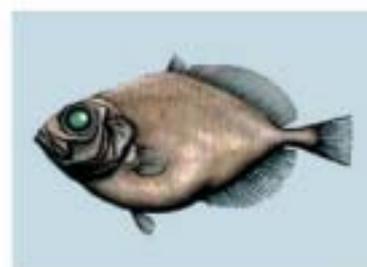
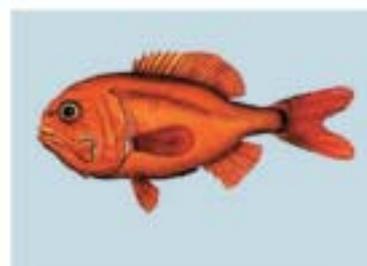


Report of the

**SECOND AD HOC MEETING ON MANAGEMENT OF DEEPWATER
FISHERIES RESOURCES OF THE SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN**

Fremantle, Western Australia, 20-22 May 2002



Department of
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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

An Intergovernmental Consultation, one in a series on the Establishment of a South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission, was held in St Denis, La Reunion 6–9 February 2001. In a special session¹ at that meeting, it was agreed that a meeting on the management of deepwater fisheries resources of the Southern Indian Ocean should be held in Swakopmund, Namibia and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia, kindly offered to hold the meeting in Swakopmund from 30 May to 1 June 2001 with the technical assistance of FAO. The results of that meeting are reported in FAO (2001).

It was agreed at the Swakopmund meeting that a regular series of meetings should be held to advance the technical activities that would support the effective management of deepsea fishery resources in the Southern Indian Ocean when the planned fishery commission, at present under negotiation, comes into effect. Australia offered to host the second of these ad hoc technical meetings in Fremantle, Western Australia. This report documents the business of that meeting, which FAO has published as its contribution to the future management of deepsea resources in this area. The document is based on the report adopted by the ad hoc technical meeting. It was reviewed by the meeting and has been circulated in draft form to those who attended the meeting. It is intended to neither prejudice the future nature of a fisheries body in the region, nor have formal legal status.

¹ Appendix F of the Intergovernmental Consultation on the Establishment of a South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission - St Denis, La Reunion, 6 - 9 February 2001: **Starting Scientific Activities relating to Deepwater Fisheries**

Delegates, in an informal post-session meeting, discussed scientific issues relating to the future management of deepwater fish resources in the proposed convention area.

The group noted the high level of uncertainty and lack of documented information regarding the distribution of deepwater resources in the proposed convention area. However, it was felt that the proposed 20°S parallel in the area east of 80°E would enclose target fish populations and minimize the risk of stocks straddling convention area boundaries.

The group expressed its concern that the recent rapid development of the deepwater fisheries in the area may result in catch and effort levels that could be unsustainable in the long term. The group also noted the urgent requirement to start collecting available information such as data on catch volumes, target species, catch species composition, fishing effort and the locations of past catches, which would be required to enable management of the fish resources to begin. Some countries are already collecting this information and it was agreed that such data collection should be requested from all countries fishing in the area as soon as possible.

Delegates also noted that there were, as yet unresolved, issues relating to the confidentiality of fishing data and that fisheries departments are bound by national laws governing the release of information provided by fishing companies. It was also noted that fishing companies would be most concerned by the possible implications for the competitiveness of their operations by dissemination of information provided in confidence to their national authorities. Despite this, it was agreed that unless this problem could be resolved there could be no timely management of the resources in question.

Thus it was agreed that a scientific meeting should be held as a matter of urgency to which representatives of countries whose vessels had been fishing deepwater fish resources in the proposed convention area AND who would be prepared to bring relevant data for collation and tabulation would be invited. In this context it was noted by some that catch rates of certain species had already fallen in some areas and that an important objective of such a meeting would be to assemble fine-scale data on past, and existing, fishing effort and levels of catches that were being achieved over the southern Indian Ocean.

A further objective of the meeting would be to document the past geographical and chronological development of deepwater fishing activity in the proposed convention area as a way of indicating what might be the overall development potential and to avoid unrealistic expectations concerning sustainable levels of catches from the fisheries.

Australian scientists are developing predictive distribution models for major commercial demersal fish species in the southern Indian Ocean. The validation of this model requires catch data from participating fishing countries. New Zealand scientists have developed a modelling approach to estimate long-term sustainable yields for orange roughy seamount fisheries based on their physical characteristics and it may be possible to use this approach to estimate indicative sustainable yields in the proposed convention area.

It was agreed that FAO be asked to arrange and facilitate this meeting, possibly to be held in Namibia. Such a meeting would be without prejudice to the form and activities of a future fisheries commission for the region. In summary, the objectives of the meeting would include:

- i. sharing information on the distribution and levels of past catch and effort and biological data;
- ii. developing processes for (a) future data collection, (b) verification and analysis and (c) its distribution and (d) to develop the methods needed for estimating indicative sustainable catch levels for deepwater species in the proposed convention area.

FAO.

Report of the Second Ad Hoc Meeting on Management of Deepwater Fisheries Resources of the Southern Indian Ocean. Fremantle, Western Australia. 20–22 May 2002.

FAO Fisheries Report. No. 677. Rome, FAO. 2002. 106p.

ABSTRACT

The Second Ad Hoc Meeting on Management of Deepwater Fisheries Resources of the Southern Indian Ocean was organized and hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia with the technical assistance of FAO. It was held in Fremantle, Western Australia, Australia, from 20 to 22 May 2002.

