Newfoundland union questions report stating Atlantic cod on brink of extinction

Written by Scott Parsons
Thursday, 06 May 2010 18:08

Editorial

The Newfoundland FFAW union is questioning the COSEWIC report stating that Atlantic cod are on the brink of extinction. According to to a Canadian Press report, Union President Earle McCurdy contends that while some stocks are still struggling, others are growing. He goes further and states that "any suggestion that cod are declining in all fishing areas is completely unwarranted."

In response Jeff Hutchings, speaking for COSEWIC, says that, while there are some positive numbers for Northern cod stocks, that's not the case with other stocks in the region.The COSEWIC assessment indicates that every cod stock in Atlantic Canada is at or below established conservation limits.

It is an established fact that Canada's Atlantic cod stocks are at an extremely low level. Mr. McCurdy's challenge to the COSEWIC report is part of a well-established industry pattern of questioning any scientific assessment, including that of DFO scientists, indicating the necessity for a precautionary approach. In this instance Mr. McCurdy is pandering to those who want to ignore the facts and continue to fish stocks for which all removals should be prohibited. Conservation is obviously low on his list of priorities. This is the kind of attitude which contributed to the collapse of Atlantic cod stocks in the late 1980s-early 1990s and keeps them at low levels nearly 20 years later and stymies attemps to achieve sustainable fisheries.

The time is long overdue to face the facts. Fishermen and fish plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador deserve better leadership.

Scott Parsons, Ph.D., SF Website Administrator

Tags: Atlantic cod, COSEWIC, Earle Mccurdy, FFAW, sustainable, fisheries, conservation,fisheries management

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