

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1976

North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

Mid-Term Meeting

Press Notice

A Mid-Term Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission took place in London from 11 to 19 November 1975. The President, Captain J.C.E. Cardoso (Portugal), was in the Chair. Delegations attended from all Member States, namely:

Belgium, Denmark, France, the German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United Kingdom.

Observers represented the Governments of the United States of America, Cuba, Finland, Italy, and the FAO, ICSEAF, and the European Economic Community.

2. Herring Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak

After a prolonged examination of measures for the regulation of the human consumption and industrial fisheries for herring in the North Sea and Skagerrak, the Commission agreed that the total catch of herring for the period 1 January-30 June 1976 shall be 87,000 tons. This total catch is allocated as national quotas as follows:

	<u>tons</u>
Belgium	800
Denmark	23,000
Faroes	5,000
France	5,300
German Democratic Republic	2,200
Germany, Federal Republic of	4,500
Iceland	5,000
Netherlands	7,300
Norway	13,000
Poland	3,700
Sweden	5,000
United Kingdom	5,300
USSR	5,700
Others*	1,200
TOTAL	87,000

* including a reserve of 500 tons for Finland

A Special Meeting will be held in London from 21 to 24 April to consider the further regulation of North Sea herring stocks for the remainder of 1976.

3. Industrial Fishing for Herring

The ban agreed at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting on directed fishing for herring for industrial purposes in Region 2 of the Convention Area has been re-confirmed. New and stricter limitations have been agreed to control the by-catches of herring taken in industrial fisheries in this Region. These provide for a maximum by-catch of herring of 10% in each landing of sprat, with a 5% maximum by-catch of herring in each landing of Norway pout, sandeel or other fisheries.

4. Celtic Sea Herring

The Commission unanimously agreed to set a new total allowable catch for the stocks of herring in the Celtic Sea of 16,800 tons for the quota year 1 April 1976 to 31 March 1977. The national quotas are as follows:

	<u>tons</u>
France	2,200
Ireland	10,000
Netherlands	3,000
United Kingdom	500
Others (total)	<u>1,100</u>

TOTAL 16,800

5. Conservation of Herring Stocks in the Irish Sea

The Commission agreed to ask its scientific advisers, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, to prepare an assessment of the state of the herring stocks in the Irish Sea - covering the Manx and Mourne herring fisheries - and to make recommendations on total allowable catches for discussion at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting.

6. Mixed Fisheries

Following a comprehensive set of proposals tabled by the United Kingdom delegation, the Commission agreed several new measures regulating the catch of protected species taken in the course of fisheries for other species, including industrial fisheries.

In particular, a closed area for industrial fisheries for Norway pout in the North Sea off the North East coast of the United Kingdom was agreed.

Limits on the percentages of protected species taken as by-catches in fisheries with small mesh nets were introduced for the first time. In the industrial sandeel fishery, this limit is 10% by weight.

The Commission's new general rule governing the catches of protected species provides that no more than 25% by weight of protected species may be taken as a by-catch in industrial fisheries or mixed fisheries for human consumption. An additional restriction limits to 10% by weight the quantity of undersized protected species. This applies to all catches whether or not they have been taken with industrial fishing nets or nets of the regulation minimum sizes, both of which may be carried on voyages. These restrictions apply not only to landings, but to catch compositions on board at any time at sea.

The existing restrictions on the use of attachments to nets were extended to small mesh net fisheries.

Higher minimum mesh sizes were introduced for a number of species currently fished with small mesh nets.

The overall effect of the measures agreed is to introduce a greater measure of control than had hitherto applied to mixed fisheries.

The majority of these new measures are due to come into effect on 1 April 1976.

7. Provision of Statistical and Biological Information on Herring By-Catches in Industrial Fisheries

The Commission agreed a resolution calling upon all Member Countries conducting industrial fisheries with herring by-catches to report urgently to the Commission's scientific advisers, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, detailed statistical and biological data of these fisheries.

8. Sprat Fishery in the North Sea

The Commission agreed that the catch of sprats taken by a Contracting State and the Faroes in the North Sea (excluding Norwegian Fjords) in 1976 shall not exceed the catch in any year between 1964 and 1974 (both inclusive) or the catch in the period 1 January-30 November 1975 reduced by 40% of the quantity exceeding 50,000 tons.

