

## 1 Executive summary

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The ICES Working Group on the History of Fish and Fisheries (WGHIST, 2012–2014) brings together fisheries scientists, historians and marine biologists working on long term change in the marine environment. It welcomes historical marine case studies from around the world and synergizes historical fisheries datasets. Outcomes are relevant for setting baselines for management, restoration and conservation of marine resources and ecosystems. In 2013, WGHIST met in Panicle (Italy), invited by veteran scientist Sidney Holt who, unfortunately, could not attend due to sudden ill health. The workshop was opened on 7 October 18:30 and closed on 11 October 12:30. Twelve participants from Australia, Africa, North America and Europe attended. The workshop excelled as platform for discussion between scientists in different disciplines, and was structured around the following three themes:

- 1) *Data rescue, archiving and digitization (ToR c).* - Rescue of historical data can be costly and time-consuming. This theme encourages learning from partners' experiences in data archiving and digitization. Efforts include: Belgium's Historical Fisheries (HiFi) database; Italy's CLODIA database on Adriatic fisheries; *Trawling Through Time* database on Cefas (UK) surveys in the North Sea (1902–1971); early scientific surveys around South Africa (Univ. Cape Town); Swedish effort in the Baltic (Stockholm University). The newly digitized datasets were identified and added to the WGHIST metadatabase.
- 2) *Case studies documenting progress in historical fisheries research (ToR a, b).* - Several fisheries declines/collapses in different sea areas were highlighted, but also attempts to view changing fisheries and fish catches in combined ecological, socio-economic, and fisheries contexts. These included repeated collapses of sprat in the Baltic, declines in Queensland's snapper fishery, declines in elasmobranchs and other large-bodied, late-maturing fish in the Adriatic, and a decline (1936–2009) in mean trophic level of landings in South Australia. Dramatic ecosystem change in Canada's Bay of Fundy over the past 150 years was attributed to a range of diverse anthropogenic pressures. For Northeast England, shifting baselines in fishers' perceptions of fish size and abundance were reported. From 1946–1995, Belgian trawlers fishing Icelandic cod had declining catch rates and proportions of 'large' cod specimens. Historical cpue data for UK trawlers revealed distribution shifts in many North Sea fish stocks the past 100 years, not only attributable to climate change but also to (locally more concentrated) fishing pressure.
- 3) *Impact and outreach* – historical fisheries science placed in current policy context (ToR d). - Historical ecology can help guide policy advice, by placing the current state in historical context, and informing on baselines and the 'virgin' state. Historical ecology has potential to support implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and the recommendation is to (1) where possible, provide data on metrics consistent with those used for MSFD indicators; (2) use spatial scales consistent with the MSFD; and (3) report on both the state of the system and the pressures it is subject to. Historical ecology may especially contribute to Descriptors 1 (Biodiversity), 3 (Commercially exploited fish), 4 (Foodwebs) and 6 (Seabed integrity).