DATE: 02-09-2024

MEMORANDUM: For Distribution

FROM: Michael Pentony

Regional Administrator, U.S. Co-Chair

Douglas Wentzell

Regional Director General, Canadian Co-Chair

SUBJECT: Distribution of the September 13, 2023, U.S./Canada Transboundary Resources Steering Committee Summary

Attached is the final summary of the September 13, 2023 Steering Committee meeting held in person at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Halifax, NS and via teleconference. Should you have any questions, please contact Marianne Randall (978-675-2188, [Marianne.Randall@noaa.gov](mailto:Marianne.Randall@noaa.gov)) or Maggie Bunbury (902-499-8452, [Maggie.Bunbury@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Maggie.Bunbury@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)).

\*U.S. Distribution

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Ian McIsaac, Industry, GOMAC Co-Chair

Lise Kay, DFO

Francine Desharnais, DFO

Doug Wentzell, DFO Regional Director General, Maritimes Region, Canadian Co-Chair

**Canada/United States (U.S.) Transboundary Resources Steering Committee**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**September 13, 2023**

**Record of Discussion**

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| ***Participants*** | |
| *Co-Chairs* | |
| **NAME** | **POSITION** |
| Mike Pentony | Co-Chair & Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) |
| Doug Wentzell | Co-Chair & Regional Director General, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) - Maritimes Region (MAR) |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **NAME** | **POSITION AND/OR ORGANIZATION** |  | | |
| *Canadian Participants:* | |
| Irene Andrushchenko | Lead, Cod, Pollock, Silver Hake Unit, DFO-MAR Science |
| Ray Belliveau | President, Charlesville Fisheries Ltd., Gulf of Maine Advisory Committee (GOMAC) Industry Co-Chair |
| Melanie Barrett | Aquatic Science Biologist, DFO-MAR Science |
| Maggie Bunbury | Policy Advisor, DFO-MAR Policy & Economics (P&E) |
| Vanessa Byrne (Observer) | Director of Fisheries Management and Science, Atlantic Groundfish Council |
| Kathryn Cooper-MacDonald | Senior Advisor, DFO-MAR Fisheries Management (FM) |
| Alain D’Entremont | President, Scotia Harvest Inc., Transboundary Management Guidance Committee (TMGC) Co-Chair |
| Michelle Greenlaw | Head, Groundfish, Pelagic & Secondary Species, DFO-MAR Science |
| Lise Kay | Policy Advisor, DFO Fisheries Policy, National Headquarters |
| Heidi MacDonald | A/Manager, DFO-MAR P&E |
| Tara McIntyre | Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC) Co-Chair, Aquatic Science Biologist, DFO-MAR Science |
| Ian McIsaac | President, Seafood Producers of Nova Scotia, GOMAC Industry Co-Chair |
| Corinne Pomerleau (Observer) | Manager, Population Ecology Division, DFO-MAR Science |
| Sara Quigley | A/Director Resource Management and Licensing, DFO-MAR FM |
| Heidi Schaefer | SAR (Species At Risk) WG Co-Chair, DFO-MAR Aquatic Ecosystems (AE) |
| *U.S. Participants:* | |
| Peter Christopher | Supervisory Policy Analyst, NMFS-GARFO Sustainable Fisheries Division (SFD) |
| Jean Higgins | SAR WG Co-Chair, NMFS-GARFO Protected Resource Division |
| Marianne Randall | Policy Analyst, NMFS-GARFO National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) |
| Eric Reid | Council Member, New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) |
| Daniel Salerno | Council Member, NEFMC and Sector Manager for Northeast Fishery Sectors V and XI |
| Michael Simpkins | Division Director, NMFS-Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Resource Evaluation and Assessment Division (READ) |
| Spencer Talmage | Fishery Management Specialist, NMFS-GARFO SFD |
| Tara Trinko-Lake | Deputy Director, NMFS-NEFSC READ |
| Cate O’Keefe | Executive Director, NEFMC |

