



Advice on the Status of Gulf of St. Lawrence Scallop Stocks

At its meeting of January 31, 1985, CAFSAC reviewed the status of scallop stocks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Landings of scallops (t of meat weight) from districts 7c, 8 and 7bl ranged from about 500 to 1,300 t in the period 1967-72 and fluctuated in the range 200-350 t since then. The 1984 landings of 229 t was about 1/3 lower than that of 1983 with the greatest drop being in the Pictou-Wood Island District. Fishing started later than usual in this area because of the presence of ice.

Landings (t of meat weight).

Year	D I S T R I C T			Total
	7c	8	7bl	
1967	4.3	182.6	718.3	905.1
1968	3.9	1052.6	273.0	1329.6
1969	5.1	231.7	405.1	641.9
1970	69.7	298.4	327.9	696.0
1971	55.4	258.8	265.3	579.5
1972	81.1	151.0	276.0	508.1
1973	45.4	112.7	146.9	304.9
1974	36.6	45.9	119.4	201.9
1975	31.1	58.1	186.0	275.1
1976	25.5	217.7	119.4	362.6
1977	14.9	175.2	61.0	251.1
1978	14.6	171.5	81.3	267.4
1979	13.1	122.0	95.1	230.3
1980	21.7	99.6	89.3	210.5
1981	23.0	157.2	174.4	354.6
1982	26.8	113.0	126.5	266.4
1983	29.0	150.9	153.6	333.4
1984	36.1	126.2	67.0	229.3

Footnote: 1984 statistics are preliminary.

From research vessel surveys, densities of commercial sized scallops were somewhat lower in 1984 than in 1983 in each of the 3 districts.

Area Surveyed	Density (gm live weight l sq. mi)	
	1983	1984
Nepisiquit Bay (7c)	4.04	2.46
Cape Tormentine (8)	4.21	3.10
Pictou-Wood Island (7bl)	3.59	3.29

The reductions in density were in part due to an unexplained increase in natural mortality in 1984 as the frequency of cluckers increased in Nepisiquit Bay from 15% in 1983 to 33% and in the Cape Tormentine area from 13% in 1983 to 25%. In contrast, to these density estimates from surveys, commercial catch rates (kg per metre per hour) increased in the Nepisiquit Bay and Pictou-Wood Island areas. The catch rate in the Cape Tormentine area decreased.



	<u>Catch per metre per hour</u>	
	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Nepisiguit Bay (7c)	1.02	1.19
Cape Tormentine (8)	1.39	1.06
Pictou-Wood Island (7bl)	1.04	1.25

Because of limited coverage, the catch rate values may not be representative.

For the first time in the past four or five years, significant numbers of prerecruits (less than 70 mm shell height) were observed in each of the 3 areas surveyed, particularly in Cape Tormentine and Pictou.

The scallop fishery in the Southern Gulf is prosecuted on an opportunistic basis and effort and catch levels can be expected to fluctuate depending on the availability to the fishermen of other species such as lobster and herring. It would appear that these factors and the presence of ice in the early part of the season have combined to result in lower catches in 1984.