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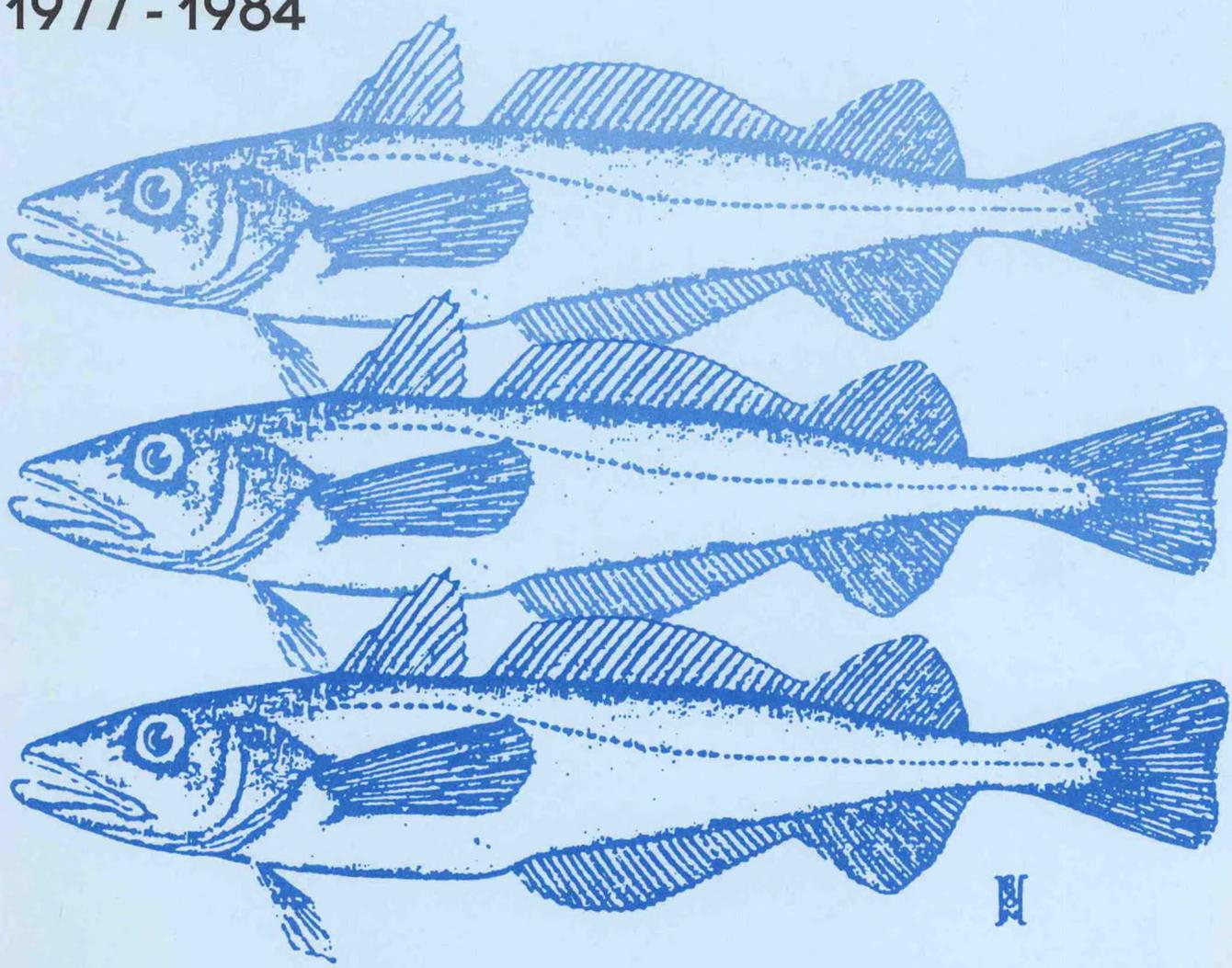
U.S. Department  
of Commerce

Rolland A. Schmitt  
Regional Director

October 1985

# Foreign and Joint Venture Fishing Operations off Washington, Oregon, and California

## 1977 - 1984



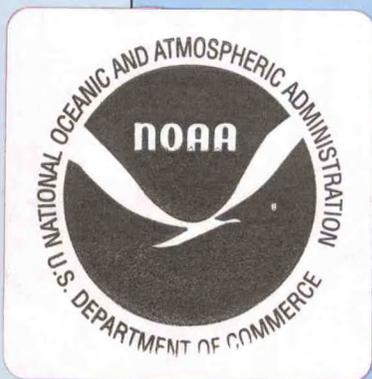
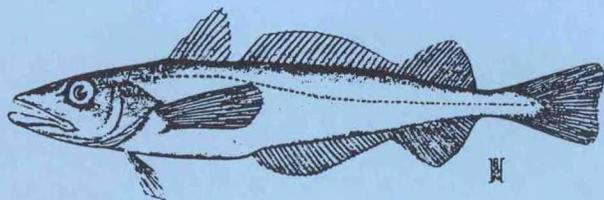
## Preface

*This pamphlet addresses many of the concerns and misconceptions expressed about foreign and joint venture fishing operations off the coast of Washington, Oregon, and California. The information presented here is a summary of policy and performance relevant to these fisheries. For further information, please contact:*

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**Foreign and  
 Joint Venture  
 Fishing Operations  
 off  
 Washington, Oregon  
 and California**

