

REPORT OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON HAKES
IN CECAF DIVISIONS 34.1.1, 34.1.2, 34.1.3 and 34.3.1

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Group met in Tenerife from June 5-9 as a result of a resolution made at the fifth session of CECAF in Lome in March 1977 (Res. CECAF/V/2).

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives are to evaluate the state of exploitation of the stocks of hakes in the northern zone of the CECAF area (Divisions 34.1.1, 34.1.2, 34.1.3, 34.3.1), and to propose management measures.

3. PARTICIPANTS

Messrs. H. Lima Dias	Chairman/Coordinator
Bas, Carlos	Spain
Bravo de Laguna, Jerónimo	Spain
Brêthes, Jean-Claude	Morocco
Jones, Rodney	FAO Consultant
Pereiro, J.A.	Spain
Robles, Rafael	Spain
Sidorov, K.S.	U.S.S.R.
Stoudenetski, S.A.	U.S.S.R.
Ansa-Emmim, M.	CECAF Project

4. TAXONOMY AND DISTRIBUTION

There are three species of hake in the area off the north west of Africa.

These are: Merluccius merluccius, M. senegalensis and M. cadenati (Bravo de Laguna, in press).

Merluccius merluccius is the most northern of the three species and is mainly found between the Straits of Gibraltar and latitude 28°N. In this region, the adults are mainly found in waters 100-500 m depth, the largest individuals (>40 cm) occurring in water more than 300m in depth. Juveniles (< 30cm) are most abundant in water 50-150 m in depth.

M. senegalensis is an African species that is distributed from the southern coasts of Morocco to Guinea. This is a more southerly species than M. merluccius and the main concentrations are found between latitudes 13° and 20° N.

Adults occur in depths of 100-400 m, the principal concentrations being between 80 and 120 m. Juveniles (< 25 cm) are mainly found between 35 and 75 m.

M. cadenati is also a more southerly species than M. merluccius, the main concentrations occurring between latitudes 8° and 22° N, and in depths of 150m to 300 m.

5. STOCK SEPARATION

The distributions of the three species overlap so that no clear lines of demarcation can be drawn.

To first approximation, however, it was noted that M. merluccius is found principally in divisions 34.1.1, 34.1.2 and 34.1.3 whereas M. senegalensis and M. cadenati are most abundant in division 34.3.1.

It is uncertain to what extent the stocks of M. merluccius are part of the stocks of hake found further north and in particular off the coast of Portugal. It was noted, however, that off northern Morocco, catches per unit effort are small, and that Spanish vessels, working out of ports in the south west of Spain, have to steam a considerable distance south before they obtain commercially attractive catches.

It was agreed that, lacking data to suggest otherwise, the stocks of M. merluccius could be treated as separate from those further north and that the Straits of Gibraltar could be taken arbitrarily as a line of separation.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE FISHERIES

The principal countries fishing for hake are Spain, Morocco, the Soviet Union and Portugal.

6.1 Spain

The Spanish fleet works out of ports in south-west Spain and fishes in divisions 34.1.1, 34.1.2, 34.1.3, and 34.3.1. There are 3 classes of vessels: "Bacas", "Trios" and "Bous".

"Bacas" are trawlers that work individually for a variety of species, including hakes. The fish are transported fresh on ice. The vessels average 210 GRT, 545 HP and 28.9 m total length.

"Bous" are trawlers that fish particularly for hakes south of latitude 23°N. Average vessel dimensions in 1976 were 322 GRT, 1028 HP and 36.7 m total length.

"Trios" are groups of 3 vessels. At any one time, two of these work as pair trawlers while the third transports fish to port. These vessels fish for a variety of species, including hakes.

On average, Spanish vessels fish . . . in depths of about 300 m.

6.2 Morocco

Moroccan vessels fish the northern part of division 34.1.1, north of latitude 29°N. The main species of hake captured is M. merluccius and the vessels operate principally out of Casablanca, Agadir and Las Palmas.

Small trawlers, of 30-50 tons, fish relatively close to the coast, in depths up to 120 m. Trips last for 1-3 days and the fish are landed fresh, in ice. Some large trawlers, greater than 140 tons, have been introduced since 1972 and fish further afield.

In addition, there are some very small vessels, that fish very close to the coast, using handlines or fixed nets. The hake catch of these vessels is relatively unimportant however.