

AD-HOC INTER-AGENCY CONSULTATION ON
ATLANTIC FISHERY STATISTICS

La Rochelle, France
26 - 27 September 1991



Provisional Report

Participants

Mr D. Cross	(Eurostat)
Mr M. Perotti	(FAO)
Dr R. Grainger	(ICES)
Mr T. Amaratunga	(NAFO)
Dr M. Windsor	(NASCO)
Dr P. Hutchinson	(NASCO)
Mr C. Schmidt	(OECD)

Apologies for absence had been received from

Dr D. Agnew	(CCAMLR)
Dr P. Miyake	(ICCAT)

Mr D. Cross was appointed Chairman of the Consultation.

The Agenda was approved (see Annex 1).

I REVIEW OF PROGRESS SINCE CWP-14

Progress made with respect to recommendations of CWP-14 was addressed as follows:

a) Ad-Hoc Inter-Agency Consultation on Global Tuna Statistics

The FAO representative reported that the tuna statistics consultations have not yet been formalised, but the tuna vessel enquiry has been carried out by FAO.

He also reported that efforts to establish a World Register of Tuna Vessels have not been successful, while the IATTC had indicated its willingness to contribute to the contents of its register. In total, 175 countries were approached, of which 18 countries responded providing data, and 27 replied that data are not available. The remaining 130 countries did not reply to the enquiry. However, confidence in the records has been indicated as a problem in releasing the data to FAO and any subsequent users. The AHIC expressed the view that, in the absence of contributions from Japan, USA, France, Spain, Taiwan, and Korea, such a register would have a very limited use.

b) Handbook of Fishery Statistics

The Eurostat representative reported that the first part of the Handbook has been published by FAO. Due to other priorities in Eurostat's programme of work, further sections still had to be edited and/or

developed. No timetable could be established, and Eurostat was prepared to accept help from other organisations or experts interested in developing particular sections.

Representatives considered this a valuable documentation and proposed that the subject be included in the Agenda of the CWP-15.

c) Inter-Agency Consultation

It was noted that a number of consultations had been organised since the CWP-14 Session (see item on Discrepancies below).

d) Definition of Inland and Marine Fisheries

The FAO representative reported that there had been no input from the regional agencies to resolve this problem. An internal enquiry had been conducted and a consultant would be engaged shortly, charged with producing a report in time for CWP-15.

e) Hatchery Data

The FAO representative said that national offices reported hatchery data in a very heterogeneous manner but an Aquaculture Statistician would be appointed shortly and one of his/her functions would be the development of hatchery data.

f) Separation of Catch Data from Aquaculture Production Data

The FAO representative reported that other work commitments had prevented any advance in this work but the new Aquaculture Statistician (see above) would have particular responsibilities in this work.

g) Inclusion of Data on Recreational Fisheries in Data Returned in STATLANT Forms

In the immediate future, FAO would be circulating to national authorities a questionnaire on recreational fisheries. A deadline of 31 January 1992 has been fixed and it was anticipated that a preliminary report would be available for consideration at CWP-15.

h) Possible Division of FAO Species Group 33 (Demersal Percomorphs)

The FAO representative said that, while it recognized the desirability of implementing this CWP recommendation, the work involved and the disruption it would cause to the FAO data base had prevented a start to this task.

i) Reporting Categories for Elasmobranch

The ICES representative reported that a number of elasmobranch species were now printed on the STATLANT 27A questionnaire and the data submitted by national authorities was now being processed following this more detailed breakdown. It was noted that FAO had nearly completed a reworking of earlier STATLANT 27A questionnaires which would provide ICES with the data in a suitable format for inclusion in the ICES data base.

j) Conversion Factors

The FAO representative reported that a statistical bulletin on conversion factors would be published before CWP-15. Some parts of the CWP-14 recommendation (e.g., inclusion of seasonal data and the

presentation of the data as time series) would be difficult to implement, given that the conversion factor enquiry is made on a three-yearly basis.

k) Programme for the Implementation of a System of Reporting STATLANT data on Magnetic and Electronic Media

It was noted that, although there was no outstanding event to report, member agencies were regularly exchanging data on magnetic media with no difficulties. It was also noted that the Eurostat proposals for legislation on catch statistics included a data transmission format compatible with CWP proposals. FAO will prepare a technical report before CWP-15.

