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Report on the 47th Statutory Meeting of ICES in Charlottenlund, Denmark
October 1959

by the Executive Secretary, Erik M. Poulsen

Director Gunnar Rollefson, Norway, Dr. Erik M. Poulsen and Mr. R.S.Keir attended the ICES Meeting as observers for ICNAF.

The meeting was held at the ICES headquarters in Charlottenlund, Denmark, on 4-10 October; it was preceded by a special IGY Meeting on 1-3 October.

About 140 delegates and experts and 30 observers and guests participated in the Meeting.

Close to 130 papers had been prepared for the Meeting and were distributed at the meetings of the various committees. The following submission of these papers by subjects may give an indication of the effort spent on the various problems coming within the scope of ICES:

Hydrography	- 27 papers ¹⁾
Pelagic fishes	- 27 "
Shellfish	- 21 "
Gear and technique	- 20 "
Groundfish	- 13 "
Salmon and trout	- 12 "
Plankton	- 7 "
Benthos	- 3 "

It is worth noting the big role played by hydrography and that pelagic fishes count for twice as many papers as groundfish; also the large amount of papers dealing with shellfish are to be noted.

The opening meeting was convened at Christianborg Castle, and chaired by the President, Dr. Furnestin.

On the following days meetings of delegates and experts continued, and the final meeting of the General Assembly was held on Saturday.

The "Distant Northern Seas Committee" (Chairman, J. Jónsson) includes the West Greenland waters. When dealing with the program for the ensuing year, it was noted i.a. that investigations on the biology of bottom fishes, including environmental studies, would be conducted by USSR in the western Atlantic in 1960.

The "Near Northern Seas Committee" (Chairman, P. Korringa) considered the problems related to benthos research, and adopted a recommendation "That a working group of specialists from as many countries as possible should meet to discuss the aims and the methods used in quantitative benthos research, with a view of coordinating future work in this field. It was proposed that such a meeting should take place during 1960 on board research ships, using the Biologische Anstalt at Helgoland as a basis. It is surmised that this work will ultimately lead to a special scientific meeting on this matter".

1) this figure does not include 45 papers presented at the special IGY meeting.

"Comité Atlantique" (Chairman, E. Leloup). Under Program of Work it was noted that the new French research vessel "Thalassa" would be ready for work during the second half of 1960 (according to information by French delegates at the 1959 ICNAF Annual Meeting, researches in the ICNAF Area are included in the program of work for "Thalassa").

The considerations of the Gadoid Fish Committee (Chairman, G. Rollefson) were centered under the following headings: (a) Feeding, food and fecundity of the cod; (b) Status of the stocks and recruitment, and (c) tagging and migrations. Under (b) the possible intermixing of Icelandic and East and West Greenland cod was discussed: "There seems to be an exchange between the different areas but the picture up to now is somewhat diffuse and a continued sampling of cod in the area is hoped to give more information on this important subject. Also a segregation according to age, and spawning age seems to take place. In W. Greenland waters there has been observed a lowering in temperature of the sea, a delay of the spawning time and a more pronounced westward drift of eggs and larvae.

In a special session the "Second Progress Report of the Working Group on Arctic Fisheries" was received. The work of this group is in many ways related to the work on "Fishery Assessment in Relation to Regulation Problems" started by ICNAF in the 1959 Annual Meeting. The Proceedings of the Gadoid Committee summarizes the report very briefly as follows:

"The report was presented by Mr. R. Beverton. The report (16 pages of text and a large number of tables and figures) treats data from 1930 to 1958 concerning catch, catch per unit of effort, age and length distribution given by Germany, Norway, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

"From the extensive age-composition data which are available, it has been possible to estimate the total mortality rate in the stocks at the present time and to determine how much this is due to fishing and how much to natural causes.

"A total mortality rate of 65% after the fish have entered the fisheries gives a satisfactory explanation of the failure of recent richer year-classes.

"Preliminary assessments based on mortality and growth-rates and special mesh experiments as to the effect of an increased mesh size showed that there certainly would be a gain in catch if the present minimum size of 110 mm was increased."

The Hydrographical Committee, Chairman J.B.Tait, considered in three meetings especially the following items: (a) collection, compiling and distribution of hydrographic data; (b) use of the conductimetric method for salinity determination; (c) a proposed multi-ship plan of investigation of cold, deep-water overflow across the Iceland-Faroe ridge; (d) publication of 45 papers presented to the Special Meeting to review the hydrographical and biological results of the IGY surveys, and passed positive recommendations on all the items.

The Plankton Committee (Chairman, E. Steemann Nielsen) decided to postpone the planned Symposium on Zooplankton to 1961, and recommended that the countries taking part in the survey of the overflow of the Iceland-Faroe ridge should take the opportunity to collect plankton samples.

The Statistical Committee (Chairman, J. Lundbeck) passed a number of recommendations in order to make effective decisions of the Edinburgh Expert Meeting on Fishery Statistics in the North Atlantic Area. It further considered joint proposals by the General Secretary of ICES and the Executive Secretary of ICNAF for a closer coordination of the statistics as published by the two organizations, and recommended

that "ICES ceases to collect and publish statistics from the Newfoundland area, but continues to include all Greenland areas, subdividing Eastern and Western Greenland, the latter to be annotated as belonging also to the ICNAF area". The Committee finally considered the problem of discards and passed the following recommendation: "The Statistical Committee is conscious of an urgent need for statistics of the parts of the catches which are discarded at sea, collected by a suitable sampling method and broken down by species and, if possible, also by size-composition."

The Comparative Fishing Committee (Chairman, C.E.Lucas) treated a series of problems relevant to the technique of commercial fisheries, and being identical to or related to problems under consideration by ICNAF.

(a) v. Brandt's studies of the relative merits of several gauges for measuring meshes suggested that, overall, the Scottish gauge best met the requirements. Certain recent improvements in this gauge arising from new experiments by the Netherlands and Scotland were considered, as was a new type of gauge used in Canadian fresh water fisheries. The following recommendation was passed:

That the Scottish mesh-measuring gauge, in general as modified by Mr.C.J.W.Westhoff, is the one most suitable for general adoption by the scientists of member countries, and that it therefore be adopted. (It is noted that machine drawings may be obtained from Mr. Westhoff, General Inspection Service, Netherlands, while models are obtainable in the Netherlands for ca. £ 10).

(b) Mesh Selection. Papers from a number of countries concerned different aspects of mesh selection. Mr. Beverton described preliminary results with the British "multiple flapper" type of topside chafer, which suggested that this might be an improvement on the present type in permitting a greater release of small fish. It comprised a series of overlapping pieces of netting which might ultimately prove more acceptable to the industry. It was recommended that further tests with the "multiple flapper" chafer be made during 1959-60, preferably by several countries.

v. Brandt gave the first evidence on selection in knotless cod-ends.

The recent extensive international fishing experiments in arctic waters were considered and it was recommended that a meeting be held in December 1959 to assess the results of the experiments more fully.

(c) In response to an enquiry, arising from FAO concern regarding the possibility of nylon set nets continuing to fish when accidentally released, answers from 11 countries indicated that no problem had been experienced except in Iceland.

The Consultative Committee, Chairman A.E.J. Went considered a series of administrative matters, and the recommendations by the various committees, which were passed with minor amendments.

The Committee recommended that Dir. G. Rollefson should represent ICES as observer at the ICNAF Annual Meeting in Bergen in May-June, 1960.

As to future ICES meetings the Committee recommended that (a) Identification badges should be provided for members attending, and (b) that the meetings should be extended to not less than 9 days, preferably starting mid week. When considered desirable Scientific Committees could start work in advance of the formal opening of the meeting.

Finally the Committee "welcomed Dir Rollefson's proposal that ICES should initiate a training scheme for fishery scientists, and recommended the Council to establish machinery for starting such courses as and when necessary".