

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information:

Decision:

Recommendation: X

Issue: Total Allowable Catch levels for Northern Shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*) for the 2022 season in Shrimp Fishing Area 0



Northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*)

Background

A fishery for Northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*) exists in Shrimp Fishing Area (SFA) 0, located in Baffin Bay. SFA 0 is immediately adjacent to and partially within the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA) (see map at Appendix 1).

Where this fishery occurs adjacent to the NSA, a recommendations on the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for *P. borealis* in SFA 0 is requested from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB).

The fishery in SFA 0 operates according to a calendar year (January 1 – December 31). Harvesting activity, if any, would likely occur no earlier than June due to ice conditions.

The TAC in SFA 0 has been 500 t since 1996 with the exception of 2020, where an interim TAC of 250t was set with no final TAC decision. No catches have been recorded since the onset of this fishery. Nunavut access to the SFA 0 fishery is via the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation's offshore licence, and through 50% ownership of the offshore Unaaq licence.

In April 2021, the NWMB made a recommendation to the Minister to change the Conditions of Licence (CoL) to permit Nunavut sub-allocation holders access to the SFA 0 Northern Shrimp competitive fishery. Given this request, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans sought views from existing competitive fishery access holders for Northern shrimp in SFA 0 regarding a possible expansion. Based on feedback received, the Department determined in October 2021 that further discussions on a possible expansion in SFA 0 would be beneficial. This issue was tabled at the Northern Shrimp

Advisory Committee (NSAC) and the opportunity to submit written comments was also provided by the Department.

The NWMB's recommendation from 2021 sought expanded access to the SFA 0 Northern shrimp fishery, including enterprises that currently have Nunavut sub-allocations, including Arctic Fishery Alliance (AFA), Baffin Fisheries Coalition (BFC), Cumberland Sound Fisheries Ltd. (CSFL), and Qikiqtaaluk Corporation (QC). It was expressed that expansion of this fishery to Nunavut enterprises previously excluded from SFA 0 would provide increased access and opportunity for Nunavut-based fisheries development.

The Department deems the recommendation of the Board to increase the access in SFA 0 to be still active, as a decision has not yet been made. Based on this, and input received from stakeholders, the Department will seek a decision from the Minister in 2022.

Science Information

Regular stock assessment surveys for Northern Shrimp are not conducted in SFA 0 as there has never been an active fishery in the area. SFA 0 was last assessed in 2010 based on surveys in 2006 and 2008 (Canadian Advisory Report 2010/024) (Summary in Appendix 2).

These surveys indicated that biomass indices were low. The fishable biomass index was 750 t (2006) and 1,100 t (2008) with female spawning stock biomass index of 580 t (2006) and 800 t (2008). A competitive TAC of 500 t, if fully taken, would result in an exploitation rate index of 40% (2008) to 70% (2006) based on the observed biomass at that time. Based on the biomass indices from 2006 and 2008, if the historic 500t TAC were set and fully taken in 2022, the potential exploitation rate would be high (66.7 per cent and 45.4 per cent, respective of the fishable biomass index considered).

With only two surveys, no biomass trends can be determined and current biomass levels and recruitment status remain uncertain. The area is not currently fished and based on the observed biomass, future prospects for a fishery are limited. Should industry express interest in fishing in this area, requests for science advice can be considered. There are no plans for future surveys at this time.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the TAC for SFA 0 be rolled over at 500 t for 2022.

In terms of allocations, the Department will present two general options to the Minister for decision in 2022, these being the following: 1) maintaining allocations solely to the offshore fleet; or, 2) expanded access that includes Nunavut sub-allocation holders along with existing entrants.

Summary of Request

In order to ensure NWMB advice may be fully considered as part of 2022 management decisions for the SFA 0 fishery, the Department is requesting from the Board:

- 1) Recommendation on the TAC for SFA 0.

The Department also offers an opportunity to adjust or re-submit the recommendation regarding expanded access in SFA 0 for 2022.

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Date: May 18, 2022

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of groundfish and shrimp administrative areas in Atlantic Canada (including Shrimp Fishing Area 0)

Appendix 2 – Summary: Assessment of Northern Shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*) in SFA 0, 2, 3 and Striped Shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*) in SFA 2, 3 and 4 west of 63°W (Science Advisory Report 2010/024)