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ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1976

Report of ICES Statistical Committee, October 1975
(Extract from Procès-Verbal de la Réunion 1972)

Chairman: Mr. J. Møller Christensen

Rapporteur: Mr. D. de G. Griffith

1. The Committee met on 1 and 2 October. The members were welcomed by the Chairman, and the Agenda was adopted following the addition of some items. Doc. C.M.1975/F:20 was discussed together with the papers referred from other Committees.
2. The membership was checked and changes and additions noted.
3. Administrative Report
The Chairman presented the Administrative Report and drew attention to the fact that six countries - France, German Democratic Republic, Iceland, Poland, Spain and U.S.S.R. - had still not submitted descriptions of their national systems.
4. National sampling systems
Document C.M.1975/D:3 was read in title only, nobody being available to present it. Doc. C.M.1975/D:4 was read; it gave a description of the system recently developed in Portugal for sampling biological data.
5. Evaluation of sampling procedures
Four papers were presented (C.M.1975/D:5, F:20, F:31 and H:21) dealing with the statistical evaluation of sampling procedures in the Netherlands, England, Scotland and France. It was agreed that more of these evaluations should be carried out in future and discussed by the Statistics Committee. The Committee recognised the value of the papers presented to the Statutory Meetings since 1973 evaluating the sampling programmes of various countries, and it was agreed that a review of these papers should be compiled for presentation to the 1976 Statutory Meeting. An offer from the Fisheries Laboratory in Lowestoft to carry out this review was welcomed (C.Res. 1975/4:16).
6. Progress Report
The Statistician introduced his Progress Report (Doc. C.M.1975/D:8) and gave an account of the development of the Council's statistical programme with regard to the computerisation of Bulletin Statistique. Tables 1-5 of Volume 58 (for 1973) had been produced by ADP, and Table 5 had been compiled by use of part of the ICES FISHDAT System. The Advance Release (1974 data) had been made in the same way.

Attention was drawn to the poor observation by member countries of the deadline for reporting catch data on Statlant forms. In some cases this was due to difficulties encountered when new ADP systems were installed, and it was suggested that national statistics offices should not abandon their manual procedures until their new ADP systems were running properly. It was also pointed out that some national offices gave a low priority to the tasks involved in completing the Statlant forms, due to the additional workload imposed on them by meetings of regulatory commissions and the Law of the Sea Conference. The Committee took note of the difficulties, but drew attention to the manner in which agencies such as ICES and the GWP had, through the development of the Statlant programme, actually smoothed the statistics reporting procedures and had brought about improvement through standardisation. This resulted in a beneficial feedback to the statistical offices themselves, and the Committee felt that higher priority should therefore be given to meeting the Statlant deadlines (C.Res.1975/4:17).

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With regard to C.Res.1974/4:11, which concerned the level of adequacy of currently available information on by-catches, the Committee recognised the need for an improvement in the collection and reporting of these data. This is of particular importance in connection with those species which are under quota and which are taken as a by-catch in Recommendation 2 fisheries. The Committee felt that a description of the sampling and data processing methods used by the member countries which carry out mixed fisheries, should be of great value to the assessment work (C.Res.1975/4:18).

The other sections of the Progress Report were taken under subsequent Agenda items.

7. Development of the ICES statistical programme

7.1 Report of the ADP Working Group (Doc. C.M.1975/D:2)

The Chairman of the Working Group presented the Report. He described the process leading to the construction of the ICES FISHDAT System to date, and stressed the need for continued contact with the Fish Committees in order that their requirements, particularly with regard to stock assessment work, could be fully realised in the design of the system. The results of the trial run on 1972 North Sea herring material were described, and the Committee noted the favourable comment which the Working Group Report had received from the Pelagic Fish (Northern) Committee.

The data security guidelines proposed by the Working Group were discussed. It was noted that the data to be stored in the ICES FISHDAT System fell into either of two categories - that to be used by the Secretariat in the production of routine publications, and that to be used by the Council's Working Groups and Committees - and it was agreed that the latter material should be protected from misuse or misinterpretation. It was agreed by the Committee and others present that the proposed guidelines were acceptable, and that they could be altered in the future if experience with their operation showed this to be desirable.

The Committee also agreed to keep under review the data systems developed in member countries (for example that described in Doc. C.M.1975/D:3), in order that the development of the ICES FISHDAT System should avoid overlap and at the same time take advantage of such other systems when possible (C.Res.1975/2:30).

7.2 Review of Tables A-L in Bulletin Statistique

The Committee agreed that these tables, the format of which had remained unchanged for some time, should be examined to ensure that they presented the maximum amount of information in a way compatible with ADP requirements. It was noted that this proposal was incorporated in the terms of reference of the ADP Working Group (C.Res.1975/2:30).

7.3 Reporting of catch statistics for VIIId,e

The countries which regularly report annual catches from the English Channel (VIIId,e) had replied as follows to the question of whether they could report catches separately for VIIId (Eastern English Channel) and VIIe (Western English Channel):

Belgium	Yes
France	No reply
German Democratic Republic	Yes
Netherlands	Yes
U.K. (England & Wales)	Yes
U.S.S.R.	No reply

On the basis of these replies, the Committee agreed to recommend that the catches from these two divisions be shown separately in Bulletin Statistique, noting that alterations would be necessary in the map of ICES fishing areas, the written description of the ICES fishing areas adopted by the Council in 1974 (C.Res.1974/1:4), and in the column headings of the Statlant forms (C.Res.1975/1:14).

7.4 Coding systems

The Consultative Committee, at its 1974 meeting, had noted that there was a risk of different coding systems being developed by different

Committees of ICES, and considered it necessary to unify these systems as much as possible. In order that the possibilities for maximum uniformity could be examined, the Consultative Committee asked that a joint meeting of representatives of the Gear and Behaviour, Hydrography and Statistics Committees, the Working Group on Eventual Establishment of an ICES ADP System for Fishery Statistics, the Working Group on Data Collection and Processing in Fish Capture Research, and the Working Group on Marine Data Management should be held, and convened by the Chairman of the Statistics Committee.

This joint meeting was held on 2 October, and was attended also by representatives of FAO, and World Data Centre A. It was agreed that, for country codes, there should be no problem in having two different coding systems, one for hydrographic material and one for statistical purposes provided that a one-to-one correspondence between these is established and maintained. The code to be used for the input of statistical data would be the three-letter code currently used in the ICES statistical system. Attention was drawn to the newly developed ISO Alpha-2 and Alpha-3 codes, and it was recommended that the suitability of these for the handling of statistical data should be referred to the Secretary of the CWP as an agenda item for its next meeting.

The Chairman of the Gear and Behaviour Committee indicated that the working Group on Data Collection in Fish Capture Research would be able to adopt the coding systems for areas, countries, species and gears being developed for the ICES FISHDAT System. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Working Group on Data Collection and Processing in Fish Capture Research and the Chairman of the Working Group on Eventual Establishment of an ICES ADP System for Fishery Statistics should, together, agree on a suitable system of codes for these items.

The Statistics Committee noted this report of the joint meeting. It was also noted that the joint Enforcement Committee meeting of ICNAF and NEAFC held in Leningrad in 1975 had agreed to use the 4-digit FAO gear code in fishing log-books, and that ICNAF's STACRES had - along with ICES - adopted the 3-letter abbreviation of gear categories proposed by the CWP. The Committee felt that the ICES Statistician should join in the deliberations of the Chairman of the Working Group on Data Collection and the Chairman of the ADP Working Group, and that they should take into account the system adopted by ICNAF and NEAFC (C.Res. 1975/4:19).

The Committee adopted the updated list of species items (Doc. C.M. 1975/D:7), and discussed the desirability of including in Bulletin Statistique data on (a) miscellaneous marine animals such as lampreys, which are commercially important in some member countries and which appear on their annual Statlant forms, and (b) seaweeds, which are also of economic importance. It was agreed that the Statistician should compile the available information on the catches, by area and country, of seaweeds (including Lithothamnion) and those marine animals (except mammals) not currently included in Bulletin Statistique, and present it to the 1976 Statutory Meeting with a view to obtaining a decision on this matter (C.Res.1975/4:20).

7.5 Tonnage categories for fleet and effort statistics

The Statistician had circulated a questionnaire to member countries in order to ascertain when they could implement the GRT classification (International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels ISSCFV) proposed by the CWP (Doc. C.M.1975/D:6, Appendix 6), if they had not already done so. The response had been as follows:-

Country	Implement ISSCFV for fleet statistics	Implement ISSCFV for effort statistics
BEL	No reply	From 1972
DEN	From 1974	From 1977 or later
FAR	From 1974	From 1974
FIN	From 1974	From 1974
FRA	No reply	No reply
FRG	From 1975	From 1976
GDR	From 1975	From 1975
ICE	From 1974	From 1974
IRL	From 1974	No date known
NED	From 1975	From 1972

Country	Implement ISSCFV for fleet statistics	Implement ISSCFV for effort statistics
NOR	From 1975	From 1973
POL	From 1975	From 1974
POR	No reply	No reply
SWE	No reply	No reply
ENG	From 1975	From 1975 for vessels >40'l.o
NI	No reply	No reply
IOM	No reply	No reply
SCO	No reply	No reply
USS	No reply	No reply

The Committee noted this response, and agreed to introduce the ISSCFV in the Bulletin Statistique for 1975 (Volume 60) (see C.Res.1975/1:15).

7.6 Measures of fishing effort for different gear categories

The Committee agreed in principle to adopt the measures of fishing effort proposed by the CWP (Doc. C.M.1975/D:6, Section 6.8 and App.7), but would wish to have the comments of the Gear and Behaviour Committee.

8. Nomination of member country to CWP

Norway had completed her 2-session term as the member country nominated by ICES to the CWP, and the Committee nominated the Netherlands for this position (C.Res.1975/3:2).

9. The Chairman informed the Committee that Mr David de G Griffith would be leaving his post as ICES Statistician at the end of this Statutory Meeting and take up a post as Fisheries Inspector at the Fisheries Laboratory in Dublin. The Chairman expressed his warm appreciation of the valuable assistance he had received from Mr Griffith over the past two years and assured him that the Statistics Committee was highly appreciative of all the work he had carried out both for the Committee itself and the Council in general. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman wished Mr Griffith good luck in his new post.

10. Communications

D:1		Administrative Report.
D:2		"Report of the Working Group on Eventual Establishment of an ICES ADP System for Fishery Statistics, Charlottenlund, 27-31 January 1975"
D:3	J Rucabado	"Data Bank PEZ - a system to store information obtained in research fishing cruises".
D:4	I F Barraca et M Lima Dias	"Sur le système statistique d'obser- vations biologiques sur quelques pêcheries portugaises (aires de NEAFC et CECAF)".
D:5	H B Becker	"Evaluation of the fish market sampling programme in the Nether- lands".
D:6*		"Report of the Eighth Session (1974) of the Coordinating Working Party on Atlantic Fishery Statistics (CWP)". (E + F).
D:7	David de G Griffith	"Current list of species items in the ICES Statistical System (as at 31 July 1975)".
D:8	ICES Statistician	"Progress Report".