



SINCE 1993 THERE HAVE BEEN MAJOR CHANGES IN THE STATUS OF SEVERAL COMMERCIAL FISH STOCKS AND A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF NEW COMPUTERIZED SURVEY DATA HAS ALSO BECOME AVAILABLE.

## President's greeting



When I began my term as President almost a year ago, I highlighted three priorities in a letter to ICES delegates. I want to reiterate the priorities here, and offer a few examples of progress.

Expanding the size and diversity of the community of ICES scientists is one priority. ICES needs to continue its efforts to make its scientific activities attractive to scientists from government laboratories, universities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, ICES member countries and world wide, and from a broad range of scientific disciplines, both genders, and diverse races and cultures. I think that our exciting program for the Annual Science Conference in Vigo is a good example of the priority that is being given to expanding our scientific community. Even more importantly, restructuring the Secretariat to establish the post of "Head of Science Programme" will focus efforts on this priority. I am pleased to report that Dr Adolf Kellermann of Germany will take up the post in October (see Staff News page 37).

Another high priority is to modernize the ICES advisory process. Increasingly, advice is needed on more complex issues, and sometimes it is needed sooner than can be accommodated by the normal annual cycle ICES uses to prepare advice. ICES is in close communication with Fisheries and Environmental Commissions that use our advice so that we can keep pace with evolving needs. Our Management Committee for the Advisory Process is expediting action on requests for advice when necessary. They have also initiated processes for "place based" integration of ICES advice (for fisheries, ecosystems and environment). This year, ICES will allow a limited number of observers at some meetings of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management as an experiment to determine if transparency can be enhanced without adversely affecting quality.

Both of these priorities depend on the effectiveness of the Secretariat. Therefore, an equally important priority is to provide the Secretariat with the tools and work environment it needs. As evidence of progress with this priority, I can report that the Secretariat has been relocated to a larger and more modern office building on H. C. Andersens Boulevard. Do not worry, the Secretariat is still in a grand old Copenhagen building like the one we learned to appreciate on Palae-gade, but with much better facilities — especially for meetings.

I believe we are making good progress, and we will make even more if we continue to work together. Thank you.

Michael Sissenwine, President of ICES

## ICES Fish-Map: mapping North Sea fish

By Henk Heesen

In October 2004, RIVO<sup>1</sup>, CEFAS<sup>2</sup>, and ICES will start work on ICES Fish-Map, a 12-month project to develop an interactive, online atlas of North Sea fish. The atlas will be accessed through the ICES website and it will focus on the most important commercial fish species in the North Sea—along with some examples of less well-studied species such as sharks and rays. The project is being co-financed by the European Commission.

The first North Sea fish atlas was published back in 1993 (ICES Cooperative Research Report No. 194). This report turned out to be very popular and was sold out for several years, and it has only recently become available again as a download from the ICES Website at [www.ices.dk/pubs/crr/crr194/CRR194.PDF](http://www.ices.dk/pubs/crr/crr194/CRR194.PDF)

The original atlas was based on data collected in the period 1985–1987 during the International Bottom Trawl Surveys (IBTS) in winter, and a series of Dutch, English, and Scottish national surveys in summer. In addition to distribution maps for juvenile and adult fish, the atlas provided biological background information for almost 100 species—including some references to recent literature for each species.

Since 1993 there have been major changes in the status of several commercial fish stocks and a significant amount of new computerized survey data has also become available. The ICES Fish-Map project will use information from the quarterly IBTS (1991–1996) and also from Beam Trawl Surveys

carried out in the North Sea. The project will also build upon experience gained at CEFAS where an online atlas was recently developed for CEFAS data (see <http://map2.cefasdirect.co.uk/isea/>).

The intention is for the ICES Fish-Map website to become the definitive source of information on the biology and exploitation of North Sea fishes for all those interested in fisheries and the ecosystem, including managers, conservationists, marine scientists, politicians, and the general public.

When the North Sea fish online atlas has been completed, the aim is to raise more funds to expand this to cover all the species that have been recorded during more recent surveys and enlarge the area to cover the whole of the Northeast Atlantic. After the huge success of the original printed atlas, a printed report will also be produced.

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ICES FISH-MAP WILL BE AN ONLINE ATLAS OF NORTH SEA FISH.

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