TUCAW[1] (TUNA CATCH WORLDWIDE), A DATABASE AND USER-FRIENDLY SOFTWARE DEVELOPED TO ANALYSE THE YEARLY TUNA CATCHES WORLDWIDE BY SPECIES, GEAR, COUNTRY AND OCEANIC AREAS

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ABSTRACT

There is a general need for people interested in tuna fisheries to have easy access to catch statistics. To solve this general problem of world-wide fishery statistics, the FAO4 Fishery Division in Rome has developed and released routinely a world-wide statistical database and its corresponding data-processing software. The tuna species and fisheries are part of this system.

However, this very interesting FAO statistical database and software may not be optimal to efficiently tackle tuna statistics, for various reasons. The two major problems in the FAO data set on tunas are that :

a) *FAO data on tuna fisheries are often biased, being often official data submitted by fishery agencies, not reviewed and collected when necessary by scientists. (Those problems have been partly solved in recent years through contacts between FAO and the Tuna Agencies, but significant "anomalies" remain in the FAO data on tunas).*

b) *FAO data always lack information on fishing gear, a key parameter in tuna fisheries.*

Consequently the purpose of this present work, which was developed as an ORSTOM project, was the following:

- *To develop an optimal tuna database, choosing for each ocean and fishery the best statistical information available on tunas, basically from ICCAT5, IPTP6, SPC7, IATTC8 and FAO. The methods and hypothesis used to select the "best' data for each area and fishery are described in Chapter 2.*
- *This database was developed using a standardised code and format system, described in Chapter 3.*
- *A user-friendly software was then developed to analyse the yearly tuna catches worldwide or*

by ocean (or by sub-area), by species, gear and country. The present framework, use and output of this software will be reviewed in Chapter 4.

Both these tasks, building a world-wide tuna database and developing analytical software, are now at an intermediate level: both the data set and the program are already operational and available for interested users9, at least for experimental use. However, both the database and the TUCAW program have not yet been extensively tested by users, and they will probably show some bugs, which will need some ad hoc corrective actions by their authors.

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4 FAO: Food and Agricultural Organization, Rome

5 ICCAT.- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, Madrid

6 IPTP: Indo-Pacific Tuna Development and Management Programme, Colombo

7 SPC: South Pacific Commission, Noumea

8 IATTC: Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission, La Jolla

9 Interested users should contact the authors to obtain a copy of the TUCAW data base and program.