
News Release

Conservatives fail to achieve fisheries conservation needs at NAFO

(September 29, 2009) Ottawa, ON – Federal Fisheries Minister Gail Shea has once again failed to bring forward minimum conservation requirements for fish stocks on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland during the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) meetings which were held in Bergen, Norway, from September 21-25, 2009, according to Liberal fisheries critic Gerry Byrne.

Four fish stocks were given special consideration during the NAFO meetings due to their fragile state, two of which have been under a complete fishing moratorium for several years. Byrne said the result of all this attention, however, was not good for the long-term health of those stocks.

“One offshore cod stock, known as 3M cod, has been under a complete fishing moratorium since 1999”, Byrne noted. “This year, NAFO reopened this fishery setting a total allowable catch of 5,500 tonnes despite a specific conservation recommendation from NAFO’s own scientific council that it should be no more than 4,120 tonnes warning that the results from those ten years of moratorium would be put in jeopardy if it went any higher.”

3M Redfish, another reopening after years of a fishing moratorium was set at 10,000 despite a NAFO scientific council recommendation of no more than 8,500 tonnes. Greenland Halibut, or turbot as it is commonly known, was set at 16,000 tonnes despite a NAFO scientific council report recommending no more than 14,000 tonnes be harvested. The recommendation for 3NLO skate was 6,000 tonnes. NAFO set the quota at 12,000 tonnes.

Byrne said that it is unbelievable that fisheries minister Gail Shea would report results like these as “progress”.

“It is even more unbelievable that the official position of her government remains that Canada has been asserting ‘custodial management’ of the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks as well as the Flemish Cap since 2007. This government can’t even get NAFO to adhere to basic conservation requirements for offshore stocks let alone accept such a false and misleading claim?”

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