



FIRST MEETING - WASHINGTON, D. C. - APRIL 2, 1951

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REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

First Meeting
Saturday, April 7, 1951

Attendance:

Canada
Denmark
Iceland
United Kingdom
United States

At this meeting Dr. A.W.H. Needler (Canada) was elected Chairman. There was a rather lengthy discussion of methods of gathering fishery statistics in the Convention area, of a proposal for a minimum mesh regulation for trawls used in the haddock fishery, and a proposal for review of research programs.

It was decided that the proposed report and recommendations of the Committee should be prepared by a Drafting Sub-Committee. The following persons were elected to constitute the Sub-Committee:

Dr. W. R. Martin, Canada
Dr. A.W.H. Needler, Canada
Dr. L. A. Walford, United States

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Report of the Meeting of the
Drafting Sub-Committee of the
Committee on Research and Statistics

The Drafting Sub-Committee met Sunday, April 8, 1951, at 3:15 p.m.

The items referred to the Sub-Committee by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics were discussed, and a draft prepared for submission to the Committee on Research and Statistics at its next meeting.

Second Meeting of the
Committee on Research and Statistics

The Committee held its second meeting on Monday, April 9, 1951, at 10:15 a.m., in Conference Room C, Shoreham Hotel, with the following countries represented: Canada, Denmark, Iceland, United Kingdom, and United States.

The report of the Sub-Committee on Drafting was read and, after some discussion, certain minor changes were incorporated into the draft.

The Committee approved the report at this meeting and submits the following items to the Commission:

1. Fishery Statistics in the Convention Area

The Committee considered the following basic fisheries statistics for all sub-areas to be the minimum requirements essential to the purposes of the Commission; namely, the development of means of maintaining the maximum sustained yield:

- (a) the total weights landed annually, in statistical regions corresponding to the Commission's sub-areas, by species for at least five principal species and by commercial size categories for those species commonly culled;
- (b) data on fishing effort expended per annum, (such as, for example, number of days absent from port by fishing vessels, number of vessel-days spent in actual fishing, etc.); and
- (c) estimates of the quantities caught but not landed, for each of the principal species.

The Committee points out that there are now large gaps in this information in the Convention area, and recommends that the Commission instruct the Executive Secretary to review the situation before the next annual meeting of the Commission in consultation with the appropriate persons in all countries fishing in the Convention area and with FAO and ICES, and to report on the adequacy of the statistics and on the problems involved in improving them. Such a report would be reviewed by the Committee and would serve as a basis for recommending action by the Commission at its next meeting.

2. Review of Research Programs and Results

The Committee recommends that the Commission request governments conducting research in the waters of the Convention area to submit summaries of programs and results of such research to the Commission in sufficient time and in sufficient number for distribution by the Executive Secretary to members of the Commission and of the Committee sixty days in advance of each annual meeting of the Commission.

Such summaries would enable the Committee to keep such programs under review, and discharge its duties under Rule 16(c) of the Rules of Procedure DOC/2 (Rev.2), April 5, 1951.

The Committee approved the following item for submission to Panel 5:

3. The Haddock Fishery in Sub-area 5

- (a) The Committee considered the question of regulating the mesh size in the cod-end of trawls used for catching haddock. It agreed that before prediction can be made with confidence, as to what will be the relation between mesh sizes and biological effects, further information is required on natural mortality rates of scrod and adult fish. The Committee suggested two possible means of measuring natural mortality:
- (i) by making a series of censuses of the area with a trawl having a mesh small enough to catch sizes which now escape from ordinary commercial gear, and observing age frequencies and changes in numbers caught;
 - (ii) by determining the total number of eggs and larvae in the area during the spawning season, estimating from those data the total adult population, and comparing the latter estimate with total catch and with estimates of total mortality from catch data;

Each of these approaches requires a research program that is far beyond the capacity of present facilities;

- (b) The Committee agreed that it is desirable to establish a minimum cod-end mesh size in Sub-area 5 as an experiment. This mesh size should be set at a level which would allow a maximum proportion of unmarketable-sized haddock to escape with minimal effect on the catch of marketable-sized fish.

This recommendation is made on the understanding that the following information will be made available before and after the regulation comes into effect: total catch; catch per effort; and size composition of the catch, both for the fish landed and for those discarded;

- (c) With regard to the size of mesh to be established initially, there was complete agreement that it could be as great as 3-3/4 inches (gauge measurement of opening); but there was disagreement as to whether it should be larger.

The Committee therefore recommends that scientists representing the United States and Canada together consider this problem, in order to provide Panel 5 before its next meeting with:

- (i) a resume of pertinent information now available;
- (ii) a recommendation regarding a mesh size, and collateral questions, for the initial experimental regulation; and
- (iii) a recommended research program to meet the requirements set forth in the above paragraphs.

4. Next Meeting

The Committee considers it desirable that it meet two or three days in advance of the Commission meeting, or on such a date as will assure time to consider the summaries and research programs submitted by the various countries.

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