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ICES governing bodies meet in Copenhagen

ICES Bureau and Council get the work done

ICES Bureau and Council met in Copenhagen at the end of October. Delegates gathered to discuss scientific, strategic, as well as financial and operational issues for ICES. The meeting was chaired by ICES President Michael Sinclair. The Science Committee (SCICOM) Chair Manuel Barange reported to Council on the development and implementation of the ICES Science Plan. The appointment of the new ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) Chair was approved by Council. Council will meet again 26–27 October 2011 in Copenhagen.



Hard working Delegates at the Council meeting (from right to left): Martin Scholten, the Netherlands, Peter Gullestad, Norway, Tore Nepstad, Norway, and Piotr Margonski, Poland.

ACOM meeting 2010

The ACOM met 16–19 November at ICES Secretariat to discuss how ICES will continue to respond in 2011 to the needs of bodies in charge of marine management including fishery commissions and environmental commissions. The workplan for ICES Advice in 2011 was finalized. This included the terms of reference and timing for the approximately 50 expert groups, which will meet to develop the scientific basis for advice during the year, including a range of workshops, which are open to stakeholders. The meeting calendar for 2011 is available [here](#).

This was the last ACOM meeting for the outgoing ACOM Chair Mike Sissenwine as well as ACOM Vice-Chair Mark Tasker. The incoming ACOM Chair JJ Maguire also attended the meeting. His three-year term will start 1 January 2011. A new ACOM Vice-Chair will be announced later.

New ACOM Chair

ICES is pleased to announce the appointment of Jean-Jacques “JJ” Maguire from Canada as the new Chair of ACOM, replacing outgoing Chair Michael Sissenwine.

JJ has extensive experience providing neutral scientific advice for fishery management in national and international scientific and management processes. He is a familiar face at ICES, first as a member of the Working Group on Methods of Fish Stock Assessments (WGMG), then on the ICES Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management (ACFM) from 1989 to 1999, which he chaired from 1996 to 1999. He is also a regular participant at the Annual Science Conference.

We at ICES welcome JJ and extend thanks to Mike for his hard work as ACOM Chair.



Jean-Jacques “JJ” Maguire.

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An interview with Harald Loeng

Recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award

Harald Loeng, a member of the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) in Norway, received the ICES Outstanding Achievement Award at the opening ceremony of this year's Annual Science Conference. Ed Houde, Chair of the Awards Committee, presented the award honouring "his many substantial and lasting contributions to ICES for more than 20 years".

His positions with ICES include, among many others, Chair of the Hydrography and Oceanography Committees, the Norwegian representative to ACME (2001–2004), Chair of the Consultative Committee (ConC) 2005–2008, and ConC Chair, during which time he initiated the reform of the science programme.



Ed Houde, Chair of the Awards Committee (left), presents the ICES Outstanding Achievement Award to Harald Loeng from the Institute of Marine Research in Norway.

You were born in the mountains and ended up by the sea. How did that happen?

I was born in the middle of Norway, in a region called Trøndelag, about 200 km north of Trondheim. I didn't have anything to do with the ocean before I started to study. Still, I spend most of my holidays in the mountains if I can.

How did you discover your interest in the ocean?

I became a physical oceanographer by chance. I was planning to study meteorology, but many of my fellow students were doing the same. I thought, why should I do the same as all of the others? So I changed. It was pure luck.

After my studies in Oslo, I got a job in Tromsø in a fjord project, studying the impact on the fjord of a new hydroelectric power station and the altered river run-off. I worked in Tromsø for two and a half years, and then I got a position at the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) in Bergen, on a project called GARP, that is, Global Atmospheric Research Programme. I was working with the sea ice in the Arctic and changes in sea ice extent, and so on, which comes close to climate. So in a way, my first job had to do with climate, as soon as I started to work at IMR in late 1976.

I worked with the research director who worked in the Barents Sea. When he left the Institute, I assumed responsibility for the Barents Sea and started working in the north. It wasn't something I planned. Sometimes you need some luck.

At the time, Odd Nakken challenged me to study the effects of temperature on capelin in the Barents Sea. We studied how capelin was distributed in the Barents Sea according to temperature conditions, and we found, at that time at least, some relationship between temperature conditions and capelin distribution. Then, I worked on a paper with the director about climate and cod. We looked at the



recruitment processes of cod in relation to temperature and found a very nice relationship between the formation of stronger clusters of cod and a change in temperature, for example, from medium to high or from low to medium temperatures. That was at least one criterion that needed to be fulfilled in order to get the good recruitment.

Since then, I've been studying the impact of climate on fish stocks in Norwegian waters, and I've been involved in the Arctic Monitoring Assessment Programme, where I was lead author for the marine-climate chapter. I've also been involved in the [Arctic Climate Impact Assessment](#); I was lead author for the marine system chapter, and that has led to climate development in the Arctic and also the impact on the ecosystems. And I am involved in some discussions about development in the Arctic, in case the sea ice disappears; if there are going to be any changes in the ecosystem, will there be fishing in the future? This is an issue that concerns the countries that have borders to the Arctic.

Because all countries bordering the Arctic are ICES Member States, wouldn't it be appropriate for ICES to become active in this region?

Yes, it makes real sense, but ICES needs to take the initiative. ICES recently signed a letter of agreement with the Arctic Ocean Sciences Board, which is a part of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC; read more about the letter of agreement [here](#)). I think this is an important step in the right direction.

ICES should decide if they want to get involved in the Arctic and be prepared to take responsibility. ICES could be a natural leader. This was discussed at the ASC during a meeting of the Working Group on Forecasting Climate Change Impacts on Fish and Fisheries ([WGFFCCIFS](#)), and that's what we are going to follow up on in Seattle next May at the Symposium on "[Comparative studies of climate effects on polar and sub-polar ocean ecosystems: progress in observation and prediction](#)". I think ICES should become involved in the Arctic.

You said that you came to ICES not as a young man but as a more mature scientist. What was your first impression of ICES?

I was curious when I first joined ICES because I had heard so many different opinions about it. When I started, younger scientists were perhaps a bit more sceptical of ICES than their older colleagues, saying that ICES was more or less a closed club. Others didn't like it because they felt it moved too slowly. Still others had very positive impressions of ICES.

It's definitely not a club. It's very open, and everyone is welcomed. It is certainly relevant to more than just scientists dealing with the North Atlantic. On the other hand, if you are outside that group, you might not have heard about ICES. My personal impression is that ICES is well known in its own community, but those not involved with ICES have hardly heard about it. This poses a challenge to ICES to make itself better known to the outside world.

So you support this idea of ICES being more proactive in communicating with the outside world?

Yes. I think ICES needs to become better known to the rest of the world. For example, people working in the Arctic might discuss sources for their data, and when ICES is mentioned, they may ask, "what is ICES?"



How far do you actually have to go to get to the Arctic?

It depends what you define as the Arctic. In some of their assessments, the Arctic Council takes “Arctic” down to 62 degrees, down to the Faroe Islands, including Iceland and so on, but some people think of the Arctic as only the ice covered areas. But I would like to include everything north of Norway as a part of the Arctic. I’ve mainly been on cruises in the Barents Sea, and I’ve been on cruises into the ice and so on, but I’ve not been in the Arctic Ocean itself.

What’s it like to go there?

Going to the ice isn’t just nice, it’s amazing. And going to the Arctic to see the land, for example to Svalbard, is just beautiful. You don’t forget it.

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Exploring cooperation in the Arctic

A letter of agreement between ICES and IASC

ICES and the [International Arctic Science Committee \(IASC\)](#) have signed a letter of agreement.

The agreement links ICES SCICOM with the IASC Working Group on Marine Sciences on issues of scientific interest and supports its mission to “facilitate research in the Arctic Ocean and surrounding seas through the support of multinational and multidisciplinary natural-science and engineering programmes”. This mission is carried out within the broader mission of IASC, which is “to encourage and facilitate cooperation in all aspects of Arctic research, in all countries engaged in Arctic research, and in all areas of the Arctic”.

Both parties will explore the integration of surveys and observational technologies in operational ecosystem surveys. The agreement encourages collaboration on workshops, data exchange, project development, and reporting. ICES and IASC will invite each other as observers to their annual meetings.

IASC is a non-governmental organization that encourages, facilitates, and promotes leading-edge, multidisciplinary research to foster a greater scientific understanding of the Arctic region and its role in the Earth system. It was established in 1990, began operations in 1991, and today is comprised of 19 member countries.

IASC members are national science organizations covering all fields of Arctic research. Each member organization provides ongoing contact between its IASC council member and its Arctic science community. IASC also has connections to numerous international Arctic organizations. Its secretariat has a rotational structure and is currently located in Potsdam, Germany.



David Hik, President of IASC, and Wojciech Wawrzynski, Professional Secretary for Scientific Cooperation (represented ICES on behalf of ICES President Mike Sinclair), at the signing ceremony.

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Hans Lassen retires as Head of Advisory

A long and vivid career is remembered

“Hans Lassen is not a name. It is a brand, a brand that has been connected with ICES since at least 1971, when he first participated in an ICES expert group meeting, close to 40 years ago”.

Thus spoke ICES General Secretary Gerd Hubold in his farewell speech describing Hans, who retired as Head of Advisory on 31 October.

Lassen joined the ICES Secretariat in November 1998, as the Fisheries Adviser. In 2006, in the middle of profound structural changes taking place at ICES, he took the post of Head of the Advisory Programme. Gerd thanked Hans for his outstanding service to ICES, emphasizing his essential contribution to the success, growth, and change at ICES.

The retirement reception, held on the last day of October at ICES Secretariat, was filled with heart-warming speeches and shared memories. But if you think you have seen the last of Hans at ICES, you are mistaken: He is currently working as project coordinator for FIMPAS and EURECA on special contract with the Secretariat.



Hans Lassen (left) with Danish delegate Ole Poulsen at the retirement reception.

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Sorting through the litter

Joint workshop on marine litter (WKMAL) considers what is known about marine debris

Marine litter is a pollution problem that affects all of our planet's oceans. Because it is one of the descriptors of good environmental status in the European Commission's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the problem of marine litter has become more urgent in Europe.

A joint workshop on marine litter was hosted at ICES Secretariat 2–4 November. Fifteen participants representing a host of different organizations – such as the European Commission, the Joint Research Centre, MEDPOL, and the Black Sea Secretariat, as well as experts from outside the ICES area – discussed aspects of monitoring marine litter. One of the meeting's major outcomes was a review of existing data.



Chris Jordan's 2009 photo series "Midway: Message from the Gyre" documents the stomach contents of albatross chicks found on Midway, a remote marine sanctuary and small area of sand and coral far from land in the Pacific Ocean. Albatross parents mistake plastic for prey and feed their chicks the indigestible bits of plastic, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of chicks annually by starvation, toxicity, and choking. Visit <http://www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/midway/> to view more pictures and for more information on the project.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines marine debris or litter as "...any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of, or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment." (UNEP, 2005) Not only is marine debris an eyesore on beaches but it has many more potentially negative ecosystem impacts, both on the coast and at sea, where the pollution can entangle or be ingested by wildlife, such as marine mammals, reptiles, fish, and birds. With little known about the long-term effects of plastic degradation, the potential for toxic accumulation, and greater concentrations of microplastics in the marine environment, enhanced monitoring and mitigation measures will be required to turn the tide on the problem of marine litter.

One of the new regulatory tools to help address this marine and coastal pollution problem is the MSFD, which aims to achieve "good environmental status" in European marine waters by 2020. Good environmental status, as outlined by the European Commission Directive, has 11 descriptors. "Properties and quantities of marine litter do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environments" defines descriptor 10. This marine litter descriptor requires Member States to collect data describing trends in the amounts of litter washed up on coasts, suspended in the water column, and deposited on the seabed, trends in the amounts of microplastics, as well as impacts on marine life.

