

SQUID RESOURCES, THEIR STATUS AND ROLE IN THE ANTARCTIC ECOSYSTEM

6.1 The Committee discussed this item on the basis of a background document prepared by the Secretariat (SC-CAMLR-IV/6) and a review of the results of Soviet investigations on pelagic squids (SC-CAMLR-IV/BG/18). It also had available to it the Antarctic cephalopod section of the general review of Antarctic marine fauna presented by Dr J. Bengtson at the 1984 session (SC-CAMLR-IV/BG/5). The Chairman noted that useful information was also contained in BIOMASS Report 33, BIOMASS Handbook 21 and the Draft FAO Species Identification Sheets. The Committee welcomed the extensive and detailed information contained in the Soviet document, but regretted that because the document was circulated to the Committee while the item was being discussed, it was not possible to give it full consideration.

6.2 Dr Tomo (Argentina) referred to FAO Species Catalogue (Vol. 3) and stated that in the waters to the north of the Convention area there are commercial fisheries on various species of squids. Some of these are already intense.

6.3 In the Convention area there is at present no commercial fishery for cephalopods. Because of differences in species composition and squid distribution north and south of the Convergence, it was believed that it was unlikely that any significant commercial fishing would develop in the Convention area in the near future. There had been some confusion concerning statistical returns from previous years, including a report of a few hundred tons by Japan in 1978. The Japanese delegation promised to examine this and clarify their statistics in advance of the next session.

6.4 Many of the mammals and birds in the Antarctic eat squid. For several of these, squids form the most frequent item of diet and therefore may play an important role in the Antarctic ecosystem. (It was noted that owing to an error in the source document, the original version of SC-CAMLR-IV/6 gave an incorrect picture of the importance of squid in the diet of fishes).

6.5 The Committee believed that further research into squid and squid ecology should be strongly encouraged. It noted that this matter had been examined in detail by the BIOMASS *Ad Hoc* Group on Squid Ecology. The list of research priorities established by this group is given in SC-CAMLR-IV/6 (paragraph 7), and its list of recommendations is given in Attachment II to that document. The Committee welcomed these proposals and recommendations, and agreed that they provided a set of useful guidelines for future squid research. In particular, the Committee hoped that the countries concerned would be able to take action to ensure the early working-up of data on cephalopods from the DISCOVERY and ELTANIN expeditions.