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| ***Agenda Items and Corresponding Discussion Notes*** | | | | |
| 1. | **Opening Remarks** | | Leads: Co-Chairs | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:** Co-Chairs welcomed participants.  The U.S. Co-Chair provided the following opening remarks:  The U.S. side has had a few staffing changes since the last meeting. Tara Trinko Lake is officially back in her role as TRAC Co-Chair, replacing Talya tenBrink. Dan Salerno is the new TMGC Co-Chair (Libby Etrie was the previous Co-Chair), and Eric Hansen recently joined the TMGC. Lastly, Dr. Cate O’Keefe is the new Executive Director of the New England Fishery Management Council, the position previously held by Tom Nies.  A few weeks prior to this meeting, U.S. and Canadian staff met in person for the first time in several years to discuss coordination on North Atlantic Right Whale (NARW) recovery issues as part of the bilateral working group. While conservation efforts continue to be underway for both countries, this in-person meeting and the sharing of information was a good reminder that recovery goals for this population depend on progress in reducing risk to these whales from both countries. As the upcoming calving season approaches, there is optimism that continued coordination will help support and enhance these recovery efforts.  For groundfish, Framework Adjustment 65 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan was published in mid-August and set the fishing year 2023 quotas for our shared groundfish stocks, as recommended by TMGC. For EGB haddock, Framework 65 implemented a quota of 1,520 mt, selected by the NEFMC.  Offshore wind energy development along the east coast of the U.S. continues to be a significant issue that requires a lot of staff time and resources to manage. NMFS works with a partner agency, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), to ensure NOAA trust resources (fisheries, protected species, and habitat) as well as fishing industry and communities are considered in the development of wind projects. In the Gulf of Maine, BOEM is in the process of approving a small research lease off the coast of Portland and designating wind energy areas throughout the Gulf for commercial leasing. Those should both be finalized by the end of 2023.  The Canadian Co-Chair provided the following opening remarks:  The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has a new Minister, the Honourable Diane Lebouthillier. Minister Lebouthillier is Member of Parliament for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine and the former Minister of National Revenue.  In 2023, there have been zero North Atlantic Right Whale (NARW) sightings in the Maritimes Region as of today. There have been three NARW sighted entangled in Canadian waters in 2023; however only one is a new entanglement, the other two are re-sightings of known entanglements.  The Department has a new multi-year Collaborative Agreement with the Atlantic Groundfish Council to enable the co-development and execution of science activities in Eastern Canada. The data collected over the three-year agreement (2023-2025) will help inform fisheries management decisions, support Canada’s international obligations, and enable the sustainable growth of Canada’s seafood industry. | | | |
| 2. | **Discussion of 2023 Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC) Results – Yellowtail Flounder Update** | | Lead: Tara Trinko Lake | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:**  The U.S. TRAC Co-Chair gave an update on Georges Bank yellowtail flounder. Combined Canadian and U.S. catches in 2022 were 15 metric tonnes (mt). The Canadian catch of 4 mt was 5% of the 78 mt quota, with landings less than 1 mt and estimated discards of 3 mt from the sea scallop dredge fishery. U.S. catches were 11 mt, with less than 1 mt of landings and 10 mt of discards.  The DFO bottom trawl survey catch rates were the fourth lowest in 36 years. The National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) spring 2023 bottom trawl survey results were not available, and the NMFS fall 2022 bottom trawl survey catch rates were the second lowest in 59 years. There was a lack of abundance of age 6+ fish in both the DFO and NMFS fall 2022 surveys.  The three bottom trawl surveys have shown that recent recruitment has been generally below average with both fewer young fish and fewer old fish.  The average survey biomass for 2023 (the 2022 NMFS fall and 2023 DFO surveys) was 917 mt, which is below the lower limit set for the Limiter (lower limit: 1,000 mt; upper limit: 7,300 to 8,500 mt). TMGC agreed that if biomass falls below the lower limit a linear decrease in F (fishing mortality) will be used to produce catch advice. The resulting catch advice from this approach is 168 mt.  The declining trend in survey biomass to low levels, despite reductions in catch to historical low amounts, indicates a poor state of the resource. Recent catch is low relative to the biomass estimated from the surveys. Fishing does not appear to be a major driver of stock status currently. The TRAC recommended continued low exploitation to allow for the possibility of rebuilding. | | | |
