

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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US proposal for the international regulation of the fishery for river herring
in Subarea 5 and adjacent areas to the west and south in Statistical Area 6

The river herring fishery (*Alosa aestivalis* and *A. pseudoharengus*) is of historic importance to the coastal area of the United States particularly in the States from North Carolina northward. This fishery remained fairly stable until 1967 when the offshore trawl fishery by distant-water fleets apparently resulted in a decrease in total harvest. Prior to 1967 the total US harvest of adult (age 4 fish and older) averaged near 20,000 metric tons per year and the catch by other countries was extremely low. The 1966-69 average for the US fishery was 22,770 metric tons. The 1970-73 average was 11,234 metric tons, a decrease of 50 percent. The average distant-water catch for 1967-73 was 5,239 metric tons. The shift downward in US catch appears to be the result of an offshore trawl fishery taking fish of less than 4 years of age, and a continued fishery on these stocks would probably result in a collapse of the US fishery.

The US Commissioners therefore request that the Commission consider at the 1976 Annual Meeting controls on the offshore trawl fishery to levels which will permit stocks to rebuild to those levels which existed prior to the initiation of the offshore foreign trawl fishery. Accordingly, the US Commissioners propose that the Commission adopt at the 1976 Annual Meeting the following proposal:

"That each Contracting Government take appropriate action to prohibit the taking of river herring (*Alosa aestivalis* and *A. pseudoharengus*) by persons under its jurisdiction except as provided for in the following paragraph.

"That, in order to avoid impairment of fisheries for other species which take small quantities of river herring (*Alosa aestivalis* and *A. pseudoharengus*) incidentally, Contracting Governments may permit persons under their jurisdiction to have in possession on board a vessel fishing for other species (either at sea or at the time of off-loading) river herring caught in Subarea 5 or in the area adjacent to the west and south in Statistical Area 6 in amounts not exceeding 5,510 pounds or 2,500 kilograms, or 1 percent by weight, of all other fish on board, whichever is greater.