

International Commission for



the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

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ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1977

Report of ICES Statistical Committee, October 1976
(Extract from Procès-Verbal de la Réunion 1976)

Chairman: Mr J. Møller Christensen

Rapporteur: Dr. V.M. Nikolaev

1. The Committee met on 6 and 7 October. The Chairman welcomed the members and observers. The list of members was checked, and the Chairman introduced the Draft Agenda and the Order of the Day, which were adopted.

2. Administrative Report

The Chairman presented the Administrative Report and suggested some improvements to be made in the national reports in the future. After some discussion it was agreed that the Statistician should prepare guidelines for submitting national reports and present them to the 1977 meeting of the Statistics Committee for consideration. The Committee noted that four countries - France, Poland, Spain and the USSR - had still not submitted descriptions of their national systems for collecting and compiling catch and effort statistics for submission to ICES on STATLANT forms. It was agreed to urge these countries, in accordance with C.Res.1973/5:7, to present such descriptions.

3. Progress Report

The Statistician submitted the Progress Report and introduced the Advance Release of Tables 1-5 of Volume 60 for 1975 reproduced from the original computer print-outs made through the kind cooperation of the Danish Institute for Fisheries and Marine Research. He described implementation in Volume 58 of Bulletin Statistique (Editor: Mr D de G Griffith), published in January 1976, of several decisions adopted by the Council at the 1974 and 1975 Statutory Meetings.

Attention was drawn to the amended Spanish nominal catch data for 1972-73 appended to the Advance Release, and the opinion of the Committee was sought on further steps, if any, to be taken regarding such amended data. After a general discussion it was agreed that any amendments or corrections to data previously published in Bulletin Statistique should be accompanied by an appropriate explanation from the national reporting office, and that such data with the accompanying explanation should be published as an annex to the Advance Release. The Statistician was requested to investigate the feasibility of further publication of such amended data for previous years in the Bulletin Statistique and to report to the 1977 Statutory Meeting with a view to obtaining a decision on this matter (see C.Res.1976/1:17).

It was noted that the response to C.Res.1975/4:17 urging all member countries to recognise the high priority which should be given to their obligations under the STATLANT programme was poor, and that the late reporting of data continued to affect the scientific assessments and the timely production of statistical publications. Accordingly it was agreed to appeal to the member countries once more to adhere to the established deadlines for the submission of STATLANT forms.

Bearing in mind the request from the Consultative Committee to consider the problem of speedy provision of monthly catch data in cooperation with NEAFC, the Committee observed that although the submission of preliminary catch statistics with an official time lag of one month was now the well established practice in NEAFC, these statistics did not cover all stocks or areas of concern. Therefore, it was agreed to recommend that the Liaison Committee should specify such stocks and areas (C.Res.1976/4:9).

The Statistician was requested to prepare and distribute to national statistical offices a new form for submitting fleet data by tonnage categories in accordance with the International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels (ISSCFV). The Committee recommended to the CWP Secretary to include into the Agenda of the next CWP meeting an item on HP categories of fishing vessels.

Regretfully only one contribution, by M J Holden, on discards by English and Welsh vessels in 1975 was presented to the Committee, notwithstanding that at the 1975 Statutory Meeting the Council reiterated its request to member countries to conduct research on discards and urged them to report the results to the 1976 Statutory Meeting.

A good response to the Council resolution on distinguishing between catches taken with midwater trawls and those taken with bottom trawls in the North-East Arctic fisheries on STATLANT 27 B forms was noted with satisfaction.

4. The ADP Working Group Report

The Chairman of the ADP Working Group, Mr J A Pope, presented the Report (Doc. C.M.1976/D:9). After a general discussion the Committee agreed on the following:-

