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COUNTRY STATUS REPORT

ON

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(Small-Scale Fisheries in the U.S.A.)¹

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1. INTRODUCTION

If the magnitude of a problem can be equated to the amount of attention it has received, then the small-scale fisheries in the United States of America have not posed much of a problem, at least on the surface. Small-scale fisheries as an entity have not been treated in the published literature. A preliminary analysis of small-scale or "artisan" fisheries conducted by the International Center for Marine Resources Development, University of Rhode Island, did not include any small-scale fisheries in the U.S.A. (University of Rhode Island, 1975).

This is not to say that there are no small-scale fisheries or fishermen in the U.S.A. Small-scale fisheries and fishermen have been characterized as those having small capital investment in each unit including a correspondingly low level of organization. The boats in these fisheries are predominantly individually owned and fishing methods are labor-intensive and unmechanized. These fisheries usually require little specialized mechanical skills; however, good seamanship may be required. Productivity and incomes are low in small-scale fisheries and catches are sold in local markets or even on a commercial barter basis; thus, infrastructural backing and credit are usually lacking (Proude, 1973). These descriptions and characteristics of small-scale fisheries and fishermen probably fit many small fisheries and fishermen in the U.S.A. The world total of full- and part-time small-scale fishermen has been estimated at 10 to 15 million (Proude, 1973; University of Rhode Island, 1975). It is not clear, however, whether these totals include fishermen in the U.S.A. The number of fishermen on boats (see discussion under section 2.3) in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington in 1975 was estimated at 24,296 (Table I).

In the developed country (such as the U.S.A.) the small-scale fishery sector generally consists of purely local fisheries that are poorly developed (in the economic sense) and are located in a setting of well utilized natural resources and plentiful supply of capital and skilled labor. Alternatively, it may include many part-time fishermen who either have alternative employment or are exploiting particularly valuable species (Proude, 1973).

Because fisheries in the U.S.A. have not been analyzed in terms of the categorization, "small-scale fisheries," it is difficult to determine their status. However, the status of U.S.A. fisheries in general will be briefly discussed and an attempt will be made to discuss some examples of what may be considered small-scale fisheries in the states of the U.S.A. bordering or in the Pacific Ocean.

Table I. 1975 Operations of Selected "Small-Scale" Fisheries in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington (Source: [U.S.] National Marine Fisheries Service, 1978)

OPERATING UNITS						
	Alaska	California	Hawaii	Oregon	Washington	Total
	Number					
Fishermen						
On boats and shore						
Full-time	7,067	7,769	2,197	1,628	5,278	23,939
Part-time	--	--	--	18	339	357
Total	7,067	7,769	2,197	1,646	5,617	24,296
Boats						
Motor	4,195	2,832	1,278	1,571	4,505	14,381
Other	--	364	--	--	--	364
Total	4,195	3,196	1,278	1,571	4,505	14,745

LANDINGS STATISTICS

Fishery	Landings			Species caught
	Weight (metric ton)	Ex-vessel value (\$)	No. of boats in fishery	
Alaska				
Anchor, set, or stake gill net	9,517.1	7,896,191	2,384	Sea herring and salmon
California				
Common haul seine	267.4	75,629	20	Surf or silver smelt
Oyster rake	362.9	1,105,504	76	Oysters
"By hand"	21.2	41,549	8	Oysters, sea mussels, clams
Hawaii				
Various	317.0	354,725	284	All species combined

Table I. Continued.

Fishery	Landings		No. of boats in fishery	Species caught
	Weight (metric ton)	Ex-vessel value (\$)		
Oregon				
Anchor, set, or stake gill net	285.8	446,261	33	Salmon, steelhead trout, common sturgeon, shad, striped bass
Drift gill net	63.8	21,296	9	Shad
Common dip net	35.6	5,885	4	Lamprey, shad, lingcod
Washington				
Pot	1.3	2,220	5	Freshwater craw- fish
Anchor, set, or stake gill net	464.3	849,032	54	Lingcod, salmon, shad, common sturgeon, smelt
Drop dip net	0.1	189	4	Dungeness crab
Drift gill net	8.8	1,520	30	Shad

2. PRESENT SITUATION

2.1 Economic role of fishing industry

Recently, a study was published which expressed the sales and consumption of U.S.A. fishery products in value terms, which is more meaningful when comparisons are made with gross national product (GNP) and total food consumption (Penn and Crews, 1979). Penn and Crews computed the following value added (contribution to the economy as GNP) figures for edible fishery products in the U.S.A.: 1976, \$5.083 billion; 1977, \$5.558 billion; and 1978, \$6.378 billion, which include fishery products from domestic and imported sources. It would have been useful to have the contribution of small-scale fisheries to these figures but Penn and Crews did not make such computations.

