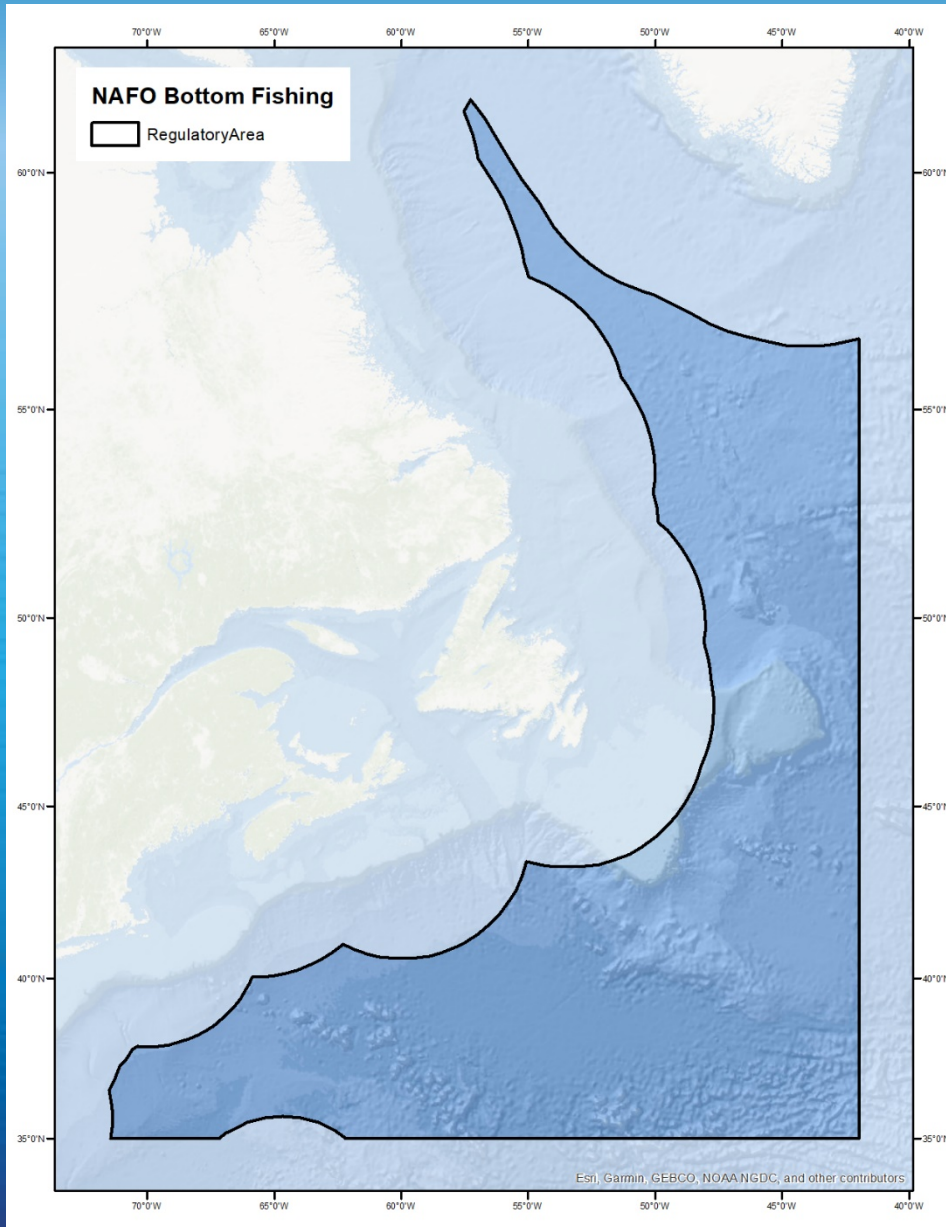
VMEs - Current NAFO closures

14 closed areas (sponge, sea pen and coral areas), plus 6 seamount areas where bottom fishing is prohibited.



