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SCICOM Chair reviews meeting's success

SCICOM met between 3 and 5 May to review progress on ICES scientific initiatives

Manuel Barange, SCICOM Chair

The 2011 spring meeting of ICES Science Committee (SCICOM) took place between 3 and 5 May, at the regional headquarters of the World Health Organization in Copenhagen. The meeting provided crucial guidance to the Chair of SCICOM and to ICES Secretariat for the months ahead. In this brief report, I will summarize the main issues discussed and decisions taken.

Strategic Initiatives

Over the past year, SCICOM and the Advisory Committee (ACOM) have implemented a number of scientific Strategic Initiatives (SI) to develop areas of work that require broad and multidisciplinary engagement by ICES groups and partner organizations. Initiatives on area-based science and management (SIASM) and on biodiversity science and advice (SIBAS) are now fully implemented, helping ICES contribute more effectively to the science and advisory needs in these areas.

An initiative on stock assessment methods (SISAM) is under development, and should make solid progress in coming months. In addition, SCICOM has agreed to support an exciting new strategic initiative on climate change and marine ecosystems (SICCME), in partnership with the North Pacific science organization (PICES). The ICES/PICES Science Plan for SICCME was supported by both partners; the initiative will now develop an implementation plan aligned with the IPCC process and the research goals of ICES and PICES.

MSFD Steering Group

Finally, the development of coordinated SCICOM-ACOM initiatives includes a new steering group on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. This group recently started working on the development of a coordinated and proactive response from ICES to assist Member Countries and regional organizations in the implementation of the directive. Many expert groups are engaged in this initiative, despite being asked to engage on very short notice.

Future science needs

SCICOM also devoted substantial time to brainstorming about science needs. We discussed how to contribute to a broad, basin-scale vision of ocean observation. There is a vacuum in our portfolio on this topic, at a time when the global landscape appears to lack vision, particularly in relation to



SCICOM and Secretariat staff, May 2011.

biological observations. This discussion will continue in coming months and probably at ASC 2011 in Gdańsk. Realigning ICES structures to ensure that we respond to the rapidly growing developments on the ecosystem modelling front was also debated. As ecosystem modelling provides a critical link between observing and forecasting needs, this topic will continue to be crucially important in the ICES portfolio.

Preparing ASC

Planning the events for ICES Annual Science Conference 2011 is always an important part of the May SCICOM meeting. More than 400 abstracts have now been received, and the event is shaping up nicely. SCICOM discussed how to make the business meetings more open and interesting to the broad ICES community (and not just the chairs of committees and expert groups), and I believe that you will be pleased with the result. For a taste of what is to come, the plenary session on Monday 19 September, will start with a SCICOM presentation of science highlights of the ICES community and updates of the science programme.

Responsive Expert Network

Last but not least, SCICOM spent some time discussing procedures that would ensure that our comprehensive portfolio of expert groups develops in response to the fast pace of scientific innovation. How can SCICOM work with EGs to encourage dynamism and scientific leadership, in the context of increased pressure on science funding in many ICES countries?

In coming months, some of the ideas will be developed and shared with EG Chairs to ensure that we make the best suggestions with a broad support base. Ideas floating include multi-annual terms of reference with more specific outcomes and mechanisms to encourage the network to restructure groups and focus their challenges every few years. SCICOM also initiated a process of coding of expert group terms of reference to evaluate how well we are implementing *ICES Science Plan*, allowing SCICOM to focus more on science strategy and prioritization, and less on operational issues.

Active scientists

A recent analysis of the attendance at science expert groups indicates that, in 2010, 1065 scientists attended SCICOM EG meetings (1325 if one counts participation of the same individual at more than one expert group). This is but one further measure of ICES success. SCICOM is committed to ensuring that current success translates into an even more successful future, and we will continue to work with the community to this end.

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Meeting biodiversity conservation needs

A chat with Jake Rice and Mark Tasker

Bill Anthony talked with Jake Rice and Mark Tasker, instructors of the ICES Training course "Fishery management to meet biodiversity conservation needs", which was held at ICES Secretariat between 7 and 9 June.

Bill: Tell us about the first time you two met.

Jake: One evening in 1990, on that little tiny train that goes to Lowestoft, a stranger approached me, said that I looked something like a scientist, and introduced himself as Mark Tasker.

Mark: The train from Ipswich.

Jake: From Ipswich to the first meeting of WGECO.

Mark: I recognized that this might be a fishery scientist.

Jake: It turned out that we were both ornithologists.

Bill: How long have you been associated with ICES?

Jake: I started in 1982. That makes it 30 years.