- (a) if separation of the ICES Sub-Area XIV into divisions makes continued production of Table 5 of Bulletin Statistique in its current form impossible because of the space limit, the 3-letter ICES country code should be used in that table and CWP should be requested to consider the feasibility of adopting 3-letter species code, corresponding to the Bulletin Statistique item numbers as shown in Doc. C.M.1975/D:7;
- (b) changes in the introductory tables of Bulletin Statistique proposed in the Report should be adopted and implemented commencing with Volume 60, with minor amendments proposed during the meeting (i.e. deletion of the words: "compared with 1962" in Tables A, D, E, and F and introduction of the uniform term of "nominal catches" in the headings of all tables). The Editor of Bulletin Statistique should be requested to review these tables on an annual basis and to submit his suggestions on their modification to the Committee meetings;
- (c) to recommend modification of Table 10 of Bulletin Statistique in accordance with the proposal contained in the Report, resulting in discontinuation of Table 11, which would be absorbed in the new Table 10 (see C.Res.1976/1:21). The Statistician should request the national reporting offices of member countries to submit all the monthly catch data required. Should any country fail to report its monthly statistics, the corresponding yearly figure should be entered into the "total" column;
- (d) to recommend that both Tables 7 and 10 of the 1976 Bulletin Statistique should be produced from computer print-outs using part of the ICES FISHDAT System, the highest priority to be given to the computerized production of Table 7 (C.Res.1976/1:20);
- (e) to approve the current and proposed developments in the approach to the full implementation of the ICES FISHDAT System intended to cater for any species of fish and for the whole ICES Area, described in the Report and in the

Users' Manual (Annex 1), prepared by Mr H Lassen and Miss B Mörck-Larsen, for the proposed trial run of the ICES FISHDAT System;

- (f) to recommend that the ADP Working Group, under the chairmanship of Mr J A Pope, should meet for 4 days immediately before or after the next meeting of the North Sea Flatfish Working Group, so that the members of the latter Group can participate in the discussions (C.Res.1976/2:24). The ADP Working Group should consider, *inter alia*, the problem of providing uniform input records of the basic catch and biological data, either on printed forms or in a computer-readable form. In the meantime, any member country which would prefer to supply material for the trial runs in a computer-readable form should consult with the ICES Secretariat on acceptable media and formats.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, complimented Mr Pope for the work carried out for a number of years on the eventual establishment of the ICES FISHDAT System.

5. Uniform Use and Development of Coding Systems

In accordance with C.Res.1975/4:19 the Chairman of the Working Group on Data Collection and Processing in Fish Capture Research, the Chairman of the ADP Working Group, and ICES Statistician have agreed on the uniform use of the same area, country, species and gear codes as currently used for the Council's statistics (see C.Res. 1976/4:11). In accordance with C.Res.1975/5:3 the Gear and Behaviour Committee provided advice on fishing effort measures by gear category to the Statistics Committee (see pages 24 and 25). Both Committees agreed that the processing of fishing effort data would be simplified if a single measure could be found which could be applied to all gears, since in such a case interpretation of catch per effort data would be easier and mixed gear fisheries could be analysed. However, for the time being the gear categories should be those listed in Section 3.2 of the FAO Fisheries Circular No.443 (Rev.1), and fishing effort measures those listed in Section 5.3 of it. The Gear and Behaviour Committee advised on certain amendments to be made in the Circular.

6. Coordinating Working Party (CWP) and Related Matters

The Committee noted with appreciation the relevant work carried out in 1976 by the Secretary of the CWP on Atlantic Fishery Statistics, as reported by him.

The CWP Secretary informed the Committee that the Ninth Session of the CWP will be held at the ICNAF Secretariat Office, Dartmouth, Canada, in late August or early September 1977 for 7 days, and it was agreed to recommend that funds should be made available for the participation at the session of the Statistics Committee Chairman and the Council's Statistician (C.Res.1976/3:1).

Since an understanding reported under Item 5 was reached on the uniform use of coding systems, it was agreed that ICES' current list of species items (as provided in Doc. C.M.1975/D:7) should be included in the FAO Fisheries Circular No.441 (Rev.2).

The Committee asked the Secretary of CWP to complete his work on the revision of conversion factors for the North Atlantic species, including seaweeds.

7. Harvest of Seaweeds

In accordance with C.Res.1975/4:20, the Statistician had compiled the available information on the harvest of seaweeds and those marine animals not currently included in Bulletin Statistique in Doc. C.M.1976/D:10 and presented it at the Joint Session of the Fisheries Improvement and the Shellfish and Benthos Committees. The Joint Session indicated its interest, in principle, in having the seaweed data published, and the Statistics Committee agreed that the Statistician and the Secretary of the CWP should study the matter and report their findings after the Ninth Session of the CWP.

