

SUMMARY REPORT
ON ITALIAN TUNA FISHERIES IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

by
D. Levi

1) Origin and development of the fishery.

The fishery probably began in Grado (N.-Adriatic) in the 50's ; it was then performed with motor-boats and small surrounding-nets of natural twines, paid and hawled from a pivoting platform at the stern of the boats.

Then bigger fishing vessels took over.

Since the first 60's the bulk of the fishery was carried-on by trawlers converting seasonally to tuna-fishing (as paired seiners).

As an increasing number of trawlers dedicated themselves to the fishing with the "volante" net (midwater-trawl derived from the Larssen net, always towed by two vessels), it was now that kind of vessels to convert seasonally to tuna fishing.

The main base ports were first Porto Garibaldi and Cesenatico, then mainly Cesenatico.

It is known that two big seiners from Salerno (of the kind described at the last GFCM meeting - Rome, February 24th 1976 -) are now permanently based in Pescara.

2) Vessels and gear.

Vessels fishing from Cesenatico range 240-500 Hp. The seine net is 500-600 metres long and 40-60 metres high, with a mesh opening of 60-80 mm. (knotless nettings).

At present 6 boats are equipped with power-block, but a quick and full generalization is foreseeable in the very next future.

These boats can close a seine in 3 minutes.

3) Season and location of fishing operations.

Up to last year two distinct fishing seasons were identifiable; March-April mainly off Pescara and Punta Penna, in the Central Adriatic Sea, for tuna between 10 and 50 kgs. August-October more to the North, off Porto Garibaldi and Cattolica-Cesenatico, moving from N. to S. during these three months, and catching progressively bigger fish from 6 to 10 kgs.

In the course of the years an increasing distance of the fishing area from the coast has been noticed, from the original 15 m. or less to the present 30-40 m.

4) Present trend.

Since springtime of 1976 most fishermen of the middle and northern Adriatic set up an agreement with a "second degree" cooperative for aerial scouting of tuna shoals.

The regional government of Emilia-Romagna is partly financing the experiment.

Apparently this is proving successful, and boat-owners have decided to continue fishing also outside the two traditional fishing seasons.

Corresponding data will be available next year.

5) Marketing.

Practically all the fish is sold wholesale and by retail thereafter.
No demand for canning.

6) Data.

The data officially reported by ISTAT (Istituto Centrale di Statistica) as "production" for tuna, most probably refer to the quantities actually sold through production-markets.

But an amount, at present very difficult to evaluate, definitely does not pass through the production markets.

No effort data are collected routinely.

Since the beginning of this year only, a couple of boats from Cesenatico are filling a log-book for detailed catch-effort data.

Some data on the number of boats actually fishing in the Adriatic sea for bluefin tuna could be collected, but this would require some time.

The data herewith enclosed are: 1) yearly total "production" figures according to ISTAT broken down by "litorale", and 2) catch and "effort" data of a relevant portion of the Adriatic fleet, the one based in Cesenatico.

Data of tab. 1 could be further broken down by month and "compartimento" (i.e. geographical division smaller than "litorale").