AFRICA

S. AFRICA USES FIRE CRACKERS TO SCARE OFF SEALS

The South African purse-seine fisheries have long been plagued by seals. Seals leap into seines by the hundreds. They feed, scatter the fish, and damage the nets. Fishermen, in frustration, have turned to shooting them despite strict regulations prohibiting their killing.

There are about 100 purse seiners in the South African fleet. Fishery officials became alarmed when they discovered that one Walvis Bay store alone reported sales of 60,000 rounds of ammunition per month to fishermen. Because of the great potential harm to the seal, South Africa's Division of Sea Fisheries began testing ways of controlling this marine animal.

Fireworks Against Seals

During a two-week period in September, fishery technologists used firecrackers--or cherry bombs--to scare the seals out of the nets. The results appeared favorable. About ten firecrackers succeeded in scaring off the seals for the duration of the pursing operations, and they showed no signs of growing accustomed to the noise. It is hoped that industrywide use of firecrackers will succeed in permanently frightening away seals. Further tests will have to be conducted before a final decision is made. ('South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review')

MEETINGS

Fifth International Congress, Fondation Francaise D'Etudes Nordiques

La Havre, France. May 2-5, 1973

Subject: "Arctic Oil and Gas: Problems and Possibilities."

"A discussion of the leading scientific, technological, ecological, economic, financial and human problems" with which mankind is faced.

Papers, reports, and discussions will be published after the Congress.

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World Fishing Exhibition

Vigo, Spain, September 12-19, 1973

Subject: "Marine Engines, Fishing Gear Processors and Equipment."

Commercial Exhibitions & Publications Ltd., Riverside House, Woolwich-London, is holding its 6th biennial World Fishing Exhibit. Fifteen major countries will participate. The area covers 56,620 square meters. There will be 4 large halls, open-air display space, and harbor area for visiting demonstration vessels.

ASIA

JAPAN

PROPOSED FISHERY BUDGET FY 1973 IS UP 30% OVER 1972

The Japanese Government, on January 15, 1973, approved the Fisheries Agency's budget request totaling 85,265 million yen (US$276.8 million, based on official exchange rate of ¥308 = US$1) for fiscal year 1973 (April 1973-March 1974). Pending approval by the National Diet (parliament), this will be an increase of 30.4 percent over the FY 1972 budget.

Promote International Cooperation

The budget request given top priority was 2,211 million yen ($7.2 million) for establishment of a private non-profit organization to promote international cooperation for protection of Japanese fishing activities off foreign coasts. This program was approved as an alternative to the Agency's earlier proposal for an International Fisheries Cooperative Agency. The funds for this program will be used to provide interest-free and low-interest loans to fishing industry groups extending economic assistance to foreign countries. The new organization is likely to be established in April. Another major item in the fishery budget is the fifth 5-year fishing port improvement plan, for which a total expenditure of 750 billion yen ($2.4 billion) for FY 1973-77 and 50,327 million yen ($163.3 million) for FY 1973 was approved. ('Suisan Shimbun', Jan. 17, 1973.)

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FORESEE FISH SHORTAGE IN 1980

The Japan Fishery Industries Federation has released a report projecting the country's yearly demand for fish as reaching 13.7 million tons by 1980. It also foresees total supply (including imports) as reaching 13.3 million, a shortage of about 360,000 tons. Of the shortage, 350,000 tons are expect to be tuna, seabream, and lobster.

As a result, the Japanese feel substantial price rises on marine products cannot be avoided in the future. The picture is expected to be clouded by declining demand for relatively cheap fish, whose prices will decrease. The report concludes that beef products will become increasingly more important to the Japanese diet in the coming years. ('Yomiuri')

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FROZEN TUNA EXPORTS REGULATED VOLUNTARILY

The Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), to avoid another yen revaluation, adopted an export control ordinance. Subject to control were items that recorded an export value exceeding US$100 million during August 1971-July 1972, and which showed substantial increase in sales during January-July 1972. Among the items under those criteria were fresh and frozen fish products. Following negotiations between the Fisheries Agency and MITI, an agreement was reached to exclude from control all species excepting tuna, which comprised the bulk of the fresh and frozen fishery exports. Frozen tuna export regulation will be implemented voluntarily by the Japan Export Frozen Tuna Producers Association. It plans to hold down the rate of increase of frozen tuna exports during January-August 1973 to one-half the rate of increase during the same period in 1972. ('Suisan Tsushin' and 'Minato Shimbun'.)

