

FISHBYTES

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Tuna Cartel: for Ecology and Economics?

By Ussif Rashid Sumaila and Melanie Power

The Pocket Oxford Dictionary defines a cartel as “a union of manufacturers to control prices etc.” Can this definition be extended to fisheries organisations? Given the story narrated below, we think it can.

According to WorldCatch (July 11, 2001), following a three-day meeting in Taiwan, the World Tuna Purse-Seiner Organization (WTPO, which is made up of 11 tuna fishing countries and regions) announced a cut to tuna catches. It is expected that the restrictions will reduce the tuna catch by 20%. The rationale behind the cuts is three-fold, according to WTPO President Cesar Rohon Hercas of Ecuador, who said “We adopted three measures to protect resources, [the] tuna fleet and the market.” As Fisheries Centre economist Ussif Rashid Sumaila noted, this move reflects the interaction between ecology

(protection of the resource) and economics (protection of both the tuna fleet and the market): WTPO feels the need to protect the market for tuna by reducing catch, which in turn could benefit resource conservation.

Under the announced cuts, Asian tuna-fishing countries will be required to stop fishing for 40 of the next 90 days. The Philippine fleet will be affected in two ways: one-third of the fleet will not fish during the 90 days following the announcement, and the fish caught by the remainder of the fleet will be sold only within Philippines. Other fleets from Europe (France and Spain) and South America agreed to not sell skipjack (according to WorldCatch News Network, the most common tuna) below the market price.

The goal of the WTPO is that these measures would cut the world tuna catch by 20% thereby helping to beef up falling prices. WorldCatch News Network reported that 1.5 million tons of tuna were caught last year by WTPO members, and that the price has dropped in recent years from US\$900/ton to just US\$260/ton.



The big question is whether the WTPO is likely to meet its objectives? The answer to this question depends a lot on whether the organisation has the mechanism in place to detect and penalise violators of agreed upon measures. To our knowledge the WTPO does not have such a mechanism in place. In addition, if there is anything to learn from both the theory and practice of cartels, it is that they hardly succeed. This is because the potential gains for any member of cheating when the rest of the membership follows the organisation's agreed measures, is too high to ignore.

It is worth noting that most of the tuna caught last year by WTPO members was sold to the US for canning.

Dr Ussif Rashid Sumaila is a Research Fellow, and Melanie Power is a PhD Candidate, at the Fisheries Centre.

In this issue...

Tuna Cartel

BC Fisheries Database

Collapsing Cod

Appointments to an Independent Fisheries Panel

Introducing Aqualink

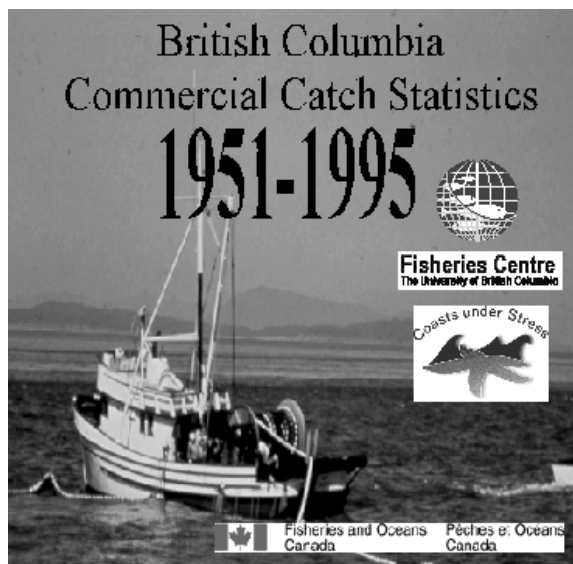
And, as always, lots of News and Notes!



Electronic Database of British Columbia Fisheries Catches

By Cam Ainsworth

The UBC Fisheries Centre and the DFO Catch Statistics Unit in Vancouver recently collaborated to commit 44 years of British Columbia commercial catch statistics into a comprehensive electronic record. From 1951 to 1995, each year is presented as a searchable Adobe PDF file providing a degree of spatial and temporal resolution that was previously unavailable in an electronic format. As an initiative of the "Coasts Under Stress" project (see *FishBytes* 6(5/6), and page 3 of this issue), this information will be used to construct past and present day models of the Hecate Strait region of BC with the ultimate aim of improving fisheries policy and restoring Canada's marine ecosystem to historic levels of abundance. Special thanks goes to Lia Bijsterveld and John Davidson of the DFO for their enthusiasm and cooperation.