Each country with catches of less than 20,000 tons in either period mentioned is permitted to exceed the catches by 50%, or take a maximum of 4,000 tons.

9. North Sea Cod, Haddock and Whiting

The Commission agreed by a majority to set total allowable catches for cod, haddock, and whiting stocks

in the North Sea of 236,000 tons, 206,250 tons, and 189,000 tons, respectively, for the period 1 January to 31 December 1976. These total allowable catches were allocated as national quotas as follows:

	<u>Cod</u> tons	<u>Haddock</u> tons	<u>Whiting</u> tons
Belgium	14,500	2,250	3,700
Denmark (including Faroes)	44,500	41,250	74,000
France	16,500	7,500	27,000
German Democratic Republic	1,000	150	500
Germany, Federal Republic of	24,500	4,875	2,800
Netherlands	26,000	10,500	14,000
Norway	5,000	7,500	11,800
Poland	3,000	1,125	-
Sweden	8,800	4,650	1,900
United Kingdom	84,000	79,500	44,000
USSR	6,400	45,000	7,000
Others (total)	1,800	1,950	2,300
TOTAL	236,000	206,250	189,000

It was also agreed that the tonnage limit of the "flexibility rule" - under which in 1975, the national quotas for any of these three species may be exceeded by 10% or 500 tons, whichever is the greater, provided that the aggregate national quotas for the three species is not exceeded - shall be increased to 3,000 tons for the 1976 quota year. There is no change to the percentage allowance in the flexibility formula.

10. Sole and Plaice Fishing in the North Sea

While total allowable catches for sole and plaice stocks in the North Sea for 1976 were agreed at the Commission's Annual Meeting in May this year, the Commission reconsidered the regulation which prohibits trawling for these species by heavier vessels inside the coastal waters of the eastern North Sea. The Commission unanimously agreed that trawling in this area shall be prohibited in 1976 by vessels exceeding 50 gross registered tons or 300 horsepower. The by-catch regulations for this provision will be re-examined at the next Annual Meeting of the Commission.

11. Arcto-Norwegian Haddock in the North-East Arctic

Because of the essentially mixed nature of the cod and haddock fisheries in the North-East Arctic, the Commission agreed a new Recommendation under which those Contracting States who have taken their quotas for North-East Arctic cod are not permitted to continue a directed trawl fishery for North-East Arctic haddock. While no quota scheme is yet agreed, figures for haddock catches in this area will in future be reported to the Commission, on a monthly basis.

12. Statistical Reporting and Quota Control

Following a request by the Norwegian delegation, the Commission studied and approved a questionnaire prepared by a specially convened Working Group designed to provide the Commission with a full and detailed picture of Member States' methods of collecting and processing statistical data of catches, including by-catches, and their current means of monitoring and controlling the uptake of quotas. The results of this analysis will be considered at the next Annual Meeting.

13. Quota Allowances for Finland

In view of the intention of the Government of Finland to accede shortly to the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Convention, the Commission agreed to set aside for Finland an allowance of 1,000 tons of herring from the total quota for "others" in the fishery to the West of Scotland for the quota year 1976. In the North Sea, the new agreement on herring quotas for the period 1 January 1976 to 30 June 1976 includes provision for a quota of 500 tons for Finland.

14. Thames Estuary Herring Stocks

The Commission agreed to exempt from North Sea and Skagerrak quota scheme the small and biologically discrete stock of herring fished in the inshore waters of the Thames Estuary between North Foreland and Orfordness. The maximum annual catch from this stock in recent years has been of the order of 500 tons.

15. Other Matters

The Commission agreed to defer until its Fourteenth Annual Meeting, further consideration of the mesh of nets in Region 1; saithe stocks in the Convention Area; and conservation of cod, haddock, and whiting

stocks to the West of Scotland and in the Irish Sea.

16. Date of Fourteenth Annual Meeting

At the invitation of the Government of Portugal, the Commission will hold its Fourteenth Annual Meeting in Lisbon from 1 to 9 July 1976 inclusive.

Office of the Commission
London