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A Report on the Tagging of Greenland Halibut
(*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) on the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland

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A total of 247 Greenland halibut was tagged off White Bay, Newfoundland, October 25 to November 1, 1969 (Fig. 1) using yellow Petersen disk tags attached by 0.032 inch (0.8 mm) stainless steel wire. The tags were attached to the anterior part of the fish directly above the insertion of the pectoral fin.

Longline gear with hooks about 2 m apart, baited with capelin, was used to catch the fish for tagging. The maximum amount of gear for a set was 5 tubs, each with eight 50-hook lines. The gear was allowed to remain in the water for sufficient time to sink to the appropriate depth (315-345 m) before it was taken back. A canvas recovery tank was used on deck to hold surplus fish as they came off the hooks.

Altogether 20 tags were returned up to one year after release. The location and date of the recapture of these tags are shown in Fig. 1. There are indications that at least some of the Greenland halibut that populate the northeast coast of Newfoundland during the summer and fall move offshore during the winter. The first tagged fish to be recovered was caught less than a month and half (11/12/69) after it was released about 70 miles (112 km) southeast of the tagging site (Fig. 1) in 350 m.

During the early spring of 1970 5 tags were returned by European factory ships from the general vicinity of Funk Island Deep (Fig. 1). Most of the remainder of the recoveries during 1970 were by the inshore fishery, mostly within a 50 mile (80 km) distance from the tagging area. One tag, however, was caught near the mouth of Trinity Bay on October 13, 1970.

It is possible that Greenland halibut caught offshore in ICNAF Division 3K and in the northern part of ICNAF Division 3L and those fished inshore in the deep coastal bays belong to the same stock. Since Greenland halibut apparently spawn in the winter, this might be a spawning migration. This could account for the fact that all offshore recoveries were made in the early spring. On the other hand, very little fishing takes place inshore during the winter and the monthly fishing activity by the European fleet in 3K and 3L in 1970 was not available.

Tagging programs in deep water in bays along Newfoundland's east and northeast coasts, as well as on the seaward slope of the continental shelf, are planned as a means of elucidating stock boundaries of this species in the Northwest Atlantic.

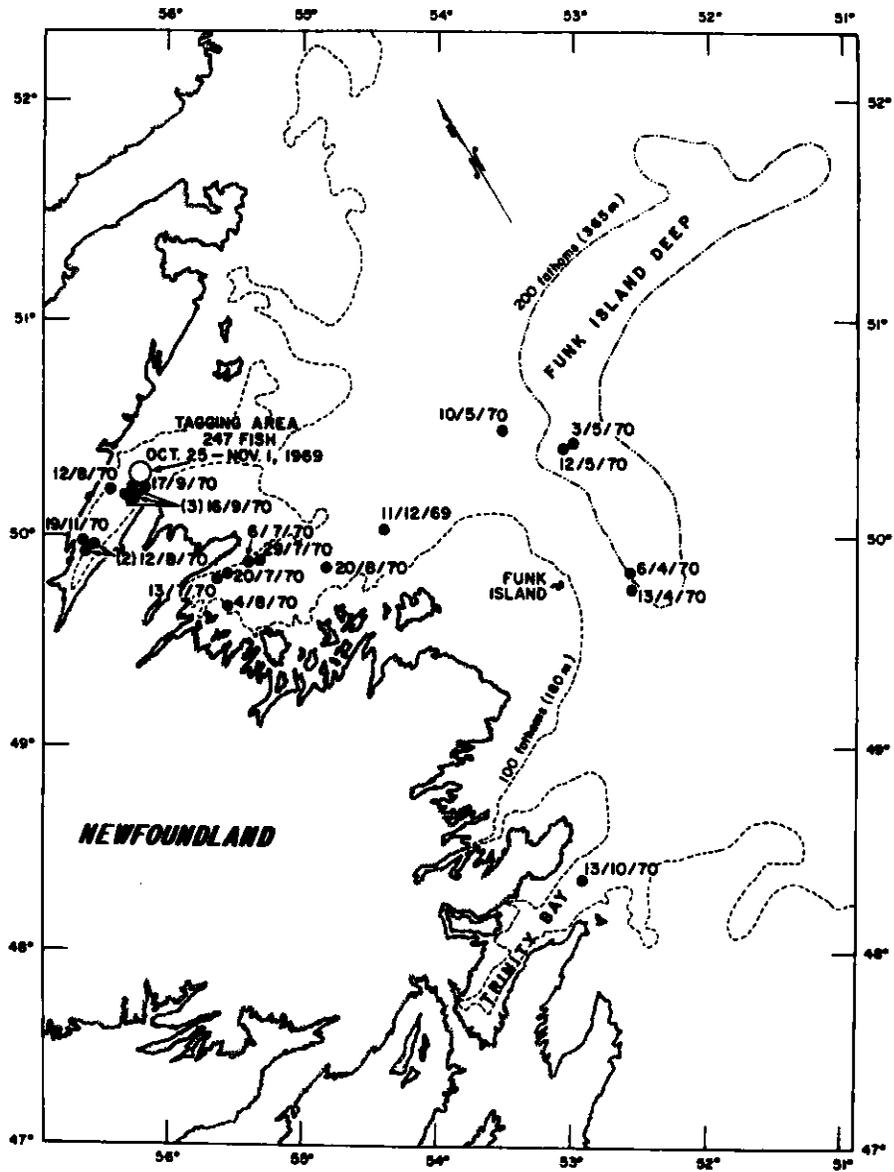


Fig. 1. Locations of tagging site and tag recaptures for a 1969 Greenland halibut tagging experiment. Day, month and year of recapture are for individual tag returns.