

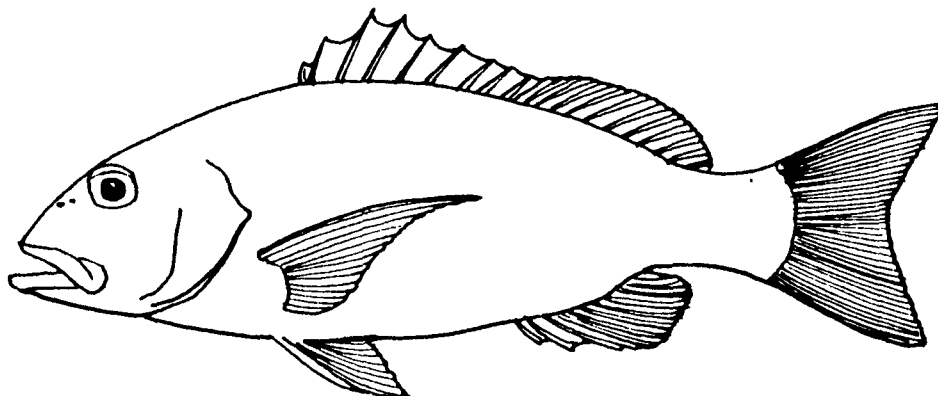
Both the Community Education Training Centre and its annual course were covered in detail under the *Focus on women* in the previous issue of *Pacific Impact* (Vol. 1, No. 4, December 1988).



INSHORE FISHERIES RESEARCH PROJECT

Analysis of deep-water fishing data commences

In January, ICLARM scientist Paul Dalzell started a six-month secondment to the Inshore Fisheries Research Project (IFRP). During this attachment, Paul's main task will be to examine existing SPC catch and effort data collected by the Commission's Master Fishermen during field fishing projects over the past 10 years or so. Data on over 100 fishing locations throughout the Pacific Islands are held by the Commission, and in some cases there is information collected from repeat visits made over a period of several years. These data have been used to compile individual country reports but have never been analysed in a comparative sense. It is hoped that the present project will provide insights into the effects of fishing on exploited deep-bottom fish populations in the Pacific Islands, and highlight some of the environmental, geographic and other factors that lead to differences in the nature of the deep-bottom fish resource.



So far, progress with the project has been good. Data entry software has been written and part of the data has been coded and entered onto a micro-computer to allow for rapid information sorting, retrieval and analysis. At the same time, a draft document containing summary information on fishing results from every location where the Commission has carried out deep bottom fishing has been compiled. This will be supplemented with information from non-SPC projects prior to publication later in the year.

Pacific Island Marine Resource Information System (PIMRIS)

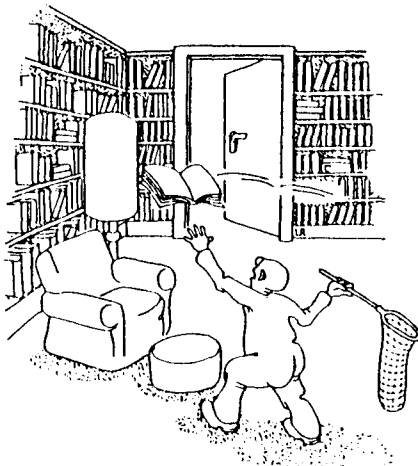
The difficulties of access to information on technical fisheries topics has been a major problem for Pacific Island fisheries development over the years. A great deal of research and development work carried out in the region never gets properly documented, and when it does, it frequently does not find its way into the hands of those who could best make use of it. As a result, the same work may be duplicated at different times or places, leading to an obvious waste of financial and manpower resources that may be better deployed elsewhere.



The Pacific Island Marine Resource Information System has been developed to try to overcome these difficulties, which are attributed variously to communications difficulties, limited document production facilities, inadequate resources for the maintenance of libraries or information collections, and high levels of staff turnover in fisheries departments and similar institutions. PIMRIS started out in 1987 as a collaborative activity between SPC, the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and the University of the South Pacific's Information Centre (USP-PIC); it has recently been joined by the Committee for the Co-ordination of Offshore Prospecting in the South Pacific (CCOP-SOPAC), and other organisations may also participate as PIMRIS develops.