Mark: Twenty-one, twenty-two years.

Bill: What changes have you seen for the better and for the worse over that time?

Mark: For the better, I guess more openness and more plurality, but it could have been much more. We've moved, but not as far as we should do.

Jake: The "better" is that you continually see bright, eager people entrained, and people who've been around maturing into greater responsibility, as us old guys begin to fade out. Good journeymen in working groups actually end up sitting at the head of the table and doing a good job of it. And the same thing in the Secretariat. That's the good part. The "worse" part is at the level of working groups, and Poul Degnbol said it in his introductory remarks to the course, the culture of the fishery advice, even from the inside, when everybody agrees we have to change, doesn't change. You put sections in the advice on effects of the environment on fish, effects of the fishery on the environment, you say "we have to have these sections", and then the sentences that are put in are something that an eighth grade student would write.



Jake Rice.

Mark: And still score badly.

Jake: We just cannot break the inertia of our practices. And I say that it's not something somebody else does to us. It's something we do to ourselves.

Bill: How did the course evolve?

Mark: Both Jake and I, coming from slightly different but not very different perspectives, feel that the intersection of biodiversity, conservation, and fishery management is very, very important. From the biodiversity conservation point of view, you've got to get fishery management right. From the fishery management perspective, the biodiversity-conservation agenda is taking over.



Mark Tasker.

Now whether that is a good thing or not, we're not going to say, but that's certainly happening. Both sides need to understand each other better, need to communicate better. They are talking close to the same points but in two different languages.

How did it evolve? Well, Jake deals mostly with global issues on the biodiversity side and on the fishery management side. I deal mostly with biodiversity conservation at regional and national levels, so the two complement each other very well, I think. In retrospect, we might have included something about economic valuation, of ecosystem goods and services, and of fisheries.

Jake: For me (and I've seen it at the global level and at regional levels, including in Europe), the biodiversity-conservation, nature-conservation interests, and the sector management interests have been evolving in parallel courses for decades. On land, they figured out how to work together back in the 1960s and 70s. In the ocean, they have been completely independent initiatives, for example OSPAR, NEAFC, DG ENV, DG MARE. And there are real governance problems because those who are accountable for managing sectors are not accountable for biodiversity outcomes. Agencies accountable for protecting biodiversity have no regulatory authority over industries. It makes it difficult to achieve good outcomes.

For all the talk about integrated management and planning, agencies are not giving up their authority. As an alternative to providing a common foundation of science advice to all those different agencies, instead of having independent science, biodiversity agencies will receive advice from biodiversity experts, fishery agencies receive advice from fishery experts, but this perpetuates these parallel universes.

Integrating the expert input into the different communities, and having the management and policy people in each community understand what to expect from biodiversity and fishery experts and how to use it together, can solve a lot of the shortcomings that the governance system presents. That can be fixed quickly, and that is what this training course is about: getting the input to, and understood by, biodiversity management, biodiversity conservation and protection, and sectoral management starting with fisheries. Getting the same range of information and understanding what to do with it.

Bill: In other words, the problem is that we're so early in the development of these ideas...

Jake: No, we're so late in the development of these ideas. If these were new ideas, if either of these disciplines was completely new, you could build them to coexist. Both of these disciplines are independently mature, scientifically and in terms of management, but they are mature in separate universes. So it's very hard to teach old dogs new tricks. And that's what has to be done.

Mark: I don't think it's necessarily the Commissions or the groupings together that are the problem. I think the problem stems from national governments and jurisdictions, where the mix doesn't occur. I think there is a lot of silly power play going on there. I think at the international level, in the secretariats, there is considerable realization that we should be working together.

Bill: Were there any unexpected developments with this particular training group?

Mark: I didn't really think about expectation if I'm really honest. I think the thing I really liked best was the incredible diversity of backgrounds. We had people from government departments, from environmental NGOs, from the Regional Advisory Councils, from the European Commission, from the European Parliament, and a bunch of a few early career PhD students. It resulted in a massive depth and range, and everyone got on with each other.

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Ecosystem approaches to marine science and advice

Looking back before we leap forwards

Steve Cadrin, University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science and Technology

The recent symposium on “Variability of the North Atlantic and its Marine Ecosystems during 2000–2009” (10–12 May, Santander, Spain) provided a relatively comprehensive status report on the North Atlantic Ecosystem, and served as a firm basis to proceed with advances in ecosystem approaches to ICES Science and Advice.



Pentti Mälkki at the symposium dinner.

