

THE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE OF RAPA

The FAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (RAPA) covers 30 countries in the Region which produce 42 percent of the world's fish production. One of its functions is to monitor and report major development trends in food and agriculture, including fisheries, in the Region. In carrying out this function RAPA collects, produces and disseminates information to different countries. The servicing of fisheries information at RAPA is undertaken by 2 units, namely: 1) the Fisheries Section and 2) the RAPA Library. This paper summarizes the activities carried out.

1) The Fisheries Section

The Fisheries Section of RAPA is a very small unit and comprises two professional officers, the Regional Fishery Officer and the Regional Aquaculture Officer, a Technical Assistant and two secretaries. The Section is also the seat of the Indo-Pacific Fishery Commission Secretariat which has been active in dissemination of fisheries information since the establishment of the IPFC in 1949. The information dissemination activity of IPFC was carried out on a quite extensive scale in its early years upto the establishment of the FAO Fisheries Department in Rome in the mid 1960's. At that time the IPFC had a specific budget and a bigger staff posted in Bangkok. After the establishment of the FAO Fisheries Department some of the IPFC activities relating to servicing of fisheries information were transferred to the Fisheries Department. At present, there is neither a separate budget nor full-time staff assigned for the IPFC in RAPA. The Technical Assistant works part time on the servicing of fisheries information mostly by supplying copies of papers/reports, etc. and limited search/photo copying upon request, in addition to the servicing of sessions of the IPFC and some of its subsidiary bodies.

The types of materials distributed are classified into a) IPFC publications and b) RAPA publications concerning fisheries. These are referred to below.

A worldwide mailing list which includes about 700 addresses of government fisheries departments, research institutions, libraries, museums, etc. has been built up over the years on the basis of exchange of IPFC publications. As a result of this, a large collection of reference materials, fisheries papers, reports published by non-FAO sources has been accumulated. These materials were earlier kept in the Fisheries Section but are now kept in the RAPA library for proper cataloguing and filing. This mailing list also serves as the basis for the distribution of IPFC publications.

An average of over 500 requests for information/publications are received annually by the IPFC Secretariat and the Fisheries Section and every effort is made to provide the information. In cases where requests for reference materials on specific subject matters are not available at RAPA, these are referred to the FAO Fisheries Department

library in Rome for on line-bibliographical retrieval from the FAO data base.

a) IPFC publications

The Indo-Pacific Fishery Commission has been instrumental in the development of data and information. The Commission, with 19 member countries, conducts regular sessions every two years to review the state of development of the fisheries of the Region, the problems involved and the needs of its member governments for fisheries management and development. The proceedings of these sessions are published and distributed on the basis of the worldwide mailing list of the Commission. Copies of working papers presented at IPFC Sessions are kept in file and are provided on request.

IPFC also conducts symposia in conjunction with most of its sessions on a wide variety of topical fisheries subjects identified by the Commission. Reports of these symposia and the papers presented are published and distributed.

In addition to these publications, reports of meetings of the six IPFC Subsidiary Bodies are published and distributed to member countries and are also available upon request.

A collection of all IPFC publications is maintained by the IPFC Secretariat. The publications are available for reference.

Fishery Reports, Technical Papers, Fisheries Statistical Yearbooks, etc. published by the Fisheries Department in Rome are also available with the Secretariat. These are available for reference but not for distribution.

A list of recent IPFC publication is given in Appendix 1.

b) RAPA publications

From time to time RAPA publishes and distributes reports/studies on fisheries subjects of topical interest generally based on the work of consultants. RAPA also publishes reports of seminars, expert consultations, etc. organized by RAPA. A list of recent RAPA reports relating to fisheries is also given in Appendix 1.

2. RAPA Library

The Library contains over 16,000 titles in the field of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and related subjects, 300 periodicals, maps, pamphlets, microfiches, etc. Out of this total, books, serial periodicals, etc. directly relating to fisheries comprise about 1,500. The subject coverage includes fishing technology, fisheries biology, oceanography, limnology, aquaculture, post-harvest technology, fisheries socio-economics and stock assessment, mostly concerning the Asia and Pacific Region.

Some of the publications are obtained by purchase, though a large number are acquired through exchange and gifts.

The Library also keeps a special collection of FAO reports, projects reports, documents from United Nations bodies and related international research institutions.

The services offered by the library are as follows:

a) Information on publications

- i) issue of a monthly list of library accessions;
- ii) issue list of periodicals received by the library; for in-house circulation
- iii) preparation of bibliographies upon request;
- iv) circulation of publications to RAPA Officers.

b) Making publications available

- i) loan from the library collection;
- ii) interlibrary loan;
- iii) placing of acquisition requests; and
- iv) photocopying service.

Appendix 1

A List of Recent IPFC Publications:

1. Report of the 5th Session of the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the South China Sea, Bangkok, Thailand, July 1985.
2. Report of the 3rd Session of the IPFC Working Party of Experts on Inland Fisheries and Workshop on Strategies for the Management of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems, Bangkok, Thailand, June 1986.
3. Report of the Twenty-second Session of IPFC, Darwin, Australia, February 1987.
4. Report of the Symposium on the Exploitation and Management of Marine Fishery Resources in Southeast Asia, Darwin, Australia, February 1987.
5. Volume of papers presented at the Symposium on the Exploitation and Management of Marine Fishery Resources in Southeast Asia, Darwin, Australia, February 1987.
6. Report of the 5th Session of the Standing Committee on Resources Research and Development (SCORRAD), Darwin, Australia, February 1987.
7. Report of the Seventh Session of the IPFC Working Party on Fish Technology and Marketing, Bangkok, Thailand, April 1988.
8. Report of the 4th Session of the IPFC Working Party of Experts on Inland Fisheries, Kathmandu, Nepal, July 1988.
9. Report of the 7th Session of the IPFC Working Party of Experts on Aquaculture, Bangkok, Thailand, August 1988 - (in press).
10. Report of 6th Session of the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the South China Sea, Manila, Philippines, December 1988 - (in press).

A List of Recent RAPA Publications Relating to Fisheries:

1. Aquaculture in Asia-Pacific Region, 1983
2. Fisheries Sector - National Development Plan Strategies of Developing Countries in Asia-Pacific Region, 1984.
3. Marine Small-scale Fisheries of the Maldives, 1986.
4. Marine Small-scale Fisheries of Indonesia, 1986.
5. Directory of Marine Fisheries Training and Education Institutions in Countries Bordering the Bay of Bengal, 1986.

6. Field and Laboratory Investigations into Ulcerative Fish Diseases in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1986.
7. Report of the Expert Consultation on Ulcerative Fish Diseases in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1986.
8. Fishermen and Fishing Communities in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1987.
9. Seaweed Culture in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1986.