International Council for the
Exploration of the Sea

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Statistics Committee

## ICES Three-Alpha Code for Species Items

by

V M Nikolaev
ICES Statistician

In FAO's Yearbook of Fishery Statistics ("Catch and Landings" volumes) a three-digit code was used originally to identify the various "species items". However, recently it has been decided to eliminate these three-digit codes and to retain only the taxonomic code for world-wide purposes to provide for the proper identification of new "species items" appearing in the constantly expanding structure of national catches. It was not expected that the FAO taxonomic code should necessarily be adopted by regional bodies, as these seldom would be concerned with more than two hundred "species items" and might need to introduce specific regional codification systems to meet their particular needs, and since, furthermore, modern ADP facilities do not require complete identity in the coding systems used by the FAO and the various regional bodies, permitting the translation of data from coding system to coding system.

By Resolution 1976/4:11 the Council, inter alia, adopted the four-digit ICES/1 code for "species items", as given in Doc. C.M.1975/D:7. These four-digit codes are used in the ICES FISHDAT System for input purposes. At the 64th Statutory Meeting the Statistics Committee, having considered the ADP Working Group Report, agreed that (p.47 of "Procès-Verbal de la Réunion, 1976"):

> "if separation of the ICES Sub-Area XIV into divisions makes continued production of Table 5 of Bulletin Statistique in its current form impossible because of the space limit, the 3-letter ICES country code should be used in that table and CWP should be requested to consider the feasibility of adopting 3-letter species code, corresponding to the Bulletin Statistique item numbers as shown in Doc. C.M.1975/D:7".

The Ninth Session of the CWP (Dartmouth, 17-23 August 1977) was informed that technical and space reasons require ICES, ICNAF, ICSEAF and ICCAT to introduce in selected tables three-alpha abbreviations and similar elements in certain of their tabular presentations. A document CWP-9/4E: "ICES Notes on a Three-Alpha Code for Species Items" was submitted by the ICES Statistician to the CWP in accordance with the above decision of the Statistics Committee. It was largely based on the 3-letter code introduced in 1972 for the English and Welsh fishermen to report on "Returns of fish landed", it being the most comprehensive one and closest to the ICES requirements.

The CWP was further informed that the now defunct three-digit code for "species items" used previously by FAO in its ADP activities, has been referred to by some countries and regional bodies as abbreviated international "identifiers" for individual species, listed for example on log book sheets.

The CWP,

> "recognising that any significantly abbreviated code would
> not satisfactorily serve FAO's world-wide ADP needs, never-
> theless considered it important and urgent that FAO, in
> addition to its taxonomically-oriented code, establishes
> and maintains a global abbreviated species identifier code.
> This could possibly consist of the various 3-alpha codes
> of the regional fishery bodies preceded by suitably selected
> two-numeric codes referring to the several major fishing
> areas".

Thus, the three-alpha codes were recommended for use not only in statistical
publications, but also in fishing sheets and logbooks when recording species
caught. With the large number of vessels moving between the ICNAF and
ICES areas and the common fish species involved, the CWP felt it desirable
that a single code should be developed for the North Atlantic area. In
response to the request of the CWP, representatives from the ICES and
ICNAF Secretariats (with participation of the Secretary of the CWP)
studied the possibility of establishing an alpha species code for the
North Atlantic, based on the ICES three-alpha species code proposed in
Doc. CWP-9/4E. The resultant common three-alpha species code, including
the scientific names of North Atlantic species, is given in Appendix 5
to Doc. C.M.1977/D:9ˣ:"Report of the Ninth Session of the Coordinating
Working Party on Atlantic Fishery Statistics". A multilingual glossary
of these species will be prepared by the CWP Secretary as a key to this
codification for the Tenth Session of the CWP scheduled for late June -
early July 1979.

Those codes from the above-mentioned common "3-Alpha Code for North
Atlantic Species Items", which are applicable to the ICES publications, are
entered below against the Bulletin Statistique "species items" arranged
for convenience in an alphabetical order under "Fish" and "Invertebrates"
landings.

