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SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE TENTH MEETING

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

Panamá, R. P.

11 February 1958

The tenth meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, being the regular annual meeting for 1958, convened in the Panama room of the Hotel El Panama in Panama City, R. P., commencing at 9:50 a.m. on 11 February 1958.

In representation of the Government of Panama there were present:

- Sr. Don Victor Navas, Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industries
- Sr. Don Juvenal Castellón, Director of International Organizations,  
Ministry of Foreign Relations
- Sr. Don M. Moscoso, Secretary of Commerce and Industries

The following Commissioners were present:

For Panama:

- Sr. Don Richard Eisenmann
- Sr. Juan L. Obarrio

For Costa Rica:

- Sr. Lic. Don José L. Cardona-Cooper, Chairman of the Commission
- Sr. Lic. Don Virgilio Aguiluz

For the United States:

- The Honorable Gordon W. Sloan, Secretary of the Commission
- The Honorable Lee F. Payne

Dr. M. B. Schaefer, Director of Investigations, and three members of the scientific staff were in attendance.

The following special observers were present from other Governments:

- Ecuador - His Excellency, Sr. Don Hugo Moncayo Veloz, Ambassador
- Chile - His Excellency, Almirante Don Enrique Lagrese, Ambassador
- Nicaragua - His Excellency, Sr. Don Mariano Barreto Portocarrero, Ambassador
- Guatemala - His Excellency, Sr. Don Manuel Orellana Cardona, Ambassador
- Peru - Sr. Don José Alvarado Sánchez, Chargé d'Affairs
- Mexico - Sr. Don Mario Armando Amador, Secretary of Embas-

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Also present were representatives of the Laboratorio Nacional de Pesca, members of the fishing industry, and others.

Sr. Lic. José L. Cardona-Cooper, Chairman of the Commission, made an opening speech, giving a brief history of the Commission, and welcoming the members, observers, and other persons present. He also presented individually the Observers

and Commissioners.

The Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries, Sr. Don Victor Navas, made a speech of cordial welcome in the name of the Government of Panama.

Mr. Gordon W. Sloan spoke on behalf of the United States Section of the Commission, expressing gratitude for the hospitality of the Government and people of Panama, and welcoming the observers.

Sr. Juan Obarrio spoke briefly on behalf of the Panamanian Section.

Sr. Lic. José L. Cardona-Cooper spoke on behalf of the Costa Rican Section. He suggested that the observers consider the desirability of the adherence of their Governments to the Convention, pointing out that the Commission is a purely scientific, non-political organization, and maintains a very good scientific staff for studying the fisheries of common concern to all the nations of the west coast of the Americas.

The tentative agenda which had been prepared for the meeting was unanimously approved and adopted. Thereafter, were taken up the several points on the agenda.

#### Approval for publication of the Annual Report for 1957

Copies of the draft of the Annual Report for the year 1957 had been sent to all Commissioners for review prior to the meeting. No modification was proposed.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that: The Annual Report for the year 1957, as drafted by the Director of Investigations be approved for publication.

#### Discussion of the present status of the fishery and the fish stocks, and of current research results.

At the request of the Chairman, Dr. Schaefer showed a number of slides illustrating the data respecting the current condition of the fishery and of the fish stocks. It was shown that, for each of the tuna species, the intensity of fishing remains below that corresponding to the maximum sustainable catch. Similar results have been obtained from study of the major anchoveta populations, the data for the Gulf of Panama being presented as an example. Due to economic circumstances the tuna-fishing fleet has declined in recent years, and a further decline appears in prospect during at least the next year.

The various researches being conducted on the population structure, biology, and ecology of the tunas and baitfishes, and on physical, chemical and biological oceanography, were presented and illustrated with slides.

A number of questions were asked about the details of some of the investigations, which were discussed.

#### Program of investigations for fiscal year 1958-1959; research program and budget for fiscal year 1959-1960.

At the suggestion of the Secretary, these two agenda items were discussed together.

