REPORT OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC SWORDFISH SYMPOSIUM*
(OAHU, HAWAII, USA, 3-6 MARCH 1997)

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Meeting Objective: To provide a forum for review and synthesis of recent developments in biological, fisheries oceanography, and resource assessment research on swordfish in the Pacific Ocean and relevant research in other oceans, and to provide international collaboration in assessments of Pacific swordfish. This symposium falls under the auspices of the newly formed Interim Scientific Committee (ISC) for tuna and tuna-like species in the North Pacific.

Participation: Nine countries, and three commissions were represented, with a total of 69 participants. There were scientists from the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans. Five were scientists currently involved in ICCAT, and there were several scientists who have at some time been involved in ICCAT. There was excellent local participation: 25 people from Hawaii (National Marine Fisheries Service, Western Pacific Regional Management Council, Swordfish Industry, and University of Hawaii). The meeting was very well organized, yet informal, and provided an excellent forum for information exchange.

Location: The meeting was held at the Turtle Bay Hilton which has excellent conference facilities. The hotel is located at the north end of the Hawaiian island of Oahu; it was somewhat isolated which makes it an excellent location for a meeting! The staff of the National Marine Fisheries Service Honolulu Laboratory and the hotel worked effectively to make the symposium run smoothly and efficiently. The organization was impressive. The Hawaiian swordfish industry (Pacific Ocean Producers and United Fishing Agency) hosted a reception for participants on the first evening.

Symposium Content:

Plenary. The first day of the meeting was a plenary session with Country Reports, the Atlantic Swordfish Report, and the Expert Panel presentations. All of the oral presentations were submitted as manuscripts and were available in advance of the meeting. In fact, the organization of the workshop was impressive.

During the first day there were eight talks on the Pacific fisheries. The Country reports reviewed the fisheries in Japan, Mexico, USA, Chile, Philippines, La Reunion, and Australia. The Pacific fishery is relatively new and there is a marked contrast in the quantity and quality of data available as compared to the Atlantic. Not only is the Atlantic a 'mature' fishery, but also ICCAT has an excellent data collection scheme in place. The Pacific scientists were trying to benefit from the experience of others as they establish protocols and data collection systems, and conduct scientific research.

As convenor of the ICCAT Swordfish Species Group, I was requested to present the review of the ICCAT work in the Atlantic: *Perspective on Atlantic (and Mediterranean) Fisheries and Assessments: The ICCAT Experience.* A manuscript was submitted in advance of the meeting and I was given 60 minutes to present and discuss the work of the Atlantic swordfish stock assessment group. The Atlantic was used as a case study for this symposium, as it is the most advanced swordfish stock assessment work in the world. The paper was well received and the organizers were extremely pleased with the contribution. It has been reviewed and will be published in the Symposium Volume.

The expert Panel Discussion included presentations on ADAPT (R. Conser), ASPIC (M. Prager), Delay-Difference Stock Assessment Models (R. Deriso), SPARCLE (J. Hampton) and Southern Bluefin (K. Sainsbury). I was particularly impressed with the paper by Keith Sainsbury (CSIRO) on *Recent developments and methods in southern bluefin tuna fishery assessments*. The SBT assessment has made excellent use of biological data to enhance their stock assessment input including: estimates of natural mortality from tagging, use of archival tags to define stock structure, etc. There were important conclusions on the reliability of (rather lack of) population projections and methods to examine this.

Workshops. The following two days were split into three working groups: Biological Input to Stock Assessment working Group, Fisheries Oceanography Working Group, and Resource Assessment and Monitoring. I was asked to participate in the latter, though other ICCAT scientists were present in the other working groups. As can be seen from the agenda and meeting report attached, there was an excellent selection of papers on swordfish biology, oceanography, and stock assessment. It was especially useful to have both age and growth and genetics experts from the Atlantic present. I was impressed by the emphasis placed on the importance of both biological input and oceanographic input to stock assessment. Too often in stock assessment, the emphasis is on producing frequent quantitative assessments, at the cost of enhancing our basic input data. One shortcoming of the meeting was that the workshop sessions were concurrent; however, on the final day, each working group gave an excellent summary to the plenary.

Working Group Reports and Wrap-up. The final day had summaries of each of the concurrent working groups. The overall conclusions of the symposium, in a very condensed form were: (1) good basic input data are essential, including both fisheries-dependent and fisheries-independent data; (2) ensure that the model is appropriate for the data; and (3) do not be afraid to make an initial attempt at a quantitative stock assessment--this is an excellent way to evaluate the quality of the data and the model fit. Given that the objective of the symposium was to assist in the development of a Pacific swordfish stock assessment, both the approach to the symposium and the results were excellent. The report of the Symposium goes to the Interim Scientific Committee (ISC) for tuna and tuna-like species in the North Pacific (the Pacific counterpart of the ICCAT SCRS).

Information Exchange: The combination of Pacific scientists, and swordfish and stock assessment experts from around the world provided an excellent forum for information exchange. The ICCAT swordfish work will be enhanced by making contact with the three genetics groups working on Atlantic swordfish stock structure, and the key people working on direct aging methods of Atlantic swordfish. The latter will benefit the upcoming ICCAT review of Atlantic swordfish sex-specific growth.

Summary/Conclusion: The Second Pacific Swordfish Symposium was extremely well organized and productive. I was impressed by the emphasis placed on the importance of both biological input and oceanographic input to stock assessment. The objectives of the meeting were clearly met, and participants benefited by learning more about the Pacific system, other approaches to stock assessment, and meeting new scientists. The Symposium benefited from the expertise of several current and former ICCAT scientists.

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