



SHELLFISH AND BENTHOS COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr. A.C. Simpson

1. Membership

The following alterations to the membership were notified:-

Belgium, add Dr. P. Hovart; Canada, add Mr. R.E. Drinnan; Iceland, Mr. H. Eiriksson replaces Mr. A. Sigurdsson.

2. Administrative Report

The Canadian contribution to the Administrative Report was discussed, and it was agreed that as very little of the Canadian work on shellfish (other than scallops) is reported regularly to ICNAF their contribution to the Administrative Report of the Shellfish and Benthos Committee would be particularly valuable. While Canadian reports of research on the same or closely related species exploited on both sides of the North Atlantic would be the most useful, information on other species should also be included.

3. Collection of fishing effort data in lobster and crab fisheries

Following up the 1967 recommendation that member countries should be encouraged to introduce for crab and lobster fisheries the collection of fishing effort statistics which were comparable between countries, the present position was reviewed. It was found that no country had at all complete effort statistics for these fisheries and that some countries obtained effort data from log books kept by selected fishermen, while others used collectors of statistics at the ports to obtain effort and catch data from selected or all fishermen. The difficulties were recognized, but the position was considered far from satisfactory. The Chairman offered to circulate to members a summary of the methods at present in use with a view to assisting in their further application and to form the basis of a further review in 1969.

4. Teneriffe Symposium

A report of the Crustacean and Molluscan section of the Symposium on the Living Resources of the African Atlantic Continental Shelf was given by Dr. H. Vilela. In particular the development of fisheries for cephalopods was noted. In view of the apparent increase in abundance of Sepia loligo and octopus following decreases in abundance of fish it was considered that there is need for more information on the cephalopods and a greater research effort is required (Recommendation C(2)).

5. New disease of Portuguese oysters (Crassostrea angulata)

A serious new disease affecting Portuguese oysters was the subject of three communications (K:5, K:12, K:17) to the Committee. First discovered in France in November 1966 it is considered to have been responsible for mortalities some 15 - 30 % above normal in

France in 1967. It was reported that Portuguese oysters showing similar symptoms have been found in Portugal, Netherlands and the south and east coasts of England. The investigations have revealed extremely widespread minor damages to the gills of oysters (both O.edulis and C.angulata), but much of the damage is considered probably to have been caused by factors other than the disease.

Preliminary observations suggest that mussels might also be susceptible to the disease and in view of the harm that this might do to the mussel industry of several countries it was considered important that priority should be given to field and laboratory experiments to determine the susceptibility of mussels to the disease. It was also recommended that countries involved in any investigations into the disease should make written progress reports to the 1969 meeting of the Committee (Recommendation C(1)).

6. Other communications

A full list of the communications, including those related to the gill disease of oysters will appear in the printed version in Procès-Verbal.

7. Shellfish excursion

Dr. F.A. Gibson (Ireland) offered to arrange an excursion to shellfish producing or processing ports in Ireland during the 2 - 3 days prior to the Council Meeting in Dublin in 1969. The proposal was welcomed, and Dr. Gibson agreed to circulate details of the excursion in due course.

C-Recommendations from the Shellfish and Benthos Committee

C(1) The Shellfish and Benthos Committee, perturbed by the preliminary evidence that mussels may be susceptible to the new gill disease of Portuguese oysters, requests those countries where the disease is known to be present, to undertake laboratory and field experiments to establish whether mussels are susceptible to the disease. Member countries investigating any aspects of the disease are asked to submit progress reports of these investigations as papers to the 1969 meeting of the Committee.

3(a)

~~C(2)~~

X The Shellfish and Benthos Committee noting the steady increase in the fisheries for cephalopods in the Council's area, recommends that the research effort into the biology and fishery of this group should be increased.