



ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1967

Canadian proposal for regulation of seal fishery

The Government of Canada as a member of Panel A (Seals), has requested that consideration be given by the Panel members to its proposal that a 25 April closing date be established for the 1968 sealing season in the Front area.

The proposal was distributed from the Secretariat to Panel members on 31 January 1967 in accordance with an agreement regarding notification of amendments reached at the Copenhagen Meeting of the Panel in October 1966.

Text of the letter of 24 January 1967 from the Canadian Government containing the proposal follows:

Mr. L.R. Day,  
Executive Secretary,  
International Commission for the  
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries,  
Bedford Institute of Oceanography,  
P.O. Box 638,  
Dartmouth, N.S.

January 24, 1967.

Dear Mr. Day,

I wish to refer to the minutes of the Copenhagen interim meeting of ICNAF, Panel A (Seals) and particularly to the agreement reached under Agenda item 6 that - "notification of any amendments from member countries to the regulations for the 1968 sealing season should be presented to Panel members not later than 31 January, 1967".

As was pointed out in Contribution No. 4 entitled "On the population dynamics of the western harp seal stocks" by Dr. D.E. Sergeant, data available to Canadian scientists have indicated a high annual rate of exploitation of harp seals in the Front area for several years and a concomitant decrease in the size of the total population as estimated by several different methods. Canada has been concerned about this situation for some time and in 1961 and 1962 Canada proposed, through the annual exchange of Notes that led to the gentlemen's agreement on international sealing regulations in the northwest Atlantic area, an earlier closing date to give additional protection to the important breeding female segment of the stock. Although the Canadian proposals were not completely acceptable to the other sealing nations, agreement was reached to change the closing date for sealing in the Front area from May 5 to April 30, beginning with the 1963 season.

Canada is still concerned about evidence of over-exploitation of the important harp seal resource in the Front area and wishes, at this time, to propose a closing date of April 25 for sealing in the Front area in order to provide additional protection for adult seals, particularly the breeding females. It is hoped that favourable consideration would be given to this proposal by the other Panel members and that the April 25 closing date would become effective for the 1968 sealing season.

It would be appreciated if you would bring this Canadian proposal to the attention of the other members of Panel A (Seals) in order that it may be considered at the 1967 Annual Meeting of ICNAF, along with other proposals for regulation of the international seal fisheries in the Convention area.

Yours very truly,

(signed)

A. W. H. Needler,  
Deputy Minister.