

Canada Takes Action to End Foreign Overfishing

From the earliest settlement of Canada, Atlantic coastal communities have depended upon the resources of the sea for their livelihood. Today, that livelihood is threatened. Since the mid-1960s, Northwest Atlantic fish stocks have declined sharply. Today, there is practically no cod fishing in Canada. Even the traditional right to fish with a hook and line for food has been eliminated for conservation reasons.

In 1977, Canada declared a 200-mile exclusive fishing zone and imposed strict controls on fishing inside this zone. However, this area does not encompass the entire continental shelf of the Grand Banks that extends off the southeast coast of Newfoundland. About 10 percent of the Banks, known as the Nose and Tail, are beyond Canada's 200-mile limit. The conservation of the important fish stocks beyond Canada's 200-mile limit is the responsibility of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). Allowable catch limits and other conservation measures are decided in collaboration between NAFO and its 15 member states.

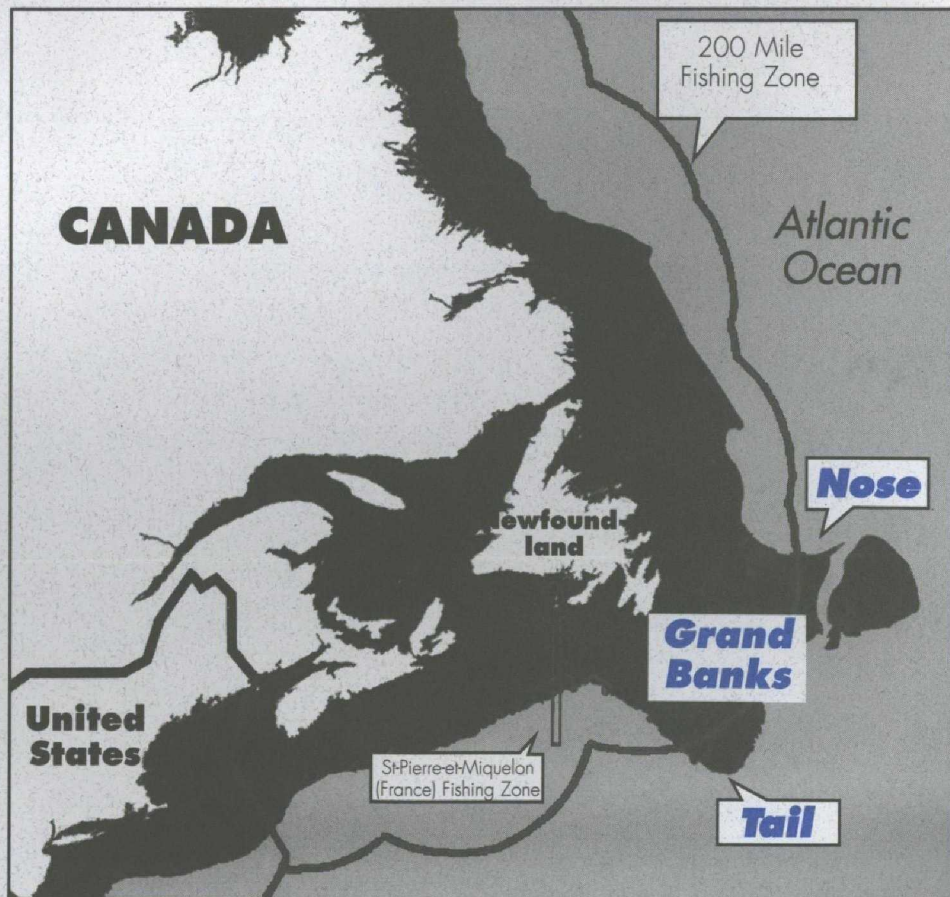
However, serious threats to the viability of stocks in the Nose and Tail continue. Fishing by stateless vessels and by vessels carrying flags of convenience, registered in countries that exercise no control over their fishing activities, is conducted without regard to conservation concerns. Such vessels are targeting fish stocks subject to NAFO moratoriums. These fish are often too young to reproduce; therefore, such fishing sabotages any hope for recovery of this precious protein resource. In order to end this exploitation, the federal Parliament unanimously approved the introduc-

tion of legislation in May 1994, enabling Canada to take action to protect important fish stocks on the high seas that straddle Canada's 200-mile limit.

