

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSIONFOURTH TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

Noumea, New Caledonia

(21 - 29 October, 1970)

FISHERY ACTIVITIES IN FRENCH POLYNESIAA. COMMERCIAL FISHING IN FRENCH POLYNESIA

[There is no industrial fishing up to date. The production is fully absorbed by the Territory.

B. DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERY RESOURCES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS

[Production has increased consistently as a result of a greater number of fishing boats for bonito and tuna for deep sea fishing and the development of fisheries in the Tuamotu (cold storage plants, airstrips, etc.)

S P E C I E S		1968	1969
Pelagic fish:	Tuna	103	61
	Bonito	607	743
	Others	237	143
Reef fish (lagoon)		1,000	1,167
Total		2,047	2,114

Recorded as at 31.8.70: 120 bonito and tuna fishing boats
in French Polynesia (more than five
being built).
20 large nets.

C. LOCAL FISHERY ORGANISATION

The Territorial Fisheries Department was created in 1967 and placed under the direct authority of the Governor of French Polynesia.

Functions:

Inshore fishing, inland waterway fishing, aquaculture, statistics, applied pure research, fishery legislation, fishing techniques, training of fishermen, co-operatives, etc.

No responsibilities as far as maritime policing or navigation or fishing beyond territorial waters (which come under the Department of Maritime Affairs).

Organisation:

Twenty-three officers in 1970 of whom twenty-one are in the pay of the Territory and two are paid by Fides ("Fonds d'investissements pour le développement économique et social des territoires d'outre mer" - Investment Fund for the Economic and Social Development of Overseas Territories). The headquarters is at Papeete (Tahiti).

D. TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENTS OF LOCAL FISHING METHODS, PARTICULARLY IN REEF AND LAGOON FISHING

D.1 - Deepsea fishing (38% of the tonnage of fish sold on the Papeete market).

D.1.1 - Bonito and surface tuna (large boats, 8 to 10 tons, and equipped with more powerful engines, 80 to 180 h.p., enabling the fisherman to push out very far from the coast in their search for bonito and tuna shoals).

D.1.2 - Deepsea tuna: extension of the long line method of fishing. Two boats are using this method successfully. The third is about to start (boats of 15 to 25 tons which can use 60 to 70 baskets, i.e. 300 to 350 hooks per fishing day).

Annual percentage of catches per hook 3 to 3.5.

D.2 - Inshore fishing and reef and lagoon fishing.

D.2.1 - Large net fishing (7 to 11% of the tonnage of fish sold on the Papeete market).

Fishing is carried out in the passes and along the coasts which are exposed to the swell from outside. Seventeen large nets were numbered in Tahiti and Moorea. Each net requires 15 to 40 fishermen to be operated. Catches of Pelagic species include: akule or ature (Selar crumenophthalmus) and opelu or scadmackerel (Decapterus pinnulatus).

The use of very large nylon nets which are very strong increases considerably the output whilst reducing maintenance costs (catch may vary from 2 to 30 tons).

D.2.2 - Torch coastal fishing of "marara" on the barrier reef (2% of sales on the Papeete market).

Species: Exocaetus sp. About one hundred fishermen with light boats (12 to 14') with outboard engines (35 h.p.) use this method for fishing every evening. Previously this type of fishing was carried out from a canoe or a small fishing boat with a torch of coconut leaves.

D.2.3 - Lagoon fishing with harpoon gun. This method is widely used in French Polynesia. For all species of reef and lagoon fish (all types of harpoon gun).

D.2.4 - Lagoon fishing with a net. Widely used in French Polynesia with an output of 4% of sales on the Papeete market. It is used for reef and lagoon fish mostly. Strong, light and easy to use nylon nets.

D.2.5 - Lagoon fishing with traps (stone or metallic mesh enclosures): 31% of sales on the Papeete market.

This method of fishing is widely used in the Leeward Islands and Tuamotu and Gambien groups for all species of lagoon fish. (Metallic mesh instead of stone walls.)

Fishing methods and gear used improve considerably local fish output; unfortunately except for the pelagic species (tuna, bonito, akule or ature, opelu or scadmackerel, marara), the quantity of reef and lagoon fish is reducing. There have been cases of overfishing in the Tahiti and Moorea lagoons. Steps to conserve fauna are being considered (restrictions in certain fishing areas, methods and techniques which should be forbidden, etc.) in order to avoid unstocking the lagoons and to protect some vulnerable species.

E. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED FOR FUTURE PLANNING AND EXTENSION

E.2.1 - Study of coral lagoon resources.

Establishing of a Research and Experimental Regional Institute for Fisheries, Reefs and Lagoons).

This subject was raised at the Technical Meeting on Fisheries held in Nouméa in June 1968. The Rangiroa Lagoon is suggested as a research centre.

E.2.2 - Study on the industrialisation of the fresh water shrimp. (Macrobrachium sp.)

This project was initiated in 1970 by the Fisheries Department in Tahiti.

E.2.3 - Feasibility study of a chain of cold storage outstations and a cold storage plant for marketing fresh fish.

- Refrigeration equipment (cold chambers, ice plant, freezing tunnel, containers, etc.)
- Preparing, processing and packaging fresh fish (freezing, deep freezing, etc.)
- Use of refrigerating agents (fresh water ice, sea water ice, artificial ice)
- Suitable methods of fish conservation in tropical countries of the South Pacific.

E.2.4 - Feasibility study of a territorial canning factory.

Species of fish likely to be canned (for human consumption or animal consumption: poultry, pigs, cats, dogs, etc.)

E.2.5 - Study of the organisation of local fishermen's co-operatives.

Production and marketing co-operatives (fishermen, breeders of oysters, mother-of-pearl, pearls, etc.) as part of the projects under way in the Territory.

F. SPC AND SPIFDA AID TO LOCAL PROGRAMMES

F.1 - Study of coral lagoon resources (setting up of the research institute) Rangiroa.

The SPC and SPIFDA could provide the research personnel and equipment, and the Territory of French Polynesia could provide the ground, the place of work, transport in the lagoon.

F.2 - Study on fresh water shrimp breeding (Macrobrachium sp.)

Desirable visit to French Polynesia by Doctor S.W. Ling, for a period of three to six months (cost supported by SPC/FAO).

The Territorial participation in providing auxiliary staff equipment and funds to operate the laboratories and culture centres.

F.3 - Cold storage chain - Cold storage plant.

Cold storage specialist to be provided by SPC for three months, Territory responsible for all equipment and operation costs.

F.4 - Study visit of a specialist in co-operatives to French Polynesia

The SPC to support the expert (salary, etc.); transport and any further assistance to be provided by French Polynesia.

Original Text: French