8. Separation of Sub-Area XIV into the Northern and Southern Parts

The Chairman presented the request from the Northwestern Working Group to consider the feasibility of such a separation, and the Committee agreed to recommend the adoption of the proposed separation (C.Res.1976/1:19).
9. A Review of the Council Meeting Papers on the Evaluation of National Sampling Procedures

The review (Doc. C.M.1976/D:3) was prepared by Mr J P Bridger from the Fisheries Laboratory in Lowestoft. It generated broad discussion on various sampling procedures and criteria involved. The Committee noted with appreciation the work done by the author in investigating sampling schemes. It agreed that the member countries should be urged to submit further papers on sampling theories or, at least, their methods of sampling, and to make every effort to increase their sampling levels which in many cases are far too low to achieve a desired degree of accuracy in assessments.

Papers C.M.1976/D:6: "A description of the Icelandic system for collecting catch-effort statistics" by J Blöndal and C.M.1976/D:7: "The system of collecting and processing statistical catch data in the German Democratic Republic" by U Falk were presented and discussed. Several members and observers reported on the high average degree of accuracy ($\pm 5\%$) of nominal catch estimates entered by skippers in fishing log books versus later inspection of their landings.
10. Sampling Procedures for acquiring Catch Statistics on By-Catch Species in Mixed Fisheries

Notwithstanding C.Res.1975/4:18 calling on the member countries to provide to the 1976 Statutory Meeting relevant information on their national procedures and the corresponding later request from NEAFC, only one paper was presented to the Committee (C.M.1976/D:8 by J Blöndal: "Collection of statistics on by-catch in Iceland"). Under the circumstances the Committee could only strongly reiterate its previous recommendation on that issue (C.Res.1976/4:12).
11. Future Requirements to Statistical Reporting

After a thorough consideration of the issue the Committee agreed that both the needs of the assessment Working Groups and the ICES FISHDAT System, as well as any future requirements on the ICES Statistical System arising from anticipated changes in the fishery jurisdiction, could be met if countries were to comply with the repeated Council resolutions calling for statistical and biological data by the ICES statistical rectangles. In view of the importance of the matters involved it was recommended to strongly reiterate the Council's request to member countries to that effect (C.Res.1976/4:10). Simultaneously it was recommended that an annual inventory of available data previously published in Statistical News Letters should be incorporated as an appendix to the Advance Release of Bulletin Statistique (C.Res.1976/1:18).
12. Any other Business

It was agreed to request the Secretary of the CWP to include consideration of the "discards" issue on the next CWP meeting Agenda.
13. Mr D de G Griffith (Ireland) was elected Chairman for the next three years. The outgoing Chairman congratulated him and expressed his appreciation to all Committee members with whom he had worked for seven years. Mr J A Pope, on behalf of the Committee members, expressed their gratitude to Mr J Møller Christensen for his fine work during his term in the chair.

14. Communications

D:1		Administrative Report.
D:2	J Møller Christensen	"Breakdown of ICES Sub-Area XIV".
D:3	J P Bridger	"The collection and compilation of catch and effort statistics and the extent of fish sampling programmes in ICES member countries in recent years".
D:4	M J Holden	"Quantities of fish discarded at sea by English and Welsh vessels in 1975".
D:5	J G Pope	"An approach to mixed fisheries theory using a modified Leslie matrix".
D:6	J Blöndal	"A description of the Icelandic system for collecting catch-effort statistics".
D:7	U Falk	"The system of collecting and processing statistical catch data in the German Democratic Republic".
D:8	J Blöndal	"Collection of statistics on by-catch species in Iceland".
D:9		"Report of the Working Group on the Eventual Establishment of an ICES ADP System for Fishery Statistics".
D:10	V Nikolaev	"Harvest of seaweeds and some marine animals in the ICES area".
D:11	ICES Statistician	"Progress Report".
D:12*	FAO/CWP Secretary	"Northeast Atlantic (Area 27-ICES, NEAFC and IBSFC): Description of fishing area for statistical purposes" (being also FAO FIPS/C440 (Rev.2)).

*For Committee members only.