Since they were founded, ICES and NAFO have approached questions of marine science and resource management from an ecosystem perspective. This approach has been reflected in a series of decadal symposia focused on describing variability of the North Atlantic ecosystem in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and 2000s. The first symposium was held in Rome in 1964, and was followed by three more in Dartmouth, Canada (1971, 1981, and 1994), an ICES sponsored conference in Mariehamn, Finland, in 1991, and an ICES/NAFO co-sponsored symposium in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2001.

All of the symposia provided venues for diverse groups of marine scientists to meet, present perspectives from their disciplines and across disciplines, and to consider decadal-scale variability of all ecosystem components. The cross-pollination of ideas at the recent symposium was enhanced by the beautiful

venue and warm hospitality of the local hosts.

It's no surprise that the overwhelmingly prevalent observation across all regions of the North Atlantic was a general warming trend. Warming was associated with freshening of seawater in most regions. As the principal drivers of seawater density, changes in temperature and salinity produced distinct changes in ocean circulation patterns, such as position of major currents, strength of gyres, and depth of mixed layers.

Biological responses to oceanographic changes varied among regions, but common observations were changes in timing of plankton blooms or fish migrations, shifts in latitudinal or depth distributions of fish populations, and a variety of changes in system productivity. Many advances in understanding ecosystem processes were presented that involved the formation of conceptual linkages between physical processes and biological responses. These case studies should inspire conference participants and readers of *ICES Journal* proceedings (due for publication in 2012) in their design of future research.

The advantages of developing conceptual understandings of ecosystem variability were best illustrated by the accomplishments of several honourees at the symposium. Several pioneers in marine science were honoured for their contributions to our understanding of the North Atlantic ecosystem: R. Allyn Clarke (Canada), R. R. (Bob) Dickson (UK), Catherine Maillard (France), Jens Meincke (Germany), Tom Rossby (USA), and Manfred Stein (Germany). Pentti Mälkki (Finland) offered a particularly inspiring history of the decadal symposia at the symposium dinner. The honourees challenged the rest of us to rise to the challenges of ecosystem science and continue to advance our understanding.

Technological advances have greatly improved our ability to sample and monitor the North Atlantic,

and many scientists are helping us to understand all of the information. The next stage of marine ecosystem science is to apply our knowledge to wise management of human activities that depend on the North Atlantic ecosystem.

Both ICES and NAFO have several strong initiatives that apply ecosystem approaches in their resource-management advice. As a recent example, the ICES Working Group on the Northwest Atlantic Regional Sea (WGNARS) recognized that the development of an Integrated Ecosystem Assessment involves a transition from science and monitoring to action, quoting Warren Bennis's guidance on leadership:

We have more information now than we can use, and less knowledge and understanding than we need.... The true measure of any society is not what it knows but what it does with what it knows.

The ICES/NAFO decadal symposium on the North Atlantic ecosystem helped to summarize and synthesize the information we have. It also promoted knowledge and understanding of ecosystem processes. This knowledge base is a promising step towards supporting ecosystem approaches to advice and resource management.

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A gold medal for an ACOM Vice-Chair

Han Lindeboom recognized by the Dutch Queen

Han Lindeboom, Advisory Committee (ACOM) Vice-Chair, has been awarded a special order by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. The Dutch medal is awarded to individuals for exceptional achievement in the fields of art and science. This is the first time the Medal of Honour for Arts and Sciences of the House Order of Orange has been given to a natural scientist. Han joins 22 other artists and academics who have been awarded this honour during the Queen's 30-year reign.

"I was only allowed to invite 20, but it ended up with more than 30 of my closest friends, family, colleagues, and students who attended the award ceremony 6 April, at the Queen's palace in The Hague". Han was handpicked by the Queen to receive the honour. At the reception, the Queen acknowledged his work in promoting international cooperation and research in the polar regions.



Han Lindeboom receiving his award from Queen Beatrix. Photo courtesy of Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau (ANP).

Han is a member of the Board of Directors of IMARES, part-time professor at Wageningen University, and a marine ecologist interested in the application of science for sustainable management in marine areas. While completing his PhD, he studied nitrogen cycling in penguin rookeries in the Subantarctic, where he met his wife, before moving back to the Netherlands. It was his experience near the South Pole that led him to become the Chair of the Dutch committee for polar research.

It was in this role that he was formally introduced to the Queen during the International Polar Year. Later, he was asked by the Queen to act as Chair of the Palace symposium "The polar regions in a changing world", which took place in 2008. According to Han, "the Dutch Queen works to support arts and sciences by organizing symposia twice a year on diverse topics".

Han has been working to promote closed areas for marine protection throughout his career. He was first involved with ICES in the early 1990s as a member of the ICES Working Group on the Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities (WGECO). In spring 2011, he was appointed ACOM Vice-Chair, ecosystem portfolio.

