

**An Examination of the Conditions and Considerations for the sustainability of the
Atlantic Canadian Groundfish Fisheries (Emphasis on cod)
Consultative process feedback questionnaire for consideration by stakeholders.**

Resource: (SILVER HAKE)

- What is the status of the stocks where you fish?

The status of the stock we fish appear to be in stable conditions however, more science work is needed in order to determine the number of possible different stocks that may be available and why the difference in age group from authorized fishing areas.

- Do current stock assessments by scientists reflect situation observed by harvesters?

As far as age groupings are concerned, science and harvesters are in agreement however, there needs to be more studies and why the different age groupings from authorized areas.

- What additional evaluations and research are required?

A DNA type testing is required in order to evaluate if different stocks exists on the Bay of Fundy/Scotian Shelf. Also, more research is required during recruitment of the stocks. Research is needed in the spring to evaluate the new juveniles coming into the fishery, summer research to evaluate spawning fish and areas of spawning and finally the fall to evaluate the fall spawn and recruitment from the summer spawn to evaluate natural mortality. At least 6 weeks of dedicated research is required for this stock.

- Are current fishing programmes (Sentinel, Stewardship and Collaborative) effective in tracking the recovery of local stocks?

NO!! Sentinel fisheries are basically a disguise for a commercial harvest and should have never been implemented. Scientific research testing various areas for the stock grounds and the scientific analysis of the harvest are probably a better and effective way to determine if the stock is rebounding/recovering.

- How can harvesters play a larger role in data and information collection?

Unfortunately, harvesters are interested in the bottom line. There needs to be an incentive for them to gather relevant biological data for further analysis by the Science community. Therefore, there needs to be a JPA from the DFO, CRA and industry whereby this exercise is recognized and the fishers can recoup some of their expenses incurred during this work. (DFO & CRA must discuss this approach)

- Since all groundfish are regulated by quota, at what level of quota should the fishery be closed?

EA's, ITQ quotas should be closed at a 95% level in order for the DFO to reconcile the number of companies or individuals.

Competitive, community quotas should be closed at 90% to ensure no over-runs.

Ecosystem:

- What are the major by-catches in your fishery? Is there a problem?

The major by-catches in our fishery are non regulated groundfish (red hake) and a small amount of small pelagics. Both pose no problems. No over-all by-catch in the fishery is 1% or less.

- Are there species at risk in your area? If so, what is the probability of your fishing harming them or their habitat?

There are no species at risk in our areas. The occasional one may be present however our separator grate with an opening over the net allows these to escape.

- Did you notice a change in belly content of fish over the last 10 years?

I have not seen any differences since 1979 having observed and sampled thousands at sea.

- What is the impact of seals on groundfish stocks in your area?

Although, not many seals are observed in the fishing grounds our stock are eaten by seals during their spawning time around Sable Island Bank.

- Are sensitive areas being adequately identified and protected?

The question is what is a sensitive area offshore? The DFO appear to be making a make work project with the AOI and eventually MPAs. In warm countries MPA are established only to protect fish and the environment for tourists. In our offshore waters who goes and dive in these areas ID by the DFO as AOI and MPA. This is a good coastal waters exercise.

- Are changes to gear required to protect productive areas and habitats?

Most definitely YES. You can see this in the Northern Shrimp and silver hake fisheries with the separator grate.

- What research is most needed to address the problems in understanding the role of groundfish fisheries in the Atlantic ecosystem, and in undertaking ecosystem-based management of these fisheries?

Predator-prey relationship.

Economics:

- What are the key factors that would contribute to the economic viability of your fishery?

The key factors would be a full scientific understanding of the fishery and management measures that allows flexibility and at the same time creates a sustainable fishery for future generations.

- What role should value added markets play in the future of the harvest strategy?

This is a processors area only and should not play any role of the harvest strategy . Having said this however, harvesters must ensure a quality product is delivered (raw material) for onshore processing. Smaller tows, better handling and storage of fish etc.

- Is current handling practices affecting quality in your area? What can be done to improve quality?

Quality is always an issue however, well equipped vessels and handling, storage practices have eliminated most of the quality issues. However, there are certain times of the year that quality becomes an issue with warm weather or spawn, feed in the fish.

- Should a comprehensive marketing plan be an essential component of a harvesting plan?

YES. You must have secured markets before your harvest starts. Doing otherwise will lead to fish going for meal or food for animals and no return to the harvester.

- Do you support the Ocean to Plate quality control and product tracing concept and practice? If so, how can it be applied in your fishery? If not, why not?

YES. We have this practice somewhat already in our fishery having converted fish holds, pens into tote boxes and slush ice. It's a start.

- If markets demand eco-labeling, what steps should be taken and who is responsible?

The fishery must get MSC certified and industry must take a lead role in the process with governments providing advice and some financial assistance to compete in an intense world economy.

Management:

- Management decisions should be made at what level? Provide examples.

Management decisions that do not affect national policies should be made at the local level.

Examples:

New fisheries that do not occur in any other region of DFO.

Observer coverage.

Management of Offshore fisheries should remain in the region not NHQ (Ottawa)

- Are you familiar with the Integrated Fishery Management Plans (IFMP) for your fishery? If so, does it work well?

We have no IFMP for our fishery. However one should be established.

- Is co-management or shared stewardship part of the management regime in your area?

NO

- How are other uses of ocean space and area-based management practices affecting your fishery?

Based on AOI/MPA there will be no room for any fishery on the Scotian Shelf in the next 20 years.

- What changes should be made in how groundfish are harvested in your area? Why?

Our stock is a wild stock and appear all over the Scotian Shelf. DFO along with industry should try and establish one or two more areas where stocks appear in a commercial basis.

- Are you satisfied with the level of input you have in the management of your fishery? If not, what can be done to improve your contribution?

The RAP and Advisory meetings does not give the majority of stakeholders enough say. More community meetings are required by the DFO, FM & Science. Representatives do not speak for all of industry but at times serve for self interest or the interest of a few.

- Is current fishing effort in balance with resource production?

There is still too much effort with the resources available in groundfish in general.

- What criteria should be met to move towards sustainability of the fishery?

Responsible management by industry and the DFO. Good solid science advice not shunned by some interest groups.

- Do you agree with the concept of a precautionary approach to fisheries management? When and how should it come into play?

Agree as long as the approach is justified with solid proof.
It should come into play when there is some doubt in the fishery/stock.

- Is the gear currently being used consistent with the catchability, by-catch, economics and ecosystem aspects of the groundfish fishery?

YES. However, industry and DFO should always look at new technology.

- Should certain gear types be encouraged or discouraged? Why?
What are the existing best practices in place in your fishery? What other practices can be applied

Certain gear types are essential in the capturing of some species however, others must be explored such as Danish seines for groundfish.