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the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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Canadian views on options to be considered by STACRES in providing advice on the scientific basis for management of certain fisheries for 1978

Further to Commissioner's Document 77/VI/4, Canada requests STACRES to consider the following options in assessing and projecting future stock levels for those stocks listed in Commissioner's Document 77/VI/4 and for Flemish Cap (Division 3M) stocks.

For those stocks subject to analytical dynamics-pool type assessments, the status of the stock should be reviewed and management options evaluated in relation to their implications to fishable stock size in both the short and long term. In those cases where present spawning stock size is a matter of scientific concern in relation to the continuing productive potential of the stock, management options should be evaluated in relation to spawning stock size. As a general reference point, the implications of fishing at $F_{0.1}$ in 1978 and subsequent years should be evaluated. The present stock size should be described in relation to those observed historically, and to those to be expected in the long term by continued fishing at the $F_{0.1}$ level. Management options for arriving at the latter stock size on a shorter time scale should be developed. Opinions of the Subcommittee should be expressed in regard to stock sizes, catch rates, and TACs implied by these management strategies for 1978 and the long term.

For those stocks subject to general production-type assessments, the status of the stock should be reviewed and management options evaluated in the way described above to the extent possible. In this case, the general reference point should be the level of fishing effort ($\cong F$) which is two-thirds that calculated to be required to take the MSY catch in the long term.

For those resources on which only general biological and/or catch data are available, no standard criteria on which to base advice can be established. The evidence on stock status should, however, be weighed against a strategy of optimal yield management and maintenance of stock biomass at levels of about two-thirds that of the virgin stock.

In the case of capelin stocks, there is a commitment to review scientific evidence accumulated over the three years that the TAC has been set at 500,000 metric tons. Only if this evidence clearly demonstrates that the TAC can be raised above this level without damage to either the productivity of capelin or of those species stocks which are dependent on it as a food resource, can TAC options above 500,000 metric tons be considered by Canada. On the other hand, if evidence demonstrates that the level of TAC of 500,000 metric tons over the past three years has resulted in either damage to the productivity of capelin or of those species stocks which are dependent on it as a food resource, then TAC options below 500,000 metric tons may have to be considered. Management options should be reviewed based on these criteria.

The Canadian Government continues to be concerned about levels of groundfish catches in the small-boat nearshore fisheries of Northeast Newfoundland-Labrador, as reflected in earlier Commissioner's Documents on this subject. Catch levels in these fisheries have continued to be considerably below average in comparison with levels existing prior to development of the large offshore groundfish fisheries. Recent scientific evidence presented by STACRES indicates that the 2J + 3KL cod stock has been substantially reduced below former abundance levels.

Canada requests that STACRES undertake a review of the available scientific information on the inter-relationships between those portions of the 2J + 3KL cod stocks which support the small-boat nearshore fisheries of Northeast Newfoundland-Labrador, on the one hand, and the offshore cod fishery, on the other, with reference to the impact on inshore fisheries of current levels of fishing offshore. In particular, STACRES should project the effects of fishing at the $F_{0.1}$ level, and alternative levels, on future levels of stock abundance and catch at present levels of exploitation rate in the inshore fishery.