

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

FIFTH TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

Noumea, New Caledonia

10 - 11 August 1972

REPORT

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Noumea, New Caledonia
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Election of Office Bearers	1
Administrative Arrangements	2
Country Statements	2
A Programme for Fisheries Development	5
The Future of SPIFDA - Proposed Work Programme	5
Alternative Proposals for Regional Fisheries Projects	6
South Pacific Commission Fisheries Programme	6
Fisheries Research	8
Training	8
Other Business	8
Conservation of Natural Resources	8
Territorial Waters	9
The Dory Project, American Samoa	9
Next Meeting	11
Summary of Recommendations	13
 <u>APPENDICES</u>	
I - List of Participants	15
II - Opening Address by The Honourable G.F.D. Betham, Secretary-General of the South Pacific Commission	19
III - Agenda	21
IV - List of Statements and Papers presented at the Meeting	23

INTRODUCTION

1. The South Pacific Commission, at its Thirty-Fourth Session (1971), made provision for holding a Technical Meeting on Fisheries - the fifth such meeting - during 1972.
2. It was decided at the Session that, due to the high cost of interpretation and servicing staff, it was not possible to hold the meeting in Tahiti as recommended by the Fourth Technical Meeting on Fisheries (1970), and consequently the meeting took place at the South Pacific Commission Headquarters, Noumea on 10 - 11 August 1972, following the Third Meeting of the SPIFDA Consultative Committee.
3. Because of the limited time available for the Meeting, emphasis was placed on an up-to-date assessment of territorial requirements and consideration of the fisheries development section of the Work Programme of the South Pacific Commission over the period 1973 - 1976.
4. The Meeting was attended by representatives of nine countries/territories, together with observers from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, including the staff of SPIFDA, the United States Peace Corps, the University of the South Pacific, the University of Oregon, and the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (See Appendix I for the list of participants).
5. The Meeting was opened by the Secretary-General of the South Pacific Commission, Mr. G.F.D. Betham. A copy of the Secretary-General's opening address is given in Appendix II.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

(Agenda Item 2)

6. Mr P. Wilson (Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands) was unanimously elected Chairman, and Mr S. Stein (French Polynesia) was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman.
7. Mr A. Harris (South Pacific Commission) was appointed as Rapporteur.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(Agenda Item 3)

8. The draft Agenda, which had been circulated, was approved (see Appendix III). However it was decided, because of the limited time available for the Meeting, to permit discussions to take place in a more informal manner than was customary, in order that the most important questions could be given adequate attention.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS

(Agenda Item 4)

9. A list of written statements and papers presented to the meeting is contained in Appendix IV. In addition, most representatives provided oral resumés of the requirements of their countries/territories. As in the case of the Fourth Technical Meeting on Fisheries, attention was repeatedly drawn to the increasing wealth of expertise available within the Pacific Island countries/territories, and the belief that this expertise should and could be used by other countries and territories to a much greater extent. Coupled with this was the belief that a greater interchange of ideas and techniques was desirable, and that the South Pacific Commission should concentrate on developing this interchange to the maximum possible extent.

10. British Solomon Islands Protectorate referred in its Report to the advent of the Taiyo Fishery Co. Ltd. which commenced a survey of skipjack resources in June 1971. The waters of the Eastern outer islands have not yet been surveyed. Negotiations for a permanent venture will take place later this year. Reference was also made to commercial operations concerning crayfish, trochus shell, Tilapia, bêche-de-mer, and sharks' fins. The interest of Solomon Islanders in the possibilities of commercial fishing has grown greatly in the last two years. Exports of marine products increased from \$107,000 in 1970 to \$1,321,000 in 1971. Recruitment of a Fisheries Officer is under way. Technical assistance has been obtained from various sources including FAO, SPIFDA and the SPC. Further assistance has been requested.

