Proposal by Norway and Russia

Amendment of the Recommendation on Shrimp Fisheries in the NEAFC Regulatory Area (Rec. 11:2015)

Background

At the annual meeting in 2015, the Commission adopted a recommendation requiring each Contracting Party to ensure that its vessels use sorting grids when fishing for shrimp in ICES sub-areas I and II of the Regulatory Area.

It is recognized that it is likely that the use of shrimp trawls may have a negative impact on the biological environment by the capture of non-target species.

Pursuant to article 4 of the NEAFC Convention, the Commission shall take due account of the impact of fisheries on other species and marine ecosystems. The introduction of mandatory use of sorting grids in shrimp fisheries partly addresses this obligation as a grid directs possible bycatches of fish through a fish outlet at the top. It is well-known that bycatches in shrimp fisheries consists of species/stocks regulated by NEAFC, while others are not. The latter ones are, however, important to all NEAFC parties through bilateral or trilateral arrangements. The species/stocks are negatively impacted by the use of a collecting bag that are attached to and cover the escape vent and thereby retaining bycatches of fish.

Through decades, Russia and Norway, as coastal States, have made considerable efforts to rebuild many of these stocks. Both Norwegian and Russian vessels are subject to strict regulations in order to keep the stocks at sustainable levels. One of the measures imposed is a ban on the use of collecting bags in the shrimp fishery both when fishing in national EEZs and in international waters. The use of collecting bags by some vessels of other Contracting Parties when fishing for shrimp in ICES sub-areas 1 and 2 of the Regulatory Area are clearly undermining the effort made by the coastal States to rebuild many of these stocks.

Furthermore, the objective of Recommendation 11:2015 is not met by the current measure. Norway and Russia would like to rectify the situation by proposing to include a ban on the use of collecting bags in the shrimp fisheries in ICES sub-areas 1 and 2.
Proposal (amendment in italic):

Recommendation on Shrimp Fisheries in the NEAFC Regulatory Area (Rec. 11:2015)

The Commission hereby adopts the following recommendation pursuant to Articles 5 and 7 of the Convention:

“Each Contracting Party shall ensure that its vessels use sorting grids when fishing for shrimps with trawl in ICES sub-areas 1 and 2 of the Regulatory Area, and shall prohibit its vessels to attach a collecting bag to the fish outlet of the grid. The spacing between the bars of the sorting grid shall not exceed 22 mm.”