

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR



THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES

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ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1973Canadian proposal concerning regulation of developing fisheries

Uncontrolled expansion of fisheries is one of the most serious problems of international fisheries management. It is becoming increasingly evident that management measures must be implemented at an early stage in fisheries development, and while knowledge to assess the effects of fisheries on fish stocks is being collected. Otherwise, overexploitation of resources and overcapitalization of catching capacity is an almost inevitable consequence.

International fisheries in the Northwest Atlantic are characterized by highly developed fishing technology and greater fishing effort than is necessary in most cases to achieve maximum sustained yield. The imposition of quota controls on some species, coupled with increased technological capacity, has resulted in the development of interest in fisheries for species until now only lightly exploited.

Catches of mackerel in the ICNAF Area have increased from 22,000 tons in 1966 to 141,000 tons in 1971. Catches of roundnose grenadiers were 17,000 tons in 1967 and 80,000 tons in 1971. The capelin catch of 6,000 tons in 1971 may have increased tenfold in 1972.

Increased fishing by large mobile fleets in the ICNAF Area has also limited the opportunities of coastal fishermen to participate in fisheries for traditionally exploited species. As a consequence of increased fishing by large vessels, most of these species are now fully exploited. Uncontrolled expansion of fisheries for other species, until now lightly exploited, will further limit the opportunities of coastal fishermen who are finding it increasingly more difficult to maintain their catches.

For these reasons, Canada believes that catch limitations should be imposed in developing fisheries for underexploited species, beginning in 1974, to control the rate of expansion in such fisheries while knowledge to assess them is being gathered. In addition, Canada proposes that catches be allocated among participating nations, the understanding that coastal fishermen would be entitled to that portion of the allowable yield from such fisheries which they are capable of catching.

The most urgent case for this kind of action is the capelin fishery, and Canada proposes that the Research and Statistics Committee examine the available information on capelin stocks with the object of providing advice on which to base a quota in 1974. Additionally, Canada proposes that the Research and Statistics Committee identify other stocks and species which are subject to developing fisheries.

