



FISHERIES CENTRE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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The University of
British Columbia

FishBytes

Volume 3 Issue 5 November/December 1997

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FISHERIES CENTRE AT UBC

"No Judgement Studies"

In the September 1997 issue of the Newsletter of the Fisheries Society of the British Isles, Terry Langford commented on an incident at a recent AFS conference. In particular, it was noted that at least two presenters stated that it was their role to provide only information for fish and habitat management, without opinions or recommendations for using that information. A debate was opened up when Mr. Langford noted that these 'no judgement studies' could turn fish biologists into 'stamp collectors'. Others in attendance warned that in giving opinions or recommendations, the value of objective science would be lessened. An interesting issue to consider, indeed. (*Terry Langford can be reached at tel@geodata.soton.ac.uk.*)

Fishbytes is the newsletter of the Fisheries Centre at the University of British Columbia. Contributions and queries should be sent to Melanie Power, *Fishbytes* Editor, Fisheries Centre, 2204 Main Mall, UBC, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6T 1Z4, or by email to melanie@fisheries.com. As noted in the last issue, a Letters to the Editor section is planned for inclusion, so contributions are needed! (Of course, we reserve the right to edit contributions). Be sure to visit the Fisheries Centre's website, <http://www.fisheries.com>, and follow the links to *Fishbytes*. There, you'll also find information on upcoming Fisheries Centre events.

Ethical Fish or Fisheries?

The interdisciplinary team working on the SSHRC-sponsored project on Ethical Analysis in Fisheries Decision-Making on Canada's East and West Coasts has been busy in recent weeks, first meeting at the University of Victoria Conference Centre in early October and then at The Battery Hotel in St. John's in early November. At each of these meetings, team members discussed their disciplinary backgrounds in relation to the issue at hand, and worked to find a common mind on the project. The locations of the workshops, one on either coast, made possible contributions from partners working in all aspects of fisheries – including fishers from various sectors, government officials, an aboriginal artist and those concerned with the viability of fishing communities. Towards the end of the second session, the team drafted a table of contents for the book to follow, and assigned writing responsibilities. The team will meet again next autumn to compile the book, with publication to follow. Later, a brochure will be published and policy workshops will be held to introduce the conclusions. Following the St. John's trip, a seminar and discussion by local team members was held at the Fisheries Centre on November 14, when feedback and suggestions from those in attendance at the discussion was welcomed by team members.

The 'Ethics Project' includes 15 team members, including natural and social scientists, ethicists, a visual artist and others. Three universities are spearheading the project, the UBC Fisheries Centre, the University of Victoria's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, and the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Whilst most team members are from those three institutions, others are affiliated with Simon Fraser University, the University of Waterloo and Harvard University. The project takes an interdisciplinary approach to applying ethical analysis to fisheries management, and as such the team members have been taking efforts to understand the various disciplines represented on the project.

Fisheries Centre participants in the project include Tony Pitcher, Daniel Pauly, Nigel Haggan and Melanie Power. Highlights of the trips included the decadent food at Dunsmuir Lodge, and in St. John's a hike up Signal Hill and the Screeching-in of Tony and Nigel by Melanie, a Newfoundlander who lives 'away'. Long may your big jib draw!
(See the Centre's website for more details on the Ethics Project.)

Longlining and Superbait

By Gary Cross, Director of Oceanarium Research

and Dr Mike Dowdall, Research Supervisor

Scientists at the Oceanarium in St. David's, Wales, U.K. have for many years been trying to understand how fish located their food. Sight and sound are of course contributory factors to locating prey, but it appears their sense of smell is the primary sense used for a fish to find its dinner. This work was instigated when the skipper of a local longline vessel said that "if only someone could find better baits, a commercial longline fishery would be viable. There would be no need to bottom trawl and discards would be a thing of the past." It has taken about 6 years to find the mechanism by which fish find their prey. Experiments in the aquarium have shown that if a fresh Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) weighing approx. 80g is placed in the tank with its head and tail chopped off - gut intact - it will take approx. 1 min. 40 secs for the Spurdogs (*Squalus acanthias*) or Rays (*Raja* spp.) to find it. This is in a well lit 77,000 litres circular seawater tank. By repeating the same experiment using our superattractant, weighing only 2g, the fish find the superattractant within approx. 30 secs.

Subsequent deep-sea trials demonstrated that weight for weight, the superattractant was up to 133% more efficient at catching fish than Mackerel. It must be remembered

that these are purely pilot studies, and in order to undertake a full scale study an enormous amount of funding would have to be obtained. The Oceanarium has funded all of the research themselves, with sea trials kindly provided by a local longliner who knows that the future of the industry lies in targeting fish more effectively. This subject requires far more research in order to be anywhere near reaching a sustainable fishery; the cost of ignorance is too high. It is the view of the Oceanarium that it is possible to halt the decline of world fisheries by targeting more effectively the desired species.