**1977-1984**

**Katherine A. King**

Before the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act) was implemented in 1977, foreign fisheries off the coast of the United States were difficult to control and monitor. Intense foreign exploitation before 1977 resulted in depletion of certain groundfish stocks, notably Pacific ocean perch, which will take years to replenish. With implementation of the Magnuson Act, the U.S. government declared jurisdiction over foreign fishing operations in the ocean from 3 to 200 nautical miles offshore. Regulatory responsibility was assigned to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), a

component of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Two types of fishing operations involving foreign vessels have been conducted off Washington, Oregon, and northern California: the foreign trawl fishery (sometimes called the "directed fishery") in which fish are both caught and processed by foreign vessels (Fig. 1), and the joint venture fishery, a domestic fishery in which U.S. trawl vessels deliver their catch to foreign processing vessels at sea (Fig. 2). These fisheries are managed according to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) which was developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Over 80 species of groundfish are included in the FMP. Of these, only three species, Pacific whiting (also called whiting or hake), shortbelly rockfish, and jack mackerel are available for foreign exploitation. Although some foreign interest has been expressed in shortbelly rockfish and jack mackerel, these fisheries have not developed. A small experimental joint venture for shortbelly rockfish was conducted in 1982 but markets for the product did not evolve and no further joint venture activity has occurred. Although there were some attempts to catch jack mackerel in the late 1970's and foreign interest was rekindled in 1983, markets for this species also failed to appear. Pacific whiting is the only species that consistently has been available and requested by foreign governments since implementation of the Magnuson Act.

**Priorities:** The U.S. Government is committed to development of its domestic fishing industry. The Magnuson Act states that the needs of the U.S. fishing industry have first priority. Twice a year, the NMFS surveys shore-based processors to estimate the amounts of Pacific whiting, shortbelly rockfish, and jack mackerel needed in that year. If shore-

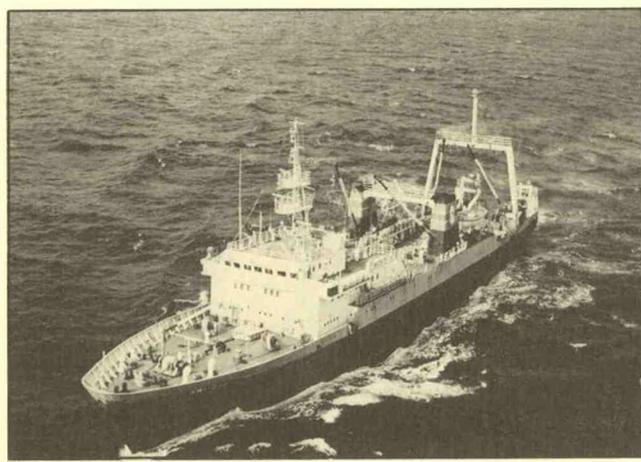


Figure 1. Polish fishing vessel WALEN.

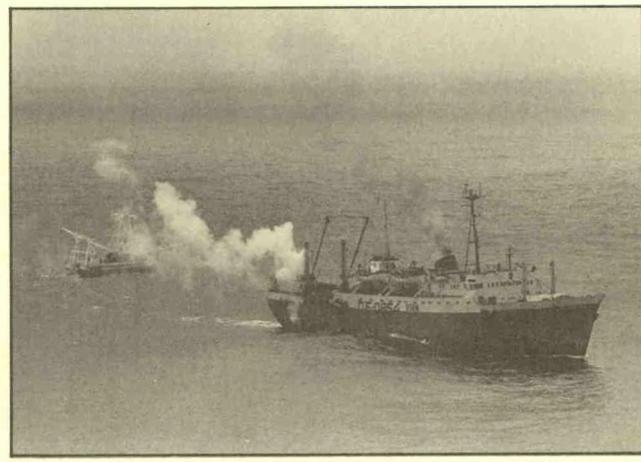


Figure 2. Joint venture vessels: U.S. trawler LESLIE LEE (left) and Soviet processor POSYET (right).

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based processors do not need the entire quota (also called the "optimum yield"), joint venture processing may be allowed on the remainder. Foreign fishing is permitted only on amounts surplus to domestic needs (both shore-based and joint venture). A reserve of whiting (20 percent of the quota) is set aside in case domestic industry needs more fish than initially estimated. After confirmation in the middle of the year that all of the reserve will not be used by U.S. processors, the remainder may be made available for joint venture processing; any left over then may be designated for foreign fishing.

**Foreign Participants:** Only foreign nations having a Governing International Fisheries Agreement (GIFA), ratified by the Congress of the United States, are eligible to operate in U.S. waters 3 to 200 nautical miles offshore. (States have jurisdiction in adjacent territorial waters within 3 nautical miles of shore.) The decision to permit a foreign nation to fish or to receive U.S.-harvested fish is contingent upon many factors, including that nation's experience and cooperation in the fishery and its willingness to purchase U.S. fish products and promote development of U.S. fisheries. Since 1976, foreign activity off Washington, Oregon and California has involved the Soviet Union (Fig. 3), Poland, Bulgaria, and Greece. Eastern-bloc nations have predominated simply because other nations have not been interested.