The legislation provides the Government of Canada with the legal authority to make regulations for the conservation of the high-seas fish stocks that exist both within the Canadian 200-mile limit and in the adjacent high-seas area beyond the 200-mile limit. The regulations list the straddling stocks to be protected, establish conservation and management measures and list the classes of foreign vessels to which these measures apply, such as stateless vessels, vessels not entitled to fly the flag of any state, and vessels flying

flags of convenience. The legislation also provides for the arrest of vessels, if necessary, and procedures to ensure that this is done reasonably and responsibly.

The Canadian government recognizes that it has its own responsibilities in this matter and that Canada cannot circumvent its own international fishing management obligations. To this end, the Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans recently served notice of the rules on Canadian high-seas fishing to all Canadian swordfish longline and bluefish tuna fishermen, warning them that the Government will no longer tolerate uncontrolled fishing by Canadian vessels on the high seas.



Environmental Review of Uruguay Round

On April 15, 1994, Canada joined some 120 countries in signing the final act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The day also marked the release of the federal government's environmental review of the outcome of the Uruguay Round, which identifies how the agreements match Canada's commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development. The review concluded that many of the agreements will have a small, positive impact on Canada's environment. As part of the final package, a Trade and Environment Committee has been created within the new World Trade Organization to address trade and environment concerns.

Secretariat of the North American Agreement on Environmental Co-operation

The environmental "side agreement" to the NAFTA, the North American Agreement on Environmental Co-operation (NAAEC) between Canada, the United States and Mexico, requires the strengthening of environmental co-operation in North America, the promotion of sustainable development on a continental basis and enhanced enforcement of domestic environmental laws. The NAAEC establishes the Commission for Environmental Co-operation, consisting of a ministerial-level Council, a central, trinational Secretariat, and a Joint Public Advisory Committee. The Secretariat will be located in Montréal. Until the Secretariat is operational, any inquiries should be directed to:

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The Commission on Sustainable Development: Second Session, May 1994

by John Fraser PC, QC, Ambassador for Environment

The UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) was established in 1992 by the UN General Assembly to review and monitor the results of the UN Conference on Environment and Development and to facilitate progress toward sustainable development worldwide. It met for its second session May 18-27, 1994, under the chairmanship of Klaus Töpfer, Germany's Minister for the Environment. Since the first session of the CSD dealt primarily with organizational issues, this second session was the first time that members were able to focus exclusively on substantive issues. According to the multi-year agenda of the CSD, this session addressed the sectoral issues of health, fresh water, human settlements, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes and radioactive wastes.

Canada's priorities were to clearly define the role of the CSD as a high-level political forum, a catalyst for action, and the co-ordinator within the UN on sustainable development; to develop a simpler format for annual national reports to the CSD; to emphasize the value of national sustainability plans; to build agreement on the need to develop standard indicators for sustainable development to measure progress in implementing Agenda 21; and to establish a good preparatory process for the review on forests in 1995.

The session ended with a two-day high-level segment involving 37 ministers from the 53 CSD member countries. As part of the high-level segment, Sheila Copps, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, and head of the Canadian delegation, chaired an evening seminar on women and sustainable development.

During the high-level segment, ministers underscored the importance of the CSD having a high political profile for it to be an effective catalyst for sustainable development, and the importance of including ministers responsible for development, planning and finance in future meetings, both sessional and intersessional.

It was decided that the CSD would sponsor two intersessional working groups: one on finance, and one dealing with technology transfer and the sectoral issues to be discussed at the 1995 session—land resources, deforestation, desertification, mountain development, agriculture and rural development, and biodiversity, as well as the progress in advancing the Forest Principles and the conventions on biodiversity and desertification. It was also agreed that Minister Töpfer, in consultation with his CSD Bureau colleagues, will look at how the various country-hosted forest initiatives, including the Canada-Malaysia Intergovernmental Working Group on Global Forests, can be co-ordinated for the 1995 session.

In the months ahead, we will be working within Canada and with our fellow CSD members on Canadian priorities for the CSD and priorities for its next session, to take place in April 1995. The second session was a good reminder for me and for everyone in New York that while much has been done already, much more is required to make sustainable development a reality. The challenge still remains very much before us.