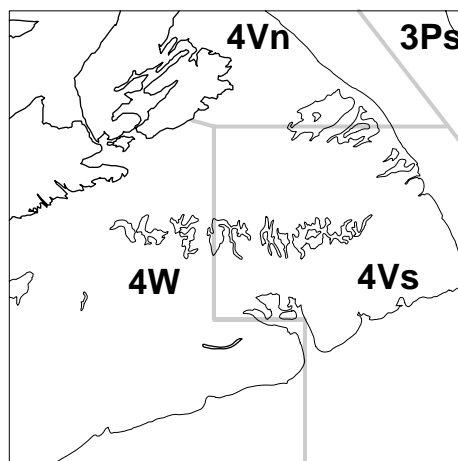


EASTERN SCOTIAN SHELF GREENLAND HALIBUT (TURBOT)



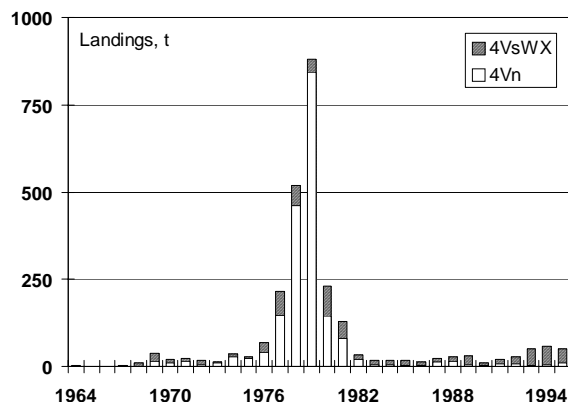
Background

Greenland halibut are generally found north of the Scotian Shelf, although they occur as far south as the Gulf of Maine. They exhibit an episodic pattern of peak occurrences associated with colder-than-normal conditions on the eastern Scotian Shelf, a response similar to that of capelin. In contrast to capelin, most Greenland halibut collected on the Scotian Shelf are immature (<45 cm) given that lengths at 50% maturity for males and females from the Gulf of St. Lawrence are 39.8 and 55.6 cm respectively. The dominance of immature fish suggests that mature fish move away from the eastern Scotian Shelf.

The diet of Greenland halibut varies with size. Smaller halibut feed mainly on shrimp and small fish while larger halibut consume capelin, herring, cod, and redfish.

Although no management unit is recognized for Greenland halibut on the Scotian Shelf there is one in the Gulf of St. Lawrence (Division 4RST) where landings have been as high 11,000t (1987) and gillnets comprise the principal gear type.

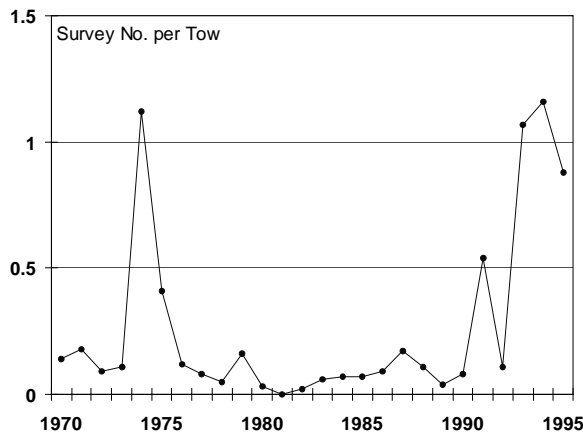
The Fishery



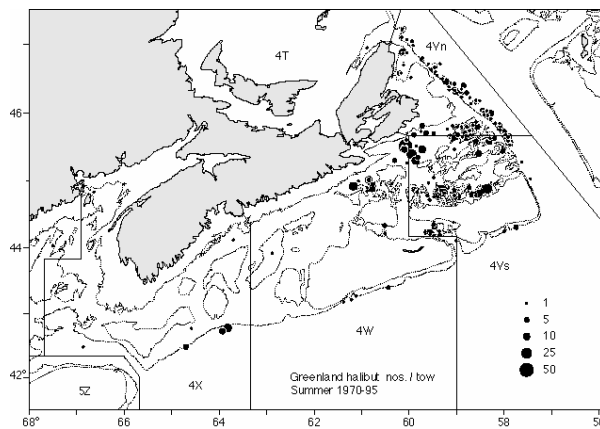
Landings on the Scotian Shelf have been generally low and restricted to Division 4Vn where a peak of 842t was recorded in 1979. The nearest large-scale commercial fishery for turbot exists in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the management unit for the stock is Division 4RST. Two peaks in landings since 1970 have occurred in Division 4RST: 8,800t in 1979 and 11,000t in 1987. The coincidence of peak landings between the two adjacent areas in 1979 suggests that when abundant the stock extends onto the eastern Scotian Shelf.

Available from: Maritimes Regional Advisory Process, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, P.O. Box 1006, Stn. B105, Dartmouth, N.S., Canada B2Y 4A2. Telephone: 902-426-8487. E-mail: d_geddes@bionet.bio.dfo.ca

Resource Status



Two distinct peaks in **abundance** have been noted in the summer research vessel surveys of the Scotian Shelf: a peak was noted in the mid-1970s and another more recent one in the 1990s. This episodic pattern of peak catch rates matches that of capelin quite closely and suggests that increases in turbot abundance are linked to colder-than-normal temperature conditions on the eastern Scotian Shelf.



Based on the summer research vessel surveys, Greenland halibut are confined to the eastern half of the Scotian Shelf. They are found in the deeper waters of the shelf and slope waters

especially near the Gully, along the Laurentian Channel and off Canso and Cape Breton.

Outlook

Their generally low level of abundance and the predominance of immature fish in the area suggests that the fishery potential for Greenland halibut on the Scotian Shelf is limited. The occurrence of Greenland halibut on the eastern Scotian Shelf may be an extension of the stock inhabiting the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

For More Information

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