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ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1972SUPPLEMENTAL MEMORANDUM BY THE UNITED STATES ON CONSERVATION
OF COD AND SILVER AND RED HAKES IN SUBAREA 5

The United States in ICNAF Commissioners' Documents 72/22 and 72/23 set forth conservation proposals for cod, silver hake and red hake in Subarea 5. These included recommendations for national catch quotas.

While preliminary, scientific assessments indicate that some of the stocks of silver and red hake may support somewhat larger catches than were taken in the last two years, we believe that given the excessive amount of fishing effort in the Convention Area, overall catch limits should, nevertheless, be established to prevent excess exploitation. It appears that conservation objectives may be achieved by maintaining cod catches in Subarea 5 at approximately the annual catch level in 1970-71 of 35,000 metric tons and establishing hake quotas at perhaps somewhat higher levels than recent catches.

In these circumstances, we believe it particularly appropriate to relate the US share in quotas for these stocks to the current harvesting capability of its small coastal fleet. This should include a modest growth factor. (US catches from the stocks in question have declined noticeably from earlier levels.) Thus, we will propose that each US allocation from 1973 overall quotas in Subarea 5 for cod and hake stocks be somewhat greater than the US average catch in a recent period of years which reflects its harvesting capability in the respective fisheries concerned.

Recognition of the special needs and circumstances of these small coastal vessels should not interfere unduly with allocations to other countries, since, as is indicated above, the catch quotas for these stocks may be larger than, but in any event should be close to the average catches in recent years.

In our view, the procedure outlined above for Subarea 5 is in accord with what we perceive to be the general principles underlying Canadian proposals for quota allocation in other Subareas.

In ICNAF Commissioner's Document 72/23, "Conservation of silver and red hakes in Subarea 5", the United States also proposed that a regulatory program for these hake stocks include (1) minimum mesh size requirements, and (2) closure of specified waters to hake fishing during certain periods.

The United States continues to believe that closing part of Subarea 5 to hake fishing early in the year is an essential component of a hake regulatory program. If applied in conjunction with a quota regulatory program, a shorter closure than has been in effect for the last three years might be applied when the danger of disrupting pre-spawning aggregations is greatest to insure that these schools of fish will not be entirely broken up before moving from offshore to coastal waters where small US vessels operate.

The United States also believes that the Commission should give consideration to applying minimum mesh requirements in the hake fisheries.

