

ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1969

Exchange of National Inspection Officers of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

An exchange of inspection officers of the United States and the Soviet Union took place between September 19 and October 4, 1968. This is the second exchange; the first having taken place in May 1965.

The exchange teams spent five days at sea on board the Soviet vessel RAMBINAS. During the five days, the teams boarded and inspected six trawlers of various types and visited one research vessel, one base ship and one inspection vessel. No irregularities were noted. Three days were spent on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter ACTIVE. Three U.S. trawlers were boarded and inspected with no irregularities being noted. The teams came ashore on September 28 in order that the inspector from the U.S.S.R. might observe the shore-side inspection procedures of the U.S.

Throughout the period of time the two teams worked together, there were frequent, frank discussions of enforcement procedures as carried out by each nation. Two items received more attention than any other--exemptions and international inspection.

Because the fisheries of the Soviet Union are conducted at a great distance from home ports, the procedure used differs in minor respects from that of the U.S. where ships fish close to their home ports. Essentially Soviet vessels use the trip exemption as do trawlers of the United States. A "trip" is considered by both countries as the time the vessel leaves its home port until it returns. Although Soviet trawlers unload at a base ship frequently, the percentage of regulated species is computed for all fish taken for the duration of that trip. Both countries utilize a frequent inspection system. The log books of Soviet vessels and the sales invoice of U.S. vessels serve to corroborate visual inspections.

The United States was pleased to learn that a Soviet inspection vessel is now assigned to work in the Convention area. The U.S. inspection team had the opportunity to board it and to spend some time with the Soviet inspectors assigned to duty on board.

Due to time limitations ashore, the discussion of the proposed Scheme of Joint International Enforcement in the ICNAF area was not completed. It was, however, the opinion of Mr. J. B. Skerry of the U.S. and Mr. V. S. Belov of the U.S.S.R. that before the scheme enters into force that the officers in charge of national enforcement systems should meet. Such a meeting would afford the officers an opportunity to gain a complete understanding of the national inspection systems of each country and the correct interpretation of the recommended Scheme of Joint International Enforcement as set forth by the Commission.