

ENGOS Disagree over Outcome of NAFO Meeting/ Meanwhile Overfishing Continues

Written by Scott Parsons, Editorial

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I read two press releases tonight about the outcome of this week's NAFO meeting. The WWF proclaims that: "NAFO Commits to an Effective Rebuilding Plan for Grand Banks Cod: Three More Years of Grand Banks Cod Moratoria". It praises Canada for taking "the lead at NAFO by developing a plan to create a robust rebuilding strategy for depleted stocks, including essential elements such as rebuilding targets, timelines, and harvest control rules." Knowing that NAFO has been a toothless tiger for decades, I shook my head in disbelief. The moratorium has been in effect for years and the EU has continued to ignore bycatch restrictions thereby rendering the moratorium meaningless. I saw nothing to indicate that this will change.

Then I saw another release from the Ecology Action Center and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition headlined: "Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization Comes up Short on Protecting the Deep Sea." They were disappointed with the failure of NAFO countries to live up to their international commitments to protect the high seas. Matthew Gianni of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition observed: "We're particularly disappointed with the European Union countries. The EU has the largest high seas trawl fleet in the Northwest Atlantic and has repeatedly highlighted the importance of conducting impact assessments for deep-sea fisheries. The bottom line is that NAFO countries will be permitting fishing in 2011 in contravention of the UN resolutions."

It seems that the WWF, now a large international bureaucracy, has been caught up in its own rhetoric. It has lost sight of the meaning of conservation on the Grand Banks. Its press release read like it could have been written by DFO.

The reality is that NAFO has again failed to take binding meaningful actions to end EU overfishing. The WWF is now complicit in that failure.

TAGS: NAFO, Grand Banks cod, overfishing, WWF, Ecology Action Center, Deepsea Conservation Coalition, sustainability, sustainable, fisheries, fishing

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