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ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1967

Report of the fifty-fourth Statutory Meeting of
the International Council for the Exploration
of the Sea, Copenhagen 1966

by H.A. Cole

Membership

Canada has now applied for membership. It is understood that the U.S.A. will join when the new Convention comes into force; almost certainly this will be on 22nd July 1967.

Officers

The following were elected to serve during the year 1966/67

President	Dr. Went (Iceland)
1st Vice President	Professor Cieglewicz (Poland)
Other Vice Presidents	Mr. Olafsson (Iceland)
	Dr. Leloup (Belgium)
	Professor Korringa (Netherlands)
	Professor Ruud (Norway)
	Mr. Letaconnoux (France)

The above constitute the Bureau which is the executive committee of the Council

Finance Committee

President, Danish Delegate, Professor Zaitsev (U.S.S.R.)
M. Aglen (U.K.)
Dr. Leloup (Belgium)
Professor Korringa (Netherlands)

Scientific Committees

Following consideration of the Report of a working group headed by Dr. Cole (U.K.), the Council adopted a revised scheme of scientific committees. The number of committees has been reduced and provision has been made for a further extension of the work of the Council to the South, into Region III of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and the South Atlantic. An interesting innovation is the establishment of a Fisheries Improvement Committee whose field of work will include fish and shellfish cultivation, transplantation and acclimatization of non-indigenous species and other aspects of the management of the environment and the fisheries.

The composition and functions of the Consultative Committee remain unchanged.

Chairman of Consultative Committee - Dr. C. E. Lucas (U.K.). Re-elected for one year.

Chairman of Committees

Demersal Fish (Northern)	Professor G.V. Nikolsky (U.S.S.R.) Elected for 2 years
Demersal Fish (Southern)	Dr. F. Lozano (Spain) Elected for 3 years
Pelagic Fish (Northern)	Professor G. Hempel (Germany) Elected for 1 year
Pelagic Fish (Southern)	Mr. R. Letaconnoux (France) Elected for 2 years
Shellfish and Benthos	Mr. A. C. Simpson (U.K.) Elected for 3 years
Sebastes and Gadromous Fish	Dr. Carlin (Sweden) Elected for 1 year
Gear and Behaviour	Mr. S. Olsen (Norway) re-elected for 3 years

Fisheries Improvement	Dr. H. A. Cole (U.K.) Elected for 2 years
Plankton	Dr. J. H. Fraser (U.K.) Re-elected for 3 years
Hydrography	Professor G. Dietrich (Germany) Elected for 2 years
Statistics	Mr. B.B. Parrish (U.K.) Re-elected for 1 year
Marine Mammals	Dr. N.A. Mackintosh (U.K.) Elected for 1 year

Finance

Despite the incidence of higher contributions, the budget for 1966/67 provides for a negligible surplus. An increased contribution has been requested from the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, to support, among other things, an additional professional member of the ICES staff, who would be mainly responsible for the Commission's statistical services but could also act as Secretary to the Liaison Committee which provides the channel for advice to NEAFC.

When the new Convention comes into force, financial contributions are fixed for the first two years but thereafter it is clear that there will be a need for increased contributions of the order of 33-50%. The adherence of the U.S.A. and Canada will help to spread the burden.

Scientific Communications

About 200 scientific papers were presented, the majority being of a rather high quality. It is impossible in a report of this character to refer to more than a few and those mentioned below are merely some of the more striking or novel. Some advances in knowledge which may affect the work of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (and which may have a direct bearing on the deliberations of the International Commission for the North West Atlantic Fisheries) are described in Commissioners Document 67/21.

Gadoid Fish Committee

The most important paper was one by Garrod (U.K.) describing the nature of the relationship between stock size and recruitment in the Arctic cod. There is a very strong suggestion that with the present greatly reduced stock, recruitment is affected. This suspicion gains strength from the results of a joint survey of the abundance of 0-group cod reported by the Norwegians - the other participants were the U.S.S.R. and the U.K. In 1966, as in 1965, 0-group cod were very scarce indeed. The techniques used on this survey aroused considerable interest.

Herring Committee

There was a one-day special meeting to consider the state of the middle and northern North Sea stocks resulting from the recent very heavy exploitation by Norwegian purse seiners. The 1966 international catch was expected to be at least 900,000 tons, although the Norwegian catches were slightly lower than in 1965. An important paper by Parrish (U.K.) made two estimates, based respectively on draft net and trawl net catches data, which gave sustainable yields widely separated, the one being at 300-400,000 tons and the other at somewhere between 750,000 and 1,000,000 tons per annum.

The discussion of the questions posed by NEAFC regarding conservation of the Downs herring on the Southern Bight did not reach a conclusion and a special meeting of the working group has been arranged.

Comparative Fishing Committee

Very great interest was aroused by Cushing's (U.K.) communication describing techniques used in an acoustic survey of the abundance and distribution of Hake off South West and South Africa: the situation is in some ways an especially favourable one for work of this kind but there was a general feeling that a major advance has been made.

There was a special session reporting progress in hydro-acoustic methods of estimation of fish distribution and abundance and it was decided to promote an international training course on the use of these methods in fishery research in 1968 with the support of FAO.

Papers from the U.K. and Norway presented evidence on the Polish-type of topside chafer which was generally agreed to have a negligible effect on the escape of fish. It was stated, however, that it did not prevent the splitting of the cod end with very heavy catches. It seems possible to deal with this problem by using heavier twine and further experiments on these lines were recommended.

Near Northern Seas Committee

There was a German contribution on the rearing of soles which gave important new information; it was accompanied by a very convincing film. The U.K. work on the very high national mortality of O-group plaice observed on the Irish Sea also evoked keen interest and it was agreed that more work of this kind on the early bottom stages of fish of commercially valuable species was required.

Salmon and Trout Committee

The papers given covered a wide field and were generally of high quality. There were two excellent films covering Salmon Rearing in Finland and Arctic Char (Canada). There was a lively discussion of causes of loss of Salmon Smolts during their passage to the sea which revealed a big range of predators and resultant high mortality in many areas.

A paper of outstanding interest described the great growth of the Norwegian Salmon catch in recent years, only partly due to the adoption of new fishing methods to supplement or replace the old-established bag nets.

Hydrographical Committee

The arrangements made did not permit the attendance of biologists at many of the meetings of this committee. A scrutiny of the report suggests a high level of technical competence due perhaps to the attendance of a comparatively large number of senior and very able men of the Committee's meetings and working groups.

A noteworthy paper (Germany) described a cheap under-way salinometer which gives an instantaneous and accurate record of salinities during surveys. This promises to bear an important research tool, particularly for inshore surveys, where synoptic mapping of highly variable salinity patterns is required. It is likely to be very valuable in pollution surveys.

Shellfish Committee

A wide range of papers was presented, including several useful communications describing improved methods of stock assessment.

A paper from the Netherlands described changes in their brown shrimp fishery, which has now moved offshore in winter using larger vessels and concentrating on the bigger shrimps. A Dutch worker has also developed a promising method of predicting the catches of brown shrimps.

There were several papers on the prawn Pandalus borealis, the stocks of which are declining on the waters of Denmark and Sweden. This also seems to be true of the lobster stocks of Northern Europe but the causes are unknown. There was a German paper describing, among other things, the high yield of Pandalus from the Farne Deeps off the northeast coast of England.

An Irish communication on Nephrops reported an apparent increase in growth rate, perhaps resulting from thinning out with heavy fishing.

A copy of any paper presented to the 1966 Copenhagen meeting of ICES can be obtained from the Secretary General, Charlottenlund Slot, Charlottenlund, Denmark.