The Director of Investigations had circulated prior to the meeting the following outline of proposed investigations during fiscal year 1958-1959, to be un-

undertaken with a budget of \$352,725 (plus \$10,000 for employee retirement plan, if adopted):

1. Collection, compilation and analysis of catch statistics, logbook data, and related information for the tunas and baitfishes.
  - a. Continue routine collection and compilation of current data.
  - b. Continue analyses to study changes in abundance and yield in space and time.
  - c. Continue research to improve indices of abundance and fishing effort, and to measure the co-variations in aggregations of fish and fishing effort.
  - d. Further development and application of theoretical models for the study of the fishery dynamics of the tunas and baitfishes.
  
2. Investigations of life history, biology, and population structure of the tunas.
  - a. Continue market measurement program at San Diego, San Pedro, and northern Peru.
  - b. Further research on age and growth from modes in size frequencies, with particular reference to areal and year-to-year variations.
  - c. Continued research on changes in abundance of age-groups in space and time by the combination of data on size frequencies and catch-per-unit-of fishing effort.
  - d. Morphometric studies - completion and publication of morphometric studies of tunas. This line of investigation to be then suspended because of lack of value.
  - e. Studies of tuna migrations.
    - (1) Tagging
      - (a) Continued improvement of tags and of tagging and recovery techniques.
      - (b) Continued full-scale tagging operations, aboard vessels based at California ports throughout the year.
      - (c) Tagging throughout the year from vessels based in Peru and perhaps also from vessels based in Ecuador.
    - (2) Inference of migration patterns from shifts of matching modal size groups (in market measurement samples) between contiguous sampling areas.
  - f. Studies of tuna maturation, spawning and early life history.
    - (1) Continued collection and analysis of data on maturity of gonads of tunas in commercial catches; collection to be discontinued in some areas where data are now adequate and concentrated on areas where samples are not yet adequate.
    - (2) Continuing study of collections of juvenile tunas collected incidentally to tagging, oceanographic, and other cruises.
    - (3) Continued study of occurrence of planktonic larvae; an additional special cruise for this purpose is to be made in May-June 1958 in the region of the Tres Marias, and additional cruises will be planned for 1959.

g. Studies of schooling habits of tunas

- (1) Continued collection and analysis of data on species and size composition of schools, collected by scientists aboard commercial vessels on tagging cruises.

3. Oceanography and tuna ecology

a. Continuing study of existing oceanographic and meteorological data for:

- (1) General description of the circulation of the Eastern Pacific.  
(2) Correlation of seasonal and annual variations in meteorological oceanographic, and biological features.

b. Continuation of analysis of physical and biological data from "Scope" cruise and from the "Island Current Survey" of 1957.

c. Conducting of a special cruise "SCOT", in cooperation with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, in April-June 1958 to obtain further general survey data on physical, chemical, and biological oceanography of the Eastern Pacific from California to Panama, and analysis of resulting data.

d. Detailed study of oceanic fronts, with special emphasis on how they act as concentrating mechanisms for tuna food organisms, in the vicinity of Baja California and the region offshore from the Tres Marias Islands; data to be gathered in conjunction with the cooperative expedition "SCOT".

e. Continued studies of the use of zooplankton indicator organisms to identify water masses.

f. Continuation of collection of quasi-synoptic surface temperature data from thermographs aboard commercial tuna-fishing vessels.

g. Continued cooperation with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the Consejo de Investigaciones Hidrobiológicas del Perú, and other agencies in the establishment of sea-level and water temperature recording equipment at selected points on the mainland and on outlying islands.

h. Continued work, primarily in cooperation with other agencies, on the development of instruments for obtaining time-series of oceanographic data from fixed or free-floating buoys.

i. Studies of physical, chemical and biological processes in selected areas of importance to the tunas; selection of areas and cruise plans to be made after completion of "SCOT".

4. Research on baitfishes.

a. Continued studies in the Gulf of Nicoya, Costa Rica, with primary emphasis on life history, biology and ecology of herrings (Oplisthonema).

b. Continued studies in the Gulf of Panama and adjacent areas off the Colombian coast of the life history, biology and ecology of the anchoveta stocks of that region.

- c. Continued collection of data and materials from other areas by tuna vessels and by special field trips.
- d. Continuation at headquarters and regional laboratories of studies of larval and juvenile stages of anchovetas and related species; increased attention to secondary bait species as various phases of anchoveta studies are brought to completion.

