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Halibut Distribution in the ICNAF  
Convention Area.

by

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Data concerning distribution and fishing of Atlantic halibut (Hippoglossus hippoglossus L.) have been received through the ICNAF Working Group on Division of Stocks and Smallest Statistical Units. A preliminary plot of these data was made for the 1961 Annual Meeting, and after the meeting copies of the chart were deposited with the Secretariat. It was suggested at that time that the various charts dealt with by the Working Group, including the one on halibut distribution, be prepared in more final form for the 1962 Annual Meeting.

The accompanying figures 1 and 2 show the 1962 edition of the halibut distribution chart. It is basically the 1961 chart with the addition of some data for Subareas 2, 3 and 4, submitted by the USSR and Canada (Maritimes). It will be noted that halibut are to be found in all ICNAF subareas. Although the areas of distribution on the chart are generally concentrated near 100-fathom depths, individuals may be found in shoaler or deeper water at various times of the year when conditions such as water temperature and availability of food are suitable. In general, indication of areas of distribution in the various submissions came from knowledge of both commercial-fleet and research-vessel catches. Specifically, these submissions were:

- (1) Canada (Maritimes) - from F. D. McCracken and A. C. Kohler - research-vessel records of distribution for Subarea 4 and fishing areas from log records of commercial fleet fishing for halibut in Subareas 3 and 4.
- (2) Canada (Newfoundland) - from V. M. Hodder - records of distribution from research-vessel catches in Subareas 2, 3 and 4.
- (3) Denmark - from Paul Hansen - historical records of distribution in Subarea 1.
- (4) Norway - from Erling Bratberg - areas of distribution from records of Norwegian tagging experiments in Subareas 1, 2 and 3; also main fishing areas for Norwegian longliners in Subareas 1, 2 and 3.
- (5) Scotland - from A. D. McIntyre - distribution and fishing from Scottish commercial fleet records for 1959. These were for East Greenland waters.
- (6) U. S. A. - from A. C. Jensen - distribution from areas of catch of commercial vessels (Subarea 5) and taggings by research vessel in Subarea 5 and southern Subarea 4.
- (7) U. S. S. R. - from Ju. Ju. Marty - areas of distribution and fishing in Subareas 1, 2 and 3, mainly from records of scouting vessels.

Present information does not permit speculation on divisions of halibut stocks in the ICNAF area. However, intensification of biological studies, particularly tagging, may serve to clarify this situation in the future.

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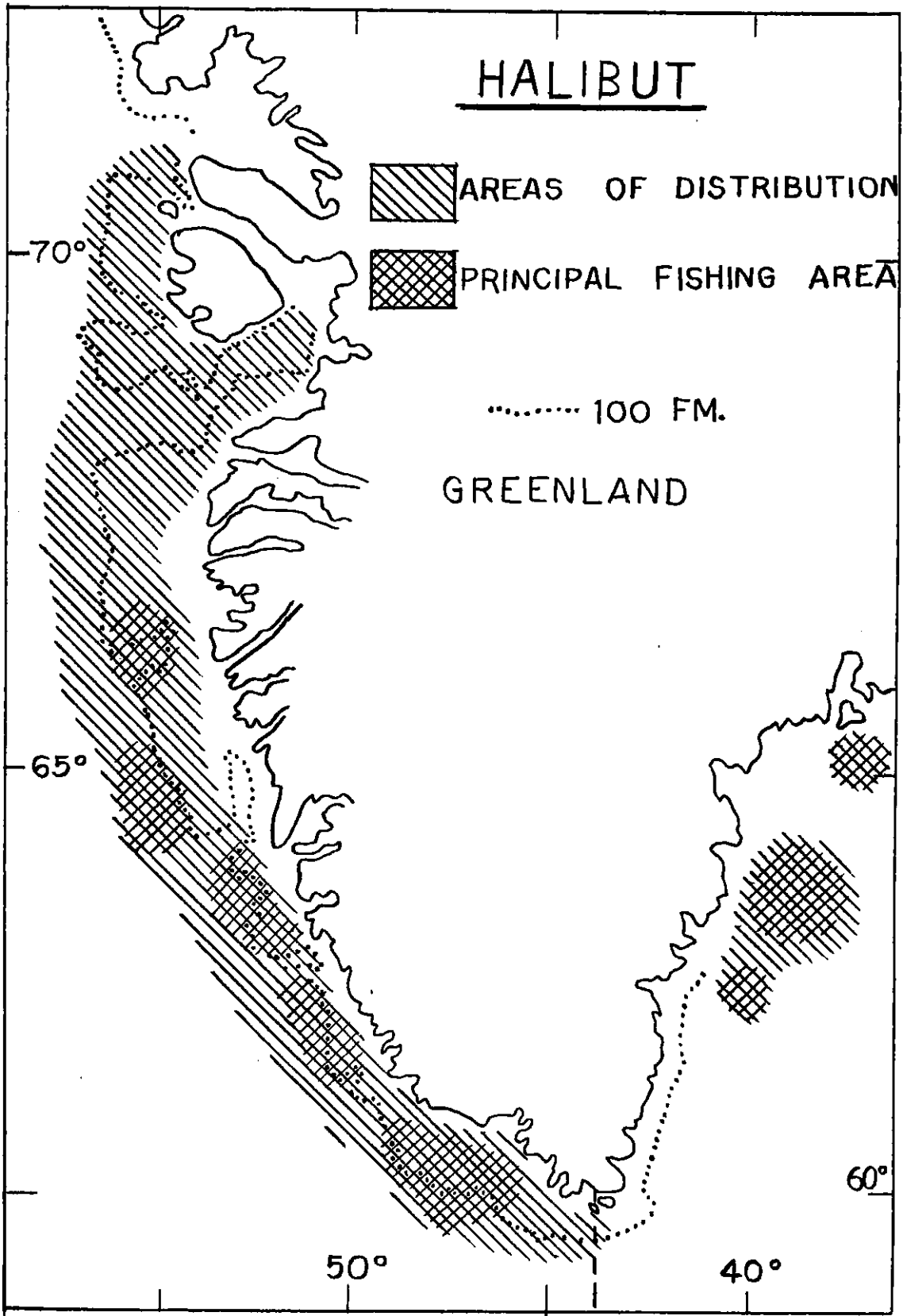


