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Report of the CWP *ad hoc* Working Group on the
Contents of Regional Fisheries Statistical Bulletins
FAO, Rome, January 1973

by Secretary, CWP

1. The Group was convened on 16 January 1973 by Mr L.P.D. Gertenbach, CWP Secretary, in accordance with the suggestion by the ICES Statistical Committee, September 1972, to consider some broad indicators of the general contents and coverage of regional statistical bulletins. Present were:

Mr J.A. Gulland (FAO)	Mr L.K. Boerema (FAO)
Mr J.P. Troadec (FAO)	Miss C. Berude (FAO)
Mr E.L. Cadima (FAO)	Mr V.M. Hodder (ICNAF)
Mr D.J. Garrod (requested to participate by CWP Secretary in the absence of the ICES Statistician)	

2. The Group considered that ICNAF's *Statistical Bulletin* provides an indication of what, at the present stage of scientific needs and statistical availability of data, reflects the approximate coverage and contents of an acceptable regionally-oriented bulletin of fisheries statistics published annually.

3. The Group noted that FAO's *Yearbook of Fishery Statistics*, even-numbered volumes sub-titles "Catches and Landings", will be organized to facilitate the preparation by FAO of either FAO Bulletins of Fisheries Statistics or FAO Fisheries Circulars, or regionally-oriented tabulations for all inland and marine statistical areas. Coverage will include a series of 7 or 8 years of data by species and by country and the data will relate to the nominal catches for the major statistical areas as a whole, *i.e.* for the Northwest Atlantic (ICNAF Convention Area plus Statistical Area 6), the Northeast Atlantic (ICES and NEAFC), the Southwest Atlantic (CARPAS), Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), Mediterranean and Black Sea (GFCM), Southeast Atlantic (ICSEAF), etc. The Group noted the general usefulness of such regional tabulations by country and species, and considered that more detailed regionally-oriented tabulations, *e.g.* monthly catch and/or effort statistics by small unit areas, should be the responsibility of regional bodies where possible.

4. The Group supported the ICNAF presentation in Part I of its Bulletin, of tabular summaries of annual catches over a long-term series of years. Perhaps, one or two other important species should now be added, *e.g.* mackerel.

5. It was recognized that most of the Tables in Part 2 of the ICNAF Bulletin, which are devoted to detailed statistics pertaining to the latest calendar year, could not be expanded to provide a time series of statistics without substantial increase in the size of the Bulletin. Also it was noted that these detailed tables were designed to meet the specific statistical requirements of ICNAF fisheries scientists for assessing the state of the commercial fish stocks and the effects of various regulatory measures on these stocks.

6. The Group felt that the current Table 3, being a summary table of subareas and species, should really be the first table in Part II of the Statistical Bulletin (let us refer to it as new Table 1).

7. The Group suggested that ICNAF's Statistics and Sampling Committee at its May 1973 Meeting consider the introduction of new Tables to precede the current Tables 1 and 1A. The new Tables (to be Tables 2 and 2A) would be set up similar to the current Tables 1 and 1A, except that they would bring together the various aggregates of species or species groups by division and country. The aggregates might be:

- Total All Species
- Total Finfish
 - Total Groundfish
 - Total Pelagics
 - Total Other Fish
- Total Shellfish

It was suggested that the Secretariat prepare a model of such a table for review at the Annual Meeting.

8. The current Tables 1 and 1A (to be new Tables 3 and 3A) would then be a straightforward listing by species and country under the same heading format as now for Tables 1 and 1A, without species aggregates.

9. The Group wondered to what extent the current Tables 2 and 2A in their present forms were used by fisheries scientists. If the tables are considered useful and need to be retained, they could become new Tables 4 and 4A.

10. The data contained in the current Table 4 (detailed catch/effort statistics) was considered briefly by the Group, but no suggestions for change evolved from the discussions. Opinions ranged from retaining the present format as is to keeping the same format with some changes in the sorting order of the various categories (division, month, gear, tonnage class, main species and country) and to separate country by country tabulations. It was noted that the table contains catch information only for a variety of miscellaneous gears; in many cases these entries occupy more than one-half of the monthly blocks. Could the data be restricted to those primary gears for which effort data are consistently available? Also mentioned was the possibility that the heading might need to be expanded to include one or two other important species (*e.g.* mackerel, and the separate designation of important flounders). It was noted that any expansion of the heading would require either further reduction in the size of print or the heading and table printed lengthwise (11 inches) on the page.

11. If the current Table 4 (new Table 5) were arranged to provide separate country by country listings of the detailed catch/effort data, then the current Table 5 might be considered redundant.

12. The Group noted that current Tables 1, 1A and 3 (new Tables 1, 2, 2A, 3 and 3A) can be produced from information provided on STATLANT 21A forms (Annual Catches by country, division and species), whereas the current Tables 2, 2A, 4 and 5 (new Tables 4, 4A, 5 and 6) contain data that can only be obtained from STATLANT 21B (Monthly Catch/effort data by country, gear and vessel category, main species, division and species and/or species groups). Since some countries submit preliminary data on 21A (deadline for ICNAF is 15 April), whereas data on 21B is more complete (deadline 15 June), the annual data from 21A have to be adjusted to correspond with catch totals given on 21B. This is not a serious problem for ICNAF, as advance tables of annual catch data issued by the Secretariat at the time of the Annual Meeting in May contain data extracted from whatever STATLANT 21A forms are available plus data taken from research reports of countries which have not yet submitted 21A forms. A further advance release of the tables is issued in late July or August when more complete data are available. In 1971 all countries had submitted 21B forms by October and the final version of these tables plus the more detailed catch/effort data tables were prepared and the *Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. 21, was released about mid-December.

13. Fears were expressed that for some regional bodies not all countries could complete 21B forms for all areas and types of gear to ensure that the aggregates of 21B would as far as the catch is concerned add up to the equivalent of the summary tables by species and divisions from 21A (these latter being preliminary in some cases). The group considered that some regional commissions, which have not yet reached in their statistical programs the comparative sophistication already obtained in the Northwest Atlantic, might usefully find it desirable to split their regional bulletins into two separate parts or volumes: the first part to contain the tables normally obtained from forms similar to 21A, and the second part issued later to contain more detailed catch/effort statistics (*e.g.* similar to current Tables 4 and 5 of ICNAF) with updating of annual statistics where necessary. It was also mentioned that countries unable to supply effort data at the time of completing STATLANT 21B to meet the regional commission's deadline might use the 21B forms to supply detailed catch information and submit the corresponding effort data at a later time. Thus a regional body could produce its annual bulletin with detailed up-to-date catch information promptly, and the catch/effort statistics which might require ADP elaboration and analyses prepared as computer printouts available to participants of working parties.