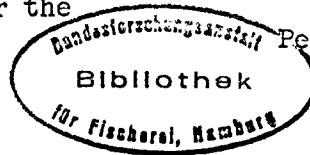


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Pelagic Fish (Northern) Committee



Preliminary Report on the Sprat Symposium in Lysekil, January 1968

by

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During the period 22-27 January 1968 a symposium with the title "Life History of the Sprat" was held at the Institute of Marine Research, Lysekil. The conveners were Mr Gunnar Dannevig, Arendal, and the present author. Delegates came from Denmark, Yugoslavia, Norway, Poland, Germany, Great Britain and Sweden; representatives of several other countries were summoned, but were unable to attend. The meeting was arranged for the specific purpose of collecting data on this clupeid. In lectures and discussions most aspects of the biology were touched upon, and a visit was made to a fish-preserving plant. The meeting decided that the lectures and discussions should be published in the Institute's series, "Meddelande från Havsfiskelaboratoriet." The work of editing is under way.

Investigation material was presented concerning sprats from the Baltic Sea, the Kattegat, the Skagerrak, the west coast of Norway, the German Bight, around the British Isles and the Adriatic Sea. In spite of the great topographical and hydrographical differences in the distribution area of the sprat, common features could be discerned in the biology of the species, as was revealed during the discussions. Among these were migrations to and from the coast during different seasons of the year, congregating in large shoals, or disintegration of shoals during spawning and so on. As a rule, only few year groups were found in the catches; the Baltic is exceptional, for relatively more older individuals are found there. The spawning regions are described from several quarters, and the problem of recruitment in various geographical regions is discussed in detail. While investigators in some laboratories have been concerned mostly with growth and types of growth, the main interests of others have

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been subpopulations and possible racial characteristics in the sprat. Full agreement could not be reached in these questions, for variability is great, as is shown by the material. The importance of the hydrographical situation for the distribution of the sprat was also discussed.

Contacts with colleagues were extremely valuable, particularly with those from distant places, not usually seen at international meetings, for example, the ICES.

The collected contributions will form an important basis for a symposium on biological data on the sprat.