

**Recommendation to provide VMS, catch and fisheries independent data to ICES
for scientific purposes**

The Commission hereby adopts the following recommendation pursuant to Article 5 of the Convention:

Considering that although vessel monitoring system (VMS) data and regular catch reports are primarily collected for monitoring, control and surveillance purposes, they are also a vital source of information for scientific purposes;

Seeking to make access and efficient use of NEAFC VMS and catch data in order for it to meet the needs of scientific research in addition to compliance monitoring;

Conscious of the need to maintain industry confidentiality of VMS data (i.e. respecting commercial sensitivity of detailed fishing locations);

The Secretary of NEAFC is instructed, with immediate effect, to make available VMS and catch data from the NEAFC Regulatory Area to ICES. The data transferred shall not contain information identifying vessels and flag State. The Secretary will instruct ICES to manage the data received with the strictest rules of confidentiality. The data shall be made available yearly no later than 1 February, covering data for the period 1 January - 31 December of the previous year.

Contracting Parties shall submit to ICES, either directly or through the NEAFC Secretary, their fishery independent data relevant for NEAFC fisheries resources as soon as it becomes available. The NEAFC Secretary will transmit that data to ICES without delay.