The Meeting reviewed the status of information available relating to the demersal fisheries of the southern Indian Ocean and the events in their recent development. Participants attended from Australia, the European Union, France, New Zealand, Namibia, Japan, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Seychelles, Ukraine and FAO. The meeting addressed the following main points:

- review of the results of the 2001 meeting in Swakopmund, Namibia;
- reports of country activities in the study area Southern Indian Ocean (SIO);
- examination of fishery and stock status reports; and
- discussion of the reporting needs to other organizations.

Reports are tabled on interim catch and effort data on a species basis for *Hoplostethus atlanticus* (Orange roughy), *Allocyttus niger* (Black oreo), *Neocyttus rhomboidalis* (Spiky oreo), *Pseudocyttus maculatus* (Smooth oreo), *Beryx splendens* (Alfonsino), *Pseudopentaceros richardsoni* (Boarfish), *Epigonus telescopus* (Cardinalfish) and *Hyperoglyphe antarctica* (Bluenose). Further presentations addressed the distribution of resources and predictive resource mapping in relation to fishing zones and bathymetric ridges; catch trends and catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) indices and fishing activity.

The meeting reviewed issues of databases; management and specification of statistical areas; documentation of fishing methods; availability of oceanographic data; and research cruises in the Southern Indian Ocean, especially those undertaken by the Soviet Union and later Ukraine. The meeting discussed proposals and plans for future collection, archiving and reporting of data; the securing of missing data and future stock assessment work. The meeting was of the view that the known fisheries of the study area were now generally “depleted” and possibly no longer of major interest to those who had pioneered the expansion of the fishery.

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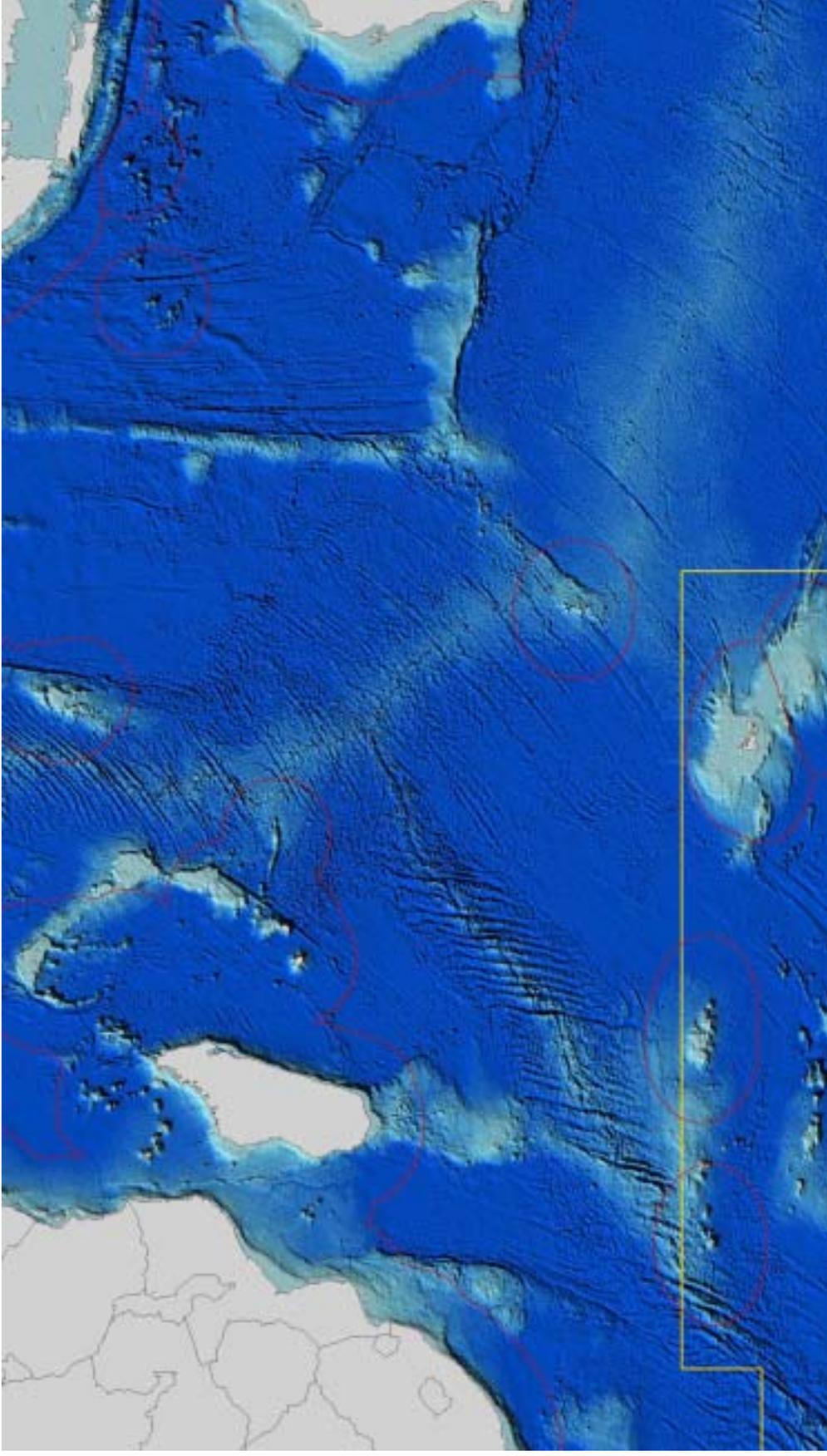
Participants at the Meeting

Other interested nations, relevant national and international organizations

FAO Fisheries Department

Fishery Officers in FAO Regional Offices

Figure 1
Bathymetric Map of the Southern Indian Ocean
(Credit: D. Barratt, Fisheries and Marine Sciences Program, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia)



Red lines indicate boundaries of exclusive economic zones.
The yellow line indicates the boundary of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) convention area.

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