Read more on the website of the [Dutch Royal House](#).

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Looking forward to the ASC

A brief look at what awaits in Gdańsk



Beautiful Gdańsk.

The setting for this year's Annual Science Conference is Gdańsk, a city that can celebrate more than a thousand years of history.

It can tell stories of pagan roots and beheaded missionaries, of Teutonic invasions and massacres. It is a city that was once one of the wealthiest and most significant in Europe, a city that witnessed the first shots of the Second World War, and a city that spelled the beginning of the end for the Communist regime of the former Soviet Union.

Gdańsk has experienced near total destruction and has always risen from the ashes. Walking its streets, visitors can catch more than a glimpse of its millennium of history. This medieval city looks fresh. The residents have worked for the past 40 years to restore their home to its former splendour, yet again.

Gdańsk became a settlement around AD 980, but it was the appearance of St Wojciech (also known as Adalbert of Prague), a Bohemian missionary who arrived in 997, that marks the first mention of Gdańsk in the annals of history. He was on a mission to convert the pagan Prussian inhabitants but was beheaded for his efforts. St Wojciech was one of the first, but certainly not the last, visitor to call on the people of Gdańsk.

The Pomeranians, the Teutonic Order, Polish kings, the Prussians, the Third Reich, and the Soviet Union have all made Gdańsk their city, and the fortunes and misfortunes that they brought to the city can be seen side by side with its current glory.

The Teutonic Order, originally invited to help suppress a rebellion, took over the city and ruled Gdańsk with brutality. Many of the residents were killed in 1308, in an event remembered as the Gdańsk Massacre. The Teutonic Order eventually moved from the city to a much larger fortification 60 kilometres away (Malbork Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site), but the ruins of their previous castle still stand, situated by the water on the edge of the old city.

While a member of the Hanseatic League (joining in 1361) and no longer under the rule of the Teutonic Order, the city prospered. The port was quickly developed, and trade, fisheries, and craft guilds quickly promoted the city to one of the wealthiest in Europe. This Golden Age lasted for 300 years. The famous Crane (*Żuraw*) remains a symbol of the city's great trading past. At one point, it was the largest working crane in the world and was operational from the 15th century through the mid-19th century. Eighty percent of the structure was destroyed in 1945, but was rebuilt and donated to the Polish Maritime Museum.

Granary Island (*Wyspa Spichrzów*) was once the site of more than 300 granaries, which contributed to the city's wealth and secured its status as the largest port on the Baltic. Today, only one remains, and the skeletal ruins stand as a reminder of the bleak days of war.

Subsequent to becoming a Hanseatic city, construction began on St Mary's (*Bazylika Mariacka*). This church has dominated the skyline of Gdańsk for 600 years. It is considered the largest brick church in the world and, along with space for 25 000 worshippers, it houses several masterpieces of Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque painting, as well as a 15th century astronomical clock. The tower of the church offers one of the city's best vantage points.

The old centre of Gdańsk is quite compact. In the past, it was known as the "City of Forty Gates", 12 of which remain today. Most are within walking distance of the conference venue.

The most famous of these is the Golden Gate, which leads onto Long Street (*ul Długa*). Lining the street are the beautiful facades of the homes that once belonged to the wealthiest families of the city. No. 12, Uphagen House, with its outstanding Rococo interiors, has been converted to a museum. Long Street in turn leads onto Long Market (*Długi Targ*), where none other than Neptune, God of the Sea, has been greeting visitors since 1633. Unfortunately, his sculpture will be temporarily removed for restoration in September.

Standing nearby is Artus Court, which contains a gallery of priceless paintings and sculpture. St Mary's Street (*ul Mariacka*), one of the most beautiful and charming in the old city, is home to many of the famous amber houses. Also in the centre is the Great Armoury. Built at the beginning of the 17th century, the Great Armoury represents the best example of Renaissance architecture in Gdańsk. Although badly damaged during the war, it has been restored to its original grandeur and now plays host to the Fine Arts Academy.

The city is currently bidding to become the European City of Culture in 2016. In this respect, it is entertaining Gdańskers and tourists alike with many cultural events throughout the city. It has long been seen as the cultural capital in the north of Poland, with its openness and freedom stretching back to its days as an autonomous city.

Gdańsk is actually part of a larger metropolitan area known as the Tri-City, and together with the cities of Sopot and Gdynia, makes the fourth largest metropolis in Poland. Sopot is a popular spa destination and is famous for having the longest wooden pier in Europe – a nice place to stretch your legs after sitting all day. Gdynia is home to the Sea Fisheries Institute, which is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year.

