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ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1971

NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION

NINTH MEETING

PRESS NOTICE

1. The Ninth Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission took place in London from 3rd to 8th May, 1971. The President, Mr. A.S. Gaidoukov (USSR) presided. Delegations attended from all Member States, namely:-

Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Observers represented the Governments of the United States of America and of Canada, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, FAO, OECD, and the Commission of EEC.

2. Salmon

The Commission agreed, by a majority, a Recommendation supplementing the measures agreed last year to protect salmon from the developing high seas fishery. The Recommendation prohibits fishing for salmon outside national limits in an area around the British Isles. This measure is subject to review next year, together with those taken last year.

3. Herring

North Sea Herring

The Commission took note that Denmark, Norway and Sweden, who together are predominant in the North Sea herring fishery, were discussing a scheme of catch limitation outside the framework of the Commission. Recognising that such an arrangement might influence the Commission's system of regulation, and taking into account the need to see the effects of the closed season regulations introduced last year (which expire unless renewed on 28th February, 1972), the

Commission decided to meet again in December to make new recommendations or extend the existing one. They agreed on the terms of reference for the scientific advice required, and (by a majority) to allow Faroese fishermen (taking account of the special constitutional status of the Faroes) to catch 1,000 tons of herring for human consumption or bait in the closed season in August/September this year, in addition to the 1,000 tons allowed to Denmark under the existing Recommendation.

Atlanto-Scandian Herring

The Commission noted and welcomed an agreement, outside the framework of the Commission, between Norway, Iceland and the USSR, covering limitation of the catch of the Atlanto-Scandian herring stock.

Celtic Sea Herring

The Commission noted the report of an ad hoc Study Group of the countries principally concerned in fishing the Celtic Sea herring stock. A stabilisation of the catch from this small and vulnerable stock was agreed to be desirable, and in order to avoid sudden increases in exploitation levels the Commission agreed to forbid the use of purse-seine gear in the area.

General

The Commission took note of a Polish statement on the priority which should be given to catches for human consumption in a case in which a particular stock of fish was in danger from overfishing.

4. Icelandic cod and haddock

The Commission studied a report from ICES on the effects of changes in fishing effort on the yields of Icelandic cod and haddock, and took note of a proposal by Iceland for the closure to trawling of an area off the north-east coast of Iceland for an experimental period. They appreciated Icelandic concern about the dangers of over-exploitation that would result from increased fishing effort in the area, and agreed that further consideration of the need for additional measures would need to be given, following the provision of a scientific assessment (expected within the year) of the North Atlantic cod stocks as a whole.

5 The Commission noted that six governments had signified agreement to the activation of Article 7(2) of the Convention, to allow measures of catch and effort limitation to be instituted by the Commission. Until all Contracting States have agreed this measure, 'quota' agreements have to be reached outside the framework of the Commission between the countries principally concerned. They decided to request other Contracting States to advise their fishermen of the terms of such agreements and invite them to facilitate their successful operation. They reviewed progress on the negotiation of one such arrangement for the North East Arctic.

6. Scheme of International Control

The Commission reviewed progress on the introduction of the scheme for the joint enforcement of their Recommendations on the high seas, and accepted an invitation from the Portuguese Government to hold an ad hoc meeting of inspectors and administrators concerned with the operation of the scheme in Portugal during March, 1972.

7. The Commission took note of a report from the Norwegian delegation on the decline in the mackerel stocks in the Skagerrak and North Eastern North Sea, and on the measures to arrest and reverse the decline taken by Norway as the country almost exclusively concerned. They asked ICES for a study to be made for them of the other stocks that might be affected.

8. The Commission noted that the use of beam trawls with heavy chains for catching sole, the stocks of which were becoming depleted, had caused concern amongst fishermen, but that there was no evidence as to the effects of this gear on the breeding stock. A number of countries were conducting research on the problem, and they were asked to provide research results to ICES so that an assessment could be made for the Commission.

9. The Commission agreed the extension for two years of its Recommendation exempting an area of the Irish Sea from its mesh regulations in order to allow a small-boat fishery for whiting to continue. The exemption would be reconsidered in 1973 on the basis of scientific reports on the state of the stock.

- 10 The Commission agreed to increase the level of its contribution to the funds of ICES by 1%.
11. The Soviet delegation proposed that an extraordinary meeting of the Commission, in which Ministers would participate, should be called at the end of 1971 to consider a number of important and difficult problems facing the Commission which were being resolved only with disappointing slowness. Meetings between Soviet and Nordic Ministers in 1969 and 1970 had proved fruitful. The Commission agreed that member states should respond to this Soviet initiative by mid-June, and that a decision on such a meeting would be taken in the light of the views expressed.
- 12 . The Commission will next meet in regular annual session in the first half of May, 1972, in London.

Office of the Commission

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