



FISHBYTES

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Far from the Sun, But a Great Break Anyway

By Kevern Cochrane

My first contact with UBC and fisheries didn't happen in 1984, when I was finalising my PhD thesis for examination at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. My supervisor was Brian Walker, a rangeland ecologist, who informed me, without betraying confidentiality, that one of my examiners would be a well known fisheries scientist from British Columbia. Brian had frequently spoken admiringly of the Institute of Animal Resource Ecology at UBC, a predecessor of the Fisheries Centre, and in particular of Carl Walters with whom, as far as I can recall, he had done some work. I immediately assumed that this threatened Canadian examiner would be Carl, and as I finalised my thesis I spent a considerable amount of time reading

recent papers of his to add to my reference list, hoping to win approval that way if no other. Some months later I received the examiners' reports back, including extensive comment from William E. Ricker, the legendary scientist from Nanaimo. Fortunately, I had made extensive use of Bill Ricker's "Green Book" on the computation

of fisheries statistics, so all was not lost. I had also learned a lot from reading Carl's papers, albeit unnecessarily in terms of my primary objective, so neither had my efforts been a complete waste. It is a measure of his generosity that Dr Ricker subsequently kindly hosted me, an unknown body from the far shores of Africa, on a short visit to the Nanaimo Biological Laboratory in 1986. Regretably, I did not have the opportunity to include UBC in that visit.

That was my non-encounter with UBC. My first actual encounter came only in 1996 but flowed from meeting Tony Pitcher at a symposium in Anchorage in 1992, just after his appointment as Director of the Fisheries Centre had been announced. Tony and I quickly discovered a common past and interest in Lake Kariba, Zimbabwe, out of which grew what has been a decade of professional and friendly collaboration. On one of my subsequent visits to the Fisheries Centre, I stayed at Green College, an institution that immediately attracted me through the beauty of its environment and buildings, the warm and friendly atmosphere of the dining hall, and the immediately apparent intensity of the academic and social programme built around the college. The chance reading of a brochure on the Cecil H. and Ida Green Visiting Professor in Residence programme at Green College, some hard work from Melanie Power and Tony, encouragement and agreement from FAO, and much appreciated assistance from Richard Ericson of Green College and Rosanne Rumley of the UBC Visiting Scholars Programme, led to my three-month fellowship at this beautiful campus with its hyperactive and talented staff and students.

My main task here has been teaching Fish 502: Uncertainty and Conflict: the Challenges to Responsible Fisheries Management. In this course I have attempted to link the science of fish and fisheries to the realities of fish resource use and fisheries management in practice. As the title

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suggests, the course has emphasised uncertainties in our knowledge and conflicts in interests and objectives, which I consider to be two primary causes of our widespread failure to utilise our aquatic resources and ecosystems sustainably, equitably and efficiently. Putting together and teaching the course, including trying to make some sense out of some of my own experiences over the last 15 years in particular, has been a stimulating and productive exercise for me. The feedback from participants in the seminar series has also been thought-provoking and instructive. I have certainly learned a lot from Fish 502 that I will carry back into my tasks at FAO, and I hope the students have gained something from it as well.

In addition to that formal task, my time here has provided an opportunity for discussing in greater depth than e-mail and short encounters allow, common interests in fisheries with the diverse and respected fisheries community at UBC as well as beyond the campus at DFO and in Washington State. I have also used the time to tie up some incomplete work and to initiate some new in collaboration with members of this community. The buzz in fisheries science at the moment is all about ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM), and FAO, along with many other institutions, is trying both to promote and respond to that very positive buzz. We all know what we want and what we hope for from EBFM, but equally we all know the difficulties associated with getting there, and the need for creative and innovative approaches that will maximise the benefits from managing ecosystems while minimising the undesirable and potentially traumatic short-term social and economic impacts that could be associated with the change. Many countries rely heavily on fisheries for providing employment and for generating economic benefits. The greatest obstacle to improved and more responsible fisheries is in finding

ways to continue to meet those needs as we move to a new regime in fisheries management.

Important work is being done to address these obstacles and to help to determine what we can and should do in managing our use of aquatic ecosystems. Some significant initiatives are taking place at the Fisheries Centre and more widely in UBC, including the ongoing development and promotion of Ecopath with Ecosim, and the Back to the Future and Sea Around Us programmes. Equally important to the contribution of the Fisheries Centre are the potential, the insights and the experiences present in the wide cultural diversity and inter-disciplinarity of the people who come to the Fisheries Centre to



Visiting Professor, Dr Kevern Cochrane

learn and to teach. The problems faced in fisheries share much in common, but are also strongly influenced in each case by unique ecological, social and cultural differences. Such differences can be either a source of conflict or a resource for enrichment and for mutually beneficial learning and cooperation. It is very encouraging to see at both the Fisheries Centre and Green College, the extent to which the cultural diversity and wide interests of their communities enriches the work and perspectives of the members and visitors to both institutions.