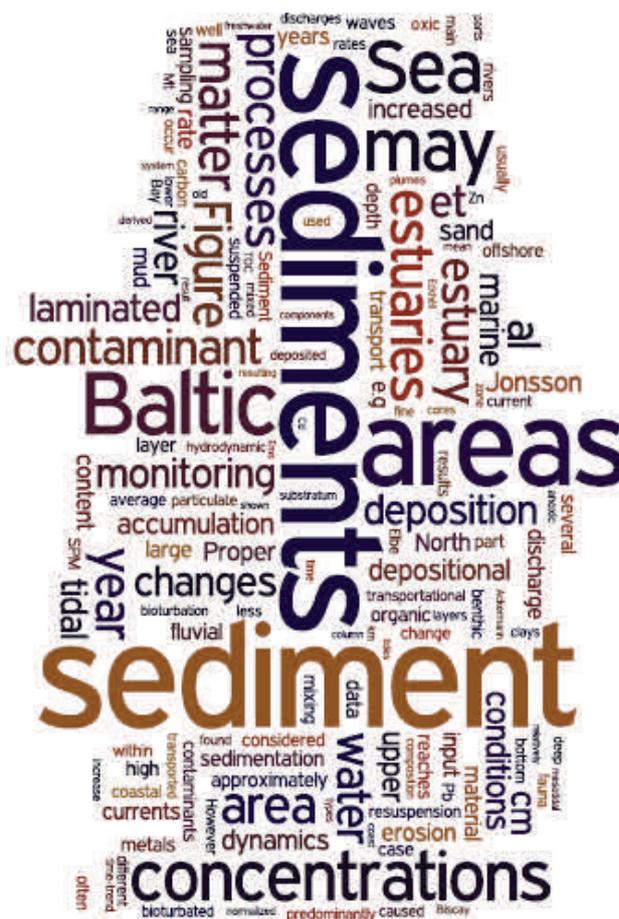
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Sediment dynamics in relation to sediment trend monitoring

Latest ICES Cooperative Research Report now available

ICES Cooperative Research Report 308 “Sediment dynamics in relation to sediment trend monitoring” is now available for download from the [ICES website](#). The new report describes the underlying processes of sediment dynamics in selected ICES areas and considers the importance of sediment dynamics in sediment trend monitoring.

This interesting graphic is a Wordle, a word cloud created using a free online tool, which displays words used frequently in the source text. Words used more frequently in the source text feature more prominently in the Wordle. You can try it yourself [here](#).



A Wordle that uses the latest Cooperative Research Report as source text.

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Grammar Slammer

Bill Anthony says, *Keep your pants on*

My uncle was a belt and braces man. (Note to Yanks: I mean *suspenders*.) Keeping his trousers fastened securely around his waist was a priority, and he took the extraordinary precaution of both lashing them to his midsection with a belt and suspending them from his shoulders with elastic bands.

Memories of my uncle's pants were reawakened recently, however, when I read, "These cores *may potentially* be used for retrospective monitoring".

This is belt-and-braces redundancy at it best. *Can*, *could*, *may*, and *might* all imply potential or possibility, and combinations such as *can possibly*, *could probably*, *may potentially*, and *might perhaps* are only useful if you are being paid by the word. And your editor only speaks Chinese. Further, and perhaps more important, they are a real turn-off for the Nobel Committee.

For our purposes, *can*, *could*, *may*, and *might* express possibility, likelihood, or ability. Therein lie the subtle differences.

Can conveys the *ability to*.

Studies demonstrate that a temperature rise of as little as 3°C *can* [*can assumably*] hasten the start of helicopter mating season by as much as three weeks.

Could is the past tense of *can* but is often more suggestive of possibility.

Panelists debate whether the EU is doing enough to heed the warnings of coal industry scientists who say wind turbines *could* [*could potentially*] blow the Earth right into the sun.

Usage note that *can* [*can perchance*] save you embarrassment: NEVER use *could of*. ALWAYS use *could have*.

Traditionalists insist that one should distinguish between *may* (present tense) and *might* (past tense) in expressing possibility. However, this distinction is rarely observed today, and *may* and *might* are generally acceptable in either case.

According to market research, there *may/might* [*may possibly*] be as many as 7 billion people who have never read *ICES Inside Out*.

One final word about *can/may* for those of you whose social skills are as vague as your writing skills. Use *may* to request or express permission, as in *May I have more cake?* Use *can* to denote ability: *Can you reach that?*

May I bring this Grammar Slammer to a close?



At least he ruled out the possibility of an embarrassing wardrobe malfunction.

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