11. Fiji. The report referred to the developments which had occurred over the past two years, which had included substantial development of the Fisheries Division, and additional fisheries vessels. The Division had been principally engaged in the development of small unit fisheries. The UNDP Tuna Project was established in 1971. Future efforts will be directed towards consolidation of the small unit fisheries, completion of the UNDP Tuna Project and the expansion of oyster culture using ferro-cement rafts. (See Working Paper N° 2) Provision of training facilities will be given special priority. Expansion of extension services, formation of a Fish Marketing Authority, establishment of a bêche-de-mer industry and work on fisheries statistics are also planned. Technical assistance will be needed for aquaculture (especially oysters), baitfish investigation and training.
12. Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony presented a paper (Working Paper N° 1) on "Deep Hand-Lining for Yellow-Fin Tuna at Funafuti, Ellice Islands". The paper describes work done in surveying the tuna resources of the area, the fishing techniques which have been used, the results which have been obtained, and problems which have arisen. The results so far obtained are reported as justifying an in-depth study.
13. Papua New Guinea. The major development in this period has been the predicted exploitation of skipjack tuna. Preliminary surveys by one joint venture company in 1970 were followed by further surveys over a wider area by the same company and two others, which will continue for one more year. Catch rates have been sufficient to induce long term proposals for shore processing including smoked dried tuna (already in production) and canneries. The other export fisheries (barramundi, prawns or shrimps, tropical rock lobsters, pearls) have stabilised in the two year period. Other minor, long established exports of bêche-de-mer and shell have been stable for many years. There has been a continued trend to commercial fisheries, away from subsistence, in non-export commodities but the majority of the catch remains non-commercial.
14. Planned future developments include the management of resources in the light of research findings, exploration of additional resources, encouragement of local commercial fisheries, and improvement of subsistence fishing methods.

15. The Fisheries Service in Papua New Guinea is part of the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries. In 1968 the Department was re-organised and the Division of Fisheries was separated into two sections, one appended to the Division of Planning and Development (now Field Operations) and one to the Research and Surveys Division. Both sections have been expanded considerably in the period under review. The Fisheries Research Section now includes ten graduates and a staff of 66, based at Kanudi, engaged in a variety of programmes on the economically important species: tuna, barramundi, molluscs, freshwater and others.

16. On the commercial development of Papua New Guinea fisheries approximately 100 vessels, mostly in the 35 - 75 ft. range, are licensed to operate from ports in the Territory although not all these are necessarily operational at any given time and some may in fact be engaged in other activities. In addition the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries has established commercial freezers in most main centres as a means of encouraging indigenous fishing operations.

17. Wallis and Futuna Islands. Reference was made in the Report to fishing boat construction and purchases over the past two years. It is hoped to acquire further boats during the next two years, to increase the fishing capacity, particularly in Futuna. It is also hoped to acquire an ice-making machine and cold storage facilities, and to establish a marketing cooperative. Technical assistance required over the next two years, including technical information and boat designs, was outlined.

18. Western Samoa. The report referred to the developments which had taken place in the Division of Fisheries since its formation in January 1970. Fisheries development had aimed at establishing autonomous village fishing societies (42) whose main purpose was to catch fresh fish for general distribution. A great advance in the general standard of fishing practice and seamanship had been observed. A 38-foot ferro cement fishing boat had been constructed and a tuna fishery project established. Plans for the future include extension of the village fishing association concept, development of the tuna fishery project, and the progressive establishment of commercial fisheries operations.

19. Other matters raised by representatives during this part of the discussion will be included under following headings.

A PROGRAMME FOR FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

(Agenda Item 5)

20. The general conclusion of the meeting was that it would not be profitable to consider an overall programme of fisheries development for the Pacific area. It would be preferable to consider the fields in which regional action was necessary or desirable, to consider which of these fields was sufficiently met under approved or proposed programmes of other institutions or agencies, e.g. the work programme recommended for SPIFDA, and then to consider the work programme of the South Pacific Commission.

THE FUTURE OF SPIFDA - PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMMES

(Agenda Items 6 and 7)

21. The recommendations contained in the Report of the Third SPIFDA Consultative Committee were considered and strongly supported, particularly those supporting continuation of the SPIFDA project.

22. If the SPIFDA project were to be extended beyond 30 June 1973 for a further period of two years, as recommended by the Consultative Committee, the problem facing the Fifth Technical Meeting was reduced to defining a fisheries development programme for the South Pacific Commission which would meet the remaining needs of the region. Such a complementary programme for the Commission will be considered below (Paragraphs 26 to 31).