**Allowances for Target Species:** Each nation permitted to fish in the foreign trawl fishery will be given an allocation of the target species (whiting, shortbelly rockfish, or jack mackerel) which must not be exceeded. Initially only half a nation's allocation is released, and the other half is released only if that nation complies with the foreign fishing regulations and agreements made with the U.S. government. Although full utilization of the quota may be desirable (there is speculation that shrimp populations increase after the number of predatory whiting de-

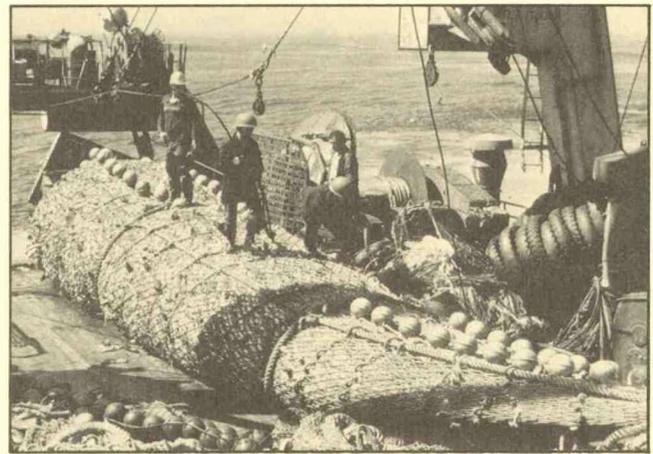


Figure 3. Whiting on the deck of a Soviet trawler.

crease), the U.S. is not obligated to allocate surplus fish to foreign interests.

In joint venture fisheries, the target species are not allocated to the individual foreign nations. Instead, all foreign nations permitted to receive U.S.-harvested fish compete for the total amount of the target species designated for joint venture processing.

**Landings:** Consistent with the intent of the Magnuson Act to encourage development of domestic fisheries, landings of whiting since 1978 generally have declined in the foreign fishery while steadily increasing in the joint venture (Table 1). Although shore-based deliveries of whiting have increased, they have comprised less than three percent of the total foreign and domestic harvest of whiting each year from 1978 to 1984. In spite of the opportunities for joint venture and foreign fisheries, just over half the whiting available for harvest has been landed between 1978 and 1984.

**Table 1**  
**Landings and quotas for Pacific whiting**

	Foreign Fishery (mt)	Joint Venture (mt)	Shore- based (mt)	Total Landings* (mt)	Optimum Yield Quota (mt)	Quota Landed (%)
1978	96,827	856	689	98,372	130,000	76
1979	114,910	8,834	937	124,681	198,900	63
1980	44,023	27,537	793	72,353	175,000	41
1981	70,366	43,557	838	114,760	175,000	66
1982	7,089	67,465	1,024	75,577	175,500	43
1983	0	72,100	1,051	73,151	175,500	41
1984**	14,772	78,889	2,721	96,382	175,500	55

\* Slight differences due to rounding

\*\* Preliminary data

In 1984, 100,000 metric tons (mt) of whiting were available for joint venture processing and almost 79,000 mt were taken. (One metric ton is approximately 2,205 pounds.) Although 30,500 mt of whiting were available for foreign fishing, only 25,000 mt were released, to the Soviet Union and Poland, and almost 15,000 mt were caught. At the beginning of the year, shore-based whiting production was estimated to be within 10,000 mt and a reserve of 35,000 mt was available to accommodate expansion. By the end of the year, almost 3,000 mt of whiting had been delivered to shore-based processors, more than twice the previous year's performance. None of the reserve was released for joint venture or foreign fishing in 1984.

In 1985, 80,000 mt of whiting were made available for foreign fishing, 45,000 mt at the beginning of the year supplemented by all of the 35,000 mt reserve in August. Joint venture processing of whiting is estimated to be within 85,000 mt, and shore-based processors are expected to need no more than 10,000 mt in 1985. By October, the Department of State had allocated 5,000 mt of whiting to the Soviet Union and 50,000 mt (with provisions for an additional 8,000 mt) to Poland; the Soviets did not accept their allocation. These two nations each initially requested 20,000 mt of Pacific whiting for joint venture processing in 1985, but it appears the Soviets will take somewhat less and the Poles are interested in slightly more. Shore-based landings of whiting are expected to be near 5,000 mt in 1985, the highest year on record and well above 1984 levels. Landings data for 1985 are not complete at the time of this printing.

Foreign performance is perhaps more meaningful when compared with domestic landings of all groundfish species (Fig. 4), not just whiting. The last year of foreign domination of groundfish landings was 1979. Since then, domestic landings (joint venture and shore-based) annually have contributed at least two thirds of the total groundfish landings and over 90 percent in 1982, 1983 and 1984. Shore-based landings of whiting, although small, have increased every year but one since 1978. Total shore-based landings of groundfish followed a similar course until 1983 when the full impact of depleted stocks and regulations to limit landings of these stocks began to be felt. Even though shore-based landings of groundfish declined in 1983 and 1984 they were higher than in the years before the Magnuson Act. Since its inception in 1978, the joint venture for whiting has grown steadily and in 1984 accounted for almost half the domestic landings of groundfish.

The major events affecting foreign and joint venture operations in recent years are summarized below.

- 1977: Although the Magnuson Act was passed in 1976, it was not implemented until a year later, resulting in a significant decline in foreign fishing in 1977.
- 1978: A pilot joint venture for whiting was conducted, involving two Soviet processors and two U.S. trawlers.
- 1980: The Soviet Union was barred from fishing following its invasion of Afghanistan. However, the Soviet joint venture was not restricted and continued to operate.

