

Northwest Atlantic



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SPECIAL MEETING SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL - FEBRUARY 1981

Report to Scientific Council on Inadequate Response to Specified Data Requirements
for Stock Assessments

by

Assistant Executive Secretary

1. Data Requirements for February 1981 Meeting

NAFO Circular Letter 80/85 (issued 17 December 1980) provided certain particulars about the Scientific Council Meeting during 17-21 February 1981. In addition to the Provisional Agenda, the Data Requirements were listed for the cod and capelin stocks to be assessed at this meeting. Specifically, it was stated that "the statistical and biological data from commercial fishing operations in 1980 must include the following items of data:

- "a) Nominal catch and effort data for 1980 by month, gear and NAFO division for each species. If catch and effort data are not complete for all months of 1980, the scientists responsible for submitting each country's data must estimate the catches for the remaining months. It is absolutely essential that the data be reported by division and not by stock area.
- "b) Sampling data from commercial fishing in 1980 should be reported according to the procedures adopted at the June 1979 Annual Meeting. This involves the use of the new revised sampling forms CFS-1 and CFS-2 for length frequencies and age-length keys respectively. If both length and age data are not fully available for all sampling in 1980, it is important that whatever data are available be forwarded as soon as possible".

Blank forms for use in providing the required data were dispatched to certain scientists who were requested to ensure that all relevant data were compiled and forwarded to designated assessment experts by 31 January 1981, with copies to the Secretariat. The forms were sent to the following country's or country components: Bulgaria, Canada (Maritimes), Canada (Newfoundland), Cuba, EEC, Faroe Islands, Federal Republic of Germany, France (Metropolitan), France (St. Pierre), German Democratic Republic, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and USSR (PINRO and AtlantNIRO). (See Circular Letter 80/85 for names of scientists.)

2. Response

- a) Nominal catch (main species and by-catch species) and effort data for 1980 by division, gear, tonnage class and month, in accordance with the specified requirements, were reported by Canada (Maritimes), Federal Republic of Germany, and Japan (only 3 of the 16 countries noted above, although nearly all of them are known to have had some fishing activity in the areas).
- b) Direct responses to the request for biological sampling data were received from the 3 countries noted in (a), all of which indicated that they had no biological sampling data to report.

Actually, the only 1980 biological sampling data reported to the Secretariat for the stocks to be assessed at this meeting are: 4 samples of capelin taken by USSR during September-October 1980 from Div. 2J.

Response to the Secretariat's requests for statistical data on behalf of the Scientific Council have continuously deteriorated in recent years, the amount of 1980 data available in the Secretariat for use by scientists at this February 1981 Meeting being the smallest on record. It is paradoxical that many of the scientists, who promote Scientific Council recommendations relating to the need for more detailed scientific data and their timely submission, actually do not bother to respond when subsequent requests for such data are made.