l) Composition of CWP and Developments in other Regions

The FAO representative reported that there has been limited progress in developing a coordinating body in the Pacific regions. For the Atlantic regions, NASCO is actively collaborating with the other CWP agencies and FAO is investigating how NASCO might be formally incorporated in the CWP.

m) Food Balance Sheets

The FAO and Eurostat representatives reported progress in consulting each other and reviewing their methods of compiling balance sheets. FAO has produced a statistical bulletin containing long-time series of more consistent data. Eurostat reported that it has an expert's report which, at first sight, has some interesting ideas but which will require further detailed study.

II ELIMINATION OF DISCREPANCIES IN AGENCY DATA BASES

The AHIC noted that ICES, FAO, and Eurostat have met three times since the CWP-14 to consider the discrepancies between the ICES and FAO data bases detected by the Eurostat suite of programs (report of the last session is included as Annex II). Many of the problems have been resolved but serious problems exist with the data for France, Spain, and, to a lesser extent, Portugal. It is considered that these problems will only be resolved with the help of national experts.

Eurostat has run its programs with the FAO and CCAMLR data and the latter secretariats are currently examining the results. Similar work will be undertaken with the GFCM, CECAF, and ex-ICSEAF data.

Following the same procedure, the NAFO data will be compared with the FAO data. The AHIC proposed that the FAO, Eurostat, and NAFO secretariats should study the results immediately prior to the June 1992 meeting of the NAFO Scientific Council.

III HIGH-SEAS FISHERIES

The AHIC reviewed the increased demand for statistics on these fisheries. NAFO has established Standing Committees to consider problems of high-seas fisheries. Many of the problems are closely related to the collection of statistics from non-member countries. NAFO, ICES, and NASCO in collaboration with FAO will prepare discussion documents for consideration at CWP-15.

FAO reported that there will be an Expert Consultation on high-seas fisheries in Rome in June 1992. One of the likely topics on the agenda will be the collection of statistics on a world-wide basis. NAFO in consultation with FAO wishes to consider changes to STATLANT 21 forms for the collection of high-seas fisheries data.

IV REPORTING BY NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

The severity of the problems of collecting data from non-member countries differed widely from Agency to Agency. ICES reported minor problems but NAFO considered the problem serious. Where data were not available from statistical returns, other sources of information (e.g., from aerial observation, from inspection vessels) were being used but, as yet, little consideration has been given to incorporating the data into the official data bases. This topic should be discussed at CWP-15.

V DEFINITION OF AQUACULTURE

The AHIC noted that there were still some reservations as to the adequacy of the definition of aquaculture. An important issue is the degree of human intervention into the life of an organism necessary to classify the production as aquaculture.

NASCO noted that, although ranching was excluded from the definition of aquaculture, it would be valuable to resolve how it might be dealt with in Statistics. A discussion document on this topic would be produced for CWP-15.

VI RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

See item I g above.

VII MARINE/FRESHWATER AREAS

See item I d above.

IX REVISIONS SUBMITTED ON STATLANT NS1 QUESTIONNAIRES

The work on discrepancies between data bases has revealed many instances of national authorities reporting to FAO on the STATLANT NS1 questionnaire revisions to data for earlier years. These revisions are not immediately usable by the regional agencies because they are not broken down by division and are not accompanied by the corresponding effort data.

The AHIC proposed that the CWP consider the following procedure with these revisions:

- 1) a request that FAO send copies of the national NS1 returns to the regional agency;
- 2) an FAO policy to consider these revisions as provisional until they have been accompanied by the required more detailed data;
- 3) a contact between the regional agency and the national authority pointing out that more detail (e.g., by Sub-area) is required before the provisional revisions can be accepted definitively.
- 4) close collaboration between FAO and the regional agency on the state of the request for more information and, eventually, if the requested data are not provided, to decide on the revisions.

X USE OF ICCAT DATA BY REGIONAL AGENCIES

FAO has adopted a policy of using ICCAT tuna data in preference to data submitted on STATLANT questionnaires. While FAO accepts that ICCAT data are generally more reliable, it poses problems because the ICCAT areas do not correspond to the divisions used by other regional agencies. It was accepted that, although technically possible with the relevant expertise, the ICCAT Secretariat could not be asked reasonably to process the data in the required formats. It was agreed that this topic should be discussed further at CWP-15.

