

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

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If we are to provide fisheries managers with useful advice, an essential requirement of fish population dynamics is high quality, statistically rigorous data. In almost all cases these data have to be collected over a long time period. In this session we will cover the data requirements for a range of models from the simple to the very complex. In all cases, I believe there are a number of criteria that must be met; these are:

- there is commitment (including adequate resources) to collecting fisheries data
- there is "ownership" of the data
- data must be "looked at."

In the following presentations these areas are highlighted as well as examples of the problems that can occur and methods to deal with them.

To ensure that we can continue to improve our databases, an important message needs to be sent to fisheries managers. This is that, paradoxically, the more information we get, the harder it gets: the uncertainties become clearer! All those nice "rules of thumb(s)" we use when there is little or no information (eg 0.5MB₀, Pauly's M) become invalid or are wrong. Despite the uