

Living Resources Committee (G)

Chair: Henk J.L. Heessen (Netherlands)

Rapporteur: Dave Reid (UK)

The Committee met on 25 and 28 September 2001 with approximately 20 participants.

Opening

The Chair welcomed the participants and D. Reid (UK Scotland) was appointed rapporteur. The agenda was adopted without change. The roll call showed ten official delegated members present on 25 September, and 15 on 28 September.

The programme of the Statutory Meeting included this year two new Joint Sessions with other Committees, on surveys – to allow presentation of surveys to the full assembly of interested parties, and on salmon matters – convened due to concern about the lack of a clear forum for salmon specialists within ICES. See separate reports on these sessions.

It was noted that the CD-ROM with ASC papers contained only 30% of the papers to be presented, as these were all that were available by the 1st of September. It was hoped that this figure could be improved for the final CD-ROM to be published in early 2002.

Committee Business

Committee Action Plan

At the start of this year's meeting, the Committee had no fully formulated Action Plan. It was agreed that this should be finalised during this meeting. A small group consisting of Colin Bannister (UK), Dave Reid (UK), T. Haug (Norway), and Uwe Piatkowski (Germany) was set up to undertake this task. The Action Plans are to be related to the ICES Strategic Plan, which in the case of this Committee means: biology and life history studies, distribution, abundance, and migrations of relevant species.

The first draft produced in 2000 was considered to be too specific, and was cut down and more generalised. The final draft should cover the area of interest of constituent Working Groups and perceived requirements for this Committee over the next ten years, and should provide the context for any future proposals for activities.

The re-drafted Action Plan was presented to the Committee at its second meeting. The draft was fully supported by the members, and was accepted with minor textual changes.

Theme sessions for future ASCs

- A session on "Regional long-term changes in the spatial distribution, abundance, and migration of pelagic and demersal resources" was proposed for

2003. Possible conveners: C. Porteiro (Spain), C. Bannister (UK), and D. Reid (UK).

- It was proposed that this year's Theme Session J on the Life History, Dynamics, and Exploitation of Living Marine Resources, should be considered for a regular (once every 2 years) repetition. This was based on the large number of papers offered and on the perceived lack of a forum for general biology work.
- A proposal was presented by O.-R. Godø (Norway) for a session addressing early maturation in exploited stocks, and why this occurs. Is it a compensatory response to environment or stock size, or is it a genetic response to increased fishing mortality? The proposal is related to a recent workshop on fisheries-induced adaptive change. An example was presented for NE Arctic cod, with data back to 1900. Genetic change may affect: long-term yield, fish size, age structure of SSB, and the ability to respond to climate change. What management actions can be taken? Can we reverse or halt changes? Can we develop reference points? The theme session should also include other taxa than fish, e.g. mammals. The Committee supported this suggestion for a theme session with the title "The effects of fishing on the genetic composition of living marine resources" with A. Rijnsdorp (Netherlands), O.-R. Godø (Norway) and others as conveners.
- A session on "Physical/biological coupling and trophic transfer to predators" was proposed, but this was felt to be too close to a session already proposed for 2002, and was therefore dropped.

Peer review

The Committee agreed that it should organise a review of some Working/Study Group reports, similar to the system used by the Oceanography Committee and as recommended by the Consultative Committee, with 3 or 4 members who review the Working/Study Group reports. It was proposed to adopt this strategy. One country might be appointed to review a single Working/Study Group. Problems with finding an uninvolved but able person for review were highlighted. It was also suggested that ICES should provide guidance for reviewers, particularly those from outside ICES. Problems were also highlighted with timing of report submission and getting it reviewed. Reviews should possibly be restricted to those Working/Study Group reports that contain active science, rather than those with mainly compilation roles. It was agreed that it was generally impossible to have the review ready before the Annual Science Conference and probably the best solution would be to have the review available for the next meeting of the Working Group. The Chair might identify those reports which really require proper peer

review and set this up. The general view was that external review (i.e. by non-ICES scientists) was difficult.

As a possible structure it was suggested that the Committee during its meeting should decide if all groups had met their terms of reference and should identify the reports requiring review, and then identify the reviewers. The reviews should be done within the Committee, but not by members of the reported group.

Working Group Reports

Working Group on Cephalopod Fisheries and Life History (WGCEPH)

The report (Doc. G:05) was presented by the outgoing Chair (Graham Pierce, UK) and was accepted. The main points raised were: few countries report complete information on landings. Some discard data are available. Information on work on stock ID from EU studies is currently unpublished. Information on assessment work, also from EU projects, is included in annexes to the report. The models used are mainly depletion models and catch curves.

Outside Spain and Portugal, little effort is given to catch data. It was suggested that national authorities should press for more extensive sampling, especially when the EU directive for data collection was being updated.

The new Chair will be J.-P. Robin (France).

Study Group on the Biology and Life History of Crabs (SGCRAB)

The report (Doc. G:04) was presented by the outgoing Chair (R. Dufour, Canada) and was accepted. Several working papers were produced on: stock structure of edible crab and snow crab; assessment of stocks of several species in Europe and in North America; assessment methodology; and national programmes. The impact of parasites and other pathogens was reviewed.

Crab fisheries are becoming increasingly important and knowledge is low. Management is mainly by technical measures. The term of reference on Marine Protected Areas was not covered, but is included as a term of reference for the 2002 meeting.

The new Chair will be Oliver Tully (Ireland).

Study Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (SGEF)

The Group worked by correspondence in 2001. The report (Doc. G:07) was presented by A. Payne and accepted. The next meeting is planned for May 2002, when assessments will be carried out for 9 case study species identified in the EU-funded DELASS project. An additional 2-day ICES/ICCAT meeting is planned in Dublin for December 2001, to discuss availability of data for assessment of pelagic sharks in the North Atlantic.

Working Group on *Crangon* Fisheries and Life History (WGCRAN)

The Group worked by correspondence in 2001. The report (Doc. G:10) was presented by the Chair (Axel Temming, Germany) and was accepted. Assessments of *Crangon* remain very difficult to achieve. The main task for the Group is to create a Y/R model for assessment and management – incorporating an annual pattern of life history. The model was reported as not currently fully functional, possibly due to the use of historic growth data, but new data have improved this. The Group intend to expand the model to include better parameterisation of mortality data, which is expected to improve its performance.

Planning Group on Comparing the Structure of Marine Ecosystems in the ICES Area (PGECML)

The report (Doc G:03) was presented by the Chair (John Pope, Norway) and was accepted. The following points were raised:

- Why do we want to compare ecosystems? – to allow us to interpret unknown situations from known ones.
- What comparisons should we make? - probably broad-scale generic ones (see below).
- What has ICES done already? – needs to be compiled.
- What do we need to do to allow comparisons? – area definitions, data sets, etc.
- Who should organise additional work and what are the priorities?
- What comparisons should be made?

The Planning Group proposed that a pilot study be carried out. Such a study should contain the following components: common spatial divisions, the definition of meta-data tables, size spectrum by area, tropho-dynamic information by area, and meta analysis. Before such a pilot study can be carried out, the Committee considered that the Working Group on Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities (WGECO) should be asked to identify common spatial divisions to ensure that the same areas are used in comparisons. This Working Group should also be asked to define what meta-data are available for ecosystem comparisons. A term of reference for WGECO was drafted for approval by the Consultative Committee.

The Committee generally felt that it was not exactly clear what was asked of the Planning Group. It is related to the Census of Marine Life and/or ecosystem approach to management. The scope should not just be fish and not just commercial species. It was mentioned that funds from the Census might be made available to make data available from different (ICES) databases.

The Chair thanked the participants of PGECML for their efforts. The Committee agreed that the Group be dissolved.

Other groups

All survey groups reported to the joint session with the Resource Management and Baltic Committees.

It was agreed that this type of session was very useful and should be repeated in the future. It was also agreed that it should be moved into the main body of the ASC session, as many people were unable to attend at this time.

New groups

A new Planning Group was accepted on North Sea Cod and Plaice Egg Surveys. The proposed Chair is J. Casey (UK). Its first meeting is scheduled for April 2002.

A new Planning Group was proposed on Aerial and Acoustic Surveys for Mackerel. The proposed Chair is Y. Shamray (Russia). The first meeting will be in A Coruña (Spain) in February 2002.

Census of Marine Life

O.-A. Bergstad presented a Census of Marine Life Pilot Project – Mar Eco ("Patterns and processes of the ecosystems of the Northern Mid-Atlantic"). The Census of Marine Life favours studies in unexplored areas. In 2001 a workshop was held in Bergen to examine the potential for a project based on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, and a Steering Group was set up. The Science Plan is available on the web site – www.efan.no/midatlccensus. Funds have been applied for setting up the planning phase and component projects are emerging.

The aim is to describe and understand the distribution, abundance, etc. of all major species at all trophic levels, and the project will include ecosystem studies.

Documents

G:03 Ref. A, ACFM	Planning Group on Comparing the Structure of Marine Ecosystems in the ICES area (PGECML)
G:04 Ref. E	Study Group on the Biology and Life History of Crabs (SGCRAB)
G:05 Ref. ACFM, ACME	Working Group on Cephalopod Fisheries and Life History (WGCEPH)
G:07 Ref. ACFM	Study Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (SGEF)
G:10 Ref. ACFM, B	Working Group on <i>Crangon</i> Fisheries and Life History (WGCRAN)

Reference papers: C:01, C:10, D:08, ACMF:13, ACFM:21, ACME:09

The main tasks are to map species abundance and distribution, to describe the trophic interactions, to describe the variety of life history strategies, and to describe the abiotic environment. The area of research extends from Iceland to the Azores.

The planning phase is from 2001 to 2003, fieldwork will be carried out from 2003 to 2005, and the analysis phase will be from 2005 to 2008.

Publication Committee

ICES has indicated that its publications deserve more attention and that these should be disseminated to a wider audience. The same holds for the ICES web-site. The Publication Committee has been restructured, with four new members.

Other Business

- The quality of the theme sessions, as well as the facilities in the conference centre, were positively commented upon.
- Powerpoint facilities were a problem in several sessions and convenors should be given clear guidelines on how to improve this next year.
- It was regretted that fewer young scientists attended the ASC.

Closure of meeting

After thanking the members and the rapporteur the Chair closed the Sessions on Friday 28 September, at 18:00.