

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

Serial No. 5503

ICNAF Com. Doc. 79/VI/24

ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1979

Canadian Proposal for an International Scientific Observer Scheme

Further to an earlier resolution at the 1975 Annual Meeting of ICNAF, and discussion at the 1979 March Special Meeting on the desirability of improving the collection of information on stocks in the Convention Area outside national fisheries jurisdiction, Canada proposes that the Commission agree to recommend to Member Governments, the implementation of a Scientific Observer Scheme to improve scientific knowledge of the status of fish stocks and fishing operations in the Convention Area.

It is proposed that Contracting Governments agree to accept aboard their vessels, designated scientific observers of other Contracting Governments, and agree to instruct the masters of their vessels to accept such observers, subject to prior notification by the authorities of the scientific observer's Government.

The scientific observers shall collect data on the catch, including species composition, amounts by species, and biological characteristics (length and age composition) of both quantities retained aboard, and quantities discarded. They shall also collect data on the fisheries operations, including the type and configuration of the fishing gear, duration of the operation, position and water depth, and such gear characteristics as are appropriate to an understanding of discards and gear selectivity.

The scientific observer shall consult with the fishing master or his designate to obtain the navigational, catch and other data required, and shall be granted access to the fishing log for this purpose. The scientific observer shall provide the master with a copy of such records that the master wishes to retain, and shall submit at the first opportunity, through his national authorities, to the authorities of the Flag State of the fishing vessel, a copy of all scientific data records. The authorities of the Flag State of the vessel shall have the responsibility of making the scientific data available to ICNAF.

The masters of fishing vessels receiving scientific observers shall ensure that such observers are granted full cooperation upon boarding, including accommodation and meals, and including access to the catch, fishing gear and fishing logs as appropriate.

Each scientific observer shall carry a document of identity provided by authorities of his Government, stating that he has the authority to act as a scientific observer under the scheme. Scientific observers may remain aboard a fishing vessel for such time as reasonably necessary to fulfill the scientific requirements, but for periods not normally to exceed 30 days, unless otherwise agreed by the Governments concerned. The scientific observer's activities shall not interfere with the working operations of the fishing vessel.

Transportation of scientific observers to and from fishing vessels may be effected by inspection vessels designated under the ICNAF Scheme of Joint International Inspection, or directly between fishing vessels. This matter shall be prime responsibility of the scientific observer's Government. The master of the fishing vessel shall arrange for messages to be sent and received by using his radio equipment and operator for this purpose.

Contracting Governments shall make such arrangements on a bilateral basis as may facilitate the implementation of this scheme.

* Executive Secretary, ICNAF, P. O. Box 638, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada B2Y 3Y9