Fig. 1. Distribution of halibut in the ICNAF Conyention Area, Subarea 1.

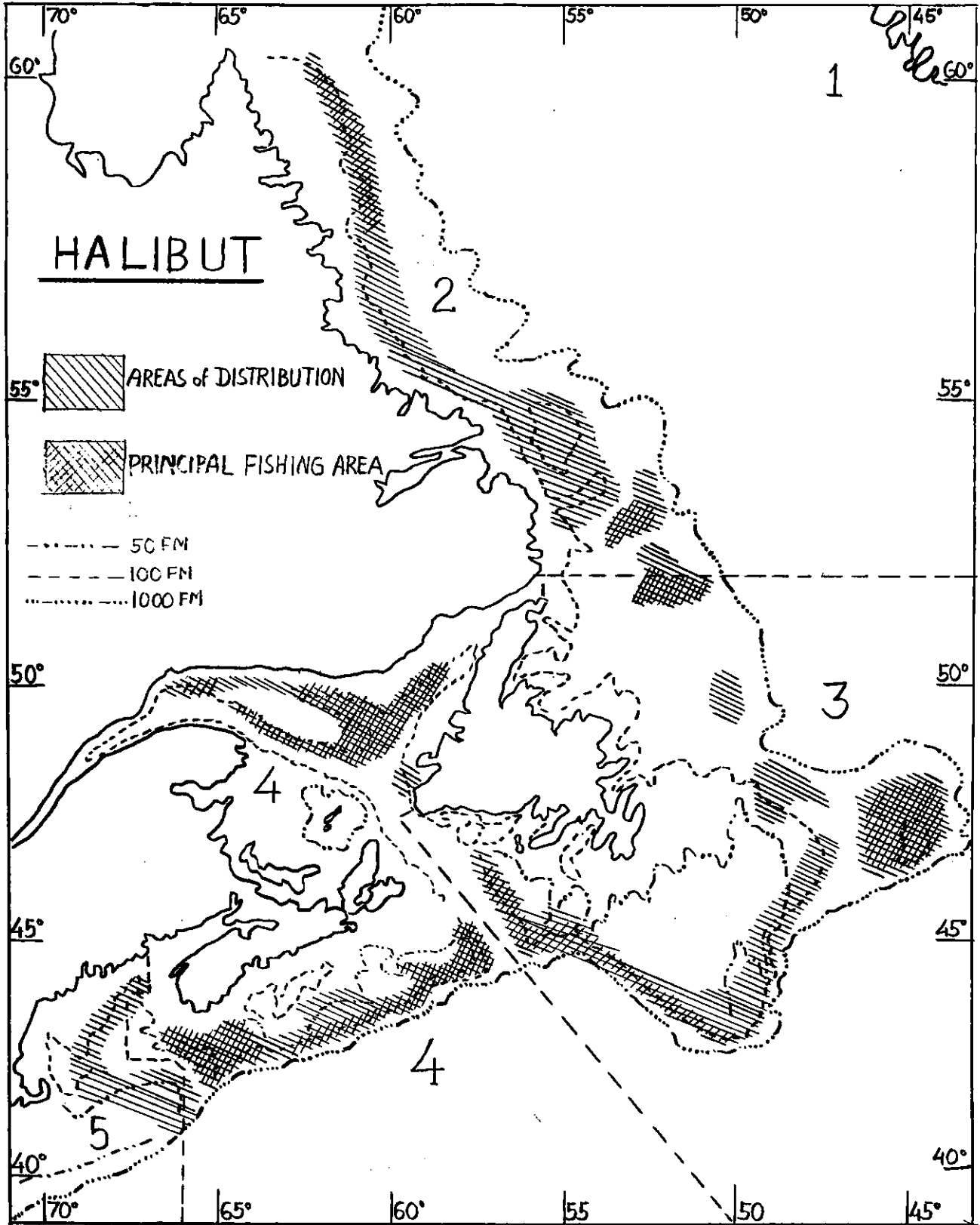


Fig. 2. Distribution of halibut in the ICNAF Convention Area, Subareas 2, 3, 4 and 5, shown by numbers.