



JOINT SESSION TO CONSIDER ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUPS' REPORTS

AND THE REPORT OF ACFM

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As last year three authors were invited to lecture on specific topics. These concerned assessment problems and the actual effects of management actions. The second part of the meeting dealt with matters of relevance arising from the Dialogue Meetings with representatives of fisheries management organisations. This led to the discussion of the Assessment Reports.

The first two lectures reported on actual effects of changes in effort (C.M.1980/G:48) and mesh size (C.M.1980/G:42). The introduction of both measures was followed by higher catches and higher catch rates. It was stressed in the discussion that the apparent success in both cases are likely to be due to the fishery being exerted on one dominant species. The case studies, on the other hand, are good examples of what may happen when the advice of ACFM is actually implemented.

The third lecture dealt with large-scale changes in fisheries and their effects on stock assessments (C.M.1980/G:27). Although there was no agreement as to whether or not large changes may be discovered on the basis of the present information it became clear that better statistics, preferably broken down to fleet units, would enable the detection of changes in fishing pattern and fishing effort.

A verbal summary report of the Dialogue Meeting was given by A Saville. The discussions there had centred on the decision-maker's responsibility to formulate management objectives as well as ACFM's task to give options and their likely effects for recommended management measures. The need to set options for TACs was largely recognised. More important, however, the meeting stressed the pressing need to move from catch to fishing effort control as the principle management method.

The discussion of the Assessment reports revealed that ACFM had not in all cases accepted the views expressed by Working Groups on assessment matters. Whilst this was not questioned it was felt that the reasoning for such changes should be communicated to the Working Groups in question.

An important question arose when Blue Whiting was discussed. How far does the setting of a TAC depend on the quality and quantity of the data base? Some participants advised that the possible danger of overexploitation would call for a precautionary TAC even in the absence of data.