



# *Issues in Arctic Fisheries Governance*

## Some Canadian Perspectives

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## Context to governance challenges well known

- Significant melting trend, with future projections suggesting an accelerated rate of change.  
Reduction of sea ice.
- Will have multiple implications on ecosystem health, resource availability and accessibility.
- Changes in the Arctic have captured the world's attention in terms of broad (even global?) environmental/marine implications and the potential for new activities in the North.



## Diverse assumptions underlie debate on Arctic governance

Range of (often competing) assumptions include:

- Fisheries and habitat depletion is imminent as ice melts
- Arctic “unmanaged” – “no” governance
- Principles exist in range of hard and soft law that govern Arctic – as globally.
- Governance is fragmented with major gaps, rendering it “ineffective” – as globally
- Sectoral (fisheries) management is antithetical to ecosystem-based management (EBM)
- Region is data poor – needs more and better-integrated research
- Coastal states lack management strategies in own waters and to cooperate with each other
- An RFMO is needed for high-seas areas consistent with UNCLOS and UNFSA
- Regional-seas approach provides a promising approach to cooperative integrated governance
- Only an new legal framework or treaty approach will protect Arctic
- Coastal and Arctic States have key responsibility and opportunity to manage for sustainability
- Arctic is a global public good, needs global governance, non arctic states have rights to seat at the table ...
- etc



## Key pragmatic suggestions also on table

- Close gaps in current integrated science knowledge for management -- including fisheries (cooperation in research and monitoring)
- Gap analysis needed re fisheries management regimes governing Arctic species/regions, linked to future scenarios regarding opportunities and ecosystem changes
- Perhaps commit/recommit to basic management principles for the region?
- Commitments to implement PA and EBM (should states multilateralize specific approach of the Northwest Pacific Management Council (NPFMC) on *freezing fishing activities?*).
- Commitment by coastal states to effective management in EEZs; bilateral cooperation where needed
- Appropriate steps in due course for RFMO for high-seas Arctic



## Even such logical steps not straightforward

- Science: what exists, what is working, what can be built upon to meet new needs, what needs to be created, levers?
- Scenarios/gaps: as above. Uncertain scenarios regarding fisheries ecosystems, resource shifts, where fishing opportunities, new players?
- Principles: Why? Fish only, or integrated management? “Cherry-picking” from among current negotiated multilateral principles? From which instruments (fish only, or biodiversity...)? What’s *new* beyond Ilulissat? To apply principles in new fisheries contexts, ahead of global agreements on same? To increase specificity (hint at “preferred” ways to implement)?
  - views differ on appropriate ways to be precautionary (more later)
- RFMO: Timing? Players? Allocations? Roles for existing RFMOs? Integration across numerous RFMOs? Integrated science?



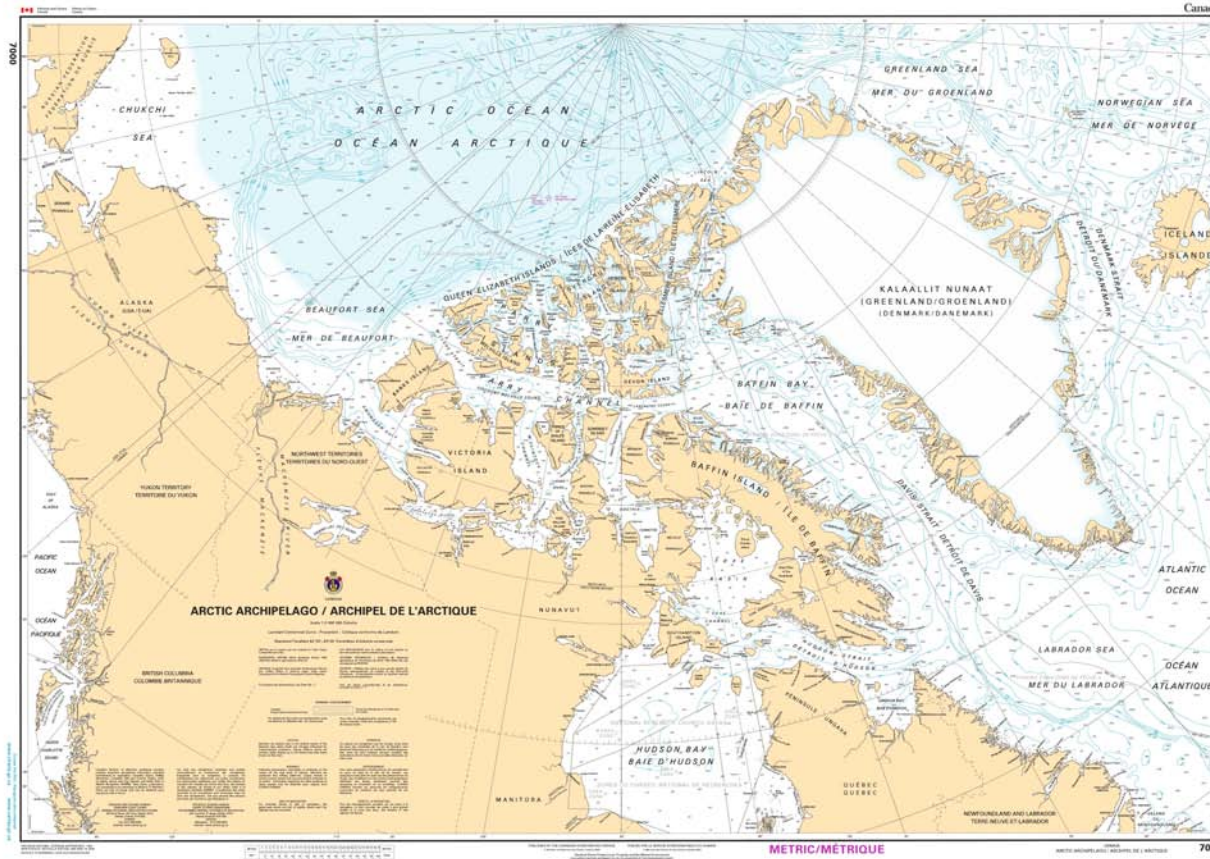
# What drives Canadian policy perspectives on such issues?