Three Alpha Codes

| | Bulletin Statistique | Proposed codes |
|---|---|---|
| Item no. | Species item | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

FISH

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 48 | Albacore | ALB |
| 04 | Atlantic salmon | SAL |
| 49 | Bluefin tuna | BLF |
| 50 | Bonito | BON |
| 10 | Brill | BLL |
| 05 | Capelin | CAP |
| 33 | Catfishes (Wolffishes) | CAT |
| 22 | Cod | COD |
| 34 | Conger eel | COE |
| 11 | Dab (Common) | DAB |
| 55 | Dogfishes and hounds | DGH |
| 12 | Flounder (European) | FLE |
| 01 | Freshwater fishes | FRF |
| 41 | Garfish | GAR |
| 14 | Greenland halibut | GHL |
| 35 | Gurnards | GUR |
| 23 | Haddock | HAD |
| 24 | Hake | HKE |
| 13 | Halibut | HAL |
| 44 | Herring | HER |
| 42 | Horse mackerel | HOM |
| 15 | Lemon sole | LEM |
| 25 | Ling | LIN |
| 52 | Mackerels | MAC |
| 16 | Megrim | MEG |
| 36 | Monk (Angler) | ANG |
| 26 | Norway pout | NOP |
| 54 | Picked dogfish | DGS |
| 45 | Pilchard | PIL |
| 17 | Plaice (European) | PLE |
| 27 | Polar cod | POC |
| 28 | Pollack | POL |
| 56 | Rays and skates | SKA |
| 37 | Redfishes | RED |
| 03 | River eels | EEL |
| 29 | Saithe (Pollock) | POK |
| 38 | Sandeels | SAN |
| 39 | Sea breams | SMB |
| 09 | Shads | SHD |
| 06 | Smelt (European) | SME |
| 18 | Sole (Common) | SOL |
| 46 | Sprat | SPR |
| 02 | Sturgeons | STU |
| 07 | Trouts, chars | STR |
| 19 | Turbot | TUR |
| 30 | Tusk (torsk, cusk) | USK |
| 31 | Whiting | WHG |
| 20 | Witch | WIT |

(cont'd)  Three Alpha Codes

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
| 47 | Various clupeoids | VCL |
| 40 | Various demersal percomorphs | VDP |
| 08 | Various diadromous fishes | VDF |
| 32 | Various gadiforms | VGF |
| 53 | Various mackerel-like scombriforms | VMS |
| 57 | Various non-teleost fishes | VCF |
| 43 | Various pelagic percomorphs | VPP |
| 21 | Various pleuronectiforms | VPL |
| 51 | Various tuna-like scombriforms | VTS |
| 58 | Unsorted, unidentified fishes | MIX |

(cont'd)    Three Alpha Codes

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|

### INVERTEBRATES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 75 | Cockle | COC |
| 65 | Crangonid shrimp | CRN |
| 76 | Cuttlefishes | CTL |
| 59 | Edible crab | CRB |
| 73 | Escallop | SCA |
| 61 | Lobster | LOB |
| 72 | Mussel | MUS |
| 62 | Norway lobster | NEP |
| 71 | Oyster (Crassostrea) | OYP |
| 70 | Oyster (flat) | OYF |
| 63 | Palaemonid shrimp | PAL |
| 64 | Pandalid shrimp | PAN |
| 66 | Penaeid shrimp | PEN |
| 69 | Periwinkle | PER |
| 78 | Poulps | OCT |
| 74 | Queen scallop | QSC |
| 81 | Sea urchins | URC |
| 60 | Spiny lobster or crawfish | CRW |
| 77 | Squids | SQU |
| 80 | Starfishes | STF |
| 68 | Whelk | WHE |
| 67 | Various crustaceans | CRU |
| 82 | Various echinoderms | ECH |
| 79 | Various molluscs | MOL |