



ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1969

Report to ICNAF of work of FAO 1968/9

by

Department of Fisheries

FAO

INTRODUCTION

This report does not attempt to cover all the activities of FAO's Department of Fisheries, but concentrates on those aspects of interest to ICNAF, especially in the field of conservation and management, and the relevant aspects of biological research, statistics, and economics.

REGIONAL FISHERIES BODIES

The period since the 1968 ICNAF meeting has been a busy one as regards new fishery bodies. Two new FAO bodies - the Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission /IOFC/, and the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic /CECAF/ have had their first meetings. Both these are responsible for international cooperation in fishery development, as well as for the management of the marine fishery resources in their areas of competence. However, CECAF in particular is seriously concerned over the apparent progressively higher rates of fishing on some demersal stocks in the region. It has expressed great interest in the work being done by ICNAF, and regards the possible application to the coastal zone of the system of management being developed within ICNAF, and the possible direct effect of action by ICNAF through diversion of some effort from the ICNAF area to the CECAF area. It requested FAO to keep it fully informed of relevant action and discussion by ICNAF.

Following the necessary series of amendments and modifications, the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunny came into force early this year. It is hoped that the Commission will have its first meeting in December, possibly in Rome. No decision has been made concerning the permanent headquarters of the Commission.

A first draft of a fishery convention for the Southeast Atlantic has been circulated to interested governments, and a revision prepared on the basis of comments received will soon be distributed. A Conference of Plenipotentiaries will be convened by FAO from 14-23rd Oct. 1969 at FAO headquarters to review, approve and sign the Convention, and it is hoped that a Commission will be set up in this area soon.

Two other FAO bodies, the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council /IPFC/, and Southwest Atlantic Regional Fisheries Advisory Commission /CARPAS/ have met during the year. Working groups of these bodies, and of the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean /GFCM/, concerned with such things as statistics, sampling, demersal, etc., have been established, and had meetings, or worked by correspondence as appropriate.

STOCK ASSESSMENT

Essential to the work of all these bodies, especially in relation to management, is good advice on the state of the stocks. Until such time as the regional fisheries bodies have their own strong groups, corresponding to the ICNAF R and S Committee and its Assessment Sub-Committee, FAO has been, and will continue to be, actively concerned with helping to provide assessment advice. Since the last meeting FAO has convened a group on tuna stock assessment, particularly in the Atlantic, and the report of this group has been issued as Fisheries Reports No. 61. Several stocks of tuna in the Atlantic are heavily exploited, including, in the ICNAF area, the small bluefin tuna off New England. The report of the ACMRR /FAO/ ICES group on the stocks of the eastern central and south-eastern Atlantic has also been issued. The work of this group, so far as the eastern central Atlantic is concerned will be continued by a group set up by CECAF, which will include in its terms of reference, the framing of possible regulatory measures which might be adopted by CECAF at its next meeting. Other assessment groups have been set up by IOFC /for tuna and shrimps/ and by CARPAS /jointly with ACMRR/.

FAO has also been concerned with providing assessment advice on Antarctic whales to IWC, and, through the UNDP/SE/ project, on the anchovy stocks to the Peruvian Government.

Many other field projects have also been concerned to varying extents with management problems.

INDICATIVE WORLD PLAN

Assessment work is also an integral part of the resources aspect of the fisheries section of FAO's Indicative World Plan. The draft of the section concerned with the Northwest Atlantic has already been presented to ICNAF. Drafts for most of the other areas have also been completed, as well as sections on molluscs and crustaceans. It is hoped that the full resources study will be completed later this year. The results, in terms of the potential of the presently important groups of species /in tons/ are as follows:

Large pelagic fish /mainly tunas/	3,000,000
Demersal fish /cods, breams, etc./	45,000,000
Shoaling pelagic /herrings, anchovies, mackerels, etc./	60,000,000
Crustaceans /shrimps, etc., including krill, etc./	2,000,000
Cephalopds	10,000,000
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Total	120,000,000

These figures are in fact almost certainly over-estimates of what can be harvested, since they are the sums of the potential from each individual stocks, assuming each is exploited at the optimum rate.

These estimates have been contrasted with the estimates of future demand for fish in 1975 and 1985. At constant prices it is believed that the demand in 1985 might be for 70,000,000 tons of food fish, and 45,000,000 tons of fish for fish meal. This is very close to the estimate of the potential under perfect management, and emphasizes the need for management in all parts of the ocean, as well as the development of resources other than those considered above /e.g. small pelagic fish in the open ocean/.

STATISTICS

The cooperation between FAO and ICNAF and ICES in the Coordinating Working Party on Atlantic Fishery statistics is reported elsewhere. FAO is also actively engaged in developing regional fishery statistics in other areas, with the ultimate objective of the production of ICNAF-type statistical bulletins, either directly by FAO, or by a regional body, for all parts of the world's oceans.

PROMOTION OF RESEARCH

The activities of FAO in promoting fishery research have continued. Various working groups of ACMRR have been active, including those concerned with direct estimation of fish abundance, methods of exploratory fishing, and egg and larval surveys, also /jointly with SCOR and WMO/AC// on the future development of ocean investigations as part of the long-term expanded programme for ocean research requested by the U.N. General Assembly. FAO collaborated with ICES and ICNAF on the recent symposium on Marine Food Chains, and will similarly collaborate on the symposium on Stock and Recruitment. It also collaborated with UNESCO on the symposium on the Resources of the Caribbean Sea and adjacent regions, held in Curacao in November 1968. Close connection is maintained with IOC, especially in implementing the fishery aspects of international cooperative investigations.

Training centres on stock assessment, in Denmark, in August-September 1968 and acoustic surveys in Norway in March 1969 have been held jointly with ICES.

A wide range of research activities have been carried out by the various field programmes in many parts of the world.

DOCUMENTATION

The Current Bibliography for Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries, and the Marine Science Contents Tables continue to be issued regularly.

A first version of a manual on Acoustic Fish Detection Methods has been issued. The final, printed, version of the Stock Assessment Manual is expected to be available very shortly, in English, French and Spanish.

A number of papers on aspects of fishery management have been published by FAO, and in various journals.