Apart from my short-term status as the Green Visiting Professor in Residence, I also have the pleasure

and responsibility of being a member of the Fisheries Centre International Advisory Committee (see article on page 3). As will be apparent from the account above, if I had to make a report in this role on my visit, it would be overwhelmingly positive. However, also in this capacity, I leave one cautionary observation. The Fisheries Centre is forging ahead on new global approaches, new paradigms and new visions. That is unquestionably good and necessary but always carries with it the dangers that what was valuable or even just useful in the old is lost, and that in examining the woods we forget that they are composed of trees. To avoid both pitfalls, it is important for the Fisheries Centre to remain firmly in touch with fisheries and fisheries management in practice, as they happen on the ground and in the water. Some important opportunities to do this, of course, lie right at the doorstep of UBC. During my time working on South African marine fisheries, I was greatly privileged to be a part of the Benguela Ecology Programme which was established specifically to encourage cooperation between the government fisheries agency (then the Sea Fisheries Research Institute) and several coastal universities. Over the last 20 years it has done this very successfully, greatly enhancing the performance of all these institutions. There is certainly the opportunity to do something similar in British Columbia, whether formally or informally. Some co-operative initiatives are taking place, but extending these into a wider programme for collaboration and exchange between the local universities and governmental fisheries management and research agencies would almost certainly be to the benefit of all participants and those they aim to serve.

Dr Kevern Cochrane is a Senior Fisheries Resources Officer with the UN FAO in Rome, and was Green Visiting Professor in Residence at Green College (www.greencollege.ubc.ca), January-April, 2002. Kevern was also the Fisheries Centre's Third Larkin Lecturer in March, 1999 (see FishBytes 5 (2) (March/April 1999)).



MONEY FOR NOTHIN', REPORTS FOR FREE

By Tony Pitcher

We are indeed in *Dire Straits*. Several of us have noticed that referees of our papers complain that work published in our Fisheries Centre Research Report series (FCRR) is available only to those who buy them from the Fisheries Centre. When you think about it, that's not so different to a *Communique* from Nature or Science, and although FCRR does not aspire to those lofty heights, most fisheries researchers have access to such journals because their institution pays for a subscription. FCRRs are published with an official ISSN, *Brothers in Arms* with all other published serials. FCRRs are edited, but not peer-reviewed, and hence can be cited, *Hand in Hand*, in the same way as any other work in that category.

Why Worry? Well, it costs a lot of money and resources to edit, format, print, publish and distribute a FCRR. All participants and sponsors of our workshops and symposia get a free copy. Please note that copies of all of our FCRRs are sent free or on an exchange basis to major fisheries libraries in USA, Canada, and *So Far Away* as Australia, UK, France and FAO. We also send copies to the Canadian inputting centre for Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA). Otherwise, paper copies of complete reports are available on request for the usual cost recovery charge.

However, we want to make our work easily available *On Every Street*, (no *Private Investigations* here) and so I am glad to let *FishBytes* readers know

that our *Latest Trick* is that all papers in Fisheries Centre Research Reports will now be made available for free download (PDF format) *In The Gallery* on our web site. (The extra costs will be borne by the projects and events that output FCRRs). We will be working through the reports retrospectively, so don't worry *How Long* it is before papers in the older reports are available.



Buy & Sell magazine disrespectful to eels, Sportfisher misses the boat

By Nigel Haggan

A man who caught a 39oz eel at an icefishing derby in St. John's, Newfoundland, sponsored by *Buy and Sell* magazine, was disqualified in favour of a contestant who reeled in a 10.05 oz trout ("Fishing derby won't honour eel-catcher", *Vancouver Sun*, Feb. 12, 2002).

The Fisheries Centre takes the strongest possible exception to this decision. It is first of all erroneous as an eel is indeed a fish. It is also disrespectful, as eels have an ancient lineage compared to the trout, a mere upstart in a geological time scale. The North American (*Anguilla rostrata*) and European eels (*A. anguilla*) have already suffered much due to a cruel twist of plate tectonics.

