

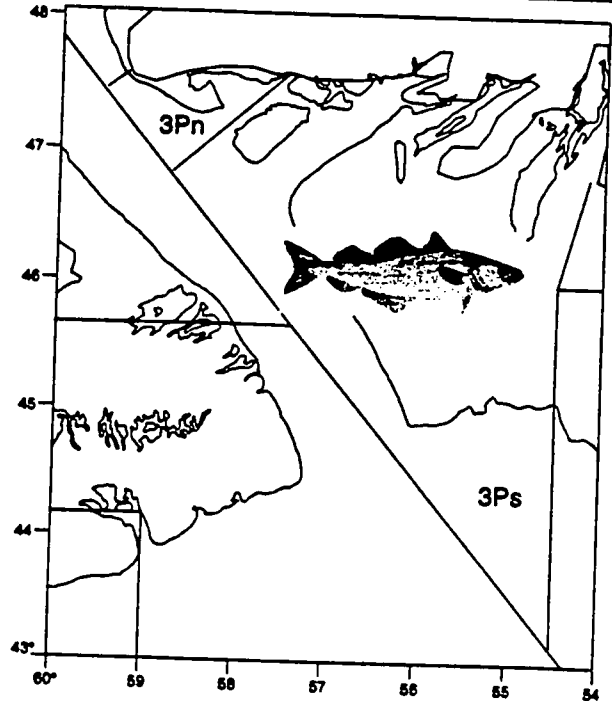
## SUBDIVISION 3Ps POLLOCK

### Background

Pollock occur on both sides of the North Atlantic; on the North American side from southern Labrador around Newfoundland into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and south to Cape Hatteras. Pollock is a member of the cod family (*Gadidae*), but unlike most members spends little time near the bottom. They are voracious eaters and often congregate in large numbers. As pelagic larvae they feed mainly on copepods, but as they settle and move inshore, crustacea, mainly amphipods, are the preferred food. As they increase in size euphausiids, shrimp and small fish become part of the diet. In the offshore areas sand lance, herring, silver hake, redfish and lanternfish become more important in the diet.

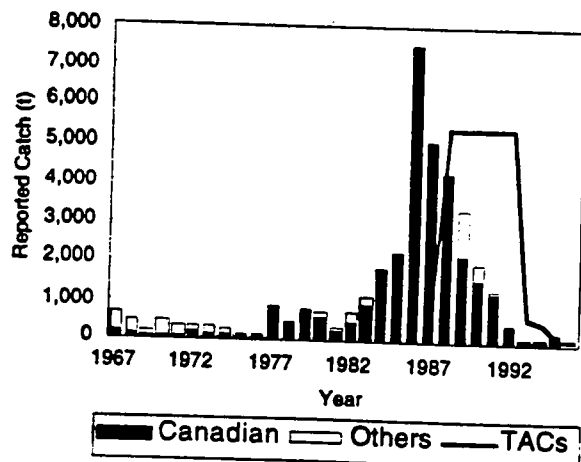
Pollock are a cold water fish preferring waters from 0° C to 10° C. However maturation of sex organs and incubation of eggs requires temperatures in the upper range. This fact places Newfoundland waters at the northern end of pollock range. Research on pollock in the Newfoundland area shows that mature fish occur along the slopes of St. Pierre Bank and the slopes of the southern Grand Bank. In summer months schools of young pollock are occasionally found in harbors along Newfoundland's south coast.

Pollock do not generally occur in Newfoundland waters in sufficient numbers to support a major commercial fishery.



### The Fishery

Historically, catches of pollock in Subdivision 3Ps have been generally low and less than 1,000 metric tons annually from 1967-1982. Catches gradually increased however, peaking at 7,500 metric tons in 1986, but have since declined to pre-1980 levels. Less than 100 metric tons were caught in 1994, but catches more than doubled to about 250 metric tons in 1995. Preliminary data to August 14, 1996 indicates a catch of only 26 metric tons.



## Landings (thousand metric tons)

Year	67-76 Avg.	77-90 Avg.	1992	1993 <sup>1</sup>	1994 <sup>1</sup>	1995 <sup>1</sup>	1996
TAC	-	-	5.4	.6 <sup>2</sup>	.5 <sup>2</sup>	.1 <sup>2</sup>	.1 <sup>2</sup>
Can.	.1	2	.5	.1	.1	3	+
Others	.2	.2	0	0	0	0	
Totals	.3	2	.5	.1	.1	3	

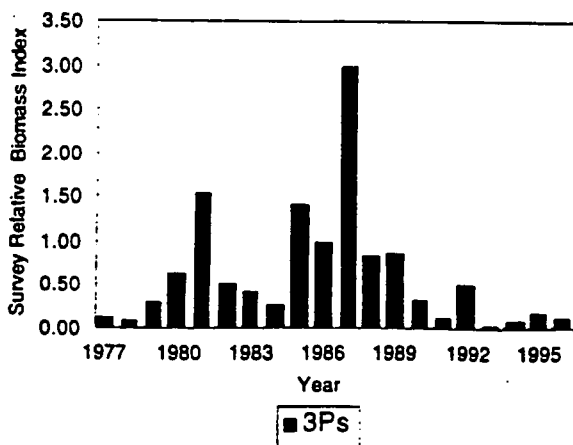
<sup>1</sup> Provisional<sup>2</sup> By-catch Only

\* Catch less than 500 metric tons

In 1996, by-catches of large commercial size pollock have increased significantly, and resulted in the fishery for hake in the offshore being closed.

### Resource Status

Due to the pelagic nature of the species, research vessel surveys may not give a reliable index of abundance or biomass. However surveys have been conducted in NAFO Subdivision 3Ps since 1972 by Canada. The relative biomass index was low in the 1970s. It gradually increased to generally higher levels until 1989, but has since declined to pre-1980 levels.



Surveys in the 1990s have caught very few pollock.

In the spring of 1995, and again in 1996 schools of small pollock were observed in many south coast harbours. These small fish were not caught during the surveys in those years.

The origin of the large pollock being taken as by-catch in 1996 is unknown; they were not caught during the 1996 survey. It is likely that they have migrated to the area from further south.

### Ecological Factors

Pollock in Newfoundland waters are at the northern extension of their range in the Northwest Atlantic. Cold waters throughout the area in recent years have probably been restrictive to their distribution and behaviour, although the presence of large fish in 1996 suggests some recent movement into the area.

### Outlook

Pollock have never been a major component of the commercial fishery in NAFO Subdivision 3Ps. The fishery is opportunistic, and based on the occurrence and survival of year-classes against great odds in the extreme north of their range. There may also be occasional migration to the area from further south. Recent surveys show biomass and abundance are low for all sizes of pollock.

### For More Information

**Research Document:** Murphy, E.F. 1995. The Status of 2GH cod, 3LNO haddock, 3Ps haddock and 3Ps pollock. DFO Atl. Fish. Res. Doc. 95/33.

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