

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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Canadian proposal for extending the size and duration of haddock closed areas in Div. 4X of Subarea 4

The haddock stock in Division 4X of Subarea 4 has shown signs of recovery in spawning several moderately good year-classes, in particular those of 1969, 1971 and 1972. However, spawning stock size is extremely low - - less than half that of the 1950's and early 1960's when the stock was stable. It is essential that removals from the stock be kept at a low level to allow the spawning stock to rebuild.

At the 1974 Annual Meeting, the Commission agreed to a catch quota of 15,000 metric tons for Division 4X haddock for 1975, a level which should allow some rebuilding of spawning stock. However, Canadian calculations for the 1974 season, based on Canadian and US landings statistics and boardings of other nations' vessels under the International Inspection Scheme, indicate that catches in 1974 will likely exceed 15,000 tons, even though a zero quota is in effect and by-catches only are allowed.

As catch rates in 1975 are expected to be comparable to those in 1974, the 1975 catch quota is likely to be exceeded through by-catches alone. Additional measures are clearly required to ensure that the 1975 catch quota is not exceeded.

Analysis of the effects of regulations from 1970 onwards indicates that the closed area/season regulations have been considerably more effective in reducing catches than have catch quota regulations because of the severe by-catch problems in Division 4X. Extension of the closed area/season for 1975 would further reduce catches, ease by-catch problems, and allow countries to stay within the quota allocations agreed at the 1974 Annual Meeting.

Canadian research vessel surveys and log records from our commercial fleet indicate that haddock are distributed widely over the offshore banks of Division 4X including LaHave Bank in the January to June period each year. Commercial concentrations occur as deep as, and frequently deeper than, 100 fm. Thus, present closed area/season regulations protect only part of the offshore overwintering and spawning concentrations.

It is proposed:

"that the Contracting Governments take appropriate action to prohibit persons under their jurisdiction from using fishing gear other than pelagic fishing gear (purse seines or true midwater trawls, using midwater trawl doors incapable of being fished on the bottom) and from attaching any protective device to pelagic fishing gear or employing any means which would in effect make it possible to fish for demersal species from 1 February to 30 June, inclusive, in that part of Division 4X of Subarea 4 bounded by the straight lines connecting the following coordinates in the order listed:

43°00'N	67°00'W
42°20'N	67°00'W
42°20'N	66°00'W
42°00'N	65°40'W
42°45'N	64°00'W
43°30'N	64°00'W
43°00'N	65°40'W."

(The attached chart illustrates the areas covered by this proposal with the shaded areas showing the proposed increase in the previously agreed to closure.)

(over)

