

Conference of SCAR/SCOR in Poland

(Mogilany, 26—28 September 1979)

A meeting of a Group of Specialists on Living Resources of Antarctica of SCAR/SCOR, devoted to an International Programme of Biological Investigations "BIOMASS", took place in Mogilany near Kraków. The conference was organised by the Committee on Polar Research of Polish Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the Institute of Ecology of Polish Academy of Sciences. The following persons attended the meeting: El-Sayed (Convenor, USA), J. Gulland (FAO), G. Knox (President of SCAR) (NZ), A. Abal and A. Tomo (Argentina), G. Hempel and D. Sahrhage (FDR), O. Mathisen, D. Siniff and K. Sherman (USA), G. Newmān (South Africa), J. Boyd (Australia), G. Daecon, A. Baker and R. Laws (Great Britain), T. Nemoto (Japan), J. Hureau (France), T. Lubimova (USSR) and S. Rakusa-Suszczewski (Poland). There were also observers from the Sea Fisheries Institute: J. Piechura, Z. Witek, N. Wolnomiejski, J. Kalinowski, and from the Department of Polar Studies of the Institute of Ecology of Polish Academy of Sciences: H. Jackowska, E. Kopczyńska, A. Myrcha and W. Starck.

The main aim of the conference was an exchange of information on the working programme for the coming year, related with the starting of the project "FIBEX" (First International Biomass Experiment) in February 1981. The First Biomass Experiment aims at an evaluation of living resources of Western Antarctica, especially in the regions of the Scotia Sea and Drake Passage, i.e. areas which are under pressure of intense fishery exploitation. The programme underlines the necessity for an application of sonic sounding methods for the evaluation of krill abundances and for establishment of trophic relations and functioning of the studied part of Antarctic ecosystem.

Ships of the following countries, which joined the programme, will participate in "FIBEX" project: Argentina, Chile, USA, USSR, Great Britain, FDR, Norway, France, South Africa, Japan and Poland. It was decided that ships of France and South Africa will work in region of Kergulene and westward from this archipelago, while Japan ships in the Pacific and Atlantic sectors of Antarctica. Region of investigations was divided among the countries participating in the programme. The region westward from King George Island was proposed to be studied by Polish

scientists. This region was already preliminarily investigated by the I Polish Antarctic Marine Research Expedition to Antarctica in 1975/1976. This will allow to continue our studies in the same area and is also related to biological investigations carried out on Arctowski Station. Methods of studies within "FIBEX" project are unified and courses of ships are coordinated. This approach and unification of methods will allow to gather the detailed data, which will be stored in International Data Centre and accessible for all countries participating in the "BIOMASS" programme. The Centre will have a great scientific and practical significance. The Group of Specialists is of an opinion that the Centre should have an access to the data on catches of ships fishing for fish, cephalopodes and other organisms which are important components of Antarctic ecosystem. The Group of Specialists stated their anxiety, that competent specialists from SCAR do not take part in works on the future Convention on Protection of Living Resources of Antarctica. The Convention is being prepared in different way than, for an example, a convention on the protection of seals. This situation should be changed.

A representative of USSR took part in the meeting of the Group of Specialists for the first time, and proposed that USSR will participate in "BIOMASS" programme with large scientific potential. This fact was welcomed with satisfaction. The "BIOMASS" programme is of special importance; it is the first large scale international research programme for the South Ocean. This programme is not only of cognitive but also of practical value, and with the present interest of the world in living resources of Antarctica and in their rational exploitation, it is of special importance especially for countries Signatories of the Antarctic Union, including Poland. The results of "BIOMASS" programme, mainly the quantitative evaluation of living resources, will influence opinions presented by Group of Specialists to the Organization of Countries Signatories of Antarctic Union via SCAR and via National Committees and various "interim measures" which will be proposed until the conclusion and ratification of the Convention on Protection of Living Resources. It can be seen that there is a close relation of scientific, practical and political matter within the programme. Participation of Poland, a country with significant achievements in studies of the living resources of Antarctica has meets with appreciation. A multidisciplinary programme of studies carried on at Arctowski Station by Polish Academy of Sciences and a way of solving ecological problems, presented at the meeting by a Polish representative, is of special interest. The results of Sea Fisheries Institute were also highly appreciated. The meeting was efficiently organised, and its results can be recognized as a success, as stated by Professor El-Sayed, who headed the meeting, in his letter to the Scientific Secretary of the Polish Academy of Sciences.