| 3. | **Discussion of 2023 TRAC Results – Cod Update** | | Lead: Tara McIntyre | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:**  The Canadian TRAC co-chair provided an update on Eastern Georges Bank Atlantic cod.  Combined Canada/U.S. catches in 2022 were 363 mt, including 20 mt of discards, against a quota of 571 mt. Canadian 2022 catches were comprised of landings of 309 mt, discards in the groundfish fishery of 7 mt, and discards in the scallop fishery of 10 mt. U.S. 2022 catches totalled landings of 34 mt and discards of 3 mt. There was a decrease in landings for both countries last year.  The 2022 NMFS fall survey showed a species distribution that was consistent with previous years. The 2022 NMFS spring survey showed unexpected catches of age 3+ fish in the southwestern portion of Eastern Georges Bank. The 2022 NMFS fall survey showed a second year in a row with a large number of age 1 fish and continues to show not many mature fish (age 3+). The fall survey demonstrated a high abundance of age 1 fish in the fall.  Younger fish are exhibiting only good growth (no slow growers) in recent years. This observation has had no impact on advice but is something to monitor as these fish age.  Available survey and fishery indicators generally remained consistent with the previous year: productivity of the stock remains low and there is no notable change in the state of the stock. The updated data showed no major departure from the range used for the assumptions of length-weight, growth, and maturity in the DLMtool (Data Limited Methods tool). Based on the approved management procedures selected by the TMGC, the advice for 2024 is 520 mt and remains appropriate.  The current application of the DLMtool is only intended as a short-term solution and should be replaced or supplemented with at least one functioning population model as soon as possible.  The bordering and overlapping stocks are still in the Critical Zone; there are some signs of improvement in condition, but natural mortality on older ages remains high. This was determined from a Canadian update run of the model for 4X5Y cod. The U.S. has not conducted an assessment for Georges Bank cod since last year.  **Discussion:**  The DFO co-chair asked if there is any sense of what could be driving the good growth pattern for young fish. DFO Science responded that some changes are also being seen in the other species at the same time. DFO is not at the point where we can definitively say what is driving the number of young fish.  The Canadian TMGC co-chair noted that by looking at the time series, it can be seen that this is the fastest growing fish in the last 10 years. This is the first time this has been seen in a cod stock in a long time. Cod, pollock, and haddock are all showing an improving trend since 2018.  DFO FM noted that it is important that we see these fish get to older stages. | | | |
| 4. | **Discussion of 2023 TRAC Results – Haddock Update** | | Lead: Tara McIntyre | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:**  The Canadian TRAC co-chair provided an update on Eastern Georges Bank (EGB) haddock.  The total catch of EGB haddock in 2022 was 5,477 metric tonnes (mt) of the 14,100 mt combined Canada/U.S. quota. Haddock discards from the Canadian scallop fishery and the U.S. groundfish fishery were estimated at 7 and 8 mt, respectively. Catches reached a peak in 2009 at 19,855 mt and have declined since then as the outstanding 2003 year class moved through the fishery. There was another peak as the 2010 year class entered the fishery in 2015. Catches have remained high as the 2013 year class became available to the fishery. In the last two years, catches have declined.  For 2022, the average biomass index was 19,341 mt (based on U.S. surveys, there was no DFO survey in 2022). The 2023 DFO survey catch was 56,922 mt which included a large tow in 5Z1. The NMFS fall survey and DFO surveys showed an increase in the biomass index in the most recent surveys, while the 2022 NMFS spring survey exhibited a decline. The 2023 NMFS spring survey results were unavailable. The NMFS fall and DFO surveys show consistent trends, and the NMFS spring survey did not pick up large year classes as well.  There were no fish older than nine years old in the 2022 NMFS spring and fall surveys and no fish older than 10 in the 2023 DFO survey. | | | |
| 5. | **Groundfish Allocations** | | Lead: Tara Trinko-Lake | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:**  The Canadian TRAC co-chair provided an update on allocation shares for Canada and the U.S. on Georges Bank through fishing year 2024.  For 2022, the resource distribution for each of the three species for the U.S. was 27% cod, 30% haddock, and 36% yellowtail flounder. This means Canadian resource distribution was 73% cod, 70% haddock, and 64% yellowtail flounder.  The 2024 allocation shares for the U.S. are 29% cod, 31% haddock, and 42% yellowtail. The 2024 allocation shares for Canada are 71% cod, 69% haddock, and 58% yellowtail. | | | |