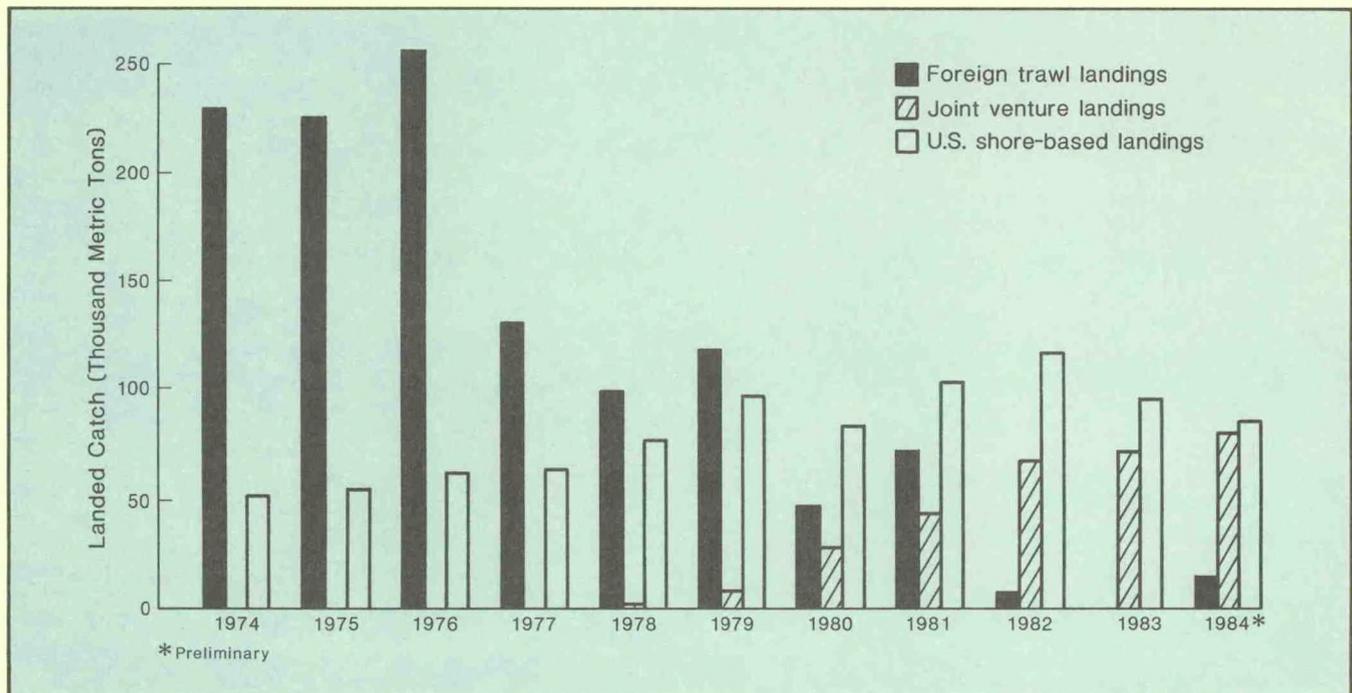


Figure 4. Landings of all groundfish species caught off Washington, Oregon, and California.

- 1982: Poland was prohibited from fishing due to its imposition of martial law. Although its joint venture was not restricted, Poland chose not to continue this operation.
- 1983: Even though whiting were available, there was no foreign fishery in 1983. Prohibitions against Soviet and Polish fishing continued.
- 1984: Sanctions against the Soviet Union and Poland were lifted in the summer, enabling a small foreign fishery by both nations. The Polish joint venture also reappeared.

**Incidental Species:** Some species that are fully utilized by domestic processors are caught unavoidably in the foreign and joint venture fisheries. These catches are not counted against quotas imposed on

U.S. landings, and only small allowances are permitted in order to discourage their harvest. Only once have incidental species accounted for more than two percent of the annual catch in the foreign trawl fishery, in 1980 when six percent were taken (Table 2). In the joint venture, less than four percent of the annual U.S. catch delivered to foreign processing vessels (including species that subsequently were discarded) have been incidental species, and generally less than a quarter of these were retained by the foreign vessels.

In the foreign fishery, each nation's incidental allowance of a species is based on a percentage of that nation's allocation of whiting (Table 3). In this fishery, all species caught, including those discarded, are counted against the incidental allowance. If an incidental allowance is reached, that nation must stop fishing even if its allocation of whiting has not been taken. This has happened five times since the Mag-

**Table 2**  
**Incidental catches\* in the foreign and joint venture fisheries for Pacific whiting**

	Foreign Fishery		Joint Venture	
	Incidental Catch (mt)	Percent of Total Catch	Incidental Catch (mt)	Percent of Total Catch
1977	2,799	2	No fishery	—
1978	1,856	2	38+	4+
1979	2,364	2	220+	2+
1980	2,905	6	933	3
1981	941	1	1,581	4
1982	164	2	1,687	2
1983	No fishery	—	1,146	2
1984	309	2	765	1

\* "Catch" includes discards from foreign fishing or processing vessels but not from U.S. joint venture vessels. Discard data are not available for the first two years of joint venture operation. Data for 1984 are preliminary.