One case that highlights the pervasiveness of the problem, as well as the need for further research and monitoring, is that of lighters, bottle caps, and other plastic objects found in the stomachs of albatross chicks, as documented by Chris Jordan in his compelling photographic series of the Pacific



Ocean, “Midway: Message from the Gyre” (2009).

UNEP. (2005). [Marine Litter. An analytical overview](#). Report of UNEP Regional Seas Coordinating Office, the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, the Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) of UNEP.

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New ICES Cooperative Research Report

A new CRR is available for free download

CRR 306 Life-cycle spatial patterns of small pelagic fish in the Northeast Atlantic

Edited by Pierre Petitgas

The spatial organization of fish populations is expected to play a key role in population dynamics and its response to environmental forcing. It has been argued that the size of populations and the spatial organization of their life cycles match key oceanographic physical features in space and time. The characterization of a functional linkage between key physical features and fish habitats was recognized as a first and important step towards understanding the variability of spatial patterns and population dynamics. Therefore, the 2004–2006 reports of the ICES Study Group on Regional Scale Ecology of Small Pelagic Fish worked at characterizing patterns in the life-cycle organization of fish stocks in the Northeast Atlantic and cross-mapping these with physical features. Results were consistent with previous findings. In the report, life-cycle patterns and how they match physical features for small pelagic fish stocks in the Northeast Atlantic are documented. Species considered include: herring (*Clupea harengus*), sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*), sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*), anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), and blue whiting (*Micromesistius poutassou*).

In future, all CRRs and TIMES will be printed on recycled paper, and CRR 306 is the first to be printed in this eco-friendly way.



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ICES Grammar Slammer

William Anthony says, oh, Tannenbaum!!

My relationship to Christmas took a turn for the worse last year when my letter to Santa Claus came back stamped “dream on, Chester!” Things went from worse to worse when I realized that something as standard and inoffensive as the phrase “Season’s Greetings” was turning around to bite me in the Christmas stocking. (By the way, that’s *inoffensive* but *unoffending*).



“Season’s Greetings” first appeared on winter season greeting cards along with “Merry Christmas”, “Compliments of the Season”, and “Christmas Greetings” in the late 19th century. “With the Season’s Greetings”, or simply “The Season’s Greetings”, was shortened to “Season’s Greetings” in the 1920s.

Here’s the problem. Should there be an apostrophe in Season’s or not? There are solid arguments on both sides.

You can insist that the greetings belong to the season, and therefore the possessive apostrophe is called for. This, I believe, is most writers’ natural instinct. You can argue in another vein that the greetings belong to the greeter, not to the season, and again the apostrophe is called for, a sort of quasi- or indirect possessive.

Or you can argue against the apostrophe that something as abstract as a season cannot perform the action of greeting, with *season* functioning as a noun.

The grammatical convolutions would be enough to cross anyone’s eyes, but add to that our desire for political correctness, and you have a real plethora of possibilities. Because it has been assumed that we are wishing greetings for the Christian season of Christmas, most greeting card companies feel that, by omitting the apostrophe, they are simply wishing generic greetings for a winter/New Year time-of-the-year, something-or-other.

In the spirit of the holiday season, I abdicate all responsibility, leaving you to make your own decision. I close with a greeting that, I hope, will offend no one. I regret that I didn’t write it myself but stumbled across it on the [Internet](#).

A politically correct Christmas greeting

Best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non-addictive, gender neutral, winter solstice holiday, practiced within the most joyous traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, but with respect for the religious persuasion of others who choose to practice their own religion as well as those who choose not to practice a religion at all;



Additionally,

a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and medically uncomplicated recognition of the generally accepted calendar year 2011, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures whose contributions have helped make our society great, without regard to the race, creed, colour, religious, or sexual preferences of the wishes.

(Disclaimer: This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others and no responsibility for any unintended emotional stress these greetings may bring to those not caught up in the holiday spirit.)

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