23. If, on the other hand, arrangements could not be made to extend the SPIFDA project, then the Meeting considered that the Commission should accept responsibility for providing continuing supervision and advice to the various projects initiated under the SPIFDA programme. The Meeting pointed out that, under the SPIFDA Plan of Operation, it was envisaged that the SPC Fisheries Officer would be required to accept responsibility for this continuing task, and it was for this reason that the SPC Fisheries Officer was nominated under the Plan of Operation as Co-Manager of SPIFDA.

24. In order to ensure that the impetus in marine resources development initiated by SPIFDA is not wasted and in the event that SPIFDA is not continued beyond July 1973 due to financial stringency on the part of UNDP, and appreciating the problems of coordination and supervision in current projects that are likely to arise after July 1973, the Meeting recommends very strongly to the Twelfth South Pacific Conference:

- (a) that adequate financial and other support be given to the SPC Fisheries Officer so that he can coordinate on-going projects and disseminate information of fisheries interest generally, and progress of individual projects in particular, to all territories in the Commission area before and after July 1973;
- (b) that provision be included in the SPC's budget for 1973/74 to enable the training fellowship aspects of the present projects to be continued.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES PROJECTS

(Agenda Item 8)

25. Generally, the Meeting strongly supported the use of SPIFDA for undertaking long term regional projects (see page 4 of 1970 Report). Having regard to the content of the work programme proposed for the extended SPIFDA project, the Meeting considered that there was no need for any further regional fisheries projects involving UNDP assistance. If approval was not obtained for extension of the SPIFDA project in any form this conclusion would need to be reviewed, but until this could be done the Meeting proposed that SPC should accept responsibility for providing continuing supervision and advice to the various projects initiated under the SPIFDA programme (see Paragraph 23 above).

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION FISHERIES PROGRAMME

(Agenda Item 9)

26. The Meeting reviewed the programme of work in fisheries development proposed for the Commission by the Fourth Technical Meeting on Fisheries (1970). The Meeting concluded that the aims and objectives set out in that Report on pages 2 to 4 should still be strongly supported. In particular, emphasis was given to the need for improving the standard of service under the heading "Fisheries Intelligence Service" (pages 2-3 of the 1970 Report). This was felt to be the most important service which the Commission could render to the countries and territories of the Pacific.

27. Within the training area, the previously stated objectives (page 10 of the 1970 Report) were supported, but it was considered that rather than making recommendations for specific training activities in each year, it would be preferable to provide funds each year to permit two or three training courses to be held. The most appropriate courses being determined by the SPC Fisheries Officer in consultation with governments and administrations.
28. Similarly, the Meeting considered that provision should be made each year for holding a Symposium or Seminar to enable regional fisheries personnel to be kept up to date in their knowledge of recent advances in techniques, etc. (see page 4 of 1970 Report). The subject to be chosen each year by the SPC Fisheries Officer in consultation with governments and administrations, not necessarily from the list drawn up in 1970.
29. The Meeting, recognising that countries of the South Pacific were engaged also in fisheries research and development activities outside the present scope of SPIFDA, noting that the terms of reference of the SPC Fisheries Officer cover a wide range of activities, further noting that according to the SPIFDA Plan of Operation the SPC Fisheries Officer is obliged to devote his full time to the duties of Co-Manager of SPIFDA, recommended to the South Pacific Conference that an additional post of Fisheries Officer be established for the duration of the SPIFDA project, so that the fisheries activities of the SPC, as set out in the Report of the Fourth Technical Meeting on Fisheries (1970) will not suffer.
30. The Meeting suggests that, if the above recommendation is approved, the two posts be identified as follows:
- | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Fisheries Officer A | : | Co-Manager, SPIFDA |
| Fisheries Officer B | : | Fisheries Information Officer |
31. The Meeting observed that the various Pacific countries and territories support a wide and growing range of fisheries specialists, and recommended that the interchange of such experts be encouraged by the territories themselves, by the Commission, FAO and other funding agencies. The Meeting felt that the creation of a second post of Fisheries Officer would greatly facilitate the full use of experts located in the area by all the countries and territories of the region.

