

## Director's Foreword

---

The Fisheries Centre at the University of British Columbia supports research that first clarifies, and then finds ways to mitigate, the impacts of fisheries on aquatic ecosystems. Only with such insight of how whole aquatic ecosystems function can management policies aim to reconcile the extraction of living resources for food with the conservation of biodiversity, with the maintenance of ecosystem services, with amenity and with other multiple uses of aquatic ecosystems. Indeed, the present dire state of marine ecosystems and their fisheries around the globe signals a pressing need for what may be termed the "ecosystem imperative."

Although ecosystem agendas of this kind have recently become embodied in the legislative goals of many nations, and are an integral part of the FAO *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries*, in practice there have been few attempts to work out how it might actually be done. In sponsoring the *Sea Around Us Project*, the Pew Charitable Trusts of Philadelphia, USA, have devoted a significant amount of funding to an ambitious pilot project that focusing on the North Atlantic that aims to address this question. A research team of senior scientists, postdoctoral research assistants, graduate students, consultants and support staff commenced work in late 1999.

Members of this team are excited and challenged by the unprecedented scope of the research work. Moreover, most of the methods used to tackle the problem magnitude are new. It seems that in concentrating on the perfection of quantitative methods that set catch quotas for large heavily-industrialized fisheries, traditional fisheries science has avoided trying to address ecosystem-based questions since the days of the pioneers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This report presents the edited output of a workshop held in May 2000 that examined the methodological bases of the research for the *Sea Around Us Project*. Each of the papers has been subjected to peer review by at least two referees, and has been scrutinized before and during the workshop by a visiting team of experts from FAO and major fisheries management agencies in Canada, the USA and Europe (See Appendix 2).

Summary comments about the project and its methods from these visiting experts are reported in Appendix 3. The *Sea Around Us* research

team are especially pleased with the overall support that the project is receiving from FAO, DFO, ICES and others.

The report is the latest in a series of *Fisheries Centre Research Reports* published by the UBC Fisheries Centre. A full list is shown on our web site at [www.fisheries.ubc.ca](http://www.fisheries.ubc.ca), and the series is fully abstracted in the *Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts*. The research report aims to focus on broad multidisciplinary problems in fisheries management, to provide a synoptic overview of the foundations and themes of current research, to report on research work-in-progress, and to identify the next steps and ways that research may be improved.

Edited reports of workshops reported in *Fisheries Centre Research Reports* are distributed to all project or workshop participants. Further copies are available on request for a modest cost-recovery charge. Please contact the Fisheries Centre by mail, fax or email to [office@fisheries.ubc.ca](mailto:office@fisheries.ubc.ca).

**Tony J. Pitcher**

*Professor of Fisheries  
Director, UBC Fisheries Centre*