In comparison with certain selected industry groups (agriculture and forestry) the U.S.A. fishing industry contributed \$840 million (1.75%) in 1976 and \$950 million (1.75%) in 1977 to the combined GNP of the agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries at the harvesting level. Seafood's share of total expenditures for food amounted to \$9.57 billion (4.23%) in 1976, \$10.31 billion (4.20%) in 1977, and \$11.45 billion (4.25%) in 1978. These expenditures for seafood represented 0.81% in 1976, 0.79% in 1977 and 0.79% of the disposable personal income in the U.S.A. (Penn and Crews, 1979).

2.2 Resource availability

The eight regional Fishery Management Councils created under the provisions of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act (FCMA) of 1976 are in the process of preparing Fishery Management Plans for various marine species in the 200-mile Fishery Conservation Zone (FCZ) of the U.S.A. The FCMA requires estimates of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for all species under management. As MSY estimates become available, better estimates of the total magnitude of marine resources in the FCZ should be obtained.

Fishery production figures can provide an idea of the magnitude of the resources. In 1978 the U.S.A catch was 2.6 million metric tons, a new record. In the same year the foreign catch in the FCZ amounted to 1.8 million metric tons ([U.S.] National Marine Fisheries Service 1978).

2.3 Production

The fishery statistics of the U.S.A. do not allow an accurate separation of landings made in small-scale fisheries and large-scale fisheries. Many species of fishes are the targets of vessels or boats in both the small-scale and large-scale fisheries sectors. Without more detailed information on the various fisheries it is also not possible to determine whether the fishery, vessels or boats, and fishermen do or do not fit the characteristics of "small-scale" as

presented earlier. However, certain statistical summarizations are given in terms of the categories "vessels," which are defined as fishing crafts having a net carrying capacity of greater than 5 tons, and "boats," which are defined as those having a net carrying capacity of less than 5 tons (see for example ([U.S.] National Marine Fisheries Service, 1978). Assuming that fishing crafts categorized as boats are in the small-scale fishery sector, it was possible to isolate certain U.S.A. fisheries that border on the Pacific Ocean for examination (Table I). It can be seen that the landings in these fisheries ranged from a low of 0.1 metric ton to a high 9,517.1 metric tons having an ex-vessel value ranging from \$189 to \$7,896,191.

2.4 Utilization, consumption, and trade

The total U.S.A landings of fish from the Pacific Ocean in 1975 were 707,880 metric tons. Of this total 541,006 metric tons (76.4%) were used for human food and 166,874 metric tons (23.6%) were used for industrial purposes. The industrial products included fresh and frozen animal food, fresh and frozen bait, canned animal food and fish meal, oil and other solubles. The per capita consumption of commercially caught fish and shellfish was 5.5 kg of fish (edible weight) in 1975. In 1975 exports of domestic edible fishery products totaled 98,976 metric tons, which was valued at \$267.4 million ([U.S.] National Marine Fisheries Service, 1978).

2.5 Marketing, distribution, and physical infrastructures

In general, the U.S.A. has a well developed marketing, distribution, and physical infrastructure. To aid the industry in this regard, ongoing economic analyses of fishery products are provided in the "Market Review and Outlook" and the "Fishery Market News Report" published by the National Marine Fisheries Service and in the "National Food Review" published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture ([U.S.] National Marine Fisheries Service, 1979).

2.6 Administration and institutional structure

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is the principal agency in the U.S.A responsible for living marine resources and the National Marine Fisheries Service is the primary NOAA entity responsible for regulating, managing, and protecting these resources. ([U.S.] National Marine Fisheries Service, 1979).

3. THE PRESENT ROLE, FUTURE SCOPE, AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

The objectives and methods of small-scale fisheries development in undeveloped and developed countries were discussed by Proude (1973). Proude stated that the introduction of assistance to small-scale fisheries in developed countries is usually of recent origin. Governments in developing countries, including the U.S.A., devised policies to (a) improve the

efficiency of production and distribution and thereby reduce costs to increase income and profitability, and (b) maintain the contribution of fisheries to national food supplies and the export trade, and increase the attractiveness of fishery products for domestic and foreign consumers.

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