

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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Canadian proposal for quota regulation of the fishery for cod in Division 2J of Subarea 2 and Divisions 3K and 3L of Subarea 3 of the Convention Area

Canada believes that for many fisheries in the Convention Area, present levels of exploitation and fishing effort result in economic returns substantially below those which could be provided if fishing mortality were set at levels which would provide catches at somewhat less than the biological maximum sustainable yield level. An example of this is the fishery for cod in Divisions 2J and 3KL, where very expensive offshore fisheries operate on a large scale along with a complex of small inshore fishing operations, mainly outside of Convention waters. It is Canada's belief that establishment of a total allowable catch (TAC) for these stocks at a level below the biological maximum sustainable yield would permit all participating nations to bring about changes in their fishing patterns which would provide substantial increases in the economic yield per recruit, to the benefit of all.

The sustained development of the offshore fishery has created an especially difficult situation for the many small inshore fishermen along the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador who depend almost entirely on the inshore migrations of cod in the warm weather months for their livelihood and whose catches have declined markedly as a result of removals from the same stocks in offshore waters during the winter months. Establishment of a TAC at a level lower than the maximum sustainable yield would provide at least a small increase in the numbers of cod available to the inshore fishermen and would provide some relief from the problems they face.

Canada therefore proposes that the Commission, at its 1974 Annual Meeting, consider establishing a total allowable catch (TAC) for cod in Division 2J of Subarea 2 and Divisions 3K and 3L of Subarea 3 for 1975 at a level substantially below the biological maximum sustainable yield.

As an alternative means of achieving a reduction in total catch and consequently increasing the economic yield per recruit from this stock, Canada further proposes that the Commission give consideration to the desirability of closing the Hamilton Inlet Bank spawning area for this cod stock during the spawning season. Such a measure would make it easier for countries to adjust to a lower total allowable catch (TAC) for the offshore fishery and provide for higher catches and increased economic benefits for inshore fishermen.

To assist the Commission in considering the implications of this latter proposal, Canada requests that STACRES be asked to assess the effects of closing the Hamilton Inlet Bank spawning area on the catches of both the inshore and offshore fisheries.