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UNITED STATES PROPOSALS CONCERNING ADDITIONAL
CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR HADDOCK

Regulatory proposals for haddock in Subarea 5 were approved at the 19th Annual Meeting of the Commission:

- (a) limiting annual haddock catches to 12,000 metric tons,
- (b) prohibiting fishing with gear capable of catching demersal species during March-April in two areas where spawning concentrations of haddock are found.

The United States has previously indicated the importance it attaches to restoring the haddock resource, which for many years provided the most valuable harvests taken by our North Atlantic trawlers. The ICNAF Subcommittee on Assessments has now emphasized that this objective will not be achieved unless additional restrictions are imposed on the fishery. The Report of the January 1971 Mid-Year Meeting of the Subcommittee (ICNAF Comm. Doc. 71/1) notes that the 1970 year-class of haddock in the Subarea "is very poor, and recruitment in 1972 will be very low, probably much less than that needed to replenish losses." (The previous six year-classes were also quite poor.) The Subcommittee stressed that continuing the annual catch at 12,000 tons will not allow for improvement of stock abundance (which is very low) and probably will lead to a further decrease by the end of 1971.

In these circumstances a substantial reduction in the Subarea 5 haddock quota or a ban on all haddock fishing (other than incidental catches) in the Subarea seems highly desirable, and the United States will propose action along this line at the 1971 Annual Meeting of the Commission.

In the event that some haddock fishing in Subarea 5 is permitted, the United States will also propose extension during May of the closed season for fishing with gear capable of catching demersal species in

the two previously designated Subarea 5 haddock spawning areas. The closed areas would then apply during March, April and May. The United States will also ask consideration of technical changes in the Subarea 5 haddock quota regulations to help avoid interference with other fisheries. At the 1970 ICNAF Annual Meeting, the United States submitted ICNAF Comm. Doc. 70/34 proposing modification in the boundary of the westernmost closed spawning area in Subarea 5. This proposal was withdrawn to allow additional time to consider such action. We plan to resubmit proposals to modify this boundary in order to minimize interference with redfish fishing in the north and also with shrimp fishing near the western boundary. We will propose that the existing coordinates of the northern and western most corners--69°20'W., 42°30'N. and 70°00'W., 42°10'N.--be changed to 69°00'W., 42°10'N. and 69°55'W., 42°10'N., respectively (see attached chart). With these changes the four corners of this closed area would be redefined as follows:

69°55'W., 42°10'N.
69°10'W., 41°10'N.
68°30'W., 41°35'N.
69°00'W., 42°10'N.

Scientists believe that opening these small segments to fishing would not have detrimental affect on the conservation of haddock. The technical changes in the boundary would facilitate operations of all fishermen since the spawning closure area would be reduced in size.

The United States also finds that the spawning closure regulations have created unusual economic hardship for small vessels of limited range and capability. Thus, we will propose exemption from these closure regulations of small vessels that make only single day trips and fish with lines using large hooks not designed to take haddock, since their catch is insignificant.

We also note difference in allowances for incidental catches of haddock and yellowtail flounder after quota closures in Subarea 5. The former allowance allows possession of 10 percent by weight of all other fish on board while the latter allows either such 10 percent allowance or 5,000 pounds. We expect to propose that the exemption clauses be standardized. In this connection, we will propose that a poundage

exemption be included in the haddock regulation. It may be desirable to standardize all exemption clauses on a poundage basis as a more precise management tool than percentages.

The basic interest of the United States in modifying the haddock management program is directly related to ICNAF Assessment Subcommittee analyses indicating a definite need for regulatory refinements to accomplish the original intent of ICNAF haddock quota proposals. Our specific proposals are designed to more effectively accomplish this objective while limiting interference with other fisheries. The cooperation of other members of the Commission in the existing haddock conservation effort has been very encouraging, and we would hope that such cooperation can be continued during the improved regulatory program needed to rebuild this resource.

