



July 18, 2022

The Honourable Joyce Murray
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard
15th Floor, Centennial Towers
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0E6

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Minister Murray:

RE: Extension of provisions for the bycatch of Juvenile redfish (*Sebastes mentella* and *Sebastes fasciatus*) in the Northern Shrimp Fishery in the Western Assessment Zone and the Eastern Assessment Zone until March 31, 2023

PROPOSAL FOR DECISION

The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) and the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) considered Fisheries and Oceans Canada's request regarding the extension of modified Conditions of Licence in the northern shrimp fishery during their respective regularly meetings in June 2022. Fisheries and Oceans Canada recommended that the modified Conditions of Licence be applied in the Western and Eastern Assessment Zones until March 31, 2023.

NWMB AND NMRWB DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the NWMB In-Camera Meeting on June 17, 2022 (IC002-2022) and the NMRWB Meeting on June 16, 2022 (#55), the Boards reviewed Fisheries and Oceans Canada's submission, as well as other relevant information. Having reached the same conclusions, the NWMB and NMRWB are providing this joint letter.

Assuming the Boards have the jurisdiction to make a decision about conditions of licence, the Boards consider they do not have enough information to justify engaging a decision-making process on this matter, at this time. The Boards request more information particularly on the status of the northern redfish stocks in the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR), the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA), and their respective

adjacent waters, as well as on the implications of increase redfish bycatch on the species and associated ecosystem.

REASONS FOR THE BOARDS' DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boards first want to commend the ongoing work by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other stakeholders on their experimental studies of various Nordmøre grid bar spacings to reduce redfish bycatch. The Boards are pleased to see that industry members voluntarily participated in this experimental study, and that more research is planned this upcoming year.

Despite this, the Boards recall this issue has come up at least two times previously. Between November 2020 and December 2021, Fisheries and Oceans Canada repeatedly made Interim Decisions (pursuant to *Nunavut Agreement* section 5.3.24 and *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement* section 5.5.22) to amend the Conditions of Licence. In those instances, Fisheries and Oceans Canada cited urgent and unusual circumstances to justify the modification of conditions of licence, or their extension. Despite those other instances, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has not provided very much additional information despite now seeking Board decisions on the modified conditions of licence. The Boards do not support the repeated or prolonged use of Interim Decisions as a viable solution to address redfish bycatch without a clear indication of the Board jurisdiction being relied on and sufficient evidence for the Boards to fulfill their responsibilities.

In reaching their respective decisions, the Boards considered Fisheries and Oceans Canada submission, input from stakeholders, and other relevant information. The Boards considered the lack of knowledge about these species in the NMR, NSA, and adjacent waters. The Boards are concerned that in the absence of adequate scientific information concerning redfish in NMR, NSA, and adjacent waters, the increased allowance in redfish take is not in line with a precautionary approach. The Boards request more information particularly on the status of the northern redfish stocks in the Nunavik Marine Region, the Nunavut Settlement Area and their respective adjacent waters, as well as on the implications of increased redfish bycatch on the species and associated ecosystem. The Boards wish to highlight the importance of implementing a survey dedicated to redfish as soon as possible. More fulsome information specific to redfish in northern waters is required to make well-informed decisions and recommendations. This is particularly true if the Boards are to make an informed decision regarding redfish management in the Western Assessment Zone, where the amended Conditions of Licence have never been applied.

CONCLUSION

The NWMB and NMRWB look forward to continued collaboration with co-management partners in facilitating and coordinating decisions and recommendations regarding marine resources. Should you have any questions,

concerns, or require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact the Boards' staff at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Joshua T. Arreak
Acting Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board



Iola Metuq
Chairperson
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

Cc. **Anika Bychok**, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Derek Mahoney, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Paula Smith, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Adamie Delisle-Alaku, Makivik Corporation
Tony Wright, Makivik Corporation
Brian Burke, Nunavut Fisheries Association
Jeff Maurice, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.



Mr. Joshua T. Arreak
Acting Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

Mr. Iola Metuq
Chairperson
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

SENT VIA EMAIL

RE: Extension of provisions for the bycatch of Juvenile redfish (*Sebastes mentella* and *Sebastes fasciatus*) in the Northern Shrimp Fishery in the Western Assessment Zone and Eastern Assessment Zone until March 31, 2023

Dear Mr. Arreak and Mr. Metuq:

Thank you for your correspondence of July 18, 2022 regarding the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) and Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) (the Boards) decisions and recommendations regarding Fisheries and Oceans Canada's proposed extension of modified Conditions of Licence to address Redfish bycatch in the Eastern Assessment Zone (EAZ) and Western Assessment Zone (WAZ) until March 31, 2023 which was presented at the NWMB's Regular Meeting (RM002-2022) and the NMRWB's Regular Meeting (#55) on June 15, 2022.

As requested to facilitate the Boards' decision-making processes, although unfortunately not available at this time, updated information regarding Redfish stocks within the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA) and the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR) as well as the implications of increased Redfish bycatch to the species and associated ecosystem will be shared with Board staff as it becomes available. Based on the Boards' recommendations and recognizing their decision-making authority, DFO will refrain from applying modified licence conditions in the NSA and the NMR portions of the EAZ, as well as the WAZ, and current licence conditions will continue to apply.

Additionally, DFO staff will continue to engage Board staff through the Redfish bycatch working group, and will share information from the 2022 experimental study to reduce Redfish bycatch currently being undertaken by industry, as information becomes available.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact DFO staff, and thank you for your continued collaboration in the management of fisheries resources.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Mahoney for

Todd Williams,
Chair, Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee

c.c.: Derek Mahoney, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Paula Smith, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Anika Bychok, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Adamie Delisle-Alaku, Makivik Corporation
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