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REPORT OF MEETING OF SCIENTISTS OF
CANADA, CUBA, USSR AND USA
REGARDING SILVER HAKE IN DIVS. 4VWX

Scientists of Canada, Cuba, USSR and USA met on 14 June to discuss further the TAC and proposed gear regulations for silver hake in ICNAF Div. 4VWX.

TAC - It was agreed that the most critical parameter in estimation of the 1977 TAC was that of recruitment and the size of the 1973, 1974 and 1975 year-classes was discussed in detail. However, differences in opinion could not be resolved and it was agreed that resolution would only be possible with further information. From a scientific viewpoint, the 1977 TAC can most accurately be determined at the end of 1976 when 1976 data are available. Thus, if a scientific agreement on the 1977 TAC is required, a scientific meeting should be held no earlier than the beginning of December 1976. The scientists agreed that the following information must be available for a resolution of the question:

1. Monthly catch and monthly effort data, particularly from the USSR fleet for 1976.
2. Monthly biological sampling data from the USSR fleet for 1976.
3. The results of the USSR research vessel survey in Div. 4WX in October 1976.
4. The results of the Cuban research vessel hydroacoustic and trawling survey in July-August 1976.
5. The results of the Canadian stratified-random trawling survey in July and preliminary results of an experimental pelagic juvenile survey in November 1976.
6. The results of the USA, USSR, Canada ageing workshop to be held in Woods Hole in October 1976.

Gear regulations - Precise information on the level of by-catches and the distribution of the silver hake fishery in relation to the other important groundfish resources was not available to the meeting. Discussion of the feasibility of conducting a successful fishery based purely on midwater trawling raised doubts which could not be resolved without further information on the vertical distribution of silver hake and variation of this seasonally. It was suggested that only those areas of potentially high by-catches should be closed to bottom trawling with mesh size less than 130 mm but these could not be defined with sufficient accuracy without more information. Since the status of this matter, scientifically, is similar to that of the TAC, resolution is contingent on bringing forward new data and analyses. It is proposed that, at the time of further scientific discussion of the TAC, the following data be made available:

7. Maps showing the seasonal distribution of the USSR silver hake fishery.
8. Maps showing the distribution of other groundfish species from Canadian research vessel survey data and commercial fisheries data.
9. Data on by-catches in USSR fishery in 1976 from the reports of scientific observers aboard USSR commercial vessels separated by pelagic and bottom trawling. (It should be noted that field observations should be conducted in July-August and thus immediate action is required.)
10. Analyses of vertical distribution patterns of silver hake from USSR commercial and Cuban research vessel data.

Attendees

Canada

Dr A.W. May

Dr R.G. Halliday

Mr A.T. Pinhorn

Dr W.T. Stobo

Cuba

Dr J.A. Varea

Mr J.J. Terré

Capt. D. Hernandez

USSR

Dr V.A. Rikhter

Mr V. Zilanov

Mr V. Solodovnik

USA

Mr R.C. Hennemuth

