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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR



THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES

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Notification Series No.2

Notification re authorized mesh measuring gauges  
and mesh size equivalents in the ICNAF trawl fisheries





Notification Series No. 2

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1. Contracting Governments are herewith notified that, in accordance with a decision taken by the Commission at its 1966 Annual Meeting (1966 ICNAF Ann. Proc. 16, p.20) and until the time of its 1967 Annual Meeting

- (a) the ICES mesh measuring gauge, with the method of use the same *mutatis mutandis* as that laid down for the ICNAF gauge but under an applied pressure of 8.8 lb, and the NEAFC simple flat mesh measuring gauge, with the method of use such that the gauge must pass easily through the meshes when wet after use, are approved as alternatives to the ICNAF mesh measuring gauge pursuant to the Commission's 1964 proposals for the international regulation of trawl fisheries which came into force in Subarea 5 on 21 October 1965 and pursuant to any other proposals which may come into force in other subareas

and

- (b) the following mesh size equivalents for different mesh measuring gauges and mesh differentials for different trawl net materials proposed by the Commission at its 1964 Annual Meeting are approved pursuant to the Commission's 1964 proposals for the international regulation of trawl fisheries which came into force in Subarea 5 on 21 October 1965 and pursuant to any other proposals which may come into force in other subareas:

Type of Net	ICNAF gauge	ICES and NEAFC simple gauges
Seine Net	100 mm (4 in)	95 mm (3 3/4 in)
Such part of any trawl net as is made of cotton, hemp, polyamide fibres or polyester fibres	105 mm (4 1/8 in)	100 mm (4 in)
Such part of any trawl net as is made of manila or any other material not mentioned above	114 mm (4 1/2 in)	110 mm (4 3/8 in)

(1964 Ann.Proc. 14, p.17)

2. A Background Note is attached as Appendix A. It contains extracts from a Note prepared by Mr J. Aglen (UK) for the ICNAF Working Group on Mesh Problems, London, 21-23 November 1966, and details the development of Commission proposals relating to mesh measuring gauges and mesh size equivalents.

Office of Commission  
17 March 1967



L. R. Day  
Executive Secretary

Background Note

on

Notification re authorized mesh measuring gauges  
and mesh size equivalents in the ICNAF trawl fisheries

1. The original trawl regulations recommended by the Commission, first for Subarea 5 and later for the other subareas, prescribed that meshes were to be measured with a flat wedge-shaped gauge having a taper of 2 cm in 8 cm and a thickness of 3/32 in or 2.3 mm, inserted into the meshes under a pressure of not less than 10 lb or 4.5 kg nor more than 15 lb or 6.8 kg (Note: the first regulation for Subarea 5 recommended in 1952 prescribed a pressure of twelve pounds *simpliciter* but this was altered the following year to prescribe a pressure in the range 10 to 15 lb).
2. What has become known as the standard ICNAF gauge conforming with the Commission's recommendations is a spring-loaded wedge-shaped gauge designed to ensure that when it is inserted in a mesh it is inserted with a transverse pressure in the range 10 to 15 lb (4.5 to 6.8 kg) (Figure 1).
3. In the North Eastern Atlantic the gauge prescribed by the London Convention of 1946, and by the regulations inherited by the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) when it was set up under the Convention of 1959 is a flat gauge 2 mm thick of the appropriate width (*i.e.* appropriate to the particular prescribed minimum) which will pass easily through the mesh when the net is wet (Figure 2). It may be noted that this gauge does not measure the width of a mesh but merely determines whether it is at or above the minimum prescribed or below it. Nor do regulations prescribe the pressure with which the gauge is to be inserted.
4. Owing to the variable pressure with which the NEAFC gauge may be inserted by different operators, the use of this gauge leads to variable results in determining whether meshes comply with the prescribed minimum. This led the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to devise a spring-loaded gauge in which a standard pressure (4 kg) is applied to the jaws of the gauge across which the mesh is stretched (Figure 3). This ICES gauge like the ICNAF gauge measures the width of the mesh, whether above or below the prescribed minimum; but unlike the ICNAF gauge it applies the standard pressure along the length of the mesh and not transverse to it. The ICES gauge has been adopted as the standard gauge for scientific purposes on both sides of the Atlantic.

