

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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Canadian proposal for reduction in fishing effort on groundfish  
stocks in Subareas 2, 3, and 4 in 1976

In recent years, catches and catches per unit effort of most important groundfish stocks in the Convention Area off the Canadian coast have declined. For Canadian fishermen, catch per unit levels have now reached the point where severe economic hardships are being experienced by most eastern Canadian fishing communities. Many fishermen have been forced to leave the fisheries to search for alternative employment at a time when economic opportunities are severely limited.

To provide relief for Canadian fishing communities and to improve the economic base for fishermen of all countries, Canada proposes a substantial reduction of fishing effort in 1976 on groundfish in Subareas 2, 3, and 4 by all countries except the coastal state. It is proposed that the reduction take the form of decreases by each country of the number of fishing days in each ICNAF Division (or in some cases, groups of divisions) by their vessels in each of a number of size categories. These reductions would be a certain minimum percentage, about 40%, below the 1973 level for each gear and size category of vessels in each Division.

Preliminary analyses indicate that while such a reduction in fishing effort would, of course, cause a commensurate immediate reduction in catch, the resulting effect on the stocks would lead to a recovery of the catch to close to present levels within a few years, to the economic benefit of all.

To assist the Commission in its consideration of the Canadian proposal, STACRES is requested to estimate, for as many stocks as possible, the effects over the next 15 years, of 20%, 30%, 40% and 50% reductions of fishing mortality below the 1973 level. STACRES is also requested to comment on the effect of such reductions in effort on TAC levels.