This program was briefly discussed and met with the approval of the Commissioners,

The Director has also transmitted, prior to the meeting, detailed recommendations for the research program for the following fiscal year (beginning 1 July 1959), together with estimates of funds required. This program is, essentially, a continuation of the program of the previous year, with some changes in emphasis on different projects. Although no increase in the level of work is planned, there will be required a small increase in funds, because of increased unit costs, for both personnel and facilities. This proposed program and budget were discussed.

It was then moved, seconded and unanimously approved that: (1) The proposed program of investigations, prepared and recommended by the Director of Investigations, for the fiscal year 1958-1959 is approved and adopted; and (2) The Commission approves the general program of investigations for the fiscal year 1959-1960, prepared by the Director of Investigations and previously transmitted to the Commissioners; to conduct these investigations there is recommended for the period 1 July 1959 through 30 June 1960 a budget of \$388,345 (including \$10,000 for an employee retirement plan).

Proportion of contributions by member Governments for fiscal year 1959-1960

At the request of the Chairman, Dr. Schaefer presented statistics of the utilization, during 1957, of the tropical tunas (as defined by the resolution of the 1953 annual meeting) by the three member governments:

United States of America	- 278,789,785 pounds
Costa Rica	- 551,324 pounds
Panama	- zero

Therefore, in accordance with the formula adopted by the Commission at its 1953 meeting, the contributions of the three member governments to the joint expenses should be:

United States of America	- 99.8%
Costa Rica	- 0.2%
Panama	- minimum contribution of \$500

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously adopted that: Contributions to the expenses of the Commission for fiscal year 1959-1960 shall be in the following proportions: United States of America 99.8%; Costa Rica 0.2%; Panama -- minimum contribution of \$500.

Status of employee retirement plan

Dr. Schaefer reported that the retirement plan, developed for the employees of the several international fisheries Commissions of which the United States is a member, had not been acceptable to 75% of the permanent employees of the Inter-

American Tropical Tuna Commission, and had not, therefore, been activated with respect to this Commission.

Certain changes in the plan are, however, being considered by the Board of Directors of the International Fisheries Commission Employee Retirement Fund, which may make it acceptable to our employees. Pending acceptance of the plan, no assessments are being made to the member governments for the costs thereof, although the item of \$10,000 for this purpose is included in the budget estimates.

#### Designation of observers at the International Conference on the Law of the Sea

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, as a specialized inter-governmental agency, had been invited to send observers to the International Conference to Examine the Law of the Sea, convening in Geneva on 24 February 1958, under auspices of the United Nations.

Dr. Schaefer had also been invited to attend the Conference, to serve the Secretariat of the Conference as an expert on Fisheries and related matters, at the expense of the United Nations.

It was suggested that Dr. Schaefer might serve as an observer for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission at no expense to the Commission. It was, however also suggested that some Commissioner might also wish to attend as an observer for this Commission, and that this would be desirable if it involved no cost to the Commission.

After some discussion of this matter, it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that: Dr. M. B. Schaefer, Director of Investigations, is authorized to attend the International Conference to Examine the Law of the Sea and to act as an observer for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission; also any Commissioner may attend this Conference and act as an observer for the Commission, the financing of such attendance to be worked out by such Commissioner and his own member government.

#### Election of officers for the next year

Sr. Don Juan L. Obarrio, of Panama, was nominated as Chairman of the Commission for the ensuing 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 ensuing year. This nomination was seconded, and he was unanimously elected.

#### Place and time of the next annual meeting

It was indicated that, in accordance with the custom of holding annual meetings in turn in each of the member countries, the next annual meeting should be held in the United States. It was also suggested that it would be desirable to hold the next meeting in San Pedro, California, and this met with general agreement.

The early part of February seemed to be the most convenient time of year for the Commissioners to hold this next annual meeting, and, due to logistics, the latter part of the week was deemed more suitable than the early part.

It was, therefore, moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that: The next annual meeting of the Commission will be held in San Pedro, California on the first Thursday in February (i.e., 6 February) 1959.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

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After a magnificent luncheon given by the Panamanian Government, the Commission's staff members showed films of tuna fishing by live bait, by purse seine, and by long-line, as well as of work aboard a research vessel.