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Conservation of Herring

Memorandum by the United States

The United States has joined with Canada in proposing regulations for the conservation of herring in subareas 4, 5, and 6 through the imposition of quotas for the various stocks and minimum fish size regulations. The United States wishes to suggest to the Commission that it also consider closures of major spawning grounds for protection and conservation of the important herring stocks in the area. It is recognized that there are numerous small spawning grounds for herring, and that it would be impractical to consider spawning closures of all of these grounds. It may be feasible, however, to consider closure of the relatively few major herring spawning grounds. Such closures might afford protection to these important stocks when they are heavily concentrated and thus particularly vulnerable to intensive fishing effort. They might assist in a more even implementation of the quota proposals by preventing a concentration of effort during brief periods, which has led to problems in other ICNAF fisheries as discussed in STACREM. In this connection, the comments of the Assessments Subcommittee (Comm. Doc. 71/1) on the direct significant biological benefits of spawning closures have been noted, but other aspects should also be considered. The United States is prepared to discuss this matter with interested Parties.