

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH MEETING

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

Panamá, Republic of Panamá

July 14, 1955

The seventh meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the regular annual meeting for 1955, convened at the Washington Room of the El Panamá Hotel, beginning at 10:25 a.m., July 14, 1955.

Present were his Excellency Don Eligio Crespo V., Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries of the Government of Panamá; Sr. Don Miguel A. Corro and Sr. Don Domingo A. Díaz, members of the Panamanian Section of the Commission; Sr. Lic. José L. Cardona-Cooper, of the Costa Rican Section; Mr. Lee F. Payne, Mr. Gordon W. Sloan, and Col. John L. Farley, of the United States Section; Dr. M. B. Schaefer, Sr. Antonio Landa, and Sr. Hernán Sobrado, of the scientific staff. Also present were members of the Panamanian Advisory Committee, including Sr. Lic. Miguel J. Moreno, Jr., Sr. Lic. Juan R. Vallarino, Sr. Lic. Juvenal A. Castellón, Sr. Juan L. Obarrio, Sr. Antonio M. Arias, and Sr. E. Quiroz. Official observers were present from Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, Perú, and the United States. Special scientific observers were present from Nicaragua and Perú. A scientific observer also attended from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Technical Assistance Mission to Panamá.

Minister don Eligio Crespo V. opened the meetings with a speech of welcome on behalf of the Government of Panamá, which was responded to by Sr. Lic. José L. Cardona-Cooper on behalf of Costa Rica, and by Mr. Lee F. Payne on behalf of the United States.

Mr. Meninger, of the United States Embassy, read a telegram from the Secretary of State expressing satisfaction at having Panamá as a member of the Commission; and highly commending the Commission for lending its Director as a technical expert to the United Nations at the recent International Conference on the Conservation of the Living Resources of the Sea.

In the absence of Chairman Sr. Lic. Virgilio Aguiluz, of Costa Rica, the meeting was presided over by Sr. Lic. Cardona-Cooper, of Costa Rica. Sr. Lic. Cardona-Cooper commenced the business meeting by introducing the members of the Commission and the observers from the several governments. Thereafter, there were taken up the several points of the Agenda of the meeting:

Approval for publication of the Annual Report for 1954

Copies of the report, in English, had been sent to all the Commissioners for review and comments some months previously, and no changes had been suggested. The Spanish translation was in process of being made on the basis of this draft.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed that: The Annual Report for the year 1954, as drafted by the Director of Investigations, be approved for publication.

Presentation and discussion of research during the past year

At the request of the Chairman, Dr. Schaefer presented the results of investigations conducted during the past year and the present state of knowledge respecting the scientific problems upon which the staff is conducting research. The results of the investigations were illustrated with a number of charts and graphs. Good progress has been made on elucidating the dynamics of the tuna populations as influenced by fishing, and the condition of the tuna stocks of the Eastern Pacific as a whole has been determined. Progress was reported on studies of the life history and population structure of the tropical tunas. The relationships of the tunas to the oceanographic factors of their environment were further elucidated. The rehabilitation of the anchoveta stock of the Gulf of Nicoya by the transplantation from Panamá in the fall of 1953 is showing encouraging results, but it is yet too early to be sure of final success. Research from the newly established laboratory on Taboga Island, in the Gulf of Panamá, has provided important information on the biology and life history of the anchovetas of the Gulf, and has led to the preliminary conclusion that there is at present no danger of overfishing from the taking of anchoveta for tuna-bait. Good results are being obtained from the studies of the seasonal upwelling in the Gulf of Panamá and its effects on the biological productivity, which forms the basis of the productive fisheries of that area.

The Commissioners and others present asked a number of questions about the research results, which were discussed.

Program of Investigations for Fiscal Year 1955-56

The Commission had recommended a budget of \$367,000 for the fiscal year, but contributions from member governments will amount to only \$198,290. The Director of Investigations had, therefore, prepared a revised research program, corresponding to the available funds, for the consideration of the Commission. The items of this proposed research program were:

1. Collection, compilation and analysis of catch statistics, log-book records, and related data of the tuna and tuna-bait fishes.
 - a. Continuing routine collection of current data, as now being done.
 - b. Completion of analysis and interpretation of historical and current data to 1954 respecting changes in abundance and yield of the tunas so far as present ancillary biological information permits; completion of a report for publication.
 - c. Completion of analysis of historical records and current data through 1955, respecting catch-per-unit-of-effort and yield on the more important bait-fishing areas.
 - d. Preliminary analysis of changes in abundance and yield of tunas by geographical sub-areas.

2. Investigations of life history, biology, and population structure of tunas.

- ✓ a. Continued market-measurement program at San Diego and San Pedro to provide information on age, growth, and size composition by geographical sub-areas.
- ✓ b. Studies of tuna maturation and spawning (time and duration of spawning, areas of spawning, size of maturity, etc.) based on examination of gonads of specimens from the landings at San Pedro.
- c. Preliminary studies of distribution of eggs and larvae based on material to be collected by "Eastropic" expedition in October-December 1955.
- ✓ d. Morphometric studies of yellowfin and skipjack measured at sea.
- x e. Observations at sea of the schooling habits of tunas (such as tendencies to school by size and by species) important to consideration of conservation measures which may be recommended when required.
- f. Collection of observations on seasons and areas of occurrence of juvenile tunas, by scientists aboard commercial fishing vessels.