The new electronic database of commercial catches in British Columbia. Cam Ainsworth designed the cover of the CD.

The effort was made possible through funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and partners in universities, government, business, non-governmental and first nations groups.

Copies are available from the UBC Fisheries Centre. For more informa-

tion, contact:

c.ainsworth@fisheries.ubc.ca.

Cam Ainsworth has been working as a research assistant at the Fisheries Centre, and is beginning MSc studies here in the fall.



Sad Cod

In our last issue, *Fishbytes* reported the sorry state of Iceland's collapsing cod resources. We mentioned Northeast Arctic cod, exploited by Norway and Russia, as the only remaining healthy Atlantic cod population. Oh dear; we spoke too soon!

One of our regular readers, Jean-Jacques Maguire writes, "Please note that Northeast Arctic cod is in nowhere near a healthy state. It is true that [about ten years ago] Norwegian fishery management measures, with the help of favourable growth and improved recruitment, resulted in increased stock sizes. However, in 1997 there was a major revision of stock status, and TACs since then have been above those advised by ICES, fishing mortality is higher than recommended and the spawning stock biomass is lower than that deemed safe."



Independent Fisheries Panel

Congratulations to Professor Gordon Munro and Dr Paul LeBlond, who have been appointed to the new Independent Panel on Access Criteria (IPAC). Canada's Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Hon. Herb Dhaliwal, announced the establishment of the new panel in late June. Other IPAC members are Arthur Kroeger (Chair of IPAC), Professor Martha Jackman and Professor David Newhouse.

Gordon Munro, Professor Emeritus with the UBC economics department, is an associated faculty member with the Fisheries Centre. Paul LeBlond is Professor Emeritus of Earth and Ocean Sciences and an Emeritus member of the Fisheries Centre, Professor Emeritus with the UBC oceanography department, and is a member of the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council.

According to a news release from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, IPAC has been mandated to review decision-making criteria and processes for providing new or additional access in Atlantic commercial fisheries which experience substantial increases in quota or value, and for new or emerging fisheries.

IPAC's work will conclude with a report to the Minister, to be submitted in autumn, 2001.



Innovative Research Network

Aqualink, an International Collaborative Aquatic Network, is a newly established supportive network of graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and research associates, aiming to promote interdisciplinary, innovative and international research and activities related to aquatic ecosystems. Members from 14 countries and 12 affiliated institutes regularly discuss issues of common interests through the email discussion list, as well as at the annual workshop. Currently, we are working on preparing a collaborative research paper addressing coastal management experiences around the world, to be presented at the Coastal Zone



Asia-Pacific Conference, to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2002 (see page 4). Aqualink will also play a very important role at this conference by serving as the key facilitator group, responsible for conducting the discussion and producing the synthesised conference report. Aqualink's goals and visions are supported by the advisory members: Dr Tony Charles, St Mary's University, Halifax; Dr Kevern Cochrane, FAO, Rome; Dr Rosemary Ommer, University of Calgary, Calgary; and Dr Daniel Pauly, University of British Columbia, Vancouver; and by our partner, the Fisheries Centre, University of British Columbia.

Aqualink is now recruiting new members. We welcome people of social and natural sciences background, to join us in this search for innovative solutions to address the world's aquatic problems. Please visit our website (www.fisheries.ubc.ca/aqualink) for membership application and other information about Aqualink.



News and Notes - Fisheries People



Congratulations to **Alisdair Beattie**, who defended his MSc thesis this summer. Alisdair's thesis was entitled "A new model for evaluating the optimal size and placement of

marine protected areas", and was supervised by Daniel Pauly. He is now beginning a PhD with Carl Walters, funded by DFO and furthering the work he began in the Hecate Strait during his MSc work.

Congratulations to **William Cheung**, from the University of Hong Kong, who has successfully defended his Masters thesis on reconstructing the history of Hong Kong's fisheries and marine ecosystem since 1950 using Ecopath and Ecosim. William was

supervised by Dr Yvonne Sadovy, and denizens of the Huts will remember several of William's visits here.

Welcome to **Dr San-Go Lee**, who is visiting at the Fisheries Centre for the summer. He is an associate professor in the Dept. of Fisheries Business and Management, Faculty of Marine Industry Policy, College of Fishery Sciences, at Korea's Pukyong National University (National Fisheries University of Pusan). At the Fisheries Centre, his study is focusing on the eco-economic based self-regulatory TAC management system in traditional coastal fisheries.

Correction

The correct website for the is www.natura.udec.cl/. An incorrect address appeared in the May/June (7(3)) issue of *FishBytes*.



Members of the Fisheries Centre Coasts Under Stress team recently visited Prince Rupert, British Columbia. As part of our contribution to the CUS project, the team will be applying the Centre's Back to the Future approach to the Hecate Strait. This portion of the project will involve ecosystem modelling using the Ecopath suite of software, interviews and a workshop in the Hecate Strait area, and a final workshop in Vancouver.

The team includes (clockwise from back left): Fisheries Centre director Tony Pitcher, an eagle-eyed Nigel Haggan, new MSc student Cameron Ainsworth, BSc Honours student Erin Foulkes, summer student Aftab Erfan, and PhD student Melanie Power. Absent are: Sheila Heymans, a post-doctoral fellow with the project, Fisheries Centre Research Fellow Rashid Sumaila, and incoming MSc student Pablo Trujillo.

News and Notes

Conference Calls

Coastal Zone Asia-Pacific, "Improving the State of the Coastal Areas" – Bangkok, Thailand, May 12-16, 2002.

This international conference is the first of its kind for the Asia-Pacific region that aims to promote innovative approaches and best practices to improve the state of the coastal areas. Researchers, communities, coastal managers, policy makers and others interested in sharing the practical solutions to address problems in these coastal areas are invited to attend. Those with examples of success and failures in the management of the coastal areas are encouraged to submit paper, poster, and video presentations in the following themes: integrated management policies, community/resource interactions, ecosystem management, resource economics, sustainable coastal activities, and coastal area planning. Abstracts are due 15 January 2002. Registration fee is \$150 US (or \$85 US for students). For more information, visit www.vims.edu/czap, or contact Dr Ratana Chuenpagdee, Conference Co-ordinator, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, PO Box 1346, Gloucester Point, Virginia, USA, 23062, phone (804) 684-7335, fax (804) 684-7843, or email ratana@vims.edu

The **Third International Conference on Recreational Fishing** – Darwin, Australia, May 22–24, 2002, to be hosted by Australia's Northern Territory. The Conference is a forum for members of the recreational fishing fraternity including managers, researchers, policy makers, industry representatives and the angling public to discuss issues relevant to the sustainable management of recreational fishing through the new millennium. The theme of the Conference is "Regional Experiences for Global Solutions". For further information, contact John Harrison – Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory

(afant@octa4.net.au), or Anne Coleman – Fisheries Division, DPIF (anne.coleman@nt.gov.au). The Fisheries Centre's Tony Pitcher is among the members of the International Steering Committee. Conference secretariat: Convention Catalysts International GPO Box 2451 Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia, 0801, phone +61 8 8981 1875, fax +61 8 8941 1639, email convention.catalysts@norgate.com.au, or visit www.conventioncatalysts.com.au or the Fisheries Centre's website.

The **Fourth World Fisheries Congress** - Vancouver, BC, May 2-6, 2004. The theme of this conference is "Reconciling Fisheries with Conservation". Previous Congresses were in Athens (#1, 1992), Brisbane (#2, 1996) and Beijing (#3, 2000). Dr Tony Pitcher has been confirmed as Programme Chair while Dr Bruce Ward from the BC Government Fisheries Unit is in charge of local arrangements and Dr Max Stocker from DFO sits on the Steering Committee. More details will be published in *FishBytes* as they become available.

Publications

Porcupine! the Newsletter of the Department of Ecology & Biodiversity at The University of Hong Kong, is available online at www.hku.hk/ecology/porcupine/.

Hook, Line and Thinker, The Newsletter of the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society, profiles the work of this cooperative society in the Canada's maritimes. The FSRs can be contacted at PO Box 25125, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3M 4H4, phone (902) 876-1160, fax (902) 876-1320, or online at www.fsrns.ca.

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Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Fisheries Centre or its members.

Be sure to visit the Fisheries Centre's website, www.fisheries.ubc.ca, and follow the links to *FishBytes*. There, you'll also find details on Fisheries Centre projects, publications, faculty and students, as well as information on upcoming Fisheries Centre events.

