

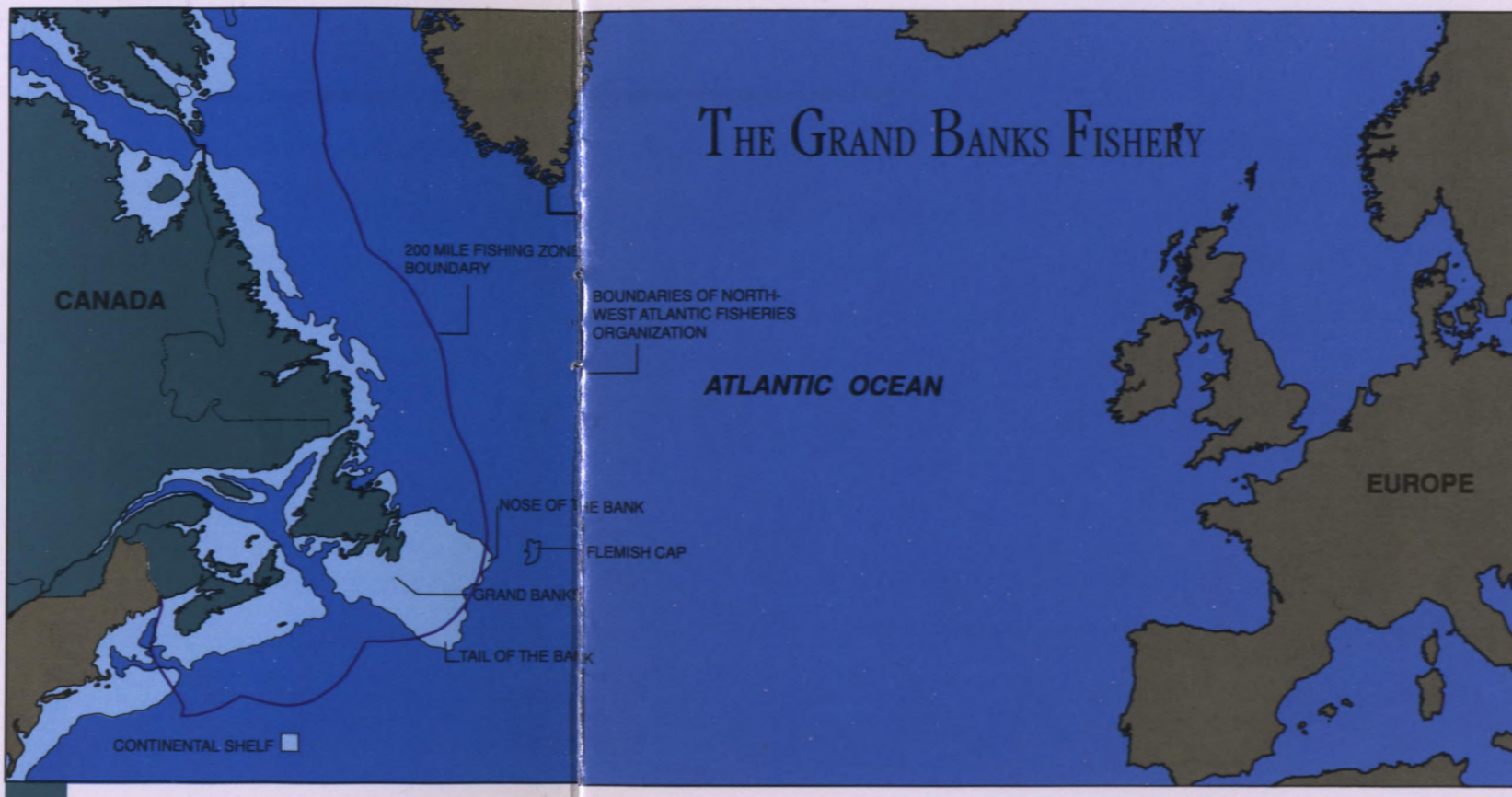
The Route to Destruction

The phrase "Grand Banks of Newfoundland" resonates in European and Canadian ears alike. The nourishing seas of this great underwater plain off Canada's east coast have supported enormous stocks of valuable fish over the centuries.

The fishing industry in these waters provides a livelihood to hundreds of communities on both sides of the ocean. The fishery pervades their way of life, maintains their social ties, and is one of the key links to their histories and traditions.

These waters could sustain their precious food resource indefinitely, if fishing in these waters were managed with care and restraint.

Full trawls such as this one have become only a memory in many of the Grand Banks' important fisheries.

