

Progress Report on North Sea Synopsis

by

Fisheries Biology Branch
FAO

Introduction

The preparation of Regional Oceanographic Synopses is described in FAO document FB/60/S5, copies of which have been made available to ICES. As mentioned at the 1960 ICES Meeting it has been decided to take the North Sea as a model for testing the proposed outline, it being one of the most intensively investigated sea areas and therefore being a multitude of data available. A preliminary draft of this synopsis was presented to the 1960 Meeting with the objective of obtaining: a) criticism on the usefulness of such synopses in general, outside their use to FAO itself; b) suggestions on its form and content, and c) to secure collaboration in preparing various chapters of it by specialised scientists in the corresponding field, if it is considered useful to scientists working on the area in question.

Subsequent developments and actions

At the 1960 Meeting, ICES passed a resolution of support for the undertaking and subsequently several comments from various laboratories have been received. These comments have been taken into account in preparation of suggestions for further action, described in the next paragraph of this note.

WMO has promised its collaboration with the synopsis and has arranged to revise the section on weather and climate with explanation of the availability of maritime meteorological services in the North Sea area. WMO has also agreed to collaborate in preparing corresponding sections for subsequent synopses for other areas.

The eventual publishing of the synopsis, as a cooperative undertaking by WMO and FAO, in the "Serial Atlas of the Marine Environment: North Atlantic" has been agreed. This new geographical journal of biological and physical oceanography is described in paper FB/60/S5 in principle; it was hoped that also ICES might agree to co-sponsorship of the synopsis, or parts of it as published.

Suggestions for follow-up action

1. There are justified comments from several scientists that an anonymous collection of data from an organisation without critical, identified comments might lend "authority" to data and theories, some of which should be revised or considered in the light of methods used and purposes for which they were originally collected or devised. It is therefore felt that different maps might be prepared and data commented on by individual scientists willing to cooperate in this task and that they be clearly indicated as authors and thereby fully responsible for comments and views presented. Quality and quantity of data in the synopsis can thereby also be improved. For the requirements of "Serial Atlas of the Marine Environment", see 3 below.

2. As a direct conclusion from the above and from the fact that FAO's activities must for the time being be concentrated on newly developing areas (FAO plans in 1962-63 to concentrate efforts on the South Atlantic) it has been suggested to us that ICES might be interested and willing to take over the general responsibility for the North Sea synopsis. Thus, one or two scientists might be nominated to take the primary responsibility for chapters of their choice (except the chapter on meteorology, which is prepared by WMO). FAO could serve on this ICES group and might contribute chapters (e.g. heat budget, benthos, trace elements, pollution). Furthermore, this group should have the opportunity to meet and discuss the content and validity of data and comments. This could be done, e.g. in connection with a meeting of a working group on marine zoo-geography and the Serial Atlas for N. Atlantic, which it is proposed to hold in Rome during 1962. FAO can render assistance in drafting maps, providing base maps, collected data and so on, if so desired.

3. The Serial Atlas of the Marine Environment: North Atlantic, has the following requirements:-

3.1 The Atlas will consist of maps with ancillary text. Tabular material will be published in text and should be kept to a minimum. The width of the tables should be $3\frac{3}{4}$ ", $7\frac{3}{4}$ " or $12\frac{1}{2}$ ".

3.2 The number of graphs should also be kept to the minimum necessary for proper presentation. If graph paper is used, that printed in orange should be avoided.

3.3 The maps should be constructed on special base maps, prepared for the purpose by the American Geographical Society. They will be printed in gathered units of four pages. The intention is to make a separate and additional issue of the maps in each Atlas study on one side only on translucent paper which will permit light-table work.

3.4 The text for each map or group of maps (chapter) (including tabular material and bibliography) should utilise four or eight pages each abt. 16 " x $12\frac{1}{2}$ " with abt. 3,000 words.

4. The comments received concerning the outline and the contents agree in the following points:-

4.1 The revised outline, as presented in the first draft of the synopsis, seems to be sufficient and also leaves some freedom of slight modification for its adoption to the requirements of the Atlas and for individual scientists to prepare different chapters according to availability of data, special interest of the compiler and importance of the subject.

4.2 To each map the following explanations should be added:-

- a) References to the sources of data and a guide to the literature on the subject;
- b) Comments and general notes and tables necessary for interpretation of the data;
- c) Notes on the methods used for obtaining the data;
- d) The accuracy of the data and their variability with space and time;
- e) Any other limitations of the data or presentations.