

Comments on the Recent Position of Collecting and Publishing
of ICES' Fisheries Statistics

by
Arni Fridriksson



Introduction

This brief paper is mainly a result of the meeting between Mr. Gertenbach and myself in Rome from the 25th to 29th June, as is also his paper "Progress Report on Statistical Reporting System in the ICES Statistical Area". While Mr. Gertenbach's paper deals with, and analyses, all the major statistical problems which we are at present faced with, only a few points will be dealt with here, being especially those concerning important tables of the Bulletin Statistique and the liberal offer of FAO's Fishery Statistical unit to undertake a part of the work involved in preparing some of the tables of the Bulletin Statistique.

I. Table 4 of the Bulletin Statistique

The proposal of the 1961 Statistical Working Group to re-arrange the column heading of Table 4 and to include new species as desired, can easily be complied with. Considering the possibility of obtaining assistance from FAO in compiling some of the STANA material for publication in the Bulletin Statistique, it will be necessary to make a further revision of Table 4 in order to ensure that as little additional effort as possible should be put on the Fishery Statistical unit of FAO.

At the moment Table 4 is divided into four sections, 1) Pelagic fishes, 2) Eel and salmonids, 3) Brackish water fishes and, 4) Marine demersal species. The arrangement of species within each section strictly follows the alphabetic order of English vernacular names.

In my capacity as Editor of the Bulletin Statistique, I take the liberty of proposing that this arrangement of Table 4 should be discontinued for the benefit of a systematic one as outlined in the Appendix to this contribution. The only objection to this new arrangement is the fact that we would be leaving a tradition of 25 years standing, but there are several evidences which are in favour of the new setting up:-

- 1) All information contained in the recent Table 4 would be found in the future Table 4.
- 2) Related systematic units would be found in the same section and not, as at present, be separated (Cod, Haddock, Saithe, Whiting etc.).
- 3) The group "Various" would be split up and specified as to systematic groups.
- 4) The new setting up would, perhaps with some minor modification, be in agreement with the FAO system and, as a consequence thereof,
- 5) the FAO assistance to the Statistical unit of the Council would be facilitated very much and overlapping of the FAO and ICES effort would be avoided.

All the surveying tables of Part I of the Bulletin Statistique and Tables 1, 2 and 3 of Part II could very easily be deduced from the main Table 4.

II. Table 7 of the Bulletin Statistique

At the 1961 meeting of the Statistical Committee it was emphasized that this table should be largely expanded and specified:-

- 1) By collecting more information, also from countries which have not before been able to provide effort statistics,
- 2) by eventually introducing more species,
- 3) by specifying in tonnage classes, and
- 4) by specifying in months.

It was decided that "the Secretary General in consultation with the Secretary of the Continuing Working Group, should prepare a mimeographed draft version of the

proposed expanded Table 7, providing for the incorporation of annual and monthly material to become available by means of STANA IE reporting procedure." This draft version has now been made and is being presented to the Statistical Committee for revision and possible approval.

The draft table only contains effort data from countries, which were able to break down by tonnage classes, by months or by both, namely, Belgium, The Netherlands and Poland. It was thought that by including the data from the other countries the picture of the draft Table 7 would have been blurred. It should be added that no "new" countries will be able to supply data for the Table 7 referring to 1961 except Iceland, which later on, will submit 1961 data for this table, broken down by tonnage classes.

By removing Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland from the existing Table 7 (Bulletin Statistique 1960) the table has been shortened by about 25% from eight to six double pages, so that the present draft table corresponds roughly with what is contained on a double page in Table 7 for 1960.

It appears that the draft table, which is designed after the same pattern as the former Table 7, has been sub-divided into eight sub-tables, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7g, and 7h, each comprising one type of gear only. This has been done in order to make the table as clear and usable as possible and in order to save space. Table 7a (Otter Trawl, Steam), 7b (Otter Trawl, Motor) and 7d (Pair Trawl, if used for demersal species) will require a double page, whereas 7c (Herring Trawl), 7e (Pair Trawl for Herring), 7f (Pair Trawl for Sprat), 7g (Shrimp Trawl) and 7h (Drift-nets) can be accommodated on one page only.

In the case of drift-nets, and the same would apply for long-line, handline and every kind of fixed gear, no distinction is made between categories of propulsions.

In several kinds of "pure" fishing methods, for instance, by herring trawl, drift-nets, etc., only one or very few species are caught. Some other species may however, be taken occasionally and in small quantities. Some of these species may be extremely important when caught by adequate gear, but they should not be recorded when caught as accidental by-products which do not indicate their stock densities.

An examination of draft Table 7 reveals that Belgium has been able to contribute to all but two of the eight sections, 7c (Pair Trawl) and 7g (Drift-nets). The Netherlands contributions cover three sections, viz.: 7b (Otter Trawl, Motor), 7c (Pair Trawl) and 7g (Drift-nets), and those of Poland cover four sections, viz.: 7a (Otter Trawl, Steam), 7b (Otter Trawl, Motor), 7c (Pair Trawl) and 7g (Drift-nets).

In presenting the draft Table 7 it must be noted that data on herring contained in Sections 7c, 7e, and 7h are usually published in the Statistical News Letters where a still further breakdown as to areal units (rectangles) is made.

III. Table 9 of the Bulletin Statistique

According to earlier decisions of the Statistical Committee, detailed information on tonnage classes and engine capacity of fishing vessels was collected and published for the first time in Table 9, relating to 1960. In order to provide a clear survey the table is sub-divided into six sections.

