

Northwest Atlantic



Fisheries Organization

Serial No. N038

NAFO/FC Doc. 80/III/1

SPECIAL MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND FISHERIES COMMISSION - MARCH 1980

Comments on Div. 3M cod

by

the Faroese Delegation

The Faroese Delegation has studied in detail the Report from the Scientific Council from February 1980 on Div. 3M cod. We note that a more complete assessment has been made, including the data and points raised by the Faroese Delegation in NAFO/FC Doc. 79/VI/2. Further, this assessment is an agreed one with all parties with major interests in the Flemish Cap cod fishery present.

The Scientific Council in its advice gives the present stock size, the expectations of recruitment and the expected yield, if the fishery in 1980 is performed at the $F_{0.1}$ level.

The Faroese Delegation has performed some calculations in order to inspect the effects of different management schemes and, for your convenience, the results are summarized below:

<u>Effort level</u>	<u>Yield 1980 (tons)</u>	<u>Stock (age 3+) 1 Jan 1981 (tons)</u>
Same level as in 1979, $F = 0.64$	21,000	78,000
Effort increased by 20 percent, $F = 0.77$	24,000	74,000
Effort reduced by 20 percent, $F = 0.51$	18,000	82,000
Effort at $F_{max} = 0.35$	13,000	87,000
Effort at $F_{0.1} = 0.20$	8,000	93,000

The outcome of the Scientific Council meeting thus clearly states that the stock at present is at a level which, only by assuming very high fishing mortalities, will render catches in the vicinity of the TAC of 40,000 tons set for 1979.

Now, the Flemish Cap stock is one of the stocks where the outcome of the fishery is very dependent on the recruitment of large year-classes. One large year-class, the 1973 year-class, is now reduced and a further good year-class, the 1977 year-class, has been shown in research vessel surveys. This 1977 year-class will recruit to the Faroese fishery in 1981 as 4-year-olds and probably contribute considerably to the catches in 1982 as 5-year-olds.

These large variations in recruitment have to be borne in mind when effects of management schemes, assuming equilibrium conditions, are projected.

The assessment by itself does not leave much freedom of action, and this certainly poses very major problems for the Faroese Delegation, problems we have to bring to the attention of the Commission.

As has been described in Faroese contributions to the scientific series of ICNAF and NAFO, the Faroese fishery on Flemish Cap is performed by a small group of specialists who have fished this area, and in former times in Canadian waters as well, using longline gear.

After 1977 this fishery has been restricted to the Flemish Cap area, making this Faroese fishing fleet unit wholly dependent on the allocations on Flemish Cap.

The Faroese fishing fleet, as a whole, is at the moment in a state of painful readjustment to the new regime of the seas. This has mainly meant a return to home waters, as distant waters have been closed. If this process shall not have a disastrous effect on the tiny Faroese nation, which is almost 100 percent dependent on fishery, time is needed to adapt. Sudden changes have very negative effects on the chances of getting through this painful period of readjustment safely.

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Thus, a cutback in allocations on Flemish Cap poses a real and most serious problem to the Faroese administration. The needs for the Faroese vessels, now restricted to Flemish Cap, are easily defined. Any cutback in allocations in the western Atlantic below 7,200 tons will raise serious problems for the vessels involved.

?? We are fully aware that all countries and nations, not disposing over waste coastal zones, have similar problems, but we have to stress that, in the case of the Faroes, it is simply a question of survival, to get time to adapt to the environment of the new regime of the seas.