Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

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EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 1986

Scientific Council Request for Advice from the Fisheries Commission

The following extracts (1 and 2) are from the "Provisional Report of Scientific Council, 4-19 June 1986" (SCS Doc. 86/24):

1. Reporting Problems with Catch Statistics (page 67)

Estimates of catches of cod, flounders and redfish in Div. 3L, 3M, 3N and 3O by various countries from Canadian surveillance data were compared with the provisional statistics that were reported to the NAFO Secretariat (Table 16). The estimates from surveillance data were from inspections of the catches and logbooks aboard vessels of different countries either at sea or in port by Canadian surveillance officers. Estimates of the catches from the inspected vessels for each country were then used to provide estimates of total catch by multiplying them by the ratio of the total days on ground by vessels of that country, as determined from overflights, to the days on ground, as determined from the inspections referred to above, allowing for lost time due to weather, mechanical failures, etc.

Table 16. Cod, flatfish and redfish catches in 1985 (provisional).

Stock	A	B	C	D	E
Cod 2J3KL	226,102	0	226,102	234,314	234,314
Cod 3M	12,787	0	12,787	26,259	26,259
Cod 3NO	36,460	4,770	41,230	44,862	49,632
A. plaice 3LNO	45,904	5,235	51,139	43,875	49,110
Yellowtail 3LNO	19,681	7,395	27,076	15,084	22,479
Witch 3NO	8,701	245	8,946	3,598	3,843
Redfish 3M	19,184	-	19,184	28,106	28,106
Redfish 3LN	21,284	375	21,659	20,150	20,525

A Catches reported to NAFO by all countries (SCS Doc. 86/22, and research reports).
B Canadian surveillance estimates for non-members not reported to NAFO.
C Sum of A and B (totals used for assessments).
D Canadian surveillance estimates for countries that reported to NAFO. (If no surveillance data, catch reported to NAFO was used.)
E Sum of B and D

STACFIS was not able to fully evaluate the validity of the technique used to estimate these catches because of lack of documentation of the method. Therefore, the following procedure was adopted for the 1985 assessment of stocks that were affected by these estimates: The most recent catch as reported by each country would be combined with the estimated catch from Canadian surveillance data for non-member countries (that have not reported catches to NAFO) to provide an estimate of the total removals for use in stock assessment; after the assessment was complete, the Canadian surveillance estimate for member countries would then be utilized to derive an alternate level of total removals in 1985; the implication of this alternate level to the advice provided from the assessment could then be evaluated.

In view of the major discrepancies between the catches reported by some member countries and those estimated from Canadian surveillance data and the fact that some non-member countries fished in Div. 3L, 3M, 3N and 3O without reporting their catches (Table 16), STACFIS

recommends

that the Scientific Council request the Fisheries Commission at its meeting in September 1986 to evaluate these estimates from surveillance data and the estimation procedure involved and advise the Scientific Council on the appropriateness of using such estimates to derive total removals in future assessments.

2. Irregularities in Catch Statistics (page 8)

The Council noted that STACFIS had addressed the problem regarding catch statistics of non-reporting countries as well as discrepancies between reported catches by some member countries and estimated catches by Canadian surveillance authorities. The Council agreed to seek direction and advice from the Fisheries Commission on how to proceed with addressing the problem in the future.

At the present meeting, the Scientific Council emphasized the need for the Fisheries Commission to advise on the appropriateness of the procedure used by STACFIS for carrying out future assessments. Resolution of the problem now would allow for the timely organization of material for the June 1987 assessments.