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Notes on Possible Discrepancies in Annual Statistical Reports  
due to differences between the year of catch and the year of landing

prepared by

The Secretary  
Coordinating Working Party on Atlantic Fishery Statistics  
FAO Department of Fisheries

(also FAO Fisheries Circular No.253)

NOTES ON POSSIBLE DISCREPANCIES IN ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORTS DUE TO DIFFERENCES  
BETWEEN THE YEAR OF CATCH AND THE YEAR OF LANDING

Prepared by

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
Rome, April 1970

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the notes for the completion of STATLANT forms (see Section 1.12 of FAO Fisheries Circulars Nos. 201 and 202) it has been indicated that:

"The nominal catch data should refer to the "calendar year of capture", i.e. the year during which the quantities of fish reported were caught".

- 1.2 In general catch data and landings data refer to the same time period, i.e. the year of capture corresponds to the year of landing. However, with the expansion of factory-ship operations often involving long trips to waters distant from domestic ports, it may happen that fishes caught in the last months of one calendar year are landed in the first months of the following year. A problem of statistical adjustment may therefore arise wherever catches made in one year are landed in the following year.

2. Action taken by the Secretary of the CWP

- 2.1 The Secretary of the CWP in June 1969 wrote to national statistical offices to collect information on this matter. The concluding paragraph of his letter read as follows:

"I should be grateful if you would let me know whether this problem occurs in your country and, if so, how it is solved by the statisticians responsible for reporting to FAO, ICES and ICNAF catch data according to the actual year of capture".

3. Comments made by National Statistical Offices

The Secretary of the CWP received the following comments from national statistical offices:

3.1 Belgium

Our fleet is not involved in factory-ship operations. The longest trips extend over 18, 19 days so that the few catches landed during the first days of a year were all captured during the last fortnight of the foregoing year. I do not think that the very small error in apportioning these catches to the year of landing is worthwhile the rather difficult adjustments necessary to do so.

3.2 Canada

This question does not present any serious problems for Canada. Trips are relatively short and what is landed in early January but caught in December is included in our statistics for December.

3.3 Denmark

The problem is of minor importance for the Danish statistics as the Danish fishing fleet has but one factory-ship. In the days up to the 31 December the fishing intensity is moreover insignificant partly due to weather conditions and partly due to the holidays. The problem is further reduced by the fact that a similar overlapping takes place at the end of the following year.

3.4 Finland

This problem does not occur in Finland.

3.13 United Kingdom

Prior to 1968 we had three large factory vessels (nearly 3,000 gross tons each) which used to stay at sea up to 4 months per voyage. Consequently we used to apportion each such voyage (catch and effort) between the months during which the catches had actually been made. Those three vessels have ceased fishing after 1967. Other freezer-trawlers (including 4 other factory vessels) are smaller (779-1789 gross tons) and their voyages on average do not exceed 37 days. We decided, for simplicity, to regard landings tabulated in any given month as equivalent to catches made in the same month. Admittedly, there is a likelihood of some catches made in December of one year being landed and tabulated in January of the following year. However, any error arising out of this is in fact only likely to be marginal. Special care is taken to ensure that no landings effected in one year are carried over to the next year. Voyages by freezer-trawlers are fairly evenly interspersed (about 17 per month); and any carry over from one month to another tends to balance itself out to a considerable extent.

3.14 United States

Discrepancies among annual statistics due to year of landing and year of catch is negligible at this time.

3.15 USSR

Only nominal catch (round fresh weight) is counted in our country, thus we have no such discrepancies.