3. Tuna-tagging.

- a. Research to develop improved tag and/or tagging techniques.
- b. Initiation of tagging program to provide data on migrations and population sub-divisions of yellowfin and skipjack tunas, supplementary to present program of State of California.

4. Oceanography and tuna ecology.

- a. Analysis of existing oceanographical and meteorological data from the Eastern Tropical Pacific for
 - (1) Better general description of the region.
 - (2) Correlation of seasonal and annual variations of meteorological and oceanographic factors.
- b. Participation of staff scientists in a cruise ("Eastropic") aboard Scripps research vessels to obtain data on the physical, chemical, and biological oceanography of the Eastern Pacific; this cruise to be coordinated with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife cruise further westward, and a cruise of a Peruvian vessel off Peru.
- c. Commencement of analysis of oceanographic data from "Eastropic."
- d. Correlation of results of oceanographic studies with geographical and seasonal changes in apparent abundance of tunas.
- e. Investigation of feasibility of obtaining worthwhile sub-surface temperature data by means of equipment placed aboard commercial tuna vessels.
- f. Investigate feasibility of establishment of tide gauging and temperature recording equipment on islands off the coast of the Americas, to provide time-series for correlation with variations in tuna availability.

5. Bait-fish research.

- a. Continue field studies in Costa Rica to evaluate transplantation experiment.
- b. Continue field studies of biology, ecology, and life history of the anchoveta stock of the Gulf of Panamá.
- c. Continue studies of anchovetas from other areas based on samples taken by tuna fishermen.
- d. Increase work at headquarters laboratory to bring up to date study and analysis of materials already collected, complete reports for publication.
- e. Make limited field studies of bait fishes in important areas not now being studied except by samples from the tuna fleet.

This proposed research program was discussed, after which it was moved, seconded, and unanimously adopted that: The revised program of investigations prepared and recommended by the Director of Investigations for the fiscal year 1955-56 be approved and adopted.

It then being 12:40 p.m. the meeting was recessed.

The meeting reconvened at 3:00 p.m.

Research program and budget for fiscal year 1956-57

The Director of Investigations had transmitted to the Commissioners on May 24, 1955 detailed recommendations for the research program for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 1956, together with detailed estimates of the funds required to conduct this research program amounting in total to \$379,912.

The recommended program is very similar to that recommended by the Commission during previous years. It includes provision for work at sea, from research vessels, which the Commission has so far been unable to support, but which is essential to the study of the ecology of the tropical tunas. The program also provides for more intensive research on the life history, biology, and population structure of the tuna populations, the results of which are required as a basis of proper detailed interpretation of statistical data on the dynamics of the fishery, and as an essential basis for recommendation of conservation measures at such time as they may be required to maintain the maximum yield of the fishery. More extensive and intensive research on the bait-fishes is also recommended.

After discussion of the proposed program and budget, it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that: The Commission approves the program of investigations for the fiscal year 1956-57 prepared by the Director of Investigations and previously transmitted to the Commissioners; to conduct this program of investigations a budget is recommended for the period July 1, 1956 through June 30, 1957 in the amount of \$379,912.

Proportion of contributions of member governments for fiscal year 1956-57

At the request of the Chairman, Dr. Schaefer indicated that the most recent statistics of utilization of the tropical tunas, by the three member governments, as defined by the resolution of the 1953 annual meeting, show

the relative shares of the utilization are: United States 99.8%, Costa Rica 0.2%, Panamá zero. Under the terms of the 1953 resolution, then, the contribution to the joint expenses of the Commission by Costa Rica should be 0.2% or \$500, whichever is greater, and the contribution by Panamá should be \$500, while that of the United States should be 99.8%.

It was then moved, seconded, and unanimously adopted that: The joint expenses of the Commission for fiscal year 1956-57 shall be in the following proportions: United States 99.8%, Costa Rica 0.2% or \$500, whichever is the greater; Panama \$500.

Cost-of-living salary increases for employees resident in the United States

The salary policy of the Commission, as previously established by a resolution at the 1951 annual meeting, provides that the pay rates of staff personnel of the Commission who are nationals or legal residents of the United States shall be geared to the pay rates of the U.S. Civil Service. The U. S. Civil Service had recently increased the pay scales of its employees by 7.5% in recognition of the increase in cost of living that has occurred in the United States since the last salary adjustments in 1951.

It was, therefore, moved, seconded and unanimously adopted that: The Director of Investigations is authorized to increase the salary rates for regular, full-time staff members of the Commission who are nationals or legal residents of the United States, by 7.5% commencing 1 September, 1955.

Election of Officers

Sr. Miguel A. Corro, of Panamá, was nominated as Chairman of the Commission for the following year. This nomination was seconded, and he was unanimously elected.

Sr. Lic. José L. Cardona-Cooper, of Costa Rica, was nominated as Secretary of the Commission for the following year. This nomination was seconded, and he was elected unanimously.

Place of future meetings

It was unanimously decided to hold a special meeting in Washington, D.C. at a suitable date in March, 1956, the date to be selected later.

It was unanimously decided to hold the next regular annual meeting at a suitable location in Southern California in July, 1956, the date and place to be selected later.

Motion of thanks to the Government of Panamá

The Commission enthusiastically and unanimously adopted a resolution of thanks to the Government of Panamá for the fine hospitality that had been extended to the Commission at this meeting.

There being no further business to come before the seventh meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, it was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

MBS:ab
8/8/55