

Seventh Fisheries Technical Meeting

Country Statement

Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony

1. General

Departmental headquarters are at Betio, Tarawa. The replacement Marine Biologist arrived in January 1974. Application has been made for a considerable increase in staff mainly at the lower levels, so that over a period of five years it should be possible to have fisheries staff on all islands in the Colony.

1.1. Staff

- i. Chief Fisheries Officer
- ii. Fisheries Officers. 3 posts.
- iii. Marine Biologist U.N.D.P.
- iv. Senior Fisheries Assistant 2 posts.
- v. Fisheries Assistants 4 posts.
- vi. Clerical staff.

J.W. Hughson left the Colony in December 1973. The post is being filled by A.L. Macdonald in an Acting capacity.

A graduate in Biology at the U.S.P. has been recruited as counterpart to the U.N.D.P. Marine Biologist.

2. Survey Vessels

- 2.1. Locally constructed steel hulled craft, 13 metres in length is engaged in surveys and as support craft for the dories. Administered from headquarters at Tarawa.
- 2.2. Two, Suva built Karitane 9 m. glass fibre launches. One at Funafuti and the other at Christmas Island.
- 2.3. Four, locally constructed 7.3m. dories. Two power by Ford engines driving Hamilton jets and two powered by Volvo Penta inboard-outboard units.
- 2.4. Several miscellaneous craft, skiffs, canoes etc.

3. Survey

3.1. Gilbert Islands Surveys

The Live bait tuna survey undertaken jointly with Van Camps has now been replaced in the Gilberts by a survey using four dories. The aim of the survey is to establish whether the dory type of craft is capable of catching tuna in commercial quantities, whether the hull and propulsion unit are suitable for use on outer islands and to give recommendations for the operation of a small boat industry. The results so far are encouraging.

3.1.2. Bait Fish

It is considered that there is not at present sufficient live bait in Colony waters to warrant further investment in a live bait tuna industry.

3.1.3. Dried/Salt cured fish

Extension staff are now working on Abemama. A small dried fish industry will begin shortly. The products, will be sold in Urban Tarawa and any excess exported.

3.1.4. Bait Fish Culture

The U.N.D.P. Marine Biologist has established that large quantities of fish food exist in Tarawa lagoon, and he is hopeful of good results in his Bait fish culture experiments. Construction of fish ponds and holding areas is in progress. It should be possible to start culture work in August.

The U.N.D.P. Marine Biologist attended a workshop on bait fish in

3.2.1 Brine Shrimp

A pilot project has now been started jointly operated by staff of the University of Hawaii and the Development Authority of the Colony. Four lagoons have been seeded and results so far seem promising.

3.2.2. Tuna Trolling

Surveys are still being undertaken.

3.2.3. Spiny - Lobster

A survey to establish the size of this resource is in progress.

3.3 Ellice Islands

A project aimed at upgrading a subsistence fishery by the introduction of improved gear and mechanisation of existing canoes is being undertaken at Funafuti. The project will extend to outer islands at a later date.

Owing to lack of facilities catches are being dried/salt cured. No assessment as yet.

4. Projects

4.1. Projects-on-going

The Fisheries Division administers four U.K. Aid granted projects and one U.N.D.P. funded country programme. Total funding amounts to approximately \$450,000

4.1.1. Fisheries Survey (U.K.Aid. 230,000)

Administration, infrastructural and overall running costs of Fisheries Survey.

4.1.2. Funafuti Fisheries Development Complex

Infrastructural costs to establish a Fisheries Survey base in the Ellice Islands and for demonstrational programmes with other measures for upgrading the existing subsistence fishery.

4.1.3. The project involves the construction by the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Development Authority's shipyard division, of four 7.5 m. dories, acquisition of an ice-making plant and 12 months running costs to evaluate the potential of this type of craft under local conditions.

4.1.4. Marine Biologist Counter-part contribution (U.K.Aid \$25,000)

Experimental ponds, field laboratory etc. for the programme designed for the Marine Biologist's appointment.

Marine Biologist U.N.D.P. Country Programme (U.N. funded \$70,000)

Emoluments, equipment etc.

4.2 Projects: Planning proposals

Depending upon the success of present surveys projects based upon the findings will be formulated.

4.2.1. Twenty dory project

When the present 4 dory survey is complete towards the end of this year it will be decided on the results, whether the project should be extended to using 20 dories. The object of this extension would be to establish the commercial viability of fleets of dories operating from outer islands.

4.2.2. Bait Fish Culture

A high priority is attached to the culture of bait within the Colony. If present surveys prove culture possible a further 300 acres of ponds and lagoons will be necessary for culture on a commercial scale.

4.2.3 Spiny Lobster

A small scale lobster industry should be possible on Christmas Island and a number of outer islands

4.2.4. Beche-de-mer

A limited resource exists. A project is being prepared at present

4.2.5. Ellice Islands fishery

It is hoped that the present project will prove the possibility of extending training and demonstration to other islands in the group.

4.2.6. General

