

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

Serial No. 3642  
(A.a. 4)

ICNAF Comm.Doc. 75/24

ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1975

Note by US Commissioners on herring regulations  
for Subarea 5-Statistical Area 6

At its 1974 Annual Meeting STACRES cautioned that, while a 1975 catch of 150,000 metric tons from the Georges Bank herring stock would likely leave the adult stock size at a level sufficient to meet the minimum size constraints set by the Commission, such a catch would continue the adult stock declines of previous years. The Committee further noted that under existing assumptions the stock size at the beginning of 1976 would be the second lowest stock size observed in the fishery, and that with no indication of improved recruitment from the 1971 and 1972 year-classes, a 1975 catch of 150,000 metric tons would likely decrease the stock below the minimum level set by the Commission to approximately 220,000 metric tons and necessitate a very low TAC for 1976 to meet the minimum level required by the beginning of 1977. This, in addition to a similar conclusion in the case of the Gulf of Maine stock, caused the United States to accept with only the greatest reluctance 1975 quotas of 150,000 metric tons and 25,000 metric tons respectively for these stocks, and to urge the Commission to take special note of the cautionary statements contained in the Report of STACRES. In Comm.Doc. 74/36, presented at the Special November Meeting of Panels 4-5, the United States proposed that these quotas be re-considered and substantially reduced on the basis of additional data received following the 1974 Annual Meeting. While such a reduction was approved in the Gulf of Maine herring quota, action was not taken on the Georges Bank quota, despite the recognition that this would likely necessitate a more drastic reduction for 1976.

Assessment scientists have now confirmed that such a reduction in the 1976 Georges Bank quota will be required to assure that the objectives established by the Commission for this stock are met. These objectives cannot be met if the quota is set at a level which incurs a substantial risk that the stock size will decline below the minimum level set by the Commission, or is set at a level which precludes the chance of any stock recovery.

The serious condition of this stock requires that the Commission now give renewed attention to the goal of rebuilding this resource. It is the view of the United States that the 1976 quotas must be set at a level which will insure that recovery can be initiated during 1976. The Assessments Subcommittee has noted that if recruitment of the 1973 year-class is at the lower of two assumed levels, a TAC of 60,000 metric tons would only "maintain the stock at the low level of 225,000 metric tons." Accordingly, it is the view of the United States that the 1976 TAC must be set sufficiently below 60,000 metric tons to insure that an increase in the stock size can be anticipated in accord with the management objectives of the Commission.

It is also the view of the United States that coastal fishermen should not be asked to subsidize the excesses of others by accepting a reduction in their allocations for this stock. Action was taken in reducing the 1975 TAC for the Gulf of Maine stock both to prevent more serious damage to the stock and to avoid imposition of the adverse economic effects on small coastal fishermen inevitably produced by later more drastic reductions in the quota. These small

coastal fleets cannot now be required to bear a similar burden as the result of a decision by other members of the Commission to delay action on the Georges Bank quota. Accordingly, it is the view of the United States that the 1976 US allocation should be increased in order to allow the continued growth of this important US fishery, and to partially compensate for the reduction which will be required in the Gulf of Maine quota.