| 6. | **Transboundary Management Guidance Committee (TMGC) Report** | | Leads: Alain d’Entremont Daniel Salerno | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:**  The TMGC Canadian and U.S. co-chairs gave a report on the TMGC meetings that took place September 11th and 12th, 2023.  The U.S. TMGC co-chair made note that their survey vessel, the Bigelow, will be going in for service in the near future, likely in 2027. An idea put forward by NOAA leadership was to commission the Bigelow’s sister ship, the Pisces, to fill in while upgrades are underway. The growing footprint of the offshore wind industry will have to be taken into consideration as it limits where surveys can take place without modification. The reliability of the Bigelow long-term is unknown so the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel group is trying to develop contingency plans.  The following are the joint recommendations put forward by the TMGC for 2024:  EGB cod   * Joint TAC – 520 mt * Canada TAC – 369 mt * U.S. TAC – 151 mt   EGB haddock   * Joint TAC – 10,000 mt * Canada TAC – 6,900 mt * U.S. TAC – 3,100 mt   GB yellowtail flounder   * Joint TAC – 168 mt * Canada TAC – 97 mt * U.S. TAC – 71 mt   At the TMGC meetings, a discussion took place on how to improve the TRAC process. A recommendation from this discussion was to establish a working group whose mission would be to develop recommendations for how to provide transboundary advice and make or coordinate transboundary management decisions going forward. Working group meetings will be held face-to-face. The NEFMC has offered to fund facilitation. Proposed members of the working group would include TMGC co-chairs, TRAC co-chairs, NMFS/DFO Science and Management Leads, TRAC Assessment Science Representatives (leads or science managers), and a NEFMC member. The working group will give a presentation of a recommendation document at the April 2024 TMGC and Steering Committee intercessional and will conduct a case study using EGB cod.  **Discussion:**  The Canadian TMGC co-chair noted that the idea of the working group expands on the work both TMGC and TRAC have started previously when the use of multi-year assessments was discussed. Now with new model frameworks, the group may be able to look at a multi-year or other process that will free up science resources.  The NEFMC representative explained that this is already a relatively large group so it will be necessary to choose wisely when deciding who will be at this table. Once this is completed and the cod case study is done, the group can obtain even more lessons learned and improve the process. Two-step funding and a longer term plan may be required. | | | |
| 7. | **TRAC 2024 Terms of Reference and Future Meeting Schedule** | Leads: Tara Trinko Lake and Tara McIntyre | | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:** TRAC co-chairs shared the draft 2024 TRAC terms of reference and identified dates for future TRAC meetings.  Dates for 2024 TRAC meetings have been chosen for July 16th-18th in Massachusetts. | | | |
| 9. | **Other Business as Needed** | | Leads: All | |
| **Highlights/Outcome:** Members discussed other business as needed.  The Canadian TRAC co-chair noted that TRAC is looking at mid-November for a peer review of the 5Z Cod Framework. Initial meetings with input from stakeholders will be conducted through the advisory committee. Timelines are being finalized so invitations will be shared soon. TRAC has not set up timing but noted a final peer review to be considered in the spring.  The U.S. TRAC co-chair noted that four assessments were brought forward and reviewed. All four assessments passed peer review. The TRAC working group meeting will likely be held in the next couple of weeks, hopefully by early October. | | | |
| 10. | **Species at Risk Working Group Updates** | | Leads: Jean Higgins and Heidi Schaefer | |
|  | **Highlights/Outcome:** Species at Risk (SAR) working group co-chairs provided updates.  The U.S. co-chair provided updates on the following:  Proposed Amendments to the Vessel Speed Rule  Still working towards making a final determination by the end of this year following the proposed rule from summer 2022.  Separate from the proposed rule but vessel related, NOAA Fisheries is also seeking to foster new technologies to reduce the risk of vessel strikes with large whales including endangered NARW. NOAA Fisheries plans to host a public right whale vessel strike risk reduction technology workshop in Washington, DC this spring - the dates for this workshop are currently being shifted due to a conflict, but the new dates will be forwarded to partners as soon as they’re identified. (Since the Steering Committee meeting the new dates have been announced as March 5, 2024 – March 7, 2024. More information can be found [here](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/event/north-atlantic-right-whale-vessel-strike-risk-reduction-technology-workshop?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_source=North+Atlantic+Right+Whale+Consortium+List&utm_campaign=171fb35719-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_02_14_02_55_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4485741029-171fb35719-372783502).)  Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team  In May, updates were provided to the committee noting that rulemaking plans for the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team were shifted due to the Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2023 (which made the Lobster and Jonah crab fishery compliant with the Endangered Species Act /Marine Mammal Protection Act until December 31, 2028). As a result, NOAA is shifting efforts on rulemakings to reduce risk from the Atlantic gillnet and non-lobster trap/pot fisheries and aiming for a proposed rule this spring.  Additionally, NOAA is continuing to prioritize efforts to advance ropeless and other technological solutions, as well as prioritizing survey and other data collection to improve model inputs on right whale and fishery distribution to support future rulemaking.  Northeast U.S. Implementation Team  The team met this July in Boston. The team heard presentations on climate and ecosystem research as well as aquaculture management. They also discussed wind energy and regional monitoring efforts.  The Population Evaluation Tool (PET) Subgroup conducted a Center for Independent Experts review of draft Population Viability Analysis (PVA). The PET Subgroup is working towards finalizing the PVA report this year.  The Canadian co-chair provided updates on the following:  North Atlantic Right Whales  The majority of NARW detections and sighting in Canadian waters have been in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. DFO science began its aerial surveillance efforts on April 13th, with the first NARW sighting in Canadian waters being reported on May 7th. As of September 6th, 2023 there have been 855 NARW visual encounters in Canadian waters by aircraft or boat (for a total of 1,068 NARWs sighted, including duplicates) and 1,820 definite NARW near real-time acoustic detections made by specialized buoy systems and automated underwater vehicles called gliders. The source of the validated detections (visual and acoustic) are collected by several government departments (e.g., DFO, CCG, TC, Parks Canada, DND) as well as non-governmental partners (e.g., NGO, Academia) and the public and submitted to DFO science for addition to and visualization in Whale Insight (<https://gisp.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/apps/WhaleInsight/eng/?locale=en>), all in near-real time. As of September 5th, DFO Science has made preliminary ID’s (i.e., meaning that they still require some Quality Assurance/Quality Control) of 133 individuals including 4 mother/calf pairs in Canadian waters. This is based on reviewing photographs taken by government platforms (aircraft, boat, drones) and select trusted sources only.  To date, in 2023 (as of September 5th), the DFO seasonal closure area (closed until November 15, 2023) in the Gulf of St. Lawrence covers approximately 21,953.2 km2 and the temporary closure areas cover approximately 24,674.50 km2 for a total area of 65,596.00 km2. In Maritimes Region, 15-day temporary closures to non-tended fixed gear fisheries were put in place.  A 13-year-old male was observed entangled on July 15, 2023 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. No gear was retrieved to support gear analysis. This whale was sighted gear-free on September 5, 2023 (validated by external experts). A 42-year-old male was disentangled in the U.S. in January 2023. DFO gear analysis confirmed that gear was active fishing gear originating from LFA 33 in southern Nova Scotia. A 15-year-old male was disentangled in the U.S. in January 2023. DFO gear analysis confirmed that gear was ghost fishing gear originating from CFA 12 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. An 8-year-old female was partially disentangled in the U.S. in March-April 2023. DFO gear analysis confirmed that gear was ghost fishing gear originating from CFA 12 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Published gear analyses are available online: [https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/publications/mammals-mammiferes/index-eng.html](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dfo-mpo.gc.ca%2Fspecies-especes%2Fpublications%2Fmammals-mammiferes%2Findex-eng.html&data=05%7C01%7CHeidi.Schaefer%40dfo-mpo.gc.ca%7C2321413ff4ee486845ab08dbb2fb272b%7C1594fdaea1d94405915d011467234338%7C0%7C0%7C638300563981746778%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FXmz2ObtpMGAeJVsoZjthrAMSYhrgP4VUQHxElCJnWQ%3D&reserved=0).  Following the $167.4M Whales Initiative (2018), Budget 2023 proposes to provide $151.9M over three years for federal Departments to continue to protect endangered whales and their habitats. These include continued investments to support protection and recovery of NARW. DFO Fisheries Management continues to implement measures with the objective of protecting NARW, with the primary objective being the prevention of fishing gear entanglement. This prevention based approach is working, however we continue to seek opportunities for further progress. DFO remains focused on advancing whalesafe fishing gear, including the introduction of new requirements in 2024, launch of the whalesafe gear strategy, and expanded use of on-demand gear, as well as measures to address ghost gear and prevent gear loss. DFO recognizes the