FISHERIES RESEARCH

(Agenda Item 10)

32. University of the South Pacific. Professor C. Lindsey outlined to the Meeting the programme of work which was to be undertaken in the field of Marine Resources at the University of the South Pacific under the Canadian Government grant, and invited the Pacific countries and territories to get in touch with him, should they wish to obtain assistance from the University in their own problems, or if they were able to cooperate in carrying out his research programme.

33. Toxic Fish. The Committee is concerned at the lack of definitive results from organisations which have been engaged in prolonged research into protoxins, particularly the several forms of fish poisoning (including turtle poisoning). It is particularly disappointing to learn that the UNDP project, for which SPIFDA support was sought and given (see Second Consultative Committee Report, page 26) has not yet commenced. Therefore this Meeting recommended that UNDP be urged to pursue the investigations and to note the content of the cable sent by the Second SPIFDA Consultative Committee to the UNDP representative for the Western Pacific at Apia in October 1971.

TRAINING

(Agenda Item 11)

34. This subject was considered under the heading "South Pacific Commission Fisheries Programme" (See paragraphs 27 and 28).

OTHER BUSINESS

(Agenda Item 12)

35. Conservation of Natural Resources. Concern was expressed by the Meeting that fisheries development should proceed with due regard to the need to make the most effective use of natural resources and to observe accepted conservation principles and practices. The Meeting expressed the wish that the Commission should produce simply worded publications, films etc. on principles of conservation. The Meeting was advised of the negotiations in progress between the SPC, the University of Guam and officials of the Territory of Guam, with a view to holding a Seminar in Guam during May/June 1973 either just before or just after the next meeting of the Pacific Science Association. The purposes of the Seminar would be to discuss conservation education problems and the question of educational aids would certainly arise at that Seminar. The Meeting strongly supported the holding of this Seminar.

36. Territorial Waters. The Meeting expressed its concern about possible depletion of tuna stocks by foreign-crewed vessels operating in these waters. The Meeting was even more concerned about such vessels fishing within territorial waters.

37. The Meeting would like to see a regional approach to this problem, particularly in respect to the definition of territorial limits and the possible methods for enforcing any necessary legislation. The Meeting therefore endorsed the recommendations of the Fourth Technical Meeting (1970). (Item XXI, page 17).

38. The Dory Project, American Samoa. Professor R. Barry Fisher (Oregon State University) reported on a dory building and fishing project currently underway in American Samoa. The project was funded by the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity.

39. The dories constructed in American Samoa are the Oregon type dory which is a rugged, simple to construct seaworthy and very fast day boat for beyond the reef fishing.

The objectives of the project were:

- (a) To teach Samoans to construct dories locally;
- (b) To provide Samoans with opportunities to engage in open ocean fishing such as bottom fishing and tuna trolling at reasonable investment costs;
- (c) To prove the dory's suitability as a logical day fishing boat for many Pacific island fisheries;
- (d) To generate private income and supplies of fresh fish in the Samoan market.

40. The construction of dories began on January 22, 1972 in Pago Pago, American Samoa. A team of two boat builders, a mechanic and a technical adviser began training Samoans. To date (August 14, 1972) nine dories have been completed and are engaged in bottom handline fishing and tuna trolling.

41. Limited experience generated to date adequately proves the attainment of the project's objectives. The Samoans are quite capable of turning out quality dories. Boats with properly trained crews are catching respectable amounts of fish (average of 350-650 lbs of bottom fish nightly and 700-1200 lbs. of skipjack and yellowfin daily). It is believed the investment of approximately \$US4,500 per boat in the project can be paid off within one year or less if desired.

42. The dory's speed and rugged sea keeping qualities have been adequately proven in Samoan waters (American and Western Samoa).

43. Disadvantages encountered centre around the propulsion plant. The Volvo Penta is an acceptable and rugged industrial gasoline engine. The outdrive units are however subject to breakdown. Extensive attention must be paid to maintenance of engines (including such simple steps as maintaining full fuel tanks to guard against condensation).

