

## Atlantic Groundfish Council recommends rollover of total allowable catch for south coast cod

(January 13, 2021 – St. John’s, NL) – Today, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) held its annual Groundfish Advisory Council meeting where industry stakeholders discuss a variety of groundfish stocks, including 3Ps cod located off the south coast of Newfoundland.

“The Atlantic Groundfish Council’s recommendation for the 2021-2022 3Ps cod fishery is a rollover of the 2020-2021 total allowable catch (TAC) at 2,691 mt,” says Executive Director, Kris Vascotto. “This recommendation is consistent with AGC’s long-standing commitment to responsible decisions that respect science advice and help enable a sustainable fishery for generations to come.”

Following a [controversial assessment](#) introduced last year, AGC successfully advocated for a significant reduction in catch for 2020-2021. That reduction, combined with the recent positive science assessment which suggested that a rollover in catch should lead to growth, gives AGC comfort that a further reduction in catch this coming year is not necessary.

“In fact, all industry representatives in attendance agreed that a rollover is appropriate,” Vascotto added. “This is in line with the principles of sustainability that is valued by Canada and by customers around the world. Consensus from industry on this is encouraging.”

This is an important fishery for AGC members, their employees on vessels and in plants, as well as to rural economies. Although the offshore sector’s share of the total allowable catch is only 12%, that share directly secures hundreds of local jobs, indirectly benefits hundreds more and ensures year-round cod supply to vital European markets.

About 225 of those local jobs are at Icewater Seafoods’ cod plant in Arnold’s Cove, NL. “Yes, the plant is operating below half of its capacity, but the best approach for our workers, our communities and the harvesters we buy from, is patience,” emphasizes Alberto Wareham, President and CEO. “We remain committed to keeping the health of the stock at the forefront and are optimistic that we will see more substantive growth in the coming years.”

While waiting for nature to cooperate, AGC and its partner, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, continue their action plan supporting the Fishery Improvement Project launched in 2017. Focusing on gaps in 3Ps science and management, this project seeks to prepare the stock for eventual Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) recertification once the stock returns to historic norms of productivity. An important component is a science-based rebuilding plan which DFO has committed to produce. The AGC looks forward to working with other industry stakeholders and DFO towards its completion.

Following this week’s meeting, DFO will decide on Canada’s position heading into negotiations with France in March (Canada holds 84.4% of the TAC and France holds 15.6% of the stock in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon). The quotas for the upcoming year (April 2021-March 2022) will be set following those negotiations.

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**About the Atlantic Groundfish Council**

The Atlantic Groundfish Council is a non-profit industry association representing year-round groundfish harvesters in Atlantic Canada. Its members employ thousands of people, in mostly year-round jobs, in rural communities throughout Atlantic Canada. The Council contributes to research that will improve the sustainability and management of groundfish fisheries by actively supporting science, sustainability certifications and responsible management.