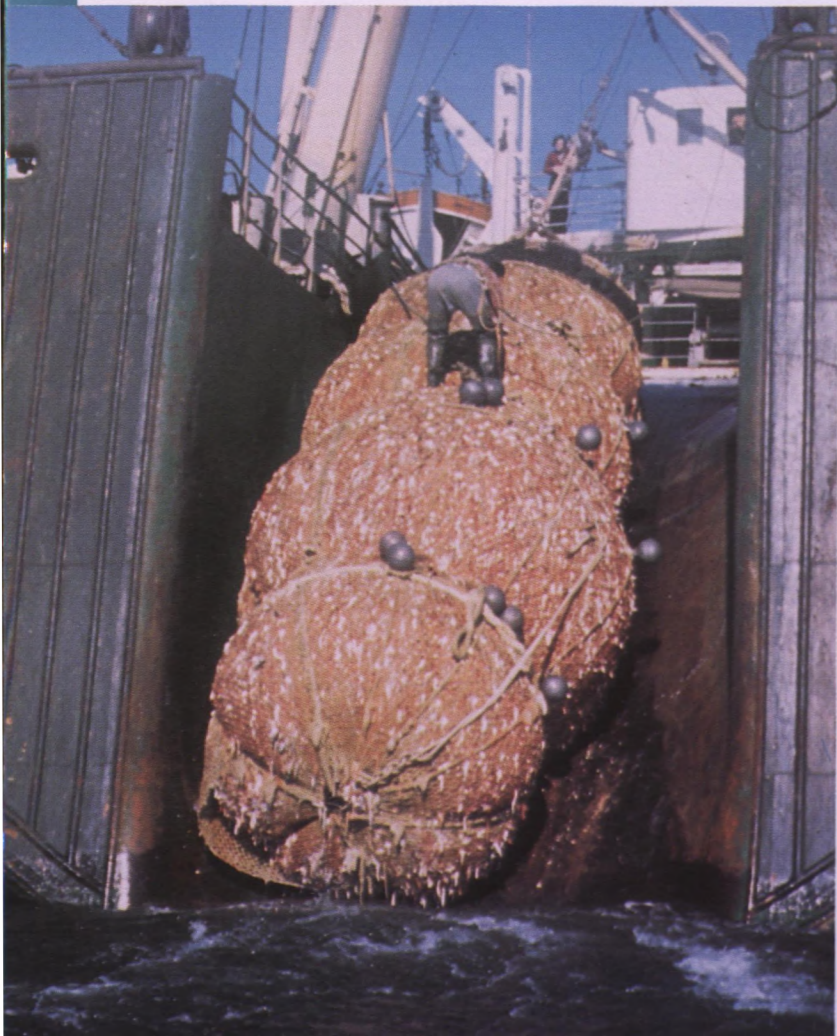


vastly exceeding the international quotas accepted by all other NAFO members, proposed for them by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the international management organization to which they belong. They have rejected these quota limits, which are based on recommendations by scientists of all NAFO members, through a legal loophole and are overfishing by destructively high amounts — exceeding the quotas as much as 10- and 12-fold. Equally worrisome, they are catching primarily immature flatfish, on average *one-quarter* the size of the fish caught inside the Canadian zone.

The EC fleets take as many fish as they can catch, ignoring the international NAFO quota limits that are the very bedrock of long-term conservation policies. The result: some of the most important fish stocks are rapidly becoming endangered.

The damage is felt on both sides of Canada's 200-mile limit, hurting fishing communities in Europe as well as in Canada.

The recent history of the international fishery elsewhere has bitter lessons to teach: grim object lessons in how overfishing can destroy whole fishery industries. It is clear that in the northwest Atlantic Ocean, as well, such practices could destroy the commercial viability of important industries.



Courtesy of DFO

But the fish resource is as vulnerable as it is valuable. It can easily be undermined and destroyed through reckless fishing methods that seize too many fish. Short-sighted fishing nations that consider only their own, immediate opportunities threaten to destroy the underpinnings of whole communities and their economies.

Vital fish stocks are being damaged in two fishing areas just beyond Canada's 200-mile limit. These two areas are known as the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks.

EC vessels, mainly Spanish and Portuguese, are taking their catches without meaningful limits on the size, age and number of fish taken. In the breeding areas of several valuable species, located just outside the Canadian 200-mile limit, they are



Courtesy of DFO

As their livelihood in the fishery crumbles, fishermen must deal with the end of their traditional lifestyle.