It is proposed that tonnage classes etc, should be indicated slightly otherwise than in the 1960 table namely:- 0-25 rather than 0-25, 25-49 rather than 26-50, 50-99 rather than 51-100 etc., and 1800- rather than >1800.

IV. The Group "Various"

In compliance with the Statistical Committee's recommendation B (2) of 1961, adequate authorities in Denmark, France and Spain were contacted in order to obtain an indication of the species composition of the group "Various". All other Council countries, of which this group contained either more than 10% of the country's landing or more than 10,000 metric tons, were also contacted. The result obtained to date can be seen in the Appendix to Table 4 of the Bulletin Statistique for 1960 (pp. 26-29). The most important feature is that Denmark has been able to reduce the "Various" group from 168,000 to 24,000 metric tons or by some 85%. The German analysis of the "Various" group could not, unfortunately, be included in the Appendix but is accounted for in a footnote on page 29. In future several of the items now contained in the Appendix should be incorporated in Table 4 where they belong. Spain is going to introduce a new system of collecting which it is hoped will enable them to account, in much more detail, for the

landings. The position of France is more uncertain.

It appears from Table 4 and its Appendix that there are still some countries which are unable to comply with the recommendation from the Edinburgh Meeting in 1959, to limit their "Various" group either to 10,000 or to 10% of their landings whichever is the less.

It is evident that it may be difficult for a country which lands say, 500,000 metric tons of fish to keep their "Various" below 10,000 tons and the question arises therefore, whether the requirement should not be modified in order to be made more reasonable.

V. Gear Classifications

In the recent nomenclature on gear, some confusion might be encountered by the users of the Council's fisheries statistics. For instance, the question arises, is a "pair trawl" always the same as "pareja trawl"? Should the term "herring trawl" be used for "bottom trawl" for herring, "pelagic trawl" for herring or both, and does the term "herring trawl" never include two-boat trawl (pair trawl) for herring? In most cases it is possible to check what is behind the name of the gear but it would mean an improvement if terms which cannot be misunderstood were defined, introduced and used consequently.

VI. Compliance with Time Requirements

Attention is drawn to the earlier requirement of the Council that statistical data should be received by the Secretary General not later than the 1st of September, viz.: 8 months after the end of the year to which they relate.

Since the trial introduction of the conjoint reporting system, many countries have been able to report considerably earlier than previously, but in some cases the information received is not satisfactory from the point of view of the Council. This means that these countries have to be contacted again in order to collect the desired information, for instance the weight of the nominal catch instead of the landed weight.

There are also important reporting units which have not yet, at the beginning of October, been able to deliver any statistical material at all. It is hoped that this kind of difficulty is transient, due to the change from one reporting system to another.

VII. Fishing of Non-ICES Members (and Italy) in the ICES Area

Reference is made to the recommendation B (5) from the meeting of the Statistical Committee in 1961 on the gaps in the fisheries statistics in the ICES area and means of filling them. The main countries in question (Eastern Germany, Italy and Japan) have been contacted, but no results have yet been obtained.

Table 4. Quantity and Value of the Various Species of Fish 1961

Values (in '000 shill.)	Species Countries Area No.	Quantities (in '000 kilos)	Distribution of Catches				
			North Sea IVa IVb IVc	Katteg. Skager. IIIa	The Sound IIIb	Belt Sea IIIc	
	<u>Salmonids</u>						
	Atlantic Salmon						
	Belgium						
	Denmark						
	Etc.						
	Capelin						
	Smelt						
	Trouts and chars						
	Various						
	<u>Pleuronectids</u>						
	Brill						
	Belgium						
	Denmark						
	Etc.						
	Common Dab						
	Common Sole						
	Flounder						
	Halibut						
	Lemon Sole						
	Megrim						
	Plaice						
	Turbot						
	Witch						
	Various						
	<u>Gadoids</u>						
	Cod						
	Haddock						
	Hake						
	Ling						
	Norway Pout						
	Pollack						
	Saithe						
	Torsk						
	Whiting						
	Various						
	<u>Clupeids</u>						
	Herring						
	Pilchard						
	Sprat						
	Various						
	<u>Scombriforms</u>						
	Bluefin Tuna						
	Mackerels						
	Various						

Appendix Table 4. (continued)

Values (in '000 shill.)	Species Countries Area No.	Quantities (in '000 kilos)	Distribution of Catches					
			North Sea IVa	IVb	IVc	Katteg. Skager. IIIa	The Sound IIIb	Belt Sea IIIc
	<u>Various Teleosteans</u>							
	Breams							
	Catfish (or Catfishes)							
	Conger Eel							
	Eel							
	Garfish							
	Gurnard							
	Horse mackerel							
	Monk							
	Redfishes							
	Sandeels							
	Various							
	<u>Elasmobranchiats</u>							
	Picked dogfish							
	Other dogfishes and sharks							
	Skates and rays							
	Various							
	<u>Unsorted and unidentified</u> (or Various)							
	<u>Grand Total</u>							

It should be noted that the term "Atlantic Salmon" is proposed for distinguishment from "Pink Salmon" or "Chum Salmon" which might appear in future catches in the Council's area.

Common Dab is to distinguish this fish from Long rough dab and so is Common Sole contra Lemon Sole. (I do not know if this is required ?).

Perhaps there ought to be sub-totals for each systematic group.