44. Nevertheless successful demonstration has led to a second project to commence in Ponape District, TTPI in September 1972. Funding will again come from the Office of Economic Opportunity to local community action agency. The project will be staffed by Oregon State University personnel and Oregon and Pacific Island fishermen and will be conducted in concert with the Department of Marine Resources, TTPI.

45. Significant changes from the Samoan Project will include a different main propulsion plant for the boats, the Hamilton Jet, more concentration on powered gear and method development and application, and a systematic development of the fishery to include stockpiling of frozen tuna for cannery freezer ships.

46. Fishing techniques to be tried will include troll bait and pole and longlining for tuna, powered reel handline fishing in deep-water, pot and trap fishing, net fishing with powered rollers (lampanas, gill and tangle nets) subsurface trolling etc.

47. It should be stressed that dories are not anything more than day boats. Further dories should be employed systematically as they are to islanders fairly sophisticated fishing packages. They should not be contemplated as fishing craft to be spread individually over hundreds of miles of atolls but rather should be a part of well thought out fisheries "package" where training, maintenance and market outlets are planned.

48. A dory model, construction plans and a paper on the feasibility of dories were supplied for examination of the conference members.

49. Next Meeting. The Meeting recommended that a further Fisheries Technical Meeting be arranged during 1974, requested that the Meeting be held following the Meeting of the SPIFDA Consultative Committee (if that Committee was still functioning), requested that more time be allowed for the Fisheries Technical Meeting to permit subjects to be discussed in depth, and requested that if possible, the Meeting be held in a Territory other than New Caledonia.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

(Agenda Item 13)

The Meeting

- (1) strongly supported the recommendations contained in the Report of the Third SPIFDA Consultative Committee, particularly those supporting continuation of the SPIFDA project.
(Paragraph 21)
- (2) recommended that, if the SPIFDA project is not continued beyond July 1973:
 - (a) adequate financial and other support be given to the SPC Fisheries Officer so that he can coordinate on-going projects and disseminate information of fisheries interest generally, and progress of individual projects in particular, to all territories in the Commission area;
 - (b) provision be included in the SPC budget for 1973 and 1974 to enable the training fellowship aspects of the present projects to be continued.
(Paragraph 24)
- (3) recommended that an additional post of Fisheries Officer be established for the duration of the SPIFDA project, so that the fisheries activities of the SPC, as set out in the Report of the Fourth Technical Meeting on Fisheries will not suffer.
(Paragraph 29)
- (4) recommended that the interchange of experts working in Pacific countries and territories should be encouraged.
(Paragraph 31)
- (5) recommended that UNDP be urged to pursue the investigations into protoxins, particularly the several forms of fish poisoning which had been proposed in 1971, and to note the contents of the cable sent by the Second SPIFDA Consultative Committee to the UNDP Representative for the Western Pacific in October 1971.
(Paragraph 33)

- (6) strongly supported the proposal of the SPC to hold a Seminar on Conservation Education at the University of Guam in 1973.
(Paragraph 35)
 - (7) endorsed the recommendations of the Fourth Technical Meeting on Fisheries (1970) concerning Territorial Waters.
(Paragraph 37)
 - (8) recommended that a further Fisheries Technical Meeting be arranged during 1974.
(Paragraph 49)
-

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Mr Morgan Chandler
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Mr C. Stenersen
(Interpreter)

Mrs J. Rivers
(Secretary)

APPENDIX II

OPENING ADDRESS

by

THE HONOURABLE G.F.D. BETHAM,
SECRETARY-GENERAL, SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

Gentlemen :

The South Pacific Commission has invited fisheries officers from all Pacific Island countries to this Fifth Technical Meeting on Fisheries to discuss their problems and to assist in finding answers to these problems. All participants and observers are warmly welcomed.

We have suggested that the main purpose of this meeting should be to formulate a Fisheries Development Programme for the Pacific.

Most of you have just completed a very arduous meeting concerning the work programme of SPIFDA. If, as I hope, it is possible for the SPIFDA project to be extended for another two or three years from 1st July 1973, a substantial contribution will be made towards a comprehensive fisheries development programme. But there will inevitably be gaps - things which are wanted by the region, but which cannot be brought into the SPIFDA work programme for one reason or another.