It now appears that fish can be categorised into two groups: the hunter and the hunted. Although all fish can be termed hunters, certain groups of fish carry a chemical signal which, in the vastness of the ocean, gives their position away to the "hunters". This even applies to Crustacea. At the present time, we have no reason to believe that there is any other major mechanism involved. Research continues. (*Gary Cross can be reached at Gary@sealife.demon.co.uk.*)

ALASKA CONFERENCE ON STOCK ASSESSMENT MODELS

By Leif Nøttestad

(A conference on Fishery Stock Assessment Models for the 21st Century was held in Anchorage, Alaska, October 8-11 1997. Several Fisheries Centre people were in attendance, and the following is a report on that trip.)

Single species approaches dominated the presentations which tended to be very specific and riddled with mathematical jargon, as of course one would expect from such a conference. Bayesian and semi-Bayesian statistical approaches for parameter estimation were a common theme in many of the models presented. Saul Saila stood out from the crowd with his interesting talk about the use of Fuzzy Regression techniques. Such techniques appear to have many benefits to standard regression analysis techniques. The use of in-season management was presented as a promising approach to implement risk averse strategies for at least some commercially important fish populations.

The Fisheries Centre gave some new, and alternative approaches to assessment models for the 21st century. Dr Tony Pitcher and masters student Dave Preikshot both delivered good presentations on the assessment of fishery 'health' using a multidisciplinary (ecological, economical, social and technological attributes) ordination technique. Dr Daniel Pauly presented an overview of assessment using ecosystem modelling (the only complete multi-species approach at the symposium), exemplified (and sold charismatically) through the well known Ecopath model. PhD student Sean Cox gave a well received presentation on some methods and preliminary results on exploitation and use of Rainbow trout stocks in small lakes in British Columbia.

During the conference, the weather in Anchorage was extremely beautiful. Clear blue sky every day with temperatures between -5 and 5°C. Some of us hired a car and drove to Kenai a few hours south of Anchorage (behavioural trade-off between learning something and experiencing something), watched the man in the street, did some hiking and experienced the gorgeous autumn contrast in colours. We took a lot of pictures, observed sockeye salmon behaviour (dead and alive) in the Kenai river, studied in detail what several grizzly bear had had for dinner, watched the northern lights and had a close encounter with a moose in the middle of the night.

(Leif Nøttestad was a visitor at the Fisheries Centre from July until October. Leif can be reached at See Volume 3 Issue 4 for more information about Leif.)

New UBC President Visits Fisheries Centre

On Thursday, October 16, UBC's new president, Dr Martha Piper, visited the Fisheries Centre. The visit included various presentations to Dr Piper as well as a tour of the facilities and a general discussion.

Dr Pitcher, Director of the Fisheries Centre, outlined the interdisciplinary and international nature of the Centre's work. About half of the research personnel are from within Canada, and half from 16 other countries. The Centre, founded five years ago in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, aims to focus research on fisheries, attracts about 1 million research dollars per year, has a respectable publication output (over 7 per faculty member per year), and mounts its own series of international workshops and symposia.

Dr Pauly (Research Director) outlined research in numerical assessment, on the evaluation of the impacts of fisheries on ecosystems and biodiversity, and on social and economic aspects of human welfare. Dr Trites (Director, Marine Mammal Unit) summarised the work of the North Pacific Universities Marine Mammal Research Consortium, run from UBC, on the interactions of endangered sea lions, killer whales and seals with their environment and fisheries. Dr Art Tautz (Director of Fisheries Branch, BC MELP) outlined how the BC Provincial Government was helping the Centre. Sylvie Guénette (Canada) and Ying Chuenpagdee (Thailand) spoke for graduate students. Ann Tautz and Pamela Rosenbaum briefly mentioned administrative issues and highlighted the lack of infrastructure.

Dr Piper expressed interest in the interdisciplinary nature of the Centre, in the difficulties experienced by a small unit and in the problems of overseas students.

Calls for Papers:

The 16th Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium and 1998 joint meeting of the American Fisheries Society Western Division, Alaska Chapter, and the North Pacific International Chapter will be held September 30 - October 3, 1998 in Anchorage Alaska. Abstracts for papers are due by January 15, 1998, preferably by email. More information can be found at <http://www.uaf.edu/seagrant/Conferences/symposia.html>, or by calling (907)474-6701 or faxing (907) 474-6285.

Student presentations are being solicited for the 1998 annual Graduate Student Symposium on Fish Population Dynamics and Management (GSS-PDM) to be held April 4-5, 1998 at the University of Washington School of Fisheries. The annual symposium is a collaborative venture between the University of Washington School of Fisheries (UW-SOF) and the University of British Columbia Fisheries Centre (UBC-FC). Registration is free. For more information contact Bill Pinnix at (206) 616-9418, fax (206) 685-7471. Email abstracts (up to 150 words, due February 15, 1998), to Bill at pinnix@fish.washington.edu, or to Rishi Sharma at sharma@cqs.washington.edu.