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SQUID INDUSTRY FACES BANKRUPTCY

Nagasaki Prefecture is Japan's second most important "surume" (dried squid) producing center. In 1971, it processed $8 million worth. This was a poor year in terms of squid landings and market prices were high. Last year, several major dried-squid producers decided to speculate; they assumed poor catches and higher prices would recur. They were mistaken. Landings were very good and prices declined.

On October 7, 1972, the Tenwa Bussan Company, one of Japan's larger "surume" dealers, declared bankruptcy with a total debt of $7 million. Shortly thereafter, the Ohshio Surume Company in Kure City declared bankruptcy with a debt of $27 million. Previously, this company had produced 30 percent of all "surume" in Japan.

JAPAN (Contd.):

Chain Reaction

These two disasters sparked a chain reaction of bankruptcies throughout Japan. Five firms in Osaka, a firm in Kobe, and one in Ohata fell victim. One or two companies in Nagoya and Hiroshima, and eight companies in Hakodata, are reported in danger of bankruptcy. Now, the suspension of auctions for "surume" in various parts of Japan threatens the livelihood of squid fishermen throughout the country. ('Suisan Keizai')

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TWO FIRMS TO BUY
U. S. SHRIMP TRAWLERS

Two Japanese firms, scheduled to be established shortly for shrimp fishing off the Guianas, north of Brazil, are planning to order 13 shrimp trawlers from U.S. boatyards. They are "Japan Distant-water Fisheries Company," which reportedly is scheduled to have eight 100-ton-class trawlers built by Atlantic Marine, Inc. at a cost of 53.4 million yen (approx. US$178,000) per vessel, and "Guiana Marine Products Company," which plans to order five similar-sized trawlers from a U.S. yard at a cost of 54 million yen (approx. $180,000) per vessel.

Fleet Off Guianas

These are two of the four groups of fishery firms tentatively authorized by the Japanese Fisheries Agency to operate 31 of the 52 additional vessels to be licensed for working off the Guianas. At present, 70 licensed shrimp trawlers, belonging to seven Japanese firms, are fishing in that region. Under the Agency's fleet buildup plan these 7 firms will be permitted a total of 21 additional trawlers. ('Suisan Tushin', Dec. 8 & 14, 1972.)

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TAIYO BUYS N. KOREAN
FISHERY PRODUCTS

Taiyo Fishery Company of Japan was scheduled to negotiate with the North Korean Marine Products Import-Export Company for conclusion of a long-term fish-purchasing contract. The Japanese firm has been importing fishery products annually through a trading firm. Included were sea-urchin roe, yellowtail, and squid worth 5 million yen (US$1.67 million). Now Taiyo wants to transact business directly. It plans to offer North Korea technical assistance in fish processing, and will send a refrigerated carrier vessel to that country if the contract materializes. Tokyo Maruichi Shoji trading firm has already concluded a long-term import contract with North Korea and is now purchasing fishery products on a trial basis. ('Suisan Tsushin')

SOUTH KOREA

BUILDING FISHING PORT AT ULSAN

The Republic of Korea's (ROK) Construction Ministry disclosed plans to spend 1,800 million won (approx. US$4.5 million) to build a fishing port at Ulsan (northeast of Pusan). It will be the largest fishing base in the country and will accommodate her growing distant-water fleet.

In 1972 forty distant-water trawlers landed in Pusan about 150,000 metric tons of fish from the North Pacific. This port has reached its maximum fish handling capacity. It necessitates construction of another base of operation.

Present plans for Ulsan include dredging and building a breakwater and wharves to permit simultaneous docking of two 3,500-ton-class and six 500-ton-class vessels. Fish processing plants will also be built at that port for annual production of 50,000 tons of frozen fish. ('Minato Shimbun')

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FISHING VESSELS
TO BE BUILT AT HOME

By 1976, The Republic of Korea (ROK) plans to build a total of 282 distant-water fishing vessels (154,600 gross tons) in domestic shipyards. Presently, vessels of this type must be purchased from foreign countries. To increase production efficiency and improve the international competitiveness of the ROK shipbuilding industry, small shipyards are being merged with larger ones. ('Suisan Keizai Shimbun')

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S. KOREA (Contd.):

ROK SEEKS OVERSEAS FISHERY AGREEMENTS

To safeguard Korean fishing operations off foreign coasts, the Republic of Korea (ROK) plans to enter into fishery agreements with 19 countries. Negotiations are now under way with six: Spain, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Peru, Guiana, and Uruguay.