XI ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) The Eurostat representative suggested that the STATLANT Newsletter and its future should be discussed at CWP-15. In preparation for this discussion, some feed-back from the recipients would be sought. One proposal for inclusion in the Newsletter is a table showing those national authorities meeting or failing to meet deadlines for submission of STATLANT questionnaires.
- b) The OECD representatives commented that a number of terms were used in fishery statistics in an uncertain way (e.g., groundfish, pelagic fish) and suggested that CWP-15 might like to review such terms. However, it was not anticipated that any CWP recommendations would emerge from these discussions but it would draw the attention of compilers and users to the difficulties in using such terms.

The ICES representative suggested that assessment groups tended to use the term 'catch' in a different way from fishery statisticians and proposed that this was a subject for discussion by CWP-15.

- c) The ICES representative reported that its initial attempts to improve the reporting of 27B data had not brought any noticeable improvement in the coverage. The situation would be reviewed by a meeting of the ICES Statistics Committee's Liaison Working Group on 29-30 January 1992, and it was probable that a report on this subject would be available for CWP-15.
- d) The Eurostat representative reported that the EC administrative file of fishing vessels has revealed that national classifications of fishing vessels and fishing gear types do not correspond with the ISSCFV and ISSCFG classification. At best, the national classifications are more detailed. Eurostat was studying this situation and would report to CWP-15, possibly with proposals to modify the international classifications. The FAO representative reported that FAO is studying the possibility of inserting in the FAO Fishery Fleet Bulletin two new sections, a) by length classes, b) by power classes.

XII PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR CWP-15

A provisional agenda for CWP-15 was then established (see Annex III). The Eurostat representative promised to supply an annotated agenda and a list of proposed documents to the participating agencies in the immediate future.

The ICES representative said that discrepancies between officially-reported catch statistics and catches as estimated by assessment Working Groups continue to show large unexplained discrepancies for some species in the ICES area. It was agreed to include an item on misreporting of catch statistics on the agenda for CWP-15.

XIII ARRANGEMENTS FOR CWP-15

Early in 1992, participating agencies would be requested to supply information on the likely number of participants. The Eurostat representative offered, in the absence of a replacement for the Secretary of CWP, to undertake a coordinating role and issue appropriate notes on arrangements to the participating agencies.

ANNEX I

DGC/July 30, 1991

Ad-Hoc Inter-Agency Consultation on Atlantic Fishery Statistics

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Draft Agenda

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Review of progress since CWP-14
3. Establishing of provisional agenda for CWP-15
4. Arrangements for CWP-15
5. Elimination of discrepancies in Agency data bases (progress report)
6. High seas fisheries
7. Reporting by non-member countries
8. Definition of aquaculture
9. Recreational fisheries
10. Marine/freshwater areas
11. Revisions submitted on STATLANT NS1 questionnaires
12. Use of ICCAT tuna data by regional agencies
13. Any other business

ANNEX III

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON ATLANTIC FISHERY STATISTICS FIFTEENTH SESSION

Dartmouth (Nova Scotia)

July 1992

1. Opening of the Session
2. Review of the recommendations and proposals from CWP-13 and progress
3. Agency programmes and publications presenting Atlantic fishery statistics
4. High seas fisheries: statistical reports by economic zones
5. Elimination of discrepancies between Agencies' data bases
6. Inland fisheries: concepts and definitions
7. Aquaculture statistics
8. Statistics on quantities and values of landings
9. Statistics on recreational fisheries
10. STATLANT catch questionnaires
11. Misreporting of catch statistics
12. Conversion factors
13. Data transmission using electronic and magnetic media
14. Use of ICCAT tuna data by regional agencies
15. Fishing vessel statistics
16. Food balance sheets
17. Handbook of Fishery Statistics
18. STATLANT Newsletter
19. Country and national issues
20. Species: concepts and definitions
21. The CWP and its method of working
22. Any other business
23. Date and place of the 16th Session of the CWP
24. Adoption of the Report