**Table 3**  
**Landings and allowances of incidental species in 1984 \***

	Foreign Fishery			Joint Venture	
	Incidental Allowance (%)	Maximum Allowance (mt)	Amount Caught (mt)	Maximum Allowance (mt)	Amount Retained (mt)
Sablefish	0.173	43	0	173	4
Pacific ocean perch	0.062	16	1	62	0
Other rockfish	0.738	184	180	738	140
Flatfish	0.1	25	0	100	0
Jack mackerel	3.0	750	115	3,000	1
Other species	0.5	125	13	500	13
Total	4.573	1,143	309	4,573	158

\* Preliminary data

nuson Act became effective in 1977. In 1984, the Polish trawl fishery was closed in late September when its incidental allowance for rockfish was expected to be exceeded.

Incidental catches in the joint venture are treated differently than in the foreign fishery because separate allocations are not designated for each foreign nation participating in joint ventures. Instead, the foreign processing vessels, along with the U.S. vessels delivering to them, compete for the amount of whiting set aside for joint venture processing by all nations. To ensure that fishing is directed toward whiting and not other species, incidental percentages are applied to each 5,000 mt of whiting received by a foreign nation's processing vessels. However, because foreign processing vessels cannot control what is caught by U.S. fishermen, incidental allowances in the joint venture are based on amounts of fish that are retained; discards do not count against the incidental allowance. If the allowance associated with each 5,000 mt of whiting is reached, that incidental species must be discarded until more whiting are taken. This is meant to remove the economic incentive for harvesting large amounts of incidental species because U.S. fishermen generally are not paid for fish that the processing vessels cannot keep.

**Salmon and Pacific Halibut:** Salmon and Pacific halibut are prohibited species which means they must not be retained by any vessel involved in the

directed or joint venture fishery. Between 1977 and 1984, the average catch of salmon in the foreign fishery was 0.08 salmon per mt of whiting (one salmon per 12 mt of whiting, Table 4). Between 1978 and 1984, the joint venture vessels averaged about 0.13 salmon per mt of whiting (one salmon per 8 mt of whiting received). Salmon catches may vary during the season. For several weeks in 1984, the proportion of salmon taken in the joint venture was surprisingly high, one salmon per 3 mt of whiting. However, by the end of the year this proportion was equal to the average for the seven years that joint ventures have operated. Generally over 90 percent of the salmon taken in these fisheries are chinook. Figure 5 compares the foreign and joint venture catch of all salmon with the ocean commercial and recreational catches of chinook salmon off Washington, Oregon, and California from 1979 through 1983.

Between 1977 and 1984, small numbers of Pacific halibut have been taken in these fisheries, less than one halibut in 326 mt of whiting in the foreign trawl fishery and one halibut in more than 1,460 mt of whiting in the joint venture.

**Number of Vessels:** In the mid-1970's, well over 100 foreign fishing vessels trawled off the Washington, Oregon, and California coast. In contrast, fewer than 50 different foreign trawl and processing vessels have operated in the whiting fishery each year since 1978, and the number operating in any given day is even lower. The number of U.S. trawlers fishing in joint ventures usually is slightly larger than the

**Table 4**  
**Catch of salmon in joint venture and foreign trawl fisheries for Pacific whiting**

		Salmon (no.)	Whiting (mt)	No. of Salmon per mt Whiting	Mt Whiting per Salmon
Joint Venture:	1978	19	856	0.022	45
	1979	1,623	8,834	0.184	5
	1980	3,602	27,537	0.131	8
	1981	6,422	43,557	0.147	7
	1982	11,694	67,465	0.173	6
	1983	5,143	72,100	0.071	14
	1984*	10,192	78,889	0.129	8
Average*		5,528	42,748	0.129	8
Foreign Trawl:	1977	14,627	110,208	0.133	8
	1978	5,905	96,827	0.061	16
	1979	7,044	114,910	0.061	16
	1980	4,831	44,023	0.110	9
	1981	5,052	70,366	0.072	14
	1982	104	7,089	0.015	68
	1983	—	—	—	—
	1984*	63	14,772	0.004	238
Average*		5,375	65,456	0.082	12

\* Preliminary data

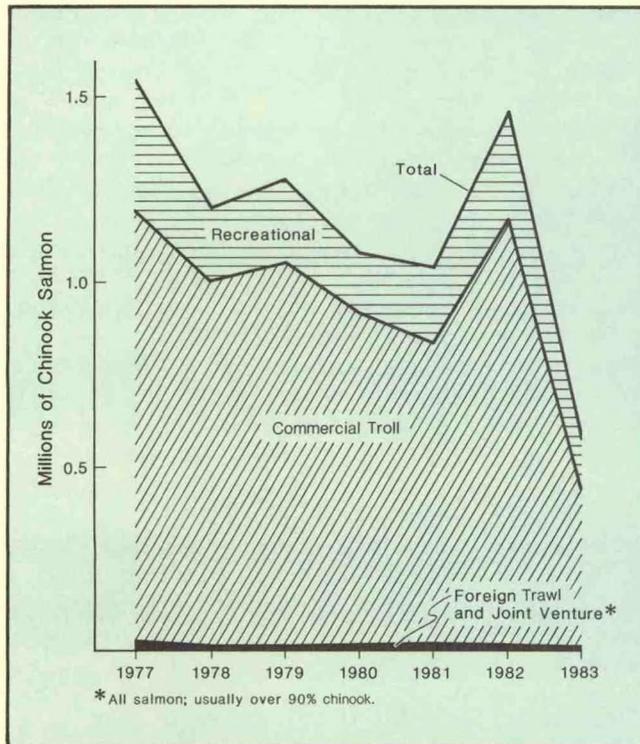


Figure 5. Cumulative annual ocean catch of chinook salmon off Washington, Oregon, and California.

number of foreign processing vessels (Table 5), no more than five percent of the domestic trawl fleet in any year.