The PIMRIS Steering Committee, consisting of representatives of the four organisations, met for the first time in March 1989 to discuss progress and plan for the future. With funding support for various elements now committed, the appointment of a PIMRIS co-ordinator at USP-PIC, and the impending (April 1989) appointment of a Fisheries Information Officer at SPC, PIMRIS is now starting to develop its activities and services.

Each organisation has a different, complementary role. USP-PIC will act as a central archive and is at present starting work on the establishment of the PIMRIS database, a bibliographic catalogue of all marine-resource related documents and other types of information produced in the region. A particular effort will be made to acquire and catalogue the large body of ephemera - unpublished reports, project documents and other useful but largely uncirculated forms of 'grey literature', that presently sit gathering dust in offices and filing cabinets around the region. Libraries at each participating organisation will undertake to submit their own catalogue records to USP-PIC for possible inclusion in the PIMRIS database. The database, or selected parts of it, can then be made available, either as hard copy or on diskette, to users in the region.



SPC's main role in PIMRIS will be in making sure information reaches those who can best make use of it. As well as upgrading the SPC *Fisheries Newsletter*, SPC is also increasing its capacity to provide a question-and-answer service, carry out literature searches and retrieval, and seek technical advice from specialists within and outside SPC. Most of these activities will be co-ordinated by the Commission's newly-appointed Fisheries Information Officer.

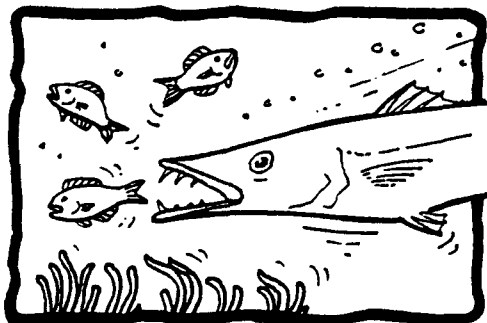
Additionally, SPC is working towards the establishment of a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) on technical topics. Each SIG will consist of a network of individuals with similar interests in fishery technical research or development topics, who undertake to provide information on their work from time to time. SIG members will receive periodic information

packages and will be encouraged to communicate with each other and with SPC on the SIG topic. To initiate the SIGs, a questionnaire was circulated in 1988. A copy is enclosed with this magazine, and interested parties are invited to complete it and return it to:

The Inshore Fisheries Research Project
South Pacific Commission
B.P. D5
Noumea Cedex
New Caledonia.

Ciguatera testing in Federated States of Micronesia

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has big plans to develop fish exports from the various Micronesian states in the coming years, and is concerned that fear of ciguatera toxicity will reduce consumer acceptance of FSM fish overseas. As a result, the FSM Federal Government's Office of Marine Resources plans to carry out testing of selected fish, using the 'poke-stick' test recently developed in Hawaii, to identify high-risk species or areas for ciguatoxicity. Hopefully, more information on the distribution of ciguatoxicity will help ensure that toxic fish are excluded from export shipments.



Since the testing procedure is expensive, and the number of tests the government can carry out is limited by the budget, a statistical sampling programme needs to be devised to maximise the effectiveness of testing. SPC scientist Paul Dalzell, presently on secondment from ICLARM, travelled to FSM in March on a five-week assignment to assist in the design of the sampling programme. This will be based on existing fishery and medical statistics that might throw light on the relative geographical incidence of ciguatera and its relation to the distribution of fishing effort. Local knowledge of ciguatera 'hot spots' and seasonality is also expected to contribute to the development of the sampling programme.

GRANTS-IN-AID

YOUTH AWARD PROJECTS 1989

These grants are awarded by the SPC Youth Programme for the purpose of organising and conducting in-country training courses or workshops, and for attachment training on youth activities within the region. A total of 2,500,000 CFP francs from the SPC budget is available for this purpose, as well as an amount of NZ\$ 10,000 provided by the Government of New Zealand. The following eight projects have already been approved and funded for 1989: