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Problems encountered in documenting fishery statistics from cooperative arrangements between coastal states and other countries

by

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1. Introduction

Following the extension of jurisdiction over fishery resources to 200 miles by Canada in January 1977, the development of cooperative arrangements between Canada and several countries has resulted in confusion regarding responsibility for reporting fishery statistics accruing from developmental charter and other joint venture operations in 1977 and 1978. Initially, the STATLANT 21 data for 1977 received from one regional statistical office in Canada included all data from joint venture operations while the data received from the other regional office did not. It was also apparent that one or two countries involved in the joint operations with Canada included the data in their STATLANT 21 reports while others did not.

2. CWP and STACRES Considerations, 1977-78

Such problems associated with double-counting and under-counting were anticipated and discussed in August 1977 at the Ninth Session of the CWP, which agreed that *the flag of the vessel should be the determining feature which establishes the country to whose national production the catches and landings should be allocated and that this should only be overridden when it is obvious that the wording of chartering and joint venture operation contracts indicates otherwise or when the interrelationships are too complicated to settle* (FAO Fish. Dept. No. 197, page 11; ICNAF Sum. Doc. 78/VI/2). This matter was brought to the attention of STACRES (ICNAF's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics) at the 1978 Annual Meeting by the Secretary of the CWP in his review of the CWP Report and by the Assistant Executive Secretary in ICNAF Sum. Doc. 78/VI/22. Some members of STACRES indicated that the flag of the vessel might not be appropriate as a nationality indicator where vessels from one country are contracted to fish from the quantities reserved for another country. It was recognized that solutions to this problem, of vital importance to the reporting and publication of statistical data, would have to be based on a very careful study of the various aspects, and it was agreed, as a temporary measure, that the Assistant Executive

Secretary and the Secretary of the CWP should keep developments of this problem under constant review through correspondence with national authorities of the various countries to ensure that double-reporting as well as under-reporting of catches is avoided (*ICNAF Redbook* 1978, pages 40 and 85).

### 3. Period of Suspended Animation

During the course of processing 1977 nominal catch statistics in 1978, the possibility of double-counting became evident, but attempts by the Secretariat to obtain clarification from Canadian authorities as to the policy being followed in the reporting of statistics from developmental charter operations were initially not successful. Near the end of 1978, when data for 1977 were scheduled to be processed and published in *ICNAF Statistical Bulletin* Vol. 27, the Secretariat still had no figures on fishing activity in 1977 by foreign vessels operating under cooperative arrangements with Canadian companies.

Early in 1979, summary data received from Canadian statistical offices indicated that catches of various species accruing from cooperative arrangements between Canada and other countries totalled about 20,000 tons, some of which were included in the Canadian STATLANT 21B reports for 1977. Vessels from 5 countries were involved in the cooperative arrangements, and, in at least one case, it was apparent (but not yet confirmed) that double-counting had occurred. In any case, all of the data were not yet available to the Secretariat in a form suitable for incorporation in its data base of 1977 statistics. This was the stage of our investigation in May 1979, nearly a year after our initial attempt to have the matter clarified, and we were still not in a position to publish *Statistical Bulletin* Vol. 27 for 1977, as the problem of double-counting had not yet been resolved with the various countries concerned.

### 4. The Breakthrough

Direct discussions with Canadian delegates at the 1979 Annual Meeting revealed that the earlier requests by the regional offices to have the developmental charter statistics included in the Canadian national statistics resulted from decisions at the regional level and did not reflect official Canadian policy on the matter. In fact, the Secretariat was informed orally at the time that, for publication purposes, the flag of the vessel would be the determining factor in allocating responsibility for the reporting of fishery statistics accruing from cooperative arrangements between Canada and other countries. In late June 1979, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Canadian Atlantic Fisheries, in a memorandum to the regional offices concerning "Policy on statistics from cooperative arrangements", requested the regional offices to report to international agencies the catches from developmental charters in the Canadian zone, indicating the vessel and the flag of the vessel involved so that it will be possible for the agencies to verify that these catches are reported in the annual statistics from the countries involved.

A subsequent letter (dated 23 August 1979) from Canadian authorities in Ottawa indicated that it would be extremely valuable to include in the *Statistical Bulletin* an appendix table detailing "catches made under arrangements with Canadian fishing companies", as it would be necessary to apply such catches against Canadian quotas in statistical tabulations relating to the management of fish stocks.

5. Verification of Developmental Charter Statistics for 1977

On 28 June 1979, with provisional statistics from Canada on fishing operations through cooperative arrangements during 1977, the Secretariat, in letters to the 5 countries involved, outlined the policy decision by Canada concerning responsibility for reporting such data, requested verification of the provisional data supplied with appropriate revision where necessary to satisfy the requirements of STATLANT 21B, requested confirmation on whether or not the data had already been included in the previously-submitted STATLANT 21B reports for 1977, and urged that the information be airmailed or telexed to reach the Secretariat by 31 August 1979. The countries involved are Federal Republic of Germany, France, Norway, Poland, and USSR.

Subsequent reports from France, Norway, Poland and USSR indicated that the relevant fishery statistics had not been included in their STATLANT 21A and 21B reports for 1977, and in the case of Norway, Poland and USSR, the statistics were supplied in considerably greater detail than had been available to the Secretariat previously. A report from Federal Republic of Germany indicated that the relevant catch and effort data were initially included in its STATLANT 21A and 21B statistics and that a separate listing of the data would be forwarded in due course, but these data have not yet been received. However, sufficient clarification and verification of the 1977 statistics from cooperative arrangement were received by mid-October 1979 to proceed with the production of *Statistical Bulletin* Vol. 27, which will be ready for distribution in early December 1979, a full year behind schedule.

6. Status of Processing 1978 Fishery Statistics

STATLANT 21B catch and effort data for 1978 have been received from all countries and processed for all countries except Canada, but information for the countries whose vessels were involved in cooperative arrangements have not yet been received from the Canadian statistical offices in sufficient detail to enable the Secretariat to correspond with the countries involved regarding verification of the data. Normally *Statistical Bulletin* Vol. 28 for 1978 should be in the production stage at this time, but a delay of 5-6 months is anticipated before it will be ready for distribution.

7. Future Requirements for STATLANT 21A and 21B Reports

The problems associated with the reporting of fishery statistics from cooperative arrangements between coastal states and other countries have been documented and reported to the Secretary of the CWP (Coordinating Working Party on Atlantic Fisheries Statistics), who, in collaboration with the Secretariats of international agencies concerned, is responsible for preparing and distributing annually the STATLANT forms with appropriate instructions for their completion. Prior to the distribution of forms and instructions for soliciting Northwest Atlantic fisheries statistics for 1979, the instructions will be modified to reflect the requirement that countries submit a separate report for the fishing activity of any vessels accruing from cooperative arrangements with coastal states. If all countries fishing in the Northwest Atlantic comply with this requirement, significant delays in the issue of future Statistical Bulletins should be avoided.