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National Reports on Collecting and Processing Fisheries Statistics

by

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At the 1978 Annual Meeting, the Statistical and Sampling Subcommittee was informed of an apparent general deterioration in the reporting of statistical data and a lack of consistency in data reported by some countries. It was noted that ICES, Eurostat and FAO have recognized the need for countries to document descriptions of their national systems of collecting and processing data, and the Subcommittee recommended "that each member country submit to the Secretariat prior to the 1979 Annual Meeting a detailed description of its system of collecting and processing fisheries statistics" (*Redbook* 1978, page 87).

In addition to notification in *Redbook* 1978 (page 87), member countries were reminded of recommendations from the 1978 Annual Meeting in Circular Letters 78/59 (issued 12 September 1978) and 79/14 (issued 1 February 1979). The only response received by the Secretariat was a report from Norway, which is given in Appendix 1.

Description of the Norwegian System of Collecting and Processing
Fisheries Statistics

The Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries is responsible for the collection and processing of the national fisheries statistics.

The system of collecting and processing fisheries statistics in Norway is in a continuous process of refinement and adjustment in accordance with changing needs for statistical information.

Different methods of collecting the basic statistics are used, depending on the needs for information in each particular fishery.

The following description is limited to the collection and processing of fisheries statistics from the Northwest Atlantic fisheries.

Norwegian vessels participate in long-lining, gill netting and trawling mainly for cod, further in shrimp trawling, capelin fishery by purse seiners and midwater trawlers, and finally in seal fishery in the Canadian economic zone. The last couple of years only long liners have been used in the cod fisheries.

Except for the seal fishery, the official Norwegian fisheries statistics are based upon information from fishing logbooks and sales contracts. First this system will be described in some detail. Then the method of collecting statistics from the seal fishery will be described.

I. Fisheries Statistics.

a) Fishing Logbook.

All vessels fishing for cod, shrimp and capelin in the area concerned are required to keep a fishing logbook during the period of operation. Each page has a copy sheet. Entries shall be made for each setting or haul, giving information about date, time and geographical position. The catches shall be specified by species, and discarded catch should be recorded (normally there is no discards in the longline fishery).

Copies and English translations of the logbooks used by the Norwegian vessels in 1975 were printed in ICNAF Working Paper No. 22 circulated at ICNAF's 25th. Annual Meeting. The logbooks in use today are slightly modified. For instance, the new edition of the logbook for longliners contains the numerical codes for column and species identification as recommended by ICNAF's Plenary on 20th. June 1975.

The fishermen are required to send the copy sheets of the logbook to the Directorate of Fisheries immediately upon arrival from the fishing ground.

b) Landed Quantity.

According to Norwegian law the fishermen's sales organizations have the sole right to all first-hand sales of fish. The organizations require that a special form (actually a sales contract) is filled out jointly by the fishermen and the buyer when a catch is landed. The form is sent to the sales organization concerned, for use in its sales functions. The completed form contains, among other things, the registration number of the vessel, the place and date of landing, the exact quantity landed, the price and first-hand value of each species, disposition of the catch, type of gear, number of men on board and fishing area.

The information in the sales contract forms the basis for the Norwegian total catch statistics. Thus, a copy of the sales contract, or a special form containing the sales contract information, is sent to the Directorate for statistical purposes.

c) Processing of the Statistics.

The Norwegian fisheries statistics are based on complete information, not on samples. At the Directorate of Fisheries the information from the logbooks and the sales contracts are processed by computers. For each species the ADP programs convert the total catch (product weight) from the sales contract into live weight, and distribute it among fishing areas and over time in accordance with the specifications in the logbooks. Through this process the quantities caught in each area during each period of time are connected to effort measures from the logbooks. The most detailed effort measures are "1.000 hooks fished" for the longliners, "hours fished" for the trawlers, and "number of hauls" for the purse seiners.

This processing also permits completion of Statlant 21 B by computer.

II. Seal statistics.

Statistics from the Norwegian seal fishery in the ICNAF area are based on custom clearance forms which are filled out at the vessel's return to Norwegian port. The forms, which specify the catches on species and age groups, are sent by the custom officials to the Directorate where the information is processed manually.

III. Collection of statistics for the purpose of quota control.

In addition to the collection of statistics outlined above Norwegian vessels report catches from the fishing ground to the Directorate of Fisheries at regular intervals. The purpose is to follow the development in the total catch quantity for each species during the fishing season and prevent that the Norwegian quotas are exceeded.