need to address ghost gear threat and lost gear reporting on both sides of the border to support species recovery. DFO will continue to support collaboration and information-sharing with NOAA to help resolve any issues related to gear colour marking regimes that arise in Canada or the US (e.g. gear marked for a fishery being improperly used in a different fishery). The NARW Bilateral Working Group met on August 21st and 22nd, 2023 in Boston, MA where DFO and Transport Canada were hosted by NOAA to discuss NARW science and management. It was a very productive meeting and will foster continued collaboration on NARW research, monitoring, information sharing, and management approaches. This year, DFO will work with Indigenous partners, fish harvesters, non-government organizations and academia to develop a long-term, whalesafe gear strategy. This strategy will guide the development and use of whalesafe fishing gear in fisheries across Canada to prevent and reduce whale entanglements. DFO will continue to collaborate with NOAA on whalesafe fishing gear, including plans to participate in the interoperability workshop hosted by NOAA in Nov 2023.  Atlantic salmon  DFO has committed to the development of a conservation strategy to restore and rebuild wild Atlantic Salmon populations and their habitats. Once complete, the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Strategy (WASCS) will align conservation actions with the goal of the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy, and adopt its guiding principles throughout its implementation. Since July 2021, the Department has conducted more than 50 meetings with participants representing over 75 organizations, including with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous organizations, partners and stakeholders across Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec. In the coming weeks, a ‘What we Heard’ report will be shared publicly. The information obtained from DFO’s engagement will be used to inform the next iteration of the WASCS (currently planned to be published by the end of 2023). For more information, see: <https://letstalkpacificsalmon.ca/wild-atlantic-salmon-conservation-strategy>. There are no changes to previous updates provided on the status of the decision whether or not to list 9 populations of Atlantic Salmon under the Species at Risk Act (SARA).  Other Species at Risk Act (SARA) Listing and Recovery updates:  Public consultations on the potential listing of lumpfish (assessed as threatened) and harbour porpoise, Northwest Atlantic population (assessed as special concern) are scheduled to run from September 27 – December 22, 2023. Public consultations on the potential listing of sei whale (assessed as endangered) are anticipated to proceed in 2024. Information about these consultation processes will be accessible on the Species at Risk Public Registry. Relevant updates coming out of the December 2022 Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) meetings include: leatherback sea turtle (Atlantic population) reconfirmed as endangered, and brook floater reconfirmed as special concern. Relevant upcoming COSEWIC assessments include: November 2023: Greenland shark, and killer whale (Northwest Atlantic/Eastern Arctic populations). April 2024: Atlantic salmon (all Designatable Units), and loggerhead sea turtle. As mentioned in the spring 2023 update, work is continuing on several recovery documents for transboundary species including leatherback sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle, white shark, and North Atlantic right whale. We anticipate providing more information on the progress of these documents at the spring 2024 meeting.  Canada-U.S. Species at Risk Working Group Update:  The Canada-U.S. Species at Risk Working Group hosted a 2 hour sea turtle-focused meeting on June 22, 2023. This area of focus was selected based on the following emerging theme from the survey we undertook in 2022: “Species or threat-specific discussions to enhance transborder cooperation”. The meeting included presentations from both Canada and the U.S. regarding the primary mandates of our departments in the context of sea turtles; an overview of international conventions/agreements relevant to sea turtles in the Atlantic; an overview of sea turtle recovery documents; and a summary of sea turtle science work underway. Planning is underway for a follow-up meeting this fall where we plan to focus discussion around identifying collaborative ways to address common threats to sea turtles, including bycatch and entanglement in fishing gear. A core group meeting will also be planned for this fall where topics for future meetings will be determined. | | | |
| 11. | **Closing Remarks** | | | Leads: Co-Chairs |
| **Highlights/Outcome:** Future meeting dates for the Canada-U.S. Transboundary Steering Committee spring and fall meetings were set and both the Canada and U.S. co-chairs provided closing remarks.  The spring Steering Committee meeting will be taking place virtually on May 16th, 2024 from 10:00AM-11:30AM AST.  The fall Steering Committee and the fall TMGC meetings will be taking place in Boston, MA from September 10th to 12th 2024. | | | |