5. At its meeting in 1963, ICNAF noted that the courts in certain countries had been unable to accept evidence based on the use of spring-loaded gauges in enforcement proceedings before them. At its meeting in 1964, the Commission (on the basis of the recommendations made by the Working Group on Chafing Gear and Mesh Measuring Problems endorsed by the *ad hoc* Committee on ICNAF Trawl Regulations) recommended the following changes in the regulations for all sub-areas, in force and pending:

- (a) that the minimum meshes prescribed should relate to trawl nets made of manila;
- (b) that on the basis of scientific advice as to selectivity equivalents, the Commission should be enabled to determine the appropriate mesh sizes when trawl nets made of material other than manila are used or when seine nets are used; and
- (c) that on the basis of scientific advice, the Commission should be enabled to approve not more than two gauges alternative to that prescribed in the regulations, by defining the gauges together with approved methods for their use and accepted scales of equivalent mesh dimensions.

(1964 ICNAF Ann.Proc. 14, p.16-17)

At the same meeting the Commission decided that when the above-mentioned recommendations enter into effect, the following mesh size equivalents be adopted for materials other than manila, and for the different methods of measurement indicated.

Type of Net	ICNAF gauge	ICES and NEAFC simple gauges
Seine net	100 mm (4 in)	95 mm (3 3/4 in)
Such part of any trawl net as is made of cotton, hemp, polyamide fibres or polyester fibres	105 mm (4 1/8 in)	100 mm (4 in)
Such part of any trawl net as is made of manila or any other material not mentioned above	114 mm (4 1/2 in)	110 mm (4 3/8 in)

(1964 ICNAF Ann.Proc. 14, p.17)

It may be noted that the Working Group mentioned above recommended that the two alternative gauges which the Commission might approve were the simple flat

gauge as specified by NEAFC and the ICES gauge, and that accordingly the simple gauge mentioned in the table above must be taken to mean the NEAFC gauge.

(1964 ICNAF Meeting Proc. 15, Appendix II)

6. At the ICNAF meeting in 1965, the possibility of uniform minimum mesh requirements for trawl fisheries in the North Atlantic was discussed and the Commission agreed that a standard mesh measuring device for both ICNAF and NEAFC was desirable. The Commission was informed that mesh problems were being considered by a Special Committee of NEAFC on International Control and that arrangements would be made for those countries which were members of ICNAF but not of NEAFC to take part in the Special Committee's work. At its meeting in 1966, ICNAF was informed of the progress made and of the special meeting of NEAFC to be held in the autumn of 1966 to give further consideration to the question of international control.

(1965 ICNAF Ann.Proc. 15, p.24-25)

7. At its meeting in 1966, the Commission took note that the recommendations mentioned in 5. above had taken effect in Subarea 5 on 21 October 1965. At that meeting, the *ad hoc* Committee on Trawl Regulations considered whether as a result of this any further action on the part of the Commission was needed to implement the recommendation particularly with reference to the alternative gauges. This led the representatives of one country to say that it could not accept the use of the ICES gauge for the purpose of the Commission's recommendations. This in turn seemed to raise doubts as to whether at its meeting in 1964 the Commission in adopting equivalent mesh sizes for *inter alia* the ICES gauge had at the same time implicitly approved that gauge as one of the alternative gauges allowed by the recommendation which had entered into force. The question was referred to the Commission which decided as a temporary measure to reaffirm approval of the ICES gauge and the NEAFC simple flat gauge for the purpose of that recommendation for one year only subject to review at the 17th Annual Meeting.

(1966 ICNAF Ann.Proc. 16, p.20)

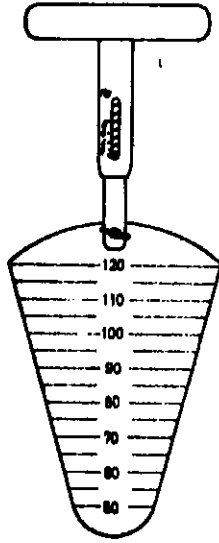


Fig. 1. ICNAF mesh measuring gauge

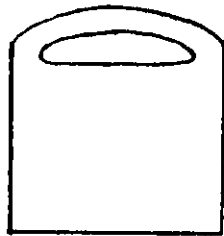


Fig. 2. [NEAFC] simple flat mesh measuring gauge

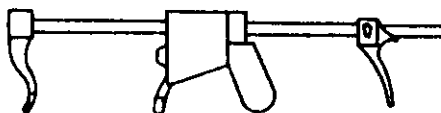


Fig. 3. ICES mesh measuring gauge