**Regulations:** Foreign vessels are governed by Federal regulations at 50 CFR 611 Subparts A and B (for all U.S. waters), 50 CFR 611.70 (for the Washington, Oregon, California region), and by other conditions and restrictions that may be attached to each vessel's permit. In many respects, foreign vessels are regulated the same, whether they are fishing,

receiving U.S. harvested fish, or both. The major differences between the regulations for foreign trawl vessels and joint venture processing vessels involve incidental allowances (discussed above), closed areas, and seasons. The regulations for the Pacific whiting fisheries are summarized below.

**Areas:** Neither foreign fishing nor joint venture processing of whiting may occur below 39° N. latitude, near Pt. Arena, California (Fig. 6). Whereas foreign fishing is prohibited north of 47°30' N. latitude, joint venture processors may operate 30 nautical miles further north to 48°00' N. latitude. Foreign fishing must occur beyond 12 nautical miles from shore, but joint venture processors are allowed to receive and process fish as close as 3 nautical miles from shore. (Foreign vessels may transit inside of 3 nautical miles if they are not fishing, processing, offloading or receiving fish.) Foreign fishing vessels also are restricted from the Klamath River Pot Sanctuary and the Columbia River Recreational Sanctuary in order to minimize conflicts with U.S. fishermen. Joint venture processors and foreign cargo vessels supporting them are not restricted from these sanctuaries.

**Season:** The foreign fishery may be conducted only between June 1 and October 31. Even though there is no seasonal restriction on joint venture operations, commercial quantities of whiting are found in the open area primarily between April and October (Fig. 7) and the fishery occurs during these months.

**Gear:** The minimum mesh size for the foreign whiting fishery is 100-mm mesh (about 4 inches) and only mid-water trawls may be used. U.S. vessels commonly use 3-inch mesh mid-water trawls to harvest whiting.

**Reporting requirements:** Foreign vessels must report whenever they enter and leave the 3-200 nautical mile zone and when they shift between statistical re-

**Table 5**  
Number of vessels operating in foreign and joint venture fisheries for Pacific whiting

	Foreign Vessels			U.S. Vessels
	Total	Trawlers	Joint Venture Processors	Joint Venture Trawlers
1978	36	36	2	2
1979	49	49	10	11
1980	34	24	11	16
1981	45	31	20	21
1982	15	4	15	19
1983	15	0	15	19
1984	29	17	20	21

NOTE: Because some vessels operated in both foreign and joint venture fisheries, the total may not equal the sum of these two categories. Cargo vessels are excluded. The one foreign processing vessel operating in the experimental joint venture for shortbelly rockfish in 1982 is not included.

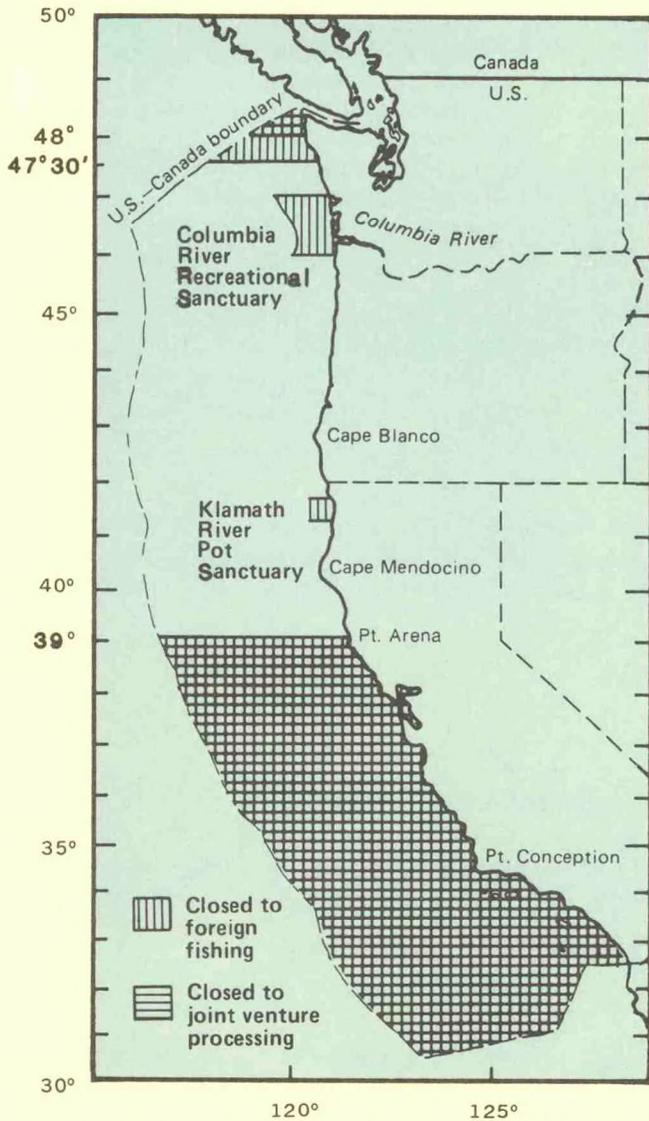


Figure 6. Areas closed to foreign fishing and joint venture processing operations in 1984 and 1985.

