

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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Canadian request for additional advice on the scientific basis for the  
management of stocks of capelin within national fisheries limits.

At the request of Canada (Comm. Doc. 78/VI/1) STACRES, at the 1978 Annual Meeting of ICNAF, provided advice on the scientific basis for management in 1979 of certain fish stocks occurring within national fishery limits. One of the stocks for which Canada requested advice was capelin in Subarea 2 and Division 3K, and STACRES, at that time, advised a Total Allowable Catch of 300,000 metric tons for Subarea 2 and Division 3K capelin in 1979.

Canadian monitoring of this fishery in 1978 has indicated low catch rates and a high proportion of immature capelin in the commercial catches during the autumn. As a precautionary measure, Canada has recently withdrawn licences issued for vessels to engage in this fishery, effective November 24, 1978.

It is now requested that STACRES, at its Special Meeting in Tokyo, Japan, 14-21 February 1979, reassess the status of the Subarea 2 and Division 3K capelin stock including review of data from the 1978 fishery. STACRES should undertake a thorough review of the available scientific information on the status of the capelin resource and, in particular, the effect of recent levels of fishing upon the productivity of capelin and of those species which are dependent upon it as a food resource. The Canadian Government is concerned about the apparent decline in abundance of both the northern and southern capelin stocks and, in particular, is concerned that current TAC levels may not protect these spawning stocks from over-exploitation. Unless evidence clearly demonstrates that fishing is not a significant factor in the declining abundance of capelin, TAC options below current levels must be considered.

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