Some Canadian context to indicate how we view choices among even pragmatic options, much less broader philosophical debates





# Canada ... a Pan-Arctic coastal State





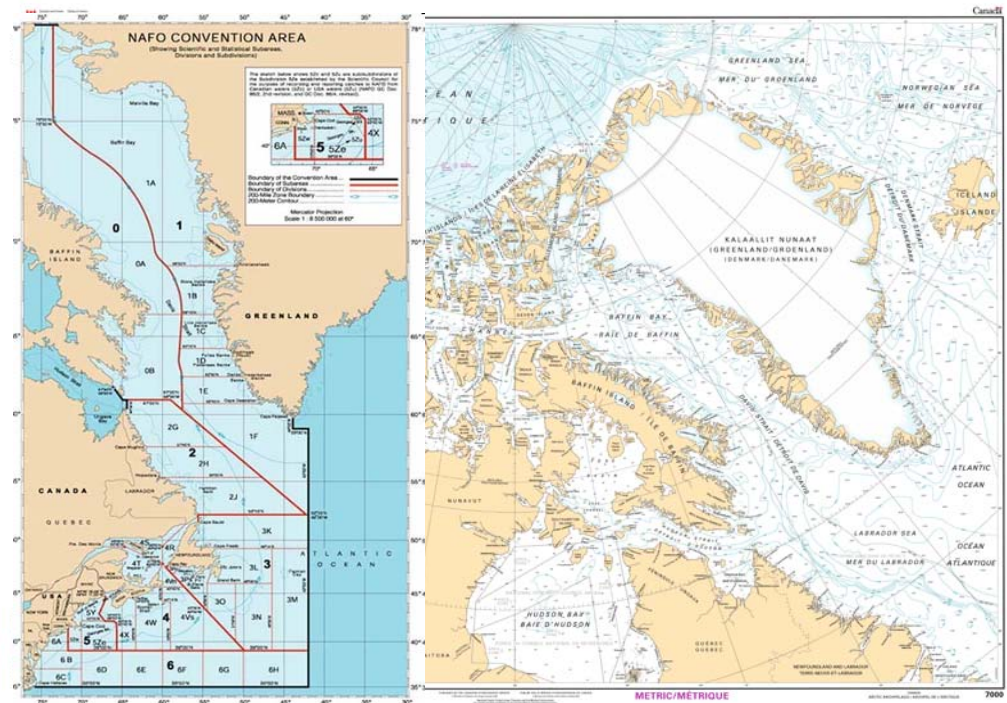
## Canadian Arctic Fisheries today

- Currently small, limited by short fishing season
- East Arctic
  - Some commercial fisheries in the eastern Arctic in Davis and Hudson Straits and Baffin Bay
  - Subsistence fisheries for fish and marine mammals
- West Arctic
  - Comprised of subsistence fisheries



