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the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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Report on Fishing Activity and Enforcement in 1978

by

the Executive Secretary  
ICNAF

A. Fishing Activity

Through 1978, fishing activity has continued outside the 200-mile fishing zone in Div. 3M in some cases in complete disregard of the Commission's conservation measures. Again, as in 1977, inspectors' reports give evidence of overfishing catch quotas, neglect by some Contracting Governments to notify intentions to fish under the "Others" allocation and to report catches from the "Others" allocation in 100-ton increments. As a result of these neglects, it has been impossible for the Secretariat to advise when catch quotas in Div. 3M for "Others" were reached and the fisheries were closed. Table 1 shows regrettably that two of the countries fishing substantially in the ICNAF Convention Area failed to report provisional monthly catch statistics in 1978.

Table 2 compares the provisional monthly catch by countries fishing in 1978 on the regulated cod, redfish, and American plaice stocks in Div. 3M. Four countries have overfished their cod allocation. The redfish catch allocation for "Others" was overfished due to the failure of a country to report its catch in 100-ton increments. Records by the ICNAF inspectors of catches logged by the vessels of one of the countries which submitted no catch reports show accumulated catches of cod far in excess of its catch allocation.

B. Enforcement

Again in 1978, Canada has borne the entire burden of surveillance and inspection at sea under the ICNAF Scheme of Joint International Enforcement in the ICNAF regulatory area (portions of Div. 3L and 3N and all of Div. 3M). Canada carried out 61 inspections at sea in the regulatory area as against 58 in 1977, and recorded sighting 130 vessels from 11 countries fishing in Div. 3M alone. With Canada exercising rigorous catch, effort, and reporting control under her licensing scheme for foreign fishing of allocations inside her 200-mile zone, the main fleets of some countries with Canadian allocations appear to be using Div. 3M as a "waiting" area while a few vessels search for the best catch rate within the area and on the species they are licensed to fish for by Canada. While waiting, extensive fishing is carried out. The same fleets, when their Canadian allocated catch and/or effort has been used and some vessels do not have a full load, appear to be "topping off" in Div. 3M en route to home port.

Table 3 gives a summary of the numbers of vessels which were registered by the Member Countries to fish in Div. 3M, the vessels sighted in Div. 3M, and the vessels inspected outside the 200-mile fishing zone in Div. 3M, 3N, and 3O by Canadian surveillance units and inspection officers. Three vessels were cited for violations, while five failed to submit a list of vessels registered to fish in the ICNAF regulatory area. Table 4 lists the country, vessel name, side number, number of times and the period in which it was sighted, and the date of an inspection if carried out.

C. Observer Scheme

The Commission's scientific observer scheme adopted in 1975 was used by Canada in 1978 and provided valuable biological information on special project fishing, discards, effect of mesh sizes on species in mixed fisheries. Further application of the scheme in the ICNAF regulatory area could help to provide much needed basic data for assessment and management purposes.

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