

Joint Session of Living Resources, Resource Management, and Baltic Committees

Survey Reports

Chair: Carl M. O'Brien (UK)

Rapporteur: Henk J. L. Heessen (Netherlands)

Opening

This Session was held on 30 September 2002 from 14:00 to 16:45. The Chair opened the meeting by explaining that the first Joint Session on Survey Reports in 2001 had helped to improve the treatment of survey Working Group reports.

Presentation of Expert Group Reports on surveys

The Report of the Planning Group for Herring Surveys (PGHERS) (Doc. G:02) was presented by Paul Fernandes (UK). He noted that data for the acoustic survey of North Sea herring are now available back to 1994. Redistribution of vessel time is being considered, taking the biomass distribution as a starting point for the reallocation of research-vessel effort. Because of a possible increase in gravel extractions in the Channel, it was questioned whether the Group could provide information on the exact spawning areas of herring in this area. Since a database is available for herring larvae surveys, the occurrence of the smallest larvae could easily be used to locate the spawning areas.

The Report of the Baltic International Fish Survey Working Group (WGBIFS) (Doc. G:05) was presented by Peter Ernst (Germany). Until now both an acoustic survey and a trawl survey have been carried out. For the trawl surveys, a new survey gear has been adopted recently. In 2002, Germany and Denmark will start an additional demersal trawl survey in the fourth quarter, in the Western and Central Baltic, respectively.

The Report of the Planning Group on North Sea Cod and Plaice Egg Surveys (PGEGGS) was not available. It was noted, however, that a pilot survey will be carried out in 2003 in order to test the survey methodology, and also to improve the method of distinguishing between cod and haddock eggs. A survey to map the spawning areas of North Sea cod and plaice will be held in 2004.

The Report of the Working Group on Mackerel and Horse Mackerel Egg Surveys (WGMEGS) (Doc. G:06) was presented by Cornelius Hammer (Germany). The 2001 survey resulted in more reliable information on the number of eggs and fecundity of mackerel. The increased fecundity estimate resulted in a decrease in the estimate of the mackerel spawning-stock biomass. For horse mackerel the lower fecundity estimated in 2000 resulted in a significant decrease in the estimate of the spawning-stock biomass. The Working Group expressed an urgent need for new research to find out whether horse mackerel is a determinate or an indeterminate spawner.

The Report of the Working Group on Beam Trawl Surveys (WGBEAM) (Doc. G:07) was presented by Gerjan Piet (Netherlands). Possibilities for further coordination were being discussed.

Gerjan Piet also presented the DATRAS project, an EU-funded project to develop a database for trawl survey data (IBTS all areas, BITS, and BTS) to be maintained at the ICES Secretariat. The presentation gave details on the different options for access to the database, once it is established. There was general agreement on adopting the proposed guidelines for access to the database, which are very similar to the procedures currently used for access to the IBTS survey data. It is intended that the database be made accessible via the World Wide Web.

Joint Session of Living Resources, Resource Management, and Mariculture Committees

Salmon Issues

Chair: Jake Rice (Canada)

Rapporteur: Niall Ó Maoiléidigh (Ireland)

Status of the Proposed Diadromous Fish Committee

The Chair opened the meeting by providing some initial background. In June 2002, a small Bureau Working Group had reported that it would be in the interests of ICES to establish a Diadromous Fish Committee. A letter to this effect was issued by the General Secretary of ICES to National Delegates outlining the background to this and proposing Terms of Reference as follows:

1. to be a forum for the exchange of views on scientific aspects of diadromous fish species, especially salmonids;
2. to stimulate international scientific cooperation on diadromous fish issues;
3. to recommend Terms of Reference for Expert Groups (or, when necessary, the establishment of such Groups), and Theme Sessions or Symposia on scientific issues concerning diadromous fish, including resource management.

It was also recommended that the Chair be an *ex-officio* member of ACFM and ACE. Essentially the Committee would be on the same level to the other Science Committees.

The purpose of this meeting was to obtain a general endorsement and receive comment back on the Terms of Reference and to guide Delegates in making their decision.

Proposed Terms of Reference of the Diadromous Fish Committee

Term of Reference 1: It was suggested that the reference to the “scientific aspect” should be clarified to include “conservation, restoration, and rational management”.

The emphasis on salmon in the proposed Terms of Reference was discussed and it was generally felt that the Group would also cover the other diadromous fish such as eel, shads, and lampreys, etc., as the title of the Committee suggested. It was therefore agreed that “especially salmonids” should be removed from this Term of Reference. It was also suggested that special consideration be given to the freshwater and estuarine aspects of these fish groups.

The issue of ranching and enhancement and the overlap with some of the Terms of Reference of the Mariculture Committee were discussed. It was suggested that certain aspects such as marine survival and the effects of farm

escapes on wild fish were probably more relevant to the Diadromous Fish Committee, while the culture of salmonids and other diadromous fish should remain within the remit of the Mariculture Committee. Issues such as the inter-relationships and interactions between wild fisheries and aquaculture could be brought before both Committees, which is common practice in existing Committees where overlap occurs.

It was generally agreed that a broad Term of Reference would be more desirable than a “wish list” of specific items and that establishing a Diadromous Fish Committee might be a good step in developing a pool of independent assessors for the associated Working Group and Study Group Reports.

Term of Reference 3: It was noted that while the Diadromous Fish Committee would propose Terms of Reference for Working Groups and Study Groups, there was no follow-through with regard to reviewing the ensuing reports. While it was acknowledged that ACFM provided the scientific advice to NASCO, there were some aspects of the Report of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon which did not go forward in the advice and which could be considered by the Diadromous Fish Committee.

Specifically, the Chair undertook to make the following changes to the proposed Terms of Reference to reflect the views of the meeting:

4. to be a forum for the exchange of views on conservation, restoration, and management of diadromous fish species;
5. to stimulate international scientific cooperation on diadromous fish issues;
6. to recommend Terms of Reference for and review reports from Expert Groups (or, when necessary, the establishment of such Groups), Theme Sessions or Symposia on scientific issues concerning diadromous fish, including resource management.

This would be brought forward to the Delegates to seek their endorsement and to facilitate the establishment of a Diadromous Fish Committee.

Theme Session proposals

The Chair presented a list of proposals for Theme Sessions in 2003, noting that there was already an increase from 2002. He sought the views of the meeting on whether any of these would be relevant to the Diadromous Fish Committee or whether the topics were broad enough to include specific areas of interest and

concern. It was noted that the Theme Sessions on Mixed Stock Fisheries and Stock Rebuilding Programmes were particularly relevant to diadromous fish and that should be communicated to the proposed Committee. With regard to the former Theme Session, the Chair reminded the meeting that this was particularly relevant to salmon stocks and it was expected that invited speakers of international stature would present keynote papers on this topic.

A suggestion for the following Theme Session was made from the floor for consideration:

“Non-High Seas Habitats and the Way that Different Diadromous Fish Use These”.

Election of a Chair for the Diadromous Fish Committee

The meeting agreed to spend the next days in consultation to bring forward nominations for the Chair of the Diadromous Fish Committee and to bring these nominations to the attention of National Delegates. Providing Delegates approved the establishment of a Diadromous Fish Committee, the first meeting of this Committee would be held later in the Meeting.