

APPENDIX 6

Consultation Summary: Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee (April 3-4, 2024) **2024-25 Total Allowable Catches for Northern and Striped Shrimp in the WAZ and EAZ**

A meeting of the Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee (NSAC) took place on April 3, 2024. The Department held a post-meeting with Indigenous participants on April 4, 2024. Meetings were well attended by groups that have direct interests in the WAZ and EAZ, namely:

- Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB)
- Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB)
- Nunavut Fisheries Association (NFA)
- Torngat Fish Producers Co-Op
- Qikiqtaaluk Corporation (QC)
- Northern Coalition (NC)
- NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC)
- Innu Nation
- Torngat Joint Fisheries Board (TJFB)
- Nunatsiavut Government (NG)
- Baffin Fisheries Coalition (BFC)
- Makivvik Corporation
- Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company

Other participants at NSAC included representatives of the offshore and inshore fleet, individual licence holders, provincial government representatives, and Oceans North (non-governmental organization).

The Department sought views on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for *Pandalus borealis* and *P. montagui* in the EAZ at the main NSAC table, with discussions on WAZ TACs reserved for the Indigenous post-meeting. DFO reminded NSAC participants of the NWMB and NMRWB's (the Boards') decision-making role in WAZ, and decision and recommendation role in the EAZ.

The Department encouraged Nunavut and Nunavik industry to make their views on TACs known to their respective Boards as part of the decision making process on 2024-25 TACs for Northern and Striped shrimp in the WAZ and EAZ.

2024-25 Total Allowable Catches:

During discussions on the EAZ and WAZ at the NSAC meeting, there was support for the application of the 2-step HDR to calculate 2024-25 TACs for *P. borealis* and *P. montagui*, in both the EAZ and WAZ.

- ***Eastern Assessment Zone:*** DFO presented an illustrative 2024-25 TAC of 8,513 for *P. borealis* and 2,464t for *P. montagui*.

- **Western Assessment Zone:** DFO presented an illustrative 2024-25 TAC of 4,186t for *P. borealis* and 15,384t for *P. montagui*.

Management Measures:

Discussion of NK-E and NK-W (EAZ-WAZ) boundary

- Makivvik Corporation revisited a request to amend the management unit lines between NK-E and NK-W, or another means to address challenges in accessing large shrimp aggregations situated on the management line.
 - DFO underlined the implications of changing a management unit that also defines distinct stock assessment areas (i.e. divides EAZ and WAZ).
 - Such a change would present a need for re-calculation of biomass over the time series, with implications on survey design for both species.
 - Further, DFO Science noted that the aggregation of the resource around the management unit/stock assessment boundary may not reflect a permanent tendency of the stock and it remains unclear whether this issue will persist as the stock fluctuates.
 - The group discussed the appropriateness of a working group to address this issue, with mixed support. Northern Coalition pointed to an ongoing process to review the appropriateness of current assessment units and to gain a better understanding of stock dynamics in the respective areas, which could contribute to and inform further discussion on this matter.

Discussion of EAZ-SFA 4 boundary

- TJFB proposed the formation of an industry-led working group to undertake a comprehensive (“10-year”) review and reflection on the implications of the boundary lines dividing the EAZ (DSW) with the northern boundary of Shrimp Fishing Area (SFA 4), and changes made in 2013.
 - TJFB called for meaningful engagement in such a working group from access holders, DFO Science and Resource Management.
 - Torngat Fish Producers Co-Op supported such a working group and review, noting no access to the EAZ for Nunatsiavut interest as a longstanding concern.
 - Other representatives did not support the establishment of a working group, noting this issue may not be appropriate for a full working group given the scope is limited to certain proponents.
 - The NSAC Chair noted potential limitations to internal DFO resources to engage in such a working group given additional priorities for this fishery over the coming year (e.g. model development, potential for Management Strategy Evaluation). The NSAC Chair committed to preparing a document to serve as a historical summary of this boundary issue to establish a common understanding. This draft would be circulated to the Committee for information.

Access and Allocations:

EAZ *P. montagui*

- CAPP supported applying the proposed 2-step HDR to set the overall TAC to help reduce fluctuations from the erratic nature of the fishery.
- Further, CAPP indicated the offshore fleet requires an allocation of 920t in the Davis Strait East/West (DSE/W) management units, and offered this could be implemented as a bycatch ‘allowance’.
 - It was proposed that this allowance represent a ‘soft limit’ that could be exceeded without implication to the directed *P. borealis* fishery in these areas. The allowance would be static to promote year-to-year stability.
 - CAPP added that the allowance request has been made for 3 years in a row now such that the risk of reaching a hard limit and unduly affecting the direct fishery remains.
 - CAPP confirmed that it would be willing to forgo an increase in the offshore bycatch quota in DSE/W that could be available under a higher TAC in 2024-25 (and future seasons) should DFO and co-management partners support conversion from a quota to an allowance.
 - CAPP suggested that where additional *P. montagui* quota was available beyond 920t for the broader EAZ, the remainder of the TAC could be allocated in NU/NK E, but that the opposite would also be true, in that when the TAC goes down, the reduction would come from the NU/NKE management units.
 - DFO recalled that co-management boards have authority to set harvest levels inside the NU/NK-E management units; establishing a bycatch allowance ‘off-the-top’ of the overall TAC for the EAZ would involve subsequent decisions from the Boards on the remaining quota.
- Northern Coalition, Makivvik Corporation and NFA suggested a need to consult more on the concept of a bycatch allowance for the offshore fleet in DSE/W, but were in principal supportive of the idea. The group indicated its interest in pursuing this discussion further with the offshore fleet.

Season bridging:

Season bridging was not raised at the NSAC table on April 3 due to time constraints, but was raised at the Indigenous meeting on April 4. DFO outlined that season bridging is currently available for the directed *P. borealis* quota in the EAZ and the *P. montagui* quota in the WAZ.

- DFO reminded the group that the Nunavut and Nunavik Boards make decisions inside settlement areas and that those decisions are needed to be able to modify the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) season bridging provisions that are applicable in the settlement areas.
- DFO noted that considering the timing of the next NWMB and NRWMB meetings, implementing any changes to the season bridging protocol for EAZ and WAZ is not expected to occur this year.
- DFO indicated since the pilot project was implemented for NU and NK entities in 2018, there have been calls from NU and NK industry to revisit various aspects of the protocol. The Department has committed to the Boards that it would complete the PA Framework for *P. borealis* stocks, including harvest decisions rules, before addressing season bridging. Given that a decision to modify season bridging is unlikely for this year, and

that *P. borealis* in the EAZ is in the healthy zone, the Department will be flexible in its assessment of any season bridging requests in Davis Strait. It was noted that Baffin Fisheries Coalition is disadvantaged in its ability to carry forward uncaught quota in Davis Strait compared to the other entities, which have additional bridging flexibility accrued via their offshore licences. The Department will maintain communication with Boards' staff on any requests and outcomes. DFO will continue discussions with Nunavut and Nunavik entities, as well as the offshore fleet .

- It was recommended to inform the Boards in the season bridging update that the current season bridging protocol for NU and NK is restrictive and to provide some interim allowances to be somewhat consistent with the southern areas.
- The Department will work generally with the offshore fleet and Nunavut and Nunavik industry to develop a season bridging protocol that respects and responds conservation and socio-economic considerations, and specifically with Nunavut and Nunavik entities for season bridging for NU and NK allocations. Issues to be addressed include amounts for carry forward and bridging for when the stock is in the Healthy, Cautious or Critical zones, deadlines, and applicable stocks.