porting areas. They also must keep and submit logbooks in which they record species, weights, location, time and other pertinent information for each

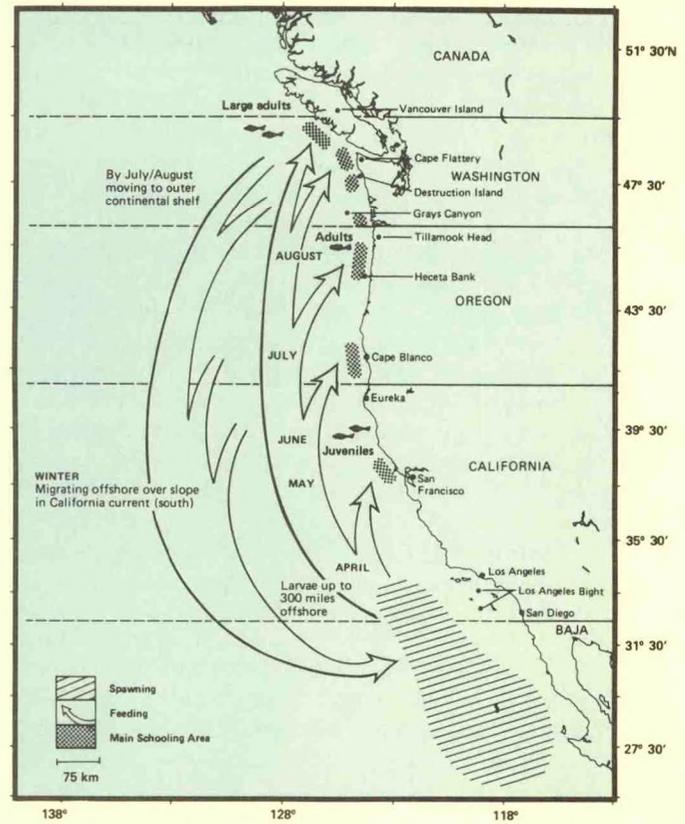


Figure 7. Pacific whiting migration behavior.

haul. Weekly reports are submitted to the NMFS for comparison with observer reports (see paragraphs on observers and catch estimates). Additional reporting requirements may be added as conditions of the foreign vessel permit.

**Enforcement:** Foreign fishing regulations are enforced by the NMFS and the U.S. Coast Guard which conduct surveillance flights and boardings at sea. Logbooks maintained by each foreign vessel are verified during and after the season for comparability with observer reports and with amounts offloaded. Compliance with the foreign fishing regulations has improved over the years (Table 6), corresponding

**Table 6**  
**Foreign fishing violations**

	Number of Violations	Vessel Days*	Vessel Days per Violation
1979	19	3,751	197
1980	11	2,391	217
1981	9	3,940	438
1982	0	1,940	—
1983	0	1,495	—
1984	not resolved	1,994	—

\* Includes slight double-counting of foreign vessels which operated in both the joint venture and foreign trawl fishery in the same day.

with more experience in the fishery and familiarity with the regulations, increased observer coverage, and requirements to keep detailed logbooks.

**Observers:** Foreign fishery observers, U.S. citizens trained by the NMFS, are placed on board each foreign vessel fishing or processing off the coast of Washington, Oregon, and California. Observers monitor the catches, gather fishery and biological data, and notify enforcement officials if compliance with the foreign fishing or joint venture regulations is questionable. The foreign nation pays in advance for placement of observers through an observer surcharge. In 1984, observer coverage (observer days relative to foreign vessel days) was about 90 percent in the foreign fishery and 93 percent in the joint venture.

**Catch Estimates:** Observers and foreign vessels independently report catch estimates each week to the NMFS. For all but the prohibited species, observer data are combined with foreign reported data to estimate catches taken in the foreign and joint venture fisheries. Foreign data are used only if observer coverage is less than 20 percent of the vessel days fished or if the foreign estimate is within 10 percent of the observer estimate. Since 1982, observer coverage has been near 100 percent and catch estimates have been based predominantly on observer reports. Estimated catches of prohibited species (salmon and Pacific halibut) are based on observer data and are not combined with the foreign reports of catches of these species.

**Fees:** All foreign vessels involved in fisheries off the coast of the United States must pay certain fees. An annual permit fee (\$101 for 1985) is charged for processing each vessel application. Foreign nations also must pay a poundage fee for fish that they catch (Table 7); there is no poundage fee for fish received in joint ventures. Over \$220,000 in poundage fees are expected to be collected from foreign fishing conducted off Washington, Oregon, and California in 1984, and almost \$45 million nationwide. A sur-



Figure 8. Soviet research vessel MYS DALNIY.

charge which supplies the Fishing Vessel Gear Damage Compensation Fund may be assessed in amounts up to 20 percent of the poundage and permit fees. This surcharge was not levied in 1984 and 1985. In addition, the foreign nation pays its observer fees in advance, currently about \$250 a day.

