Outline of Sampling Strata for Subarea 2

by

J. Messtorff

Bundesforschungsanstalt für Fischerei
Institut für Seefischerei, Bremerhaven, Fed. Rep. Germany

On request of the chairman of the working group on coordinated groundfish surveys a preliminary stratification scheme along the lines of the sampling strata successfully used in Subarea 5 and those outlined by Pinhorn for the Grand Bank area has been prepared as a basis for discussion by the working group at the Annual ICNAF - Meeting 1972 (see Fig. 1).

The depth contures used as border lines for the sampling strata have been transferred from the German Fishery Charts Nrs. 459 - 461 (Scale 1 : 500 000) published by the German Hydrographic Institute in 1965.

A suitable and internationally adopted stratification scheme would certainly offer the possibility for a better coordination of field work and could serve as a basis for getting more accurate estimates of biomass and stock abundance in the respective areas. But in order to get reliable estimates not only dephth zones but other conditions which are known to be of considerable influence on the behaviour of the living communities have to be taken into account. Especially in the northern subareas the hydrographic situation is very variable and komplex. Extreme bottom temperature conditions may even divide one sampling stratum in variable areas with quite different species distribution or stock densities. In these areas groundfish surveys should therefore be accompanied with an adequate amount of hydrographic observations and the distribution of trawl stations should be in accordance with the observed situation.

As yet no field experience could be gained in using the proposed stratification scheme on groundfish surveys in Subarea 2 but it is hoped that coordinated survey operations in fall 1972 will give the opportunity to test the usefulness of this or a similar scheme.
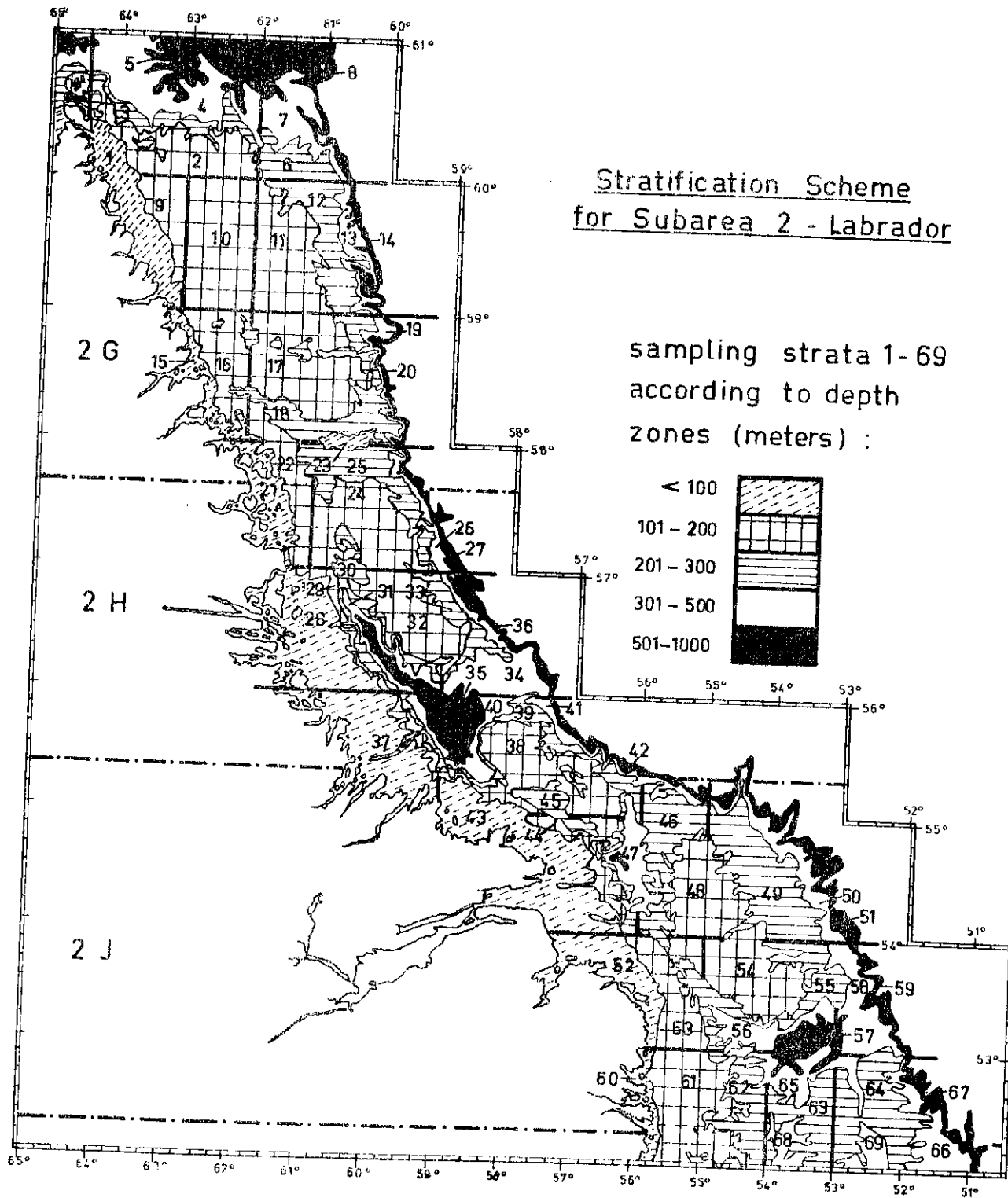
Fig. 1.