Can-Asian Fishing Boats

It has recently been reported in the press (*Vancouver Sun*, 6 Nov. 1997, reprinted from *The Montreal Gazette*) that during Lucien Bouchard's visit to China, a \$16.8 million deal was signed to sell refurbished Magdalen Islands fishing boats to China. The deal was reported to have been made between Upsilon Commerce International, Greenfield Pk., and China Huan Dao, and five boats will be refitted to suit the South China Sea.

This action is reprehensible, given the status of the fisheries in the area (See contributions in Silvestre and Pauly, 1997. *Status and Management of tropical coastal fisheries in Asia*. ICLARM Conf. Proc. 53, 208 p.). Any effort to retire vessels should contribute to a net reduction in effort on the global scale, not merely a reshuffling of effort from one overfished area to another. (*If you wish to add your support to a letter to Premier Bouchard from Tony Pitcher, Daniel Pauly and Carl Walters, please email melanie@fisheries.com.*)

Steveston Field Trip

On September 25, despite a turn for the worse in coastal weather, roughly 25 members of the Fisheries Centre boarded a bus to Steveston for a tour hosted by Duncan Stacey and John Kapp. Designed to complement a module on Commercial and Sport Fisheries to be held next term, the tour was open to all interested parties.

We began by visiting a seine loft owned by the Canadian Fish Company, at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, where we saw and learnt about the nets and other gear. Then, following a walk through downtown Steveston, we examined gillnets at the BC Packers gillnet loft.

A visit to the Britannia Heritage Shipyard was highlighted with a salmon barbeque and good conversation. Then the rains came, temporarily driving us all inside the Shipyard buildings.

Nonetheless we soon headed out for a boat tour along Cannery Row. Although most participants chose to board the larger packers, a few of us (braver and more water resistant?) decided to try out the small, open skiffs, and were treated to a running commentary by Duncan Stacey on the types of vessels moored along the channel and the history of the area.

The day passed quickly, and whilst waiting for the bus to collect us, we were able to enjoy some of Steveston's shops and to visit a cafe for some warming coffee and hot chocolate.

News and Notes

Congratulations to Dr Alida Bundy. A student of Dr Pauly, Alida successfully defended her thesis, *Assessment and Management of Multispecies, Multigear Fisheries: A case study of San Miguel Bay, the Philippines*, on November 24, 1997. Alida now holds a Canadian Government Laboratory Visiting Fellowship (a post-doc) with Department of Fisheries and Oceans, North West Atlantic Fisheries Centre and Bedford Institute of Oceanography.

Bon Voyage to Tony and Val Pitcher as they head off to Australia for Tony's sabbatical. Enjoy the sunshine, and your break from us!

Visiting at the Fisheries Centre: Maria de los Angeles Gasalla has been a visiting scientist at the Fisheries Centre for two months beginning in mid-October. A Research Scientist at the Fisheries Institute (Insituto de Pesca) at Santos, Brazil, Maria has an MSc in biological oceanography from the Oceanographic Institute of the University of São Paulo. Her current research focuses on fishery biology and trophic levels of some by-catch species and cephalopods, and she is particularly interested in ways to link ecological knowledge and fisheries stock assessment research. At the Fisheries Centre, Maria has been busy using Ecosim, attending lectures by Daniel Pauly and Carl Walters, studying and learning English.

Publications: Two new publications from the Alaska Sea Grant College Program. One, *Fisheries Bycatch: Consequences and Management* (publication number AK-SG-97-02), includes extended abstracts and a panel discussion on bycatch management. The second, a brochure entitled *Flat Out Facts about Halibut* (publication number SG-ED-29), tells you everything you ever wanted to know about halibut. For more information, phone (907)474-6707, fax (907)474-6285, or email FYPUBS@aurora.alaska.edu.

Correction: In issue 3-4 of *Fishbytes*, notice was given for the 1998 IASCP conference. An incorrect email address was provided, and should have read iascp98@sfu.ca, not iascp@sfu.ca. *Fishbytes* apologises for the error.

For Your Diary: The Coastal Community Network will be holding its annual general meeting Friday, April 3 to Sunday, April 5, Cowichan Native Village, Duncan, B.C. The conference theme is 'partnerships', and will be co-hosted by Cowichan Tribes & Cowichan Valley Regional District. Open to all persons, groups and agencies. For more information, call Cheryl Wilson at (250) 383-1923, fax (250) 337-1983, or email cdwilson@uvic.ca. To register call (800) 665-3955, fax (250) 746-5612 or email cvrd@island.net, or write to: Conference of Coastal Communities c/o Trish Irish, CVRD, 137 Evans St. Duncan, B.C., V9L 1P5. For information on membership in the CCN, call their office at (250) 726-4683, fax (250) 726-2268, or email coastcom@island.net. (Note that their office will be closed Dec. 1 to Jan. 14).



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