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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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REVISED REGULATIONS ADOPTED FOR NEW ENGLAND HADDOCK FISHERY

The Department of the Interior announced today that revised regulations prescribing restrictions on trawling nets used in the taking of haddock in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean by persons under the jurisdiction of the United States have been adopted.

The new regulations authorize the Fish and Wildlife Service to issue registration certificates for vessels to be used in the taking of haddock within Subarea 5 of the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. These certificates will be issued by the Service's Regional Office in Boston, Mass.

Subarea 5 is an area of the high seas lying off the coast of New England and is one of five separately described areas of the high seas covered by the International Convention for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, signed at Washington, February 8, 1949.

Vessels registered for use in the haddock fishery will be required to use trawl nets having a minimum mesh size of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. As a result, possession of trawl nets with a mesh size less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches on vessels which must be so registered to participate in haddock fishing will be illegal, thus making more effective the enforcement of the restriction on mesh size. Prior to the new regulation, no registration to so identify boats engaged in haddock fishing was required.

The minimum mesh size restriction has been in effect since 1953. It was adopted in that year following a proposal by the 10-nation International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. Experience gained during three years of operations has indicated the desirability of effecting the change which will be helpful in obtaining industry-wide compliance with the requirements of the regulations.

For many years, prior to the adoption of the regulations, haddock fishermen using nets having an inside measurement as small as two and seven-eighths inches caught haddock which were too small to be marketed. These small haddock were discarded at sea. The present regulations, based upon knowledge obtained through extensive research into the rates of growth and mortality of haddock, specifies a minimum mesh size of four and one-half inches inside measure which has the effect of permitting immature haddock to escape unharmed from the nets. Since adoption of the new fishing practices in 1953, biologists of the Fish and Wildlife Service estimate that several million pounds of young fish have been left in the sea each year for capture at a future time when they will have grown to a more desirable size.

By notice of proposed rule making published in the Federal Register on June 12, 1956, the public was invited to participate in the adoption of the proposed amendments to these regulations by submitting data, views, or arguments to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service within 30 days from the publication of the notice. Only one person sent in comments.

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