# Eastern Canadian Arctic

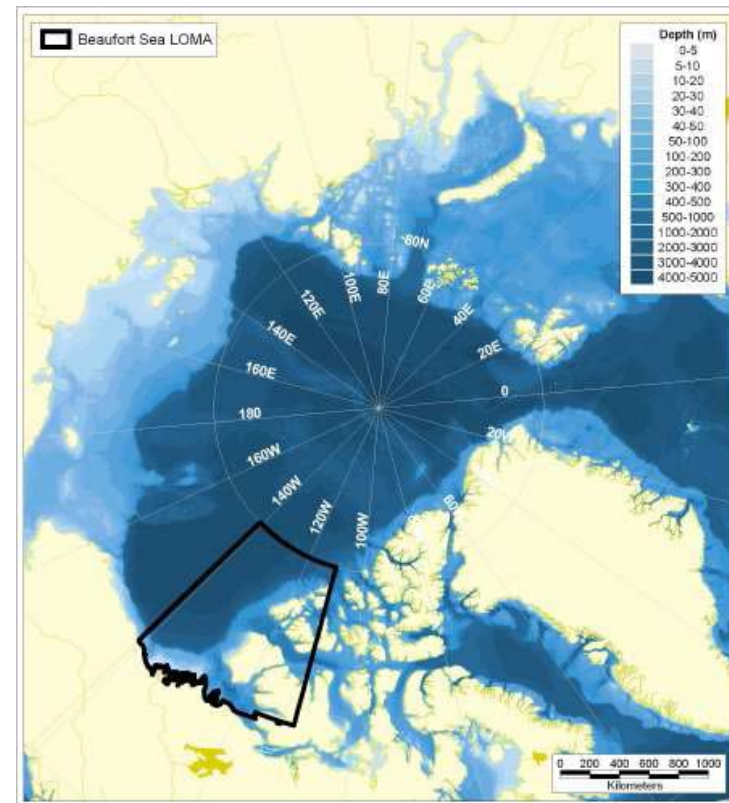
- Commercial fisheries in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait governed within Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)
- Hudson Strait – Canadian EEZ





# Western Canadian Arctic

- West- Oceans management approach
- Beaufort Sea Large Ocean Management Area (LOMA) as a planning framework





## Canadian Arctic Governance

- UNCLOS/UNFSA/CCRF- Foundations to Canada management of resources within EEZ in the Arctic
- Co-managed through agreements between federal, territorial/ provincial governments and under agreements negotiated with Aboriginal groups.
- Future bilateral arrangements for shared resources with other states; possibilities for expanded pragmatic management



## Some Canadian Management Principles

- Sustainable use of marine living resources
- Commitment to ecosystem and precautionary approaches
- Fisheries tools to manage fisheries, integrated management tools for cross-sectoral management (both needed, and support each other)
- Both legal obligations and existing and emerging commitments to soft law as coastal, flag, port state and market state
- RFMOs are basis of high-seas governance, if active fishing exists
- Protect vulnerable marine ecosystems
- Implement existing tools and mechanisms as pragmatic foundation to domestic and collective management
- Respect co-management obligations and consultative processes



# Canadian Fisheries Management

## *based on precautionary approach and sustainable use*

- PA: exploratory fishery and information gathering processes -- not “freezing” current effort or area “footprint” – how to “prove” sufficient info to reverse the freeze, and how to get info pragmatically.
- Information gathering stage to inform future viability and decision-making for new fisheries, and application of prudent management.
- Consistent with underlying spirit of UNGA 61/105 on VMEs, where “freezing footprint” was not accepted multilaterally as the management “standard”
- High Seas: potential races for fishing history as stocks move north or become more accessible may need different approaches





## Fisheries Renewal adding policy frameworks of significance to Arctic

For example:

- Benthic policy, forage species management etc
- Checklist for fisheries sustainability assessments
- Fleshing out ecosystem-based fisheries management
- *Species at Risk Act* also in play



## *Policy to Manage the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas.*

- Adds additional and specific layer of precaution for Arctic
- Applies to all Canadian fishing activities both within and outside Canada's 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone.
- A "frontier area" demands mapping, exploratory fisheries protocol etc. Includes Arctic areas where there is no history of fishing and little if any information available concerning the benthic features (habitat, communities and species) and the impacts of fishing on these features.
- Helps create baseline data and risk assessments irrespective of whether fisheries are found ultimately to be viable and manageable.

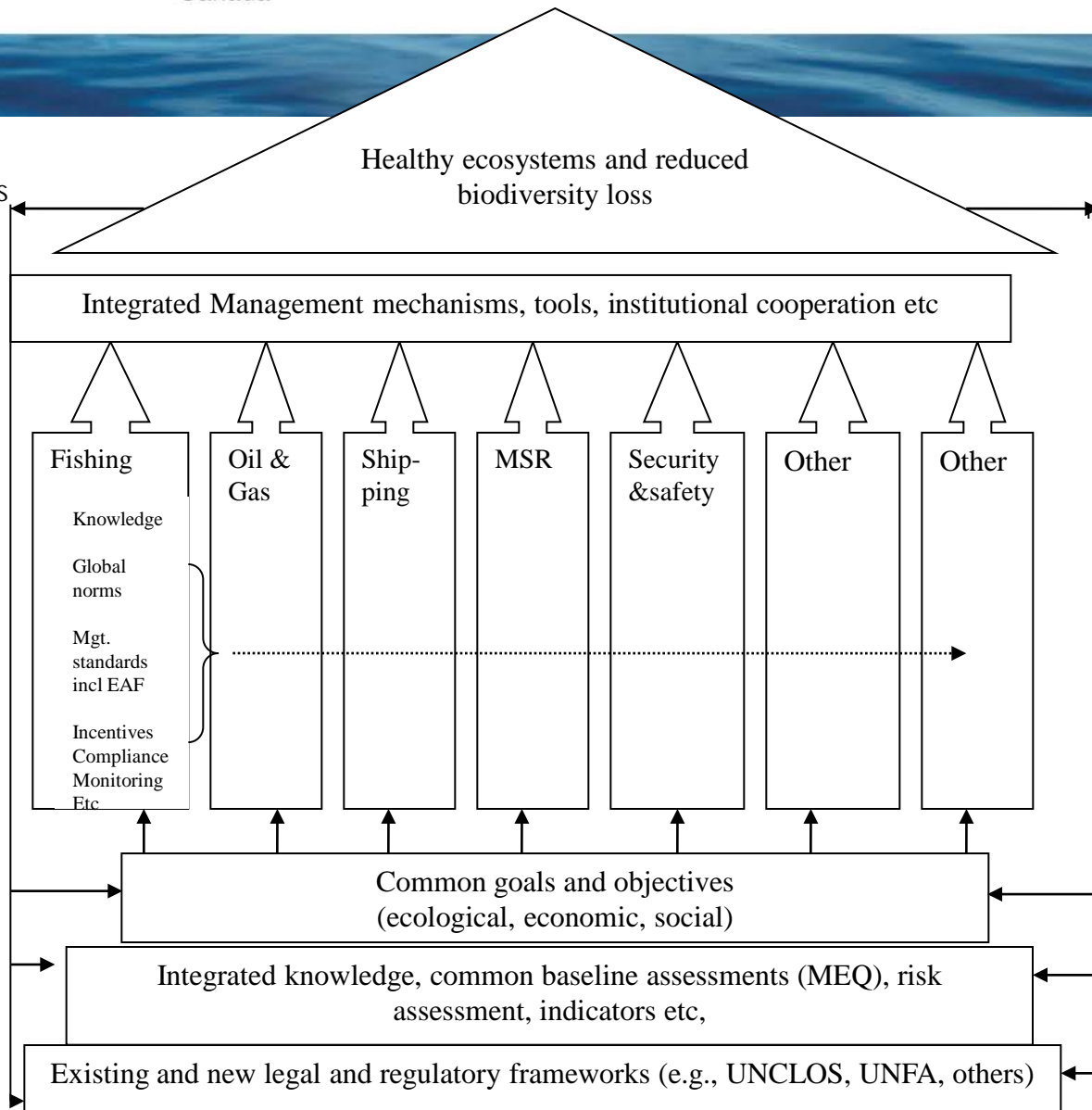


## In closing: Where does fisheries governance fit with broader Arctic governance issues?

- Do not agree with oft-stated view that “sectoral management is inconsistent with ecosystem-based management” – either in global debates or for Arctic (a common refrain).
- Ignores differences between ecosystem based fisheries management approaches (EAF) and integrated (ecosystem) approaches to oceans (EBM)
- Moreover EAF is part of EBM, not neglectful of it.
  - Reduced/eliminated overfishing
  - Bycatch management
  - VMEs/benthic policies
  - Time/area closures etc
  - Integration of socioeconomic and cultural considerations into fisheries management choices and best-use decisions

