



Serial No. 3643
(A.a. 4)

ICNAF Comm. Doc. 75/25

ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1975

Note by US Commissioners on haddock and flounder
regulations in Subarea 5

In Commissioner's Document 74/38 submitted to the Special Meeting on Panels 4-5 in November 1974, the United States proposed certain amendments in the haddock regulations for Subarea 5 which it felt necessary to reduce incidental catches of this species, and without which a satisfactory rate of recovery could not be provided for this severely depleted stock. Central to these proposed modifications was the closure of the Georges Bank area to fishing with gear or in a manner capable of catching demersal species. Due to objections raised by Member Governments, action was not taken on these US proposals. At that time the United States announced that it could accept an alternative regulatory package, but emphasized that it did not view this as a long term solution, but only as a minimally satisfactory response to the problem during 1975.

Evidence has now been presented by the Assessments Subcommittee that points even more forcefully to the need for improved controls on by-catches of both haddock and flounder in Subarea 5. Current assessments of Subarea 5 haddock indicate that recruitment has remained poor and that while some improvement was observed in the 1972 year-class, the minimal recovery this has generated is leveling off due to the very poor year-classes in 1973 and 1974. The Subcommittee has also called attention to additional disturbing trends in evidence indicating that growth rates for young fish have increased sharply since 1970 implying a considerable reduction in age at recruitment. The Assessments Subcommittee also notes in its Report that these factors have serious implications relative to stock and recruitment, further indicating that every effort should continue to be made to limit fishing mortality on this stock. Continuing declines have been noted in the "Other Flounder" stock in Subarea 5-Statistical Area 6. The Subcommittee has also noted that all abundance indices have shown a decline in the yellowtail stock east of 69°W during 1974, and warns that the "by-catch of yellowtails, particularly immatures, should be held to the lowest possible level."

Accordingly, it is the view of the United States that the Commission must again address the problem of adequately controlling by-catches of these stocks. The United States has already noted in Commissioner's Document 75/15 that the Commission must re-examine the entire question of the trawl fishery exemptions in Subarea 5, as well as Subareas 3-4, in order to develop a proposal which will adequately address the by-catch problem. It is equally clear to the United States that such a measure cannot be relied on alone as a solution to this problem, but must be supplemented by controls aimed at eliminating use of gear from areas of known groundfish concentrations. An appropriate proposal designed to accomplish this objective will be submitted by the United States.