One cannot but agree that a burgeoning seal population is having an enormous impact on cod recovery. After this years 65,000 catch of seals the situation can only get worse. Only 65,000 seals will be taken from out of a quota of something like 350,000 seals. However if anyone thinks there is not relatively intense fishing on the diminishing cod stocks in 3Ps and the Gulf stocks then they are mis-informed on inaccurate information provided by people who are very involved in those fisheries. The same applies to 3NO cod, the fastest growing cod in the North Atlantic (if given a chance to grow). The very small stock there is directly fished or with high bycatch levels. The same situation applies to American Plaice , a very important species to the N&L offshore fleet. It was bad enough before NAFO changed the bycatch levels from 5 to 13 percent (which in practical terms is 20 percent). Now it will never have an opportunity to recover. Furthermore, recently DFO and N&L Provincial fisheries gave permission to an offshore trawler company to export yellowtails and AP from bycatches to China in a round state. A substantial portion of their catch is small and too young to reproduce.

Yesterday we made an appeal to have a Judicial Inquiry into fisheries in N&L in order to stop the continuing overfishing in its many forms.

Gus Etchegary, Chairman , Fisheries Community Alliance, N&L

TAGS: cod, seals, COSEWIC, overfishing, Grand Banks cod, fisheries, sustainable

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