The opportunity exists during this meeting to identify these items and to set them out in order of priority, so that the Commission can draw from them a supplementary fisheries development programme. It would, I think, be desirable to:

- (a) define the long-term aims and objectives of the Programme;
- (b) identify specific projects to be undertaken in pursuance of these objectives over the period 1973 to 1976;
- (c) allocate the priority which you would give to each specific project in relation to others in the list.

Although 1973 is included in this list, I should say that the draft Work Programme and Budget for 1973 has already been circulated to Governments and Administrations, and I would therefore suggest that projects should only be proposed for execution in 1973 if they are regarded as of the utmost urgency. If any such projects are identified I will undertake to ensure that they are brought to the attention of the Twelfth South Pacific Conference.

If it appears likely that for any reason the SPIFDA project may not be continued beyond 30th June 1973, then it becomes even more important to undertake the task I have outlined.

For a number of reasons I have felt it necessary to limit the duration of this meeting. As mentioned in the Savingram announcing the arrangements for the meeting, two days have been allocated for the meeting, but with the proviso that arrangements can be made, if you desire, to continue the meeting on Saturday.

I deeply regret that the Commission was unable to accept the recommendation from the Fourth Technical Meeting on Fisheries that this Meeting be held in Tahiti - this was almost entirely because of the heavy additional cost of providing interpretation and translation services in Tahiti. Because of the necessity for holding the meeting in Noumea, and because of the importance of establishing a forward work programme which will take account of the alternative courses which SPIFDA may follow, it has not been possible either to place special emphasis on the subjects proposed by the Fourth Technical Meeting for discussion at this Fifth Meeting.

I am not saying that you ought not to discuss the subjects you then referred to - you are of course warmly encouraged to discuss whatever interests you. I am merely saying that the Commission has not been able to support this meeting with specialists in the fields which were identified for discussion, and feels that, at this stage, the overall problems of developing a coordinated development plan should be given some priority.

I wish you all a very profitable and enjoyable meeting.

APPENDIX IIIAGENDA

1. Opening of Meeting
 2. Election of Chairman
 3. Administrative Arrangements
 4. Country Statements
 5. A Programme for Fisheries Development in the Pacific -
Broad Considerations
 6. Recommendations from the Third SPIFDA Consultative Committee
Meeting Relating to the Future of the South Pacific Islands'
Fisheries Development Agency
 7. Detailed Consideration of Proposals for Extension of the
SPIFDA Project
 8. Consideration of Alternative Proposals for Regional Fisheries
Projects Involving UNDP Assistance
 9. Consideration of Proposals for Fisheries Development Projects
which could be Undertaken by the South Pacific Commission:
 - (a) Technical Meetings and Seminars
 - (b) Training Courses
 - (c) Assistance to Fisheries Cooperatives
 - (d) Other Forms of Assistance
 10. Fisheries Research - Relationships with Universities and Other
Research Institutes
 11. Training
 12. Other Business
 13. Recommendations and Report
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APPENDIX IVLIST OF STATEMENTS AND PAPERS PRESENTEDAT THE MEETING

- SPC/Fisheries 5/Terr.Rep.1 - Territorial Report : British Solomon
Islands Protectorate
- Terr.Rep.2 - Territorial Report : Territory of Wallis
and Futuna
- Terr.Rep.3 - Territorial Report : Government of Western
Samoa
- Terr.Rep.4 - Territorial Report : Fiji
- SPC/Fisheries 5/WP.1 - Deep Hand-Lining for Yellow-Fin Tuna at
Funafuti, Ellice Islands, by S.P. Rawlins,
Fisheries Survey Unit, Gilbert and Ellice
Islands Colony
- WP.2 - Multipurpose Culture raft, by Tom Lichatowich,
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Forests, Suva, Fiji
- WP.3 - The Hawksbill Turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata
squamata) in Western Samoa, by W.N. Witzell,
Fisheries Division, Apia, Western Samoa.
-