

FISH BYTES

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FISHERIES CENTRE AT UBC

A POSITIVE STEP: The

Marine Stewardship Council Initiative

By Daniel Pauly

Most conferences and other events fisheries scientists attend have ambivalent outcomes: good science, but the fisheries are still going downhill. In September, four faculty and associates of the Fisheries Centre, UBC (T. Pitcher, D. Pauly, G. Munro and J. Sproul) attended an event which differed from previous ones in that there is a chance - faint, but real - that its results will have a positive impact on at least some fisheries.

The event was a workshop, co-sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and Unilever, an Anglo-Dutch corporation heavily involved in the international fish market. The two partners plan to create a Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), devoted to ensuring that fish products reaching consumers (mainly in the developed world) have been caught in fisheries certified as sustainable (see Vol. 2 Issue 3 of *Fish Bytes*).

The three day workshop was devoted to developing the first set of principles and criteria to be used by certifiers acting on behalf of the MSC, and thus had to consider the state-of-the-art in fisheries ecology and social sciences while remaining realistic, i.e. implementable in the field. Biological considerations were important when deriving these principles and criteria (because maintenance of the stocks is the key to the sustainability of any fishery) but economic, social and governance issues were also considered, and if implemented, should lead to more equitable fisheries. This first draft will be further tested and developed in national and regional workshops while the MSC proper is being established. A regional workshop for the Pacific North-

west may be jointly sponsored by the Fisheries Centre and Vancouver Aquarium next spring while the first is scheduled for the Boston Aquarium this October.

On behalf of the other three UBC attendees, I express the hope that the MSC initiative will succeed, and that we shall personally do all we can towards this positive new step for sustainable fishing.

Fisheries Centre Nets

Australian Partner

The Fisheries Centre, UBC (FC) and the Fisheries Division of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, Northern Territory of Australia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). FC and the Fisheries Division (FD), having common interests in fostering research in fisheries resource management, entered into an agreement to cooperate in research, training and information utilising their joint expertise. The Fisheries Division is based in Darwin, the capital city of the Northern Territory, and is responsible for administration of fisheries resources in Northern Territory waters. FD have research programs involving aquatic resource management, aquaculture, and fishing industry development.

Informal ties between the two institutes have already been created. Dr. David Ramm, deputy director of the Fisheries Division, came to the Fisheries Centre on sabbatical for 6 months in 1994. Rick Buckworth, research scientist at FD, was here for 1 year ('95/'96) and is doing his Ph.D. under Dr. Carl Walters on Spanish mackerel assessment. Dr. Walters is in Darwin now running assessment workshops for Northern Territory species. Dr. Tony Pitcher, director of the Fisheries Centre, also visited the Darwin lab in 1996 and caught barramundi and a crocodile in a gillnet on the Mary River.

THE BRISBANE CONFERENCE

The Fisheries Centre's presence at the Brisbane World Fisheries Congress was noticed, even among over a thousand participants, when eight of us (and several former visitors) wore Centre T-shirts. Centre members gave four oral presentations and six posters. Tony Pitcher chaired a session that included papers from members of the African Fisheries Society. As well as delivering his own paper on shoaling and resilience, FC Director Dr. Tony Pitcher also read the late Dr. Peter Larkin's paper on the costs of research for management, and led a brief tribute to Dr. Larkin's contribution to fisheries science. Trevor Hutton gave his paper on the lessons being learned from attempts to re-adjust the management of South African fisheries to the post-apartheid era. James Scandol talked about an oceanographic model of salmon migration. Ramon Bonfil talked about world shark fisheries and about monitoring shark bycatches in the *Shark & Man* workshop. Ramon also visited Queen's Cliff, Victoria to attend a shark assessment workshop.

Alida Bundy presented a poster, complete with computer display, on *multispecies fisheries of San Miguel Bay, Philippines*, using the new ECOSIM ecosystem harvesting model. Sylvia Salas and Ricardo Torres poster covered *factors affecting management in a Mexican artisanal fishery*. Taja Lee and Tony Pitcher's poster presented an *individual-based simulation model of fish school dynamics*. Alida Bundy and Tony Pitcher gave a poster, *a new family of empirical models for the potential yield of lake fisheries*, summarizing their new model for approximating the potential fish yield of tropical lakes. A poster entitled *Evaluating The Benefits of Recreational Fishing* was presented by Tony Pitcher, Art Tautz, Joelle Row (South Africa) & Simon Hemphill