Working-level talks with Spain are expected to produce a formal agreement for: 1) joint construction of a 6,000-ton cold storage at Las Palmas; 2) other construction, including a minor ship-repair facility, a dispensary for Korean fishermen, and a bonded warehouse for ship supplies; 3) cooperative eel cultivation; and 4) exchange of information.

Other countries with which ROK plans to conclude bilateral pacts are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, India, Mauritius (in Indian Ocean), El Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania.

May Rival Japanese

The Koreans, with strong government backing, are aggressively moving forward to secure their fishing grounds. They are likely to become formidable rivals to the Japanese distant-water fishery operators. ('Suisan Keizai Shimbun', Jan. 17, 1973.)

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POLE-AND-LINE SKIPJACK VESSELS TO BE BOUGHT FROM JAPAN

The South Korean Koryo Distant-Water Fishing Company signed a contract with the Japanese trading firm Mitsubishi Shoji to buy two large pole-and-line skipjack vessels. Each is 434 gross tons and scheduled for completion in May or June 1973. This action is the first time a private Korean firm has ordered such vessels from Japan. Koryo's venture, if successful, is likely to attract other Korean firms into the pole-and-line skipjack fishery. ('Katsuo-maguro Tsushin', Dec. 20, 1972.)

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ROK LIFTS BAN ON IMPORT OF USED JAPANESE FISHING VESSELS

The Republic of Korea (ROK) announced on January 15, 1973, that effective immediately it will permit the importation of used fishing vessels from Japan. This policy removes the ban imposed in February 1972. The ROK Government will permit imports of Japanese vessels needed for: 1) distant-water fishing; 2) transportation and shipboard processing of fish catches; and 3) development of new fishing grounds and training in fishery technology. ('Shin Suisan Shimbun Sokuho', Jan. 17, 1973.)

AUSTRALIAN FISHERY EXPORTS SET RECORD

Australian fishery exports were a record US$87.3 million in FY 1971-72 (twelve months ending in June). Rock lobster tail exports were 10.3 million pounds worth a record US$39 million; these were increases of 5 percent and 22 percent, respectively. Almost the entire quantity was exported to the United States.

Prawn exports set records for both volume and value--17.7 million pounds (up 19 percent) valued at US$31.4 (up 54 percent). Exports of prawn to Japan dropped from 78 to 67 percent of the total. Exports of prawn to the United States were 16 percent, and the United Kingdom 7 percent of the total.

Abalone & Scallop

Exports of abalone increased 30 percent to US$9.8 million. Canned abalone exports were 5.5 million pounds valued at US$6.8 million, while frozen abalone exports increased to 2.4 million pounds and US$3.0 million.

Scallop exports dropped 4 percent in volume to 2.1 million pounds but increased 5 percent in value to US$2.8 million. The United States bought 54 percent of Australia's scallop exports, taking 1.1 million pounds worth US$1.5 million, increases of 83 and 114 percent, respectively.

Industry Growth Predicted

The Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry predicts that the Australian fishing industry will continue to grow, although probably at a slower rate than in recent years. Exports increased by 21 percent in FY 1971-72. The brightest feature of the year was the enormous increase in the prawn industry. The Minister warned against excessive optimism, stating that most of the prawn production comes from northern Australia, where catches are subject to wide fluctuations.

Among Australian fishermen there is increasing confidence in the future of the industry. More sophisticated vessels are being built, as are modern plants and ancillary services. There is now a solid core of experienced, dedicated personnel in the industry.

Progress in the 5 years ending June 1971 was rapid, with production up 60 percent, and exports more than doubled. The Australian fleet exceeded 9,000 vessels by June 1971, with 46 vessels more than 85 feet in length--compared with only 15 over 85 feet in 1966. Fishing personnel has increased by more than 3,000 to over 16,000.

Industry Consolidation Ahead

The Minister expects the next 5 years to be a period of consolidation of the industry. Emphasis will be on developing fisheries in remote areas and on exploring mid-water pelagic resources. To increase the supply of fish in local markets, these projects are necessary. Consumption has risen significantly, but only half the fish sold is caught locally and only 21 percent is fresh

In order to finance increases in the industry, a grant of $108,000 has been awarded for exploration into a possible jack mackerel purse-seining fishery; a grant of $109,000 was made for a shark fishery. ('Australian Fisheries')