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Status of the American plaice fishery in Subarea 2-Division 3K,
Division 3M and Subdivision 3Ps¹

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The principal fishery for American plaice in the Convention Area occurs on the Grand Bank, ICNAF Divisions 3L, 3N and 3O. The stock here was placed under quota starting in 1973. Other stocks of plaice in Subareas 2 and 3 are also being exploited and it is the purpose of this document to present a brief summary of the status of the fishery in Subarea 2 and 3K, Division 3M and Division 3Ps.

American Plaice Subarea 2 and Division 3K

From knowledge of the extent of plaice migrations in Division 3L and 3N it is quite probable that very little mixing occurs between adult plaice in Division 3K and those to the south in Divisions 3L, N, O, although Division 3K may be a source of recruitment to Division 3L at the egg and larval stages. The Canadian fishery for American plaice in Subarea 2 and 3K is conducted almost entirely by inshore boats 50 tons and under using gill nets (165-203 mm) almost exclusively. The fishery is in conjunction with the cod, witch and Greenland halibut fishery. However, as with the latter fishery the boats have been forced to move farther offshore because of dwindling stocks. Research cruises to the area do not indicate particularly large concentrations but rather a number of relatively small aggregates scattered throughout the area possibly depending on the correct conditions such as suitable bottom sediment.

With a limited knowledge of the availability of plaice in these divisions a TAC of about 8000 tons (the average for the past 5 years) (Table 1) is suggested with about 1500 tons subtracted for removals outside the Convention Area.

American Plaice - Division 3M (Flemish Cap)

This stock is distinct from the Grand Bank stock as indicated by vertebral averages (Pitt, 1963), age at sexual maturity (Pitt, 1964) and rate of growth (Pitt, 1967). The total stock on Flemish Cap is probably relatively small and the only substantial landings reported were in 1965 and 1966 by the USSR which listed about 5000 and 4000 tons respectively (Table 2) of "unspecified flounder." Presumably these were all plaice and were probably by-catches of the cod fishery. Judging from recent catches it appears highly unlikely that the TAC should exceed 2000 tons annually.

American Plaice Division 3Ps (St. Pierre Bank-Newfoundland South Coast)

The separation of 3Ps plaice from Grand Bank stock (Divisions 3L, 3N and 3O) is primarily based on its geographic separation from the latter area and also because no plaice tagged on the Grand Bank were recovered on St. Pierre Bank or in adjacent localities. Except for relatively large catches taken in 1968 (8350 tons) and 1969 (4340 tons) by the USSR the fishery has been mainly by Canada with small

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quantities landed annually by the St. Pierre based French fishery (Table 3). No real knowledge of the condition of the stock is at present available but a TAC of between 8000 and 9000 tons is suggested here with 2500-3000 tons from outside the Convention Area.

References

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1964. Sexual maturity and spawning of American plaice Hippoglossoides platessoides (Fabricius) from Newfoundland and Grand Bank areas. J. Fish. Res. Bd. Canada. 23: 651-672.
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Table 1. Plaice Subarea 2 and 3K (Nominal catches)

Year	Canada		Ger	Pol	Rom	Spa	USSR	UK	GDR	Non-Member	Total Stock
	Inshore	Total									
1962	54	60		7			222	1			290
1963	104	116		84			346	3		16	565
1964	86	95		146			642	27		115	1025
1965	167	222		308			2100	8		50	2688
1966	171	228		150			1330	10		213	1931
1967	230	384		102			1893	23		199	2601
1968	562	1023		244			5142			38	6447
1969	760	1689		129			6645		214		8677
1970	1688	3751		378	293		8160		104		12686
1971	1119	2486		233	5	6	2597	2	19		5348
1972	538	1197	4	852	97	5	6760	23	135		9070

USSR and Polish catches for 1962-69 were calculated on the basis of the 1970 and 1971 breakdown of plaice and witch. "Unspecified flounder" were considered to be all plaice and witch.

Table 2. Plaice - Division 3M (Flemish Cap) - Nominal catch

Year	Total	Ice	Pol	Rom	Spa	USSR	UK	Non-Members	Total Stock
1962	14		150			557			721
1963			108			51	20		179
1964			10			1831	37		1878
1965	19	2	216			4964	83		5284
1966			17			4003	53		4073
1967	57		63				33	1	154
1968	100					337	4		441
1969	12					113			125
1970			17			62			79
1971						1079			1079
1972			8	106	17	665	48		884

NOTE: All USSR and Polish "unspecified flounder" entered as plaice.

Table 3. American Plaice 3Ps - St. Pierre Bank and South Coast Nfld. - Nominal catch

Year	Canada		Fra	Rom	USSR	UK	Total Stock
	Inshore	Total					
1962	307	1022	2				1024
1963	159	529	208			16	753
1964	409	1362	152			28	1542
1965	555	1849	162				2011
1966	729	2431	667		290		3388
1967	901	3004	533				3537
1968	1656	5519	524		8350		14393
1969	1215	4050	245		4340		8635
1970	3479	11595	397		336		12328
1971	1786	5953	820		409		7182
1972	1776	5921	383	14	220		6538

USSR catches based on 1970/71 breakdown of plaice, yellowtail and witch applied to "unspecified flounder" 1962-69.

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