Currently **275,265 km²** of the NAFO RA is closed to bottom fishing.*

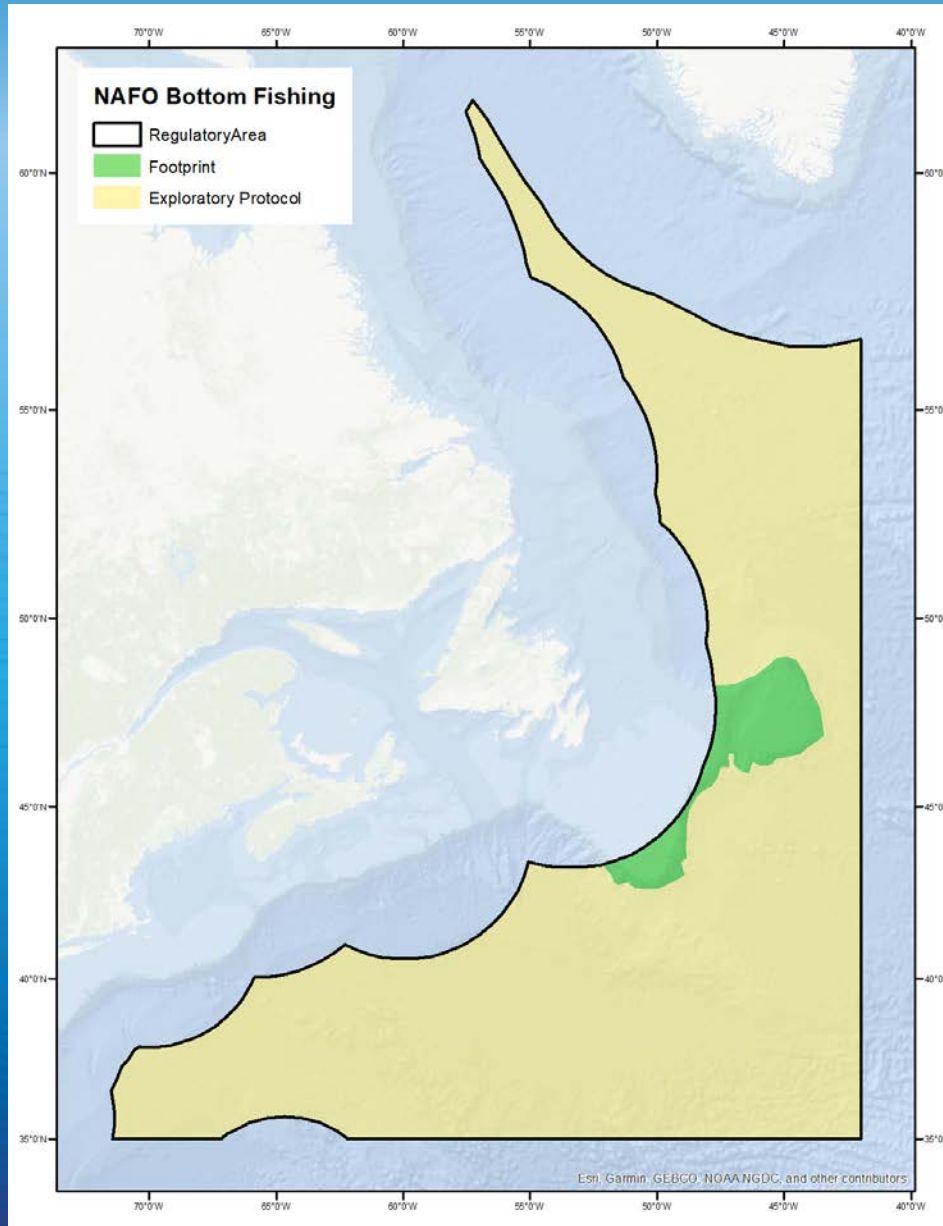
Area Restrictions on Bottom Fishing



The NAFO Regulatory Area is approximately
 $2\,661\,860\text{ km}^2^*$

*UTM NAD83 Zone22N projection

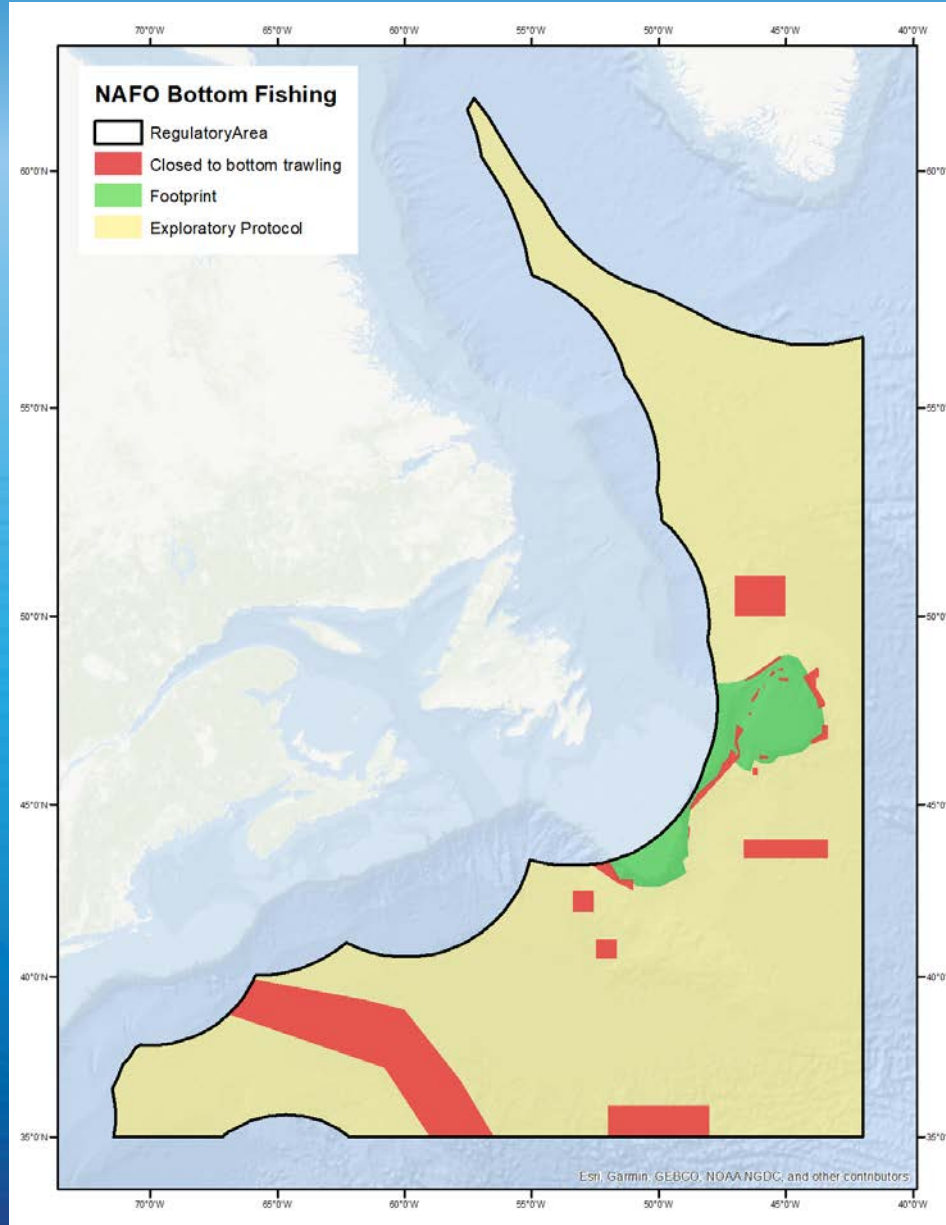
Area Restrictions on Bottom Fishing



Bottom trawling is permitted to occur within the boundaries of the Fishing Footprint (green)

The remainder of the NRA is subject to an extensive Exploratory Fisheries Protocol (yellow)

Area Restrictions on Bottom Fishing



Bottom trawling is prohibited within the boundaries of the VME and seamount closures.

Approximate % of NRA:

- Trawlable area – 4.25%
- Exploratory – 85.41%
- VME Closures – 10.34%

Examples of NAFO's Current Cooperation

Offshore Oil and Gas Operations

- Canadian oil and gas activity on the continental shelf beyond Canada's 200-mile limit
- Potential for conflict with fishing activity and fishery research in international waters
- Proposed "information exchange mechanism" with the relevant coastal State as a means to avoid potential overlapping activities
- Current cooperation based on this proposed information exchange mechanism

Global and Regional Cooperation

NAFO participates in:

- UN and FAO WG's and consultative processes
- COFI (FAO)
- CWP, ASFA, FIRMS, VME Database (FAO)
- Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network – RSN (FAO)
- Global Dialogue between RFMOs and Regional Seas Organizations (CBD)
- Joint Scientific Symposia
- Joint working Groups with ICES
- JAGDM (Joint Advisory Committee on Data Management)
- International Fisheries Commission Pensions Society
- Other RFMO meetings in an observer capacity



NAFO and the BBNJ

- NAFO has participated as an observer at most of the meetings of the PrepCom and Intergovernmental Conference, as well as a speaker at a number of side events organized by the FAO.
- NAFO's message is as follows:
 - NAFO is a relevant regional and sectoral body envisaged under the UN BBNJ process.
 - NAFO is already contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity to areas beyond national jurisdiction
 - NAFO's contributions include environmental impact assessments and area-based management tools

Concluding Remarks

- NAFO has already demonstrated its ability and openness to develop and maintain cooperative working relationships with IGOs that can contribute to its work and have competence for ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living resources and their ecosystems, particularly in NAFO's Convention Area.
- This openness clearly extends to future collaboration on the Sargasso Sea.

THANK YOU!

For further information, please visit:

www.nafo.int