Some 30 million years ago, eels spawned happily in a narrow stretch of water between what is now Europe

and North America. Every year, continental drift added a few millimeters to their journey, but the eels never noticed, morphing finally into a species that swims thousands of kilometres to spawn and die in the Sargasso Sea. It was not until the early 1900s that Johannes Schmidt, a Danish oceanographer, connected the transparent, leaf-shaped marine larvae to the freshwater parents (Schmidt 1922).



We therefore urge the owners of *Buy and Sell* magazine to publish a formal, written apology to *A. rostrata*, award the fishing derby prize (a 14' boat, motor and trailer) to Errol Squires, and leave fish taxonomy to those who delight in such matters.

Reference:

Schmidt, J. (1922) The breeding places of the eel. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc.*, B, 211: 179-208.



Larkin Lecture and Advisory Council Visit

The Fisheries Centre is pleased to announce that Dr Yvonne Sadovy (Department of Ecology and Biodiversity, The University of Hong Kong) will present the Sixth Larkin Lecture, Thursday, February 20, 2003.

The Larkin Lecture will coincide with a visit by the Centre's International Advisory Council. The IAC is comprised of:

- Dr David Policansky (Chair), NRC, Washington, DC, USA
- Dr Kevern Cochrane (Vice-Chair), FAO, Rome, Italy
- Dr Anthony Charles, St Mary's University, Halifax, Canada
- Dr Pamela Mace, NMFS, Woods Hole, USA
- Dr Cornelia Nauen, EU, Brussels, Belgium
- Dr Andrew Rosenberg, University of New Hampshire, Durham, USA



News and Notes

Welcome

Welcome to **Simone Libralato** and **Chiara Piroddi**, both visiting the Fisheries Centre from Venice, Italy. **Simone** has a fellowship from ICRAM (Central Institute for Scientific and Technological Research Applied to the Sea) and is a PhD student in Environmental Sciences & Physic-Chemistry at the University of Venice. His research looks at the direct and indirect effects of fishing activity at the ecosystem level and he will use Ecopath with Ecosim to compare different habitats of the area and create scenarios of different management strategies. **Chiara** is an undergraduate student in the University of Venice (Environmental Science), and is working on a thesis on the management of marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea (Ionian Sea and Adriatic Sea) for the conservation of dolphins, in collaboration with the Tethys Research Institute, a non-profit NGO dedicated to the preservation of the marine environment. Chiara has come to the Fisheries Centre to learn Ecopath with Ecosim, which she will use in her research.

Conference Calls

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

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. 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 the Fisheries Centre's website or www.conventioncatalysts.com.au.

A North American Practitioners Workshop for Marine Reef Research and Monitoring by Volunteer Divers – Institute of Ocean Sciences, Sidney, BC, June 20-22, 2002. Organised and sponsored by Brian Smiley (Science Branch, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Sidney, BC), William (Bill) Seaman (Florida Sea Grant College Program, and Dept. of Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA), and Tony Pitcher (UBC Fisheries Centre). We plan to collaborate as biologists and scientists who have first-hand experience and current interests in volunteer-based, underwater monitoring of natural and artificial ocean habitats around the United States and Canada. For more information, see the announcement on the Fisheries Centre's website.

Marine Fisheries, Ecosystems and Societies in West Africa: Half a Century of Change – Dakar, Senegal, June 24-26, 2002. The symposium has two main components: a presentation of the results of the *Fisheries Information and Analysis System* project and their implications to the management of fisheries in the sub-region; and a presentation of new approaches to fisheries analysis in West Africa and their impact on natural ecosystems and society. Contact Dr Daniel Pauly and/or Dr M.L. Palomares of *The Sea Around Us Project*, or Dr. J. Michael Vakily of the FIAS project for information on this symposium.

The **Fourth World Fisheries Congress** - Vancouver, BC, May 2-6, 2004. The theme of this conference is "Reconciling Fisheries with Conservation: The Challenge of Managing Aquatic Ecosystems". Previous Congresses were in Athens (#1, 1992), Brisbane (#2, 1996) and Beijing (#3, 2000). Dr Tony Pitcher and Dr Paul Hart are co-chairs of the Programme Committee, 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.

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Our mailing address is UBC Fisheries Centre, 2204 Main Mall, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, V6T 1Z4. Our fax number is (604) 822-8934. All contributions, queries (including reprint requests), subscription requests, and address changes should be sent to Melanie Power, *FishBytes* Editor, at the above address, or by email to FishBytes@fisheries.ubc.ca. Electronic versions of contributions are preferred.

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.