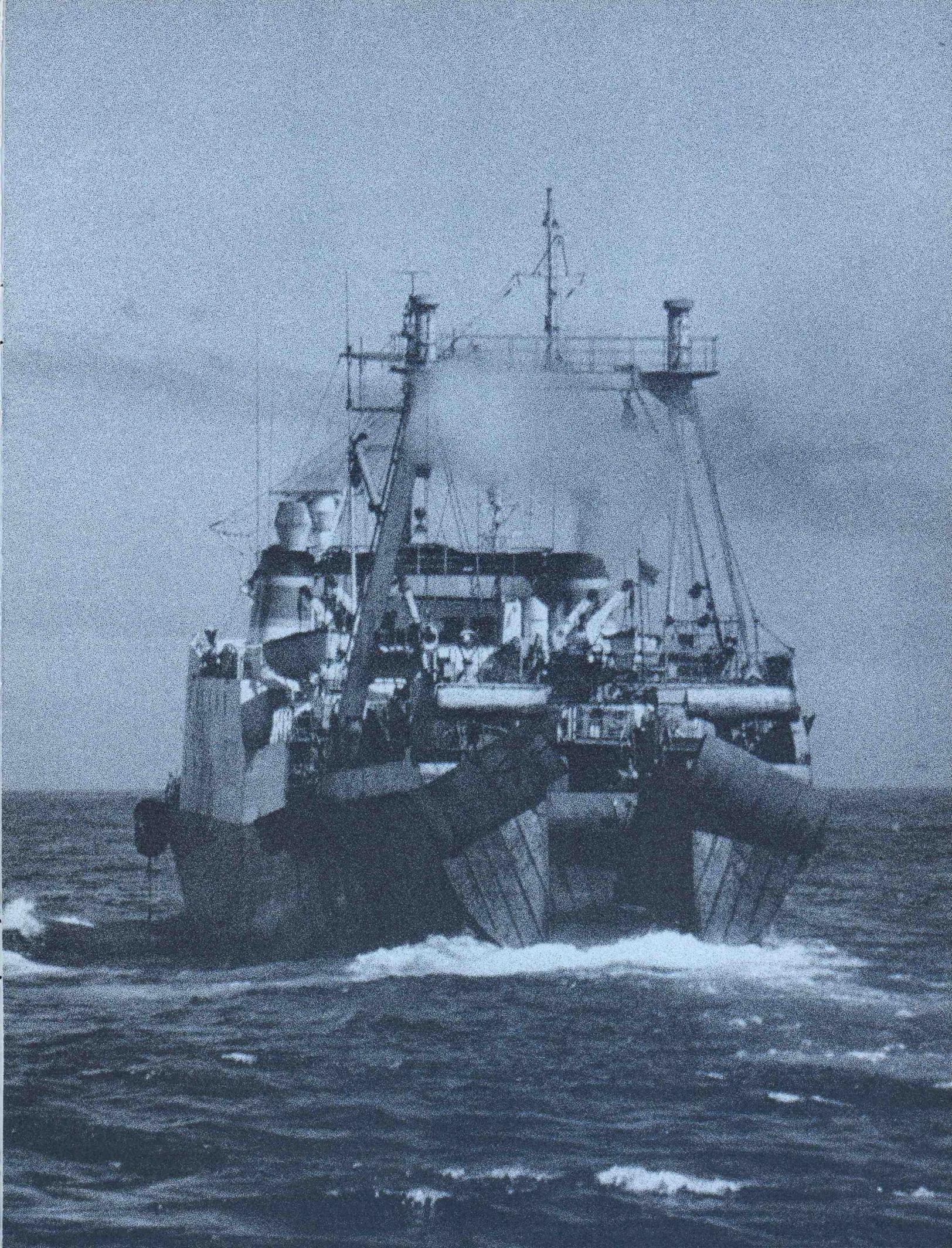
**Research:** Foreign vessels occasionally participate in cooperative research surveys with U.S. scientists (Fig. 8). For example, an extensive investigation of fish larvae has occurred for a number of years with the Soviet Union off the Washington, Oregon, and California coast. This survey contributes to forecasting whiting and anchovy abundance by assessing the amounts of eggs and larvae off-shore. Cooperative research vessels follow a scientific plan approved by the NMFS and are not considered "fishing vessels." The few salmon, halibut, or other prohibited species caught are returned to sea immediately unless needed for research purposes. The small amounts of other fish caught during research operations may be retained by the vessel after the scientific information is gathered. These catches do not count against quotas imposed on foreign or U.S. fisheries. Foreign research vessels may operate in areas closed to commercial fishing but no closer than three nautical miles from shore. Usually less than five foreign vessels operate in any given year in cooperative fisheries research off Washington, Oregon, and California, and generally U.S. scientists are on board. On rare occasions, perhaps two weeks a year, independent research is conducted by a foreign educational institution, not in conjunction with U.S. scientists. This research also must be approved by the NMFS.

*This document may be cited in the following manner:*

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**Table 7**  
**Poundage fees for the foreign trawl fishery**

	1984 (\$/mt)	1985 (\$/mt)
Pacific whiting	14	32
Sablefish	157	143
Pacific ocean perch	89	124
Other rockfish	68	119
Flatfish	59	155
Jack mackerel	15	55
Other fish	49	154





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