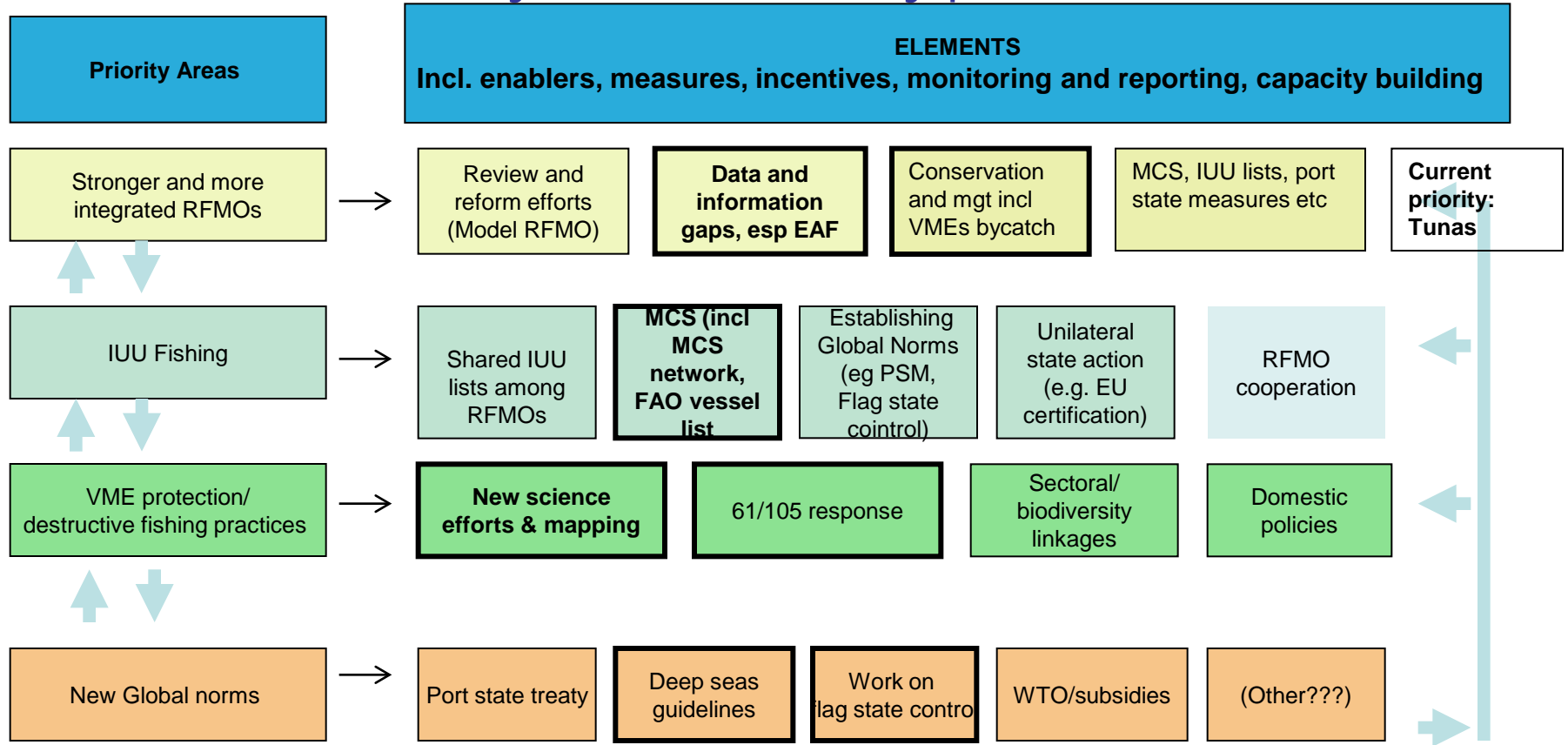


Source:  
L. Ridgeway, in press





# Global fisheries reform will improve contributions to ecosystem/biodiversity protection



Bold outline are areas of clear cross walks to other sectors or IM . Bold text are areas where special public investment would be helpful



## Essential enablers of coherent integrated model

- Integrated data and information/assessment (various existing/expanded/new regional initiatives?/GRAME?)
- Improved sectoral management and standards (domestic and high seas (RFMO))
- Cooperative IM mechanisms – formal or informal at whatever scale works
- Literacy in “oceans community” of what is happening in sectoral reform/standards and vice versa to embrace sectoral players in integrated solutions
- Improved cooperation & integration among international organizations looking at Arctic issues



## Cooperation in Arctic

- Arctic Council provides important cooperation to many foundational activities. Shows ability to grow its agenda . Consider strengthening where gaps exist in actual management, whether sectoral or IM.
- LME identification and baseline assessments and indicators, scientific and risk assessments, non-legally binding guidelines...
- Other bilateral and/ or multilateral cooperation may be envisioned (sectorally) as per future RFMO, and for Science
- Other integrated cooperative governance mechanisms possible building on regional seas examples?
- Some debates are neither Arctic-only or short run – don't delay action
- We does not see a treaty approach like Antarctic as a necessity (Ilulissat Declaration)