

## Japanese Government Willing To Impose Fishing Restrictions to Protect Halibut

The Japanese Government has indicated its willingness to impose voluntarily important restrictions on its fishing fleet in 1974, designed to protect dangerously depleted halibut stocks in the eastern Bering Sea. The actions are undertaken as part of a three-nation conservation program with the United States and Canada, under the aegis of the INPFC (International North Pacific Fisheries Commission).

Japanese draft measures incorporating the new conservation moves, which were based on recommendations initiated by the IPHC (International Pacific Halibut Commission), have been studied and approved in a series of recent meetings with U.S. and Canadian officials. Representatives of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, whose National Marine Fisheries Service is deeply involved in the U.S. effort to conserve and protect marine resources, participated in the discussions. The consequent understandings as to voluntary measures to be taken by Japan will be made a matter of official record without delay through circulation by the INPFC to the three governments, together with the INPFC's recommendations for joint measures to conserve halibut in the eastern Bering Sea. The new understandings stated that Japan would take the following additional domestic measures in 1974 for the purpose of protecting the halibut fishery:

1. prohibition of operations of mothership and North Pacific trawl fisheries in Area A south of 55° 30' North Latitude January 1 to March 31, 1974. The closure will apply for next winter also, but will begin on December 1, 1974.

2. prohibition of operations of mothership and North Pacific trawl fisheries in Area E south of 56° North Latitude December 1 to March 31. This closure will begin in December 1974.

The new Japanese measures were agreed upon in the weeks following the annual meeting of the INPFC held at Tokyo last November. Japan noted at the Tokyo conference that it would institute certain domestic conservation measures for halibut in the eastern Bering Sea including continuation of the ban on retaining trawl-caught halibut in most areas, increasing the minimum size limit from 26 to 32 inches, and other measures including improved enforcement. However, disagreements arose at that meeting concerning proposals made by the United States and Canada that Japan further curtail its trawl fishery in the eastern Bering Sea, believed to have a definitely destructive effect on halibut stocks because of the capture of large numbers of juvenile halibut in the fishery's "incidental" catch. The Tokyo meeting ended in an impasse on the halibut question. For the first time since 1963, the INPFC failed to recommend halibut conservation measures for the eastern Bering Sea at its annual conference.

Robert W. Schoning, Director of the NMFS and a U.S. Commissioner on the IPHC, and an Alternate U.S. Commissioner on the INPFC, said that the United States is pleased at the Japanese decision to take a greater part in international endeavors to protect a valuable marine asset through the expedient of setting a ban on trawling in certain areas and periods to reduce rates of capture and resultant high mortality of juvenile halibut.

Mr. Schoning said that the Japanese moves showed definite progress toward meaningful and concerted conservation action within INPFC through its member nations, Canada, Japan, and the United States.

## Canadian Report Recommends Trade: Port Use for Fish

A suggestion that Canada should bargain with other countries for the wider use of east coast ports in return for a bigger share of the Atlantic fish catch, rather than closing its ports altogether is one of a number of recommendations contained in a report on east coast port use by Dr. E.P. Weeks, Chairman of the Canadian Saltfish Corporation.

The 180-page report focuses on the activities of foreign fleets fishing off Canada's east coast and details their calls and expenditures at Canada's ports. It also estimates the financial losses which would result from closing these ports to foreign fishing vessels buying oil, food and other supplies.

The report suggests that Canada's chief aim in bargaining for use of port facilities should be a reduction in the present intense foreign fishing off the Atlantic coast, thus benefiting Canada's own offshore and inshore fishermen.

Dr. Weeks states that a review of the broad picture of the Canadian ports and foreign fishing fleets "leads to the general conclusions that Canada should adopt, as the basis of negotiations with interested countries, port use in the full sense rather than closure." He adds: "This would work to the advantage of Canadian ports, of the Canadian primary fishery, of processors, of employment and the economy in general, as well as being of value to the foreign countries concerned."

The report contends that port closure by itself would not likely result in any appreciable decline in fishing activity off the east coast by foreign fleets, which would still aim to take their ICNAF catch quotas regardless of the additional costs or inconveniences. However Dr. Weeks points out that the current oil situation accentuates the problems of distant water fishing fleets and is bound to increase their interest in the use of Canadian ports, not only on the present basis but even more in the way of specific new privileges for which they will be prepared to bargain.

The report states: "If the ports were opened to the extent of giving privileges for crew exchange, transshipment and storage, and the landing of fish, there would undoubtedly be a much larger number of port calls. These, in turn, would mean greater sales of goods and services." On the other hand, port closure—excluding emergency calls—would cause a loss of about four-fifths of foreign fleet expenditures in Atlantic ports.

On the basis of 1972 expenditures, this would amount to about \$18 million, of which more than \$16 million would be in Newfoundland and the remainder in Nova Scotian ports. St. John's, Nfld., where foreign fishing vessels make up nearly 40 percent of total calls, would be the hardest hit. The report estimates that total employment would decrease by approximately 2,500 man-years if the ports were closed to foreign vessels.

Under adequate safeguards, the landing of foreign fish could be of advantage to Canadian plants whose capacity is underutilized and to employment on a year-round basis, the report adds. Repairs to foreign fishing vessels in Canadian ports should involve the maximum use of local repair facilities, instead of the common practice of regarding the ports as a place to berth the vessels while foreign crews do the work.

## **Norwegian Fish Meal Is Well Received**

Norwegian fish meal produced for human consumption has been enthusiastically received in 13 African and Asian countries, according to World Wide Information Service, Inc. The meal has been marketed under the name of "Norse fish powder."

By the end of 1973, 3,000 tons of fish meal were shipped from Norway to Bangladesh. Small quantities were exported to other countries—either as regular sale or as part of the Norwegian foreign aid program. Production has been going on at three factories in northern Norway and two in the south. This has been satisfactory for the quantities needed so far.

## **Japan Encourages Frozen Food Industry**

The Kansai Cold-Storage Association has set up a new body called the Food Distribution System Association to develop the frozen food industry in Japan. As a part of the program, new cold storage construction has been encouraged. The Chuo Reito Co. completed the construction of a new cold-storage warehouse in Chuo Ward, Tokyo, with a capacity of about 27,000 short tons.

## **Australia Reports Tuna Developments**

In recent months, the Australian Government has put over US \$1,495,000 into fisheries research and development projects. Its policy is to develop the Australian fishing industry—particularly exports—to a "greater degree" than in the past, says World Wide Information Service, Inc.

Potential for tuna catches off Western Australia (WA) is supposed

to be "huge," according to Australian researchers. It has been reported that several years ago, Japanese fishermen caught 40,000 tons about 150 miles off the WA coast. Current Australian catches are small. Interestingly, researchers project that Western Australia's rock lobster industry will not expand its current catch and could decline in two years.

Meanwhile, Safcol, Australia's major fishing cooperative (sales, over US\$33 million), will build a US\$3 million tuna cannery on New South Wales' south coast. The cannery will concentrate on processing skipjack tuna, which is smaller than the bluefin tuna currently caught in local waters. Fish will be caught by purse seine netting and several vessels have recently been built for the project.

Exploitation of skipjack could nearly double Australia's tuna catch and Safcol will look at the export market, possibly through a United Kingdom-based dealer. The cannery will be at Unanderra, near the steel town of Wollongong. It will employ 250 workers. Two unnamed companies will join Safcol in the cannery project. Safcol is also reported to have recently rejected a takeover offer from an undisclosed United States source.

## **South Africa Eyes Lobster, Hake Catch**

South Africa has once again limited its rock lobster catch for the current season, November 1, 1973 through June 30, 1974, to 3.5 million pounds tail weight, according to World Wide Information Service, Inc.

Over the years, the catches of rock lobster have declined drastically, with the result that the South African Government has steadily lowered the catch-quota for local lobster fishermen, from 7.4 million pounds to the current figure. The scientist in charge of the South African Division of Sea Fisheries rock lobster research,

says, however, that there are optimistic signs of a recovery in the lobster population.

The South African fishing industry, fearing overfishing of the hake supplies, is urging the International Commission for the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries to impose a limit on the amount of hake caught in the Southeast Atlantic Region. The South African industry wants the annual catch restricted to 800,000 tons, with each nation fishing these waters agreeing to a quota system. The vast area of ocean off the South African and Southwest African coasts is yielding a harvest of 1 million tons of hake a year. South African boats account for about 100,000 tons of this. The remainder is caught by fleets from Russia, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Cuba and Poland.

## Cod Quotas Set By Three Nations

Delegations from Great Britain, the Soviet Union and Norway agreed in May 1973 to propose a limitation on arctic cod catches during 1974, reports the NMFS Statistics and Market News Division. According to the agreement the total quota was fixed to 550,000 tons with the following allocations: Norway, 242,850 tons; USSR, 179,500 tons; and Great Britain, 77,650 tons. In addition, Norway was to be allowed a coastal quota of 40,000 tons. The agreement is reported to have been accepted by the British government and there was a reported verbal acceptance from Moscow.

## Australian 1972-73 Fish Exports Told

During the 1972-73 financial year, Australia exported edible fisheries products worth US\$109 million, according to World Wide Information

Service, Inc. Rock lobsters, prawns, abalone and scallops were the main export earners, making up nearly 92 percent of the total value.

## ROCK LOBSTERS

The value of rock lobster exports fell from US\$51 million in 1971-72 to US\$49 million in 1973-74. The quantity of frozen tails exported was 4,600 tons, down 1 percent from the previous year, while the value fell 9 percent to US\$45 million.

During 1972-73, the United States took almost all Australian rock lobster tail exports while France bought 44 percent of the whole rock lobsters, and Japan received 35 percent. Western Australia was the main rock lobster exporting state, shipping 70 percent of the rock lobster tails and 59 percent of the whole rock lobsters.

### *Publications*

## Alaskan Marine Resource Publications

The first in a series of three books on "Alaska and the Law of the Sea" has been published by the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC), University of Alaska. A major study of the historic development and future of Alaska marine interests supported by the Alaska Sea Grant Program has gathered the information for the series.

The 70-page soft-cover book entitled "Alaska and the Law of the Sea—National Patterns and Trends of Fishery Development in the North Pacific," was written by Eugene H. Buck, research analyst in fisheries for AEIDC.

Statistics compiled in the new book

## PRAWNS

Prawn exports in 1972-73, amounted to 6,505 tons—18 percent less than 1971-72. They were worth US\$36 million, or 9 percent less than the previous year. Queensland shipped 37 percent of the total quantity of prawns; Western Australia, 23 percent; and Northern Territory, 22 percent.

Japan bought 79 percent, compared with 67 percent the previous year. Britain took 11 percent, and the United States and South Africa each took 4 percent.

## SCALLOPS

Scallops exports rose 78 percent in quantity and more than doubled in value to 1,704 tons, worth a record US\$7.5 million. The United States took 53 percent and France took 32 percent.

underscore the magnitude of foreign harvest versus Alaska harvest, showing where and on what species foreign fleets have harvested recently in the North Pacific a combined total of more than four billion pounds a year. It compares the United States catch with foreign catches for each species of commercially harvested fish and provides a general summary to be used in national and international fisheries discussion.

For each species, charts depict annual catches, the relative importance of various fishing districts and the divisions of the catch between nations. A page of text aids interpretation of statistics, and a map illustrates district subdivisions, major fishing areas and the general pattern