

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR

Information:

Decision:

Recommendation: X

Issue: Carry Forward Provisions for the Greenland Halibut Fishery in Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Subarea 0 Offshore



Figure 1. Greenland Halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*).

Background

Over the years stakeholders have requested and encouraged the development of carry forward provisions for the Greenland halibut (GHL) commercial fishery allocations in NAFO Subarea (SA) 0. Stakeholders view carry forward provisions as another tool to better manage their commercial fishery allocations throughout the harvesting season. A map illustrating NAFO Subareas and Divisions relevant to the GHL fishery can be found in Appendix 1.

The ability to carry forward GHL allocations in Subarea SA 0 would provide harvesters with increased flexibility, allowing for greater adjustment to resource, operational, business, environmental, and market factors. This could also result in improvements to harvester safety, and would help to maximize the fishery's economic returns while being mindful of sustainability considerations.

The provisions being proposed is in line with the principles and requirements of *DFO's Quota Carry Forward Guidelines for Atlantic Canada (the Guidelines)*. *The Guidelines* were developed by DFO-Science and Resource Management to provide consistency and transparency when applying carry forward provisions to a fishery, and to ensure that sustainability of the resource is not compromised. *The Guidelines* are applicable to domestically managed quota based fisheries in Atlantic Canadian waters including northern waters, and must be based on acceptable precautionary approach principles.

As the SA 0+1 (offshore) GHL stock is transboundary and shared with Greenland, *the Guidelines* prescribe that carry forwards may only be allowed if agreed upon with relevant nations. In May 2024, Greenland amended its *Fisheries Act*, a domestic, legally binding legislation that entered into force on January 1, 2025. This Act now allows for the transfer of up to 25 per cent of the annual quota of an operator from or to the following quota year (i.e., carry forwards and borrowing) for all Greenlandic fisheries, including GHL in NAFO SA 1 (offshore). As the percentage allowed under the Greenlandic Act has the potential to exceed the maximum carry forward permitted in *the Guidelines* (i.e. 15 per cent of a fishery's total quota), the Department has determined that an agreement with Greenland is no longer required in order to proceed with carry forward provisions for the Canadian portion of the SA 0+1

(offshore) GHL stock.

Given the interest expressed by harvesters in the operational flexibilities carry forwards allow, and in consideration of the overarching benefits to the prosecution of the fishery, DFO is proposing that carry forward provisions for the GHL fishery in SA 0 be implemented starting in the 2026 fishing season. DFO is specifically proposing that in eligible carry forward years, licence holders would be entitled to carry forward the lesser of 15 per cent of their net allocation (the total of all incoming and outgoing in-season quota transfers, but not including amounts carried forward from a previous year) and the ending balance (quota minus catch) to the following fishing season, consistent with procedures already in place for various Atlantic fisheries. Quota may only be carried forward from, and to, the area in which it was originally set (e.g. from Division 0A to Division 0A). Consistent with *the Guidelines*, any allocation remaining from the previous fishing year (up to the 15 per cent maximum) will be automatically carried forward to the following year upon quota reconciliation. Quota that has been carried forward may only be prosecuted in the fishing season it has been carried forward into (it is not eligible to be carried forward more than once).

Science Information

GHl quota in SA 0 offshore is eligible to be carried forward from a management year where the SA 0+1 offshore GHl stock is assessed to be in the healthy zone of NAFO's Precautionary Approach (PA) Framework.

Consultation

The Eastern Arctic Groundfish Stakeholder Advisory Committee (EAGSAC) was created as one of a series of measures to ensure the fisheries governance regime for groundfish in the NAFO SA 0 is publicly accountable, predictable and transparent. It provides a forum for discussion and an opportunity for members to provide advice and recommendations to DFO on the management and policies related to SA0 GHl. EAGSAC membership includes Co-management Organizations, Rights Holders, Commercial Fishery Associations, Commercial Fishers, Environmental Organizations and Other Government Organizations.

The concept for the carry forward provisions were presented at the annual EAGSAC meeting in 2024 with subsequent discussions at the EAGSAC meeting in 2025. At the 2025 meeting EAGSAC members were generally supportive of adopting carry forward provisions for this fishery. Draft carry forward provisions were provided to EAGSAC members on August 18, 2025 to obtain their views and input. Feedback received to date show general support for the provisions.

Of note, the Government of Nunavut expressed their support for the application of carry forward provisions for this fishery, but also recommended development of a carry forward policy framework specifically tailored to Nunavut (as opposed to utilizing one based on guidelines developed for Atlantic Canada). It was felt that the policy framework under *the Guidelines* does not adequately reflect the unique circumstances, operational realities and governance structures that characterize Nunavut-adjacent fisheries such as the GHl fishery in SA 0.

Feedback received from the Nunavut Fisheries Association (NFA) acknowledged the flexibility that carry forward provisions would allow but was interested in increasing the 15% carry forward to 25% to match Greenlandic provisions.

Recommendation

Given the interest expressed by harvesters in the operational flexibilities carry forwards allow, and in consideration of the overarching benefits to the prosecution of the fishery, DFO is proposing that carry forward provisions for the GHL fishery in SA 0 be implemented (in line with the principles and requirements of *the Guidelines*) starting in the 2026 fishing season.

Specifically, in eligible carry forward years, licence holders would be entitled to carry forward the lesser of 15 per cent of their net allocation (the total of all incoming and outgoing in-season quota transfers, but not including amounts carried forward from a previous year) and the ending balance (quota minus catch) to the following fishing season. Quota may only be carried forward from, and to, the area in which it was originally set (e.g. from Division 0A to Division 0A). Any allocation remaining from the previous fishing year (up to the 15 per cent maximum) will be automatically carried forward to the following year upon quota reconciliation. Quota that has been carried forward may only be prosecuted in the fishing season it has been carried forward into (it is not eligible to be carried forward more than once).

As per Article 15, Part 3.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, DFO is seeking the advice of the NWMB for management decisions with respect to the development and implementation of Carry Forward Provisions for the GHL commercial fishery in SA 0.

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Date: August 29, 2025

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of groundfish and shrimp administrative areas in Atlantic Canada

