

WGNAEO - Working Group on Northwest Atlantic Ecosystem Observations

2019/FT/EOSG03 A Working Group on Northwest Atlantic Ecosystem Observations (WGNAEO), chaired by Philip Politis*, USA, and Don Clark*, Canada, will work on ToRs and generate deliverables as listed in the Table below.

	MEETING DATES	VENUE	REPORTING DETAILS	COMMENTS (CHANGE IN CHAIR, ETC.)
Year 2020	11-13 February	Halifax, Canada	Interim report by 12 March 2020 to Ecosystem Observation Steering Group	
Year 2021	TBD	USA	Interim report by June 2021 to Ecosystem Observation Steering Group	
Year 2022	TBD	Canada	Final report by June 2022 Ecosystem Observation Steering Group	

ToR descriptors¹

ToR	DESCRIPTION	BACKGROUND	SCIENCE PLAN CODES	DURATION	EXPECTED DELIVERABLES
a	Coordinate US and Canadian resource and ecosystem survey strategies for enhanced regional evaluation in the Northwest Atlantic.	Canada and the U.S. have begun discussions of trawl survey coordination on Georges Bank, which would entail addressing differences in strata design, gear, and ecosystem observations. The main product of this ToR would be an operational plan to coordinate surveys, subject to review by DFO and NEFSC leadership. After implementation of the Plan, the WG would review the first year of coordinated survey activities.	3.1, 3.2	3 years	Draft Plan for coordination in June 2020 Final Plan for Coordination in Jan 2021

¹ Avoid generic terms such as “Discuss” or “Consider”. Aim at drafting specific and clear ToR, the delivery of which can be assessed

b	Coordinate and develop access, metadata, and methods for integrating historical Canadian and U.S. trawl survey data to facilitate scientific analyses	With ongoing concerns over the changes in species distribution and changes in species productivity on the Northwest Atlantic shelf, approaches for combining the two nation's datasets would be extremely valuable to regional science and management entities. The purpose here would be to develop data sharing methods and methods for analyzing combined data.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Year 2 and 3	
c	Collate and review ocean observations collected in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean and conduct gap analyses to inform integrated ecosystem assessments and ecosystem science activities.	There are numerous ocean observing activities underway in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. These data are critical to a number of users. Under this ToR, the WG will bring the different activities together, document variables measured and methods used, consider mechanisms to combine data across activities, and conduct gap analyses relative to variables useful for marine resource management.	3.1, 3.2	3 years	Review paper

Summary of the Work Plan

Year 1	The WG will meet and develop a plan for meeting the timelines of ToR a. The WG will also host a Workshop on ToR c in spring 2020 including both U.S. and Canadian organizations and groups involved in Ocean and Ecosystem Observations.
Year 2	The WG will complete the trawl survey coordination plan and deliver to U.S. and Canadian leadership for review (ToR a). The WG will also make recommendations as to combining data for joint analyses (ToR b). The Ocean Observing inventory and gap analyses will be completed (ToR c).
Year 3	The WG will review status of coordinated surveys (ToR a). Trawl survey data will be made available either jointly or with described methods on how to combine (ToR b). The WG will complete the review papers on regional ocean observations and submit for publication (ToR c).

Supporting information

Priority	High priority. The ToRs of this working group are closely aligned with a number of the observation and exploration priorities described in the ICES Science Plan. Additionally, this expert group will conduct survey coordination, data compilation, and oceanographic information that will aid WGNAM to assess environmental and ecosystem effects on mackerel stock dynamics.
Resource requirements	The research programmes which provide the main input to this group are already underway, and resources are already committed. The additional resource required to undertake additional activities in the framework of this group is negligible.
Participants	The Group will be attended by 5-10 members.
Secretariat facilities	WebEx Coordination may be requested
Financial	No financial implications.
Linkages to ACOM and groups under ACOM	There are no immediate linkages but developing the expertise could link to ACOM in the future especially WGNAM.
Linkages to other committees or groups	There is a very close working relationship WGNARS. In addition connections will be developed with WGOH and other EOSG groups.
Linkages to other organizations	There are linkages to a number of organizations and institutions throughout the western North Atlantic engaged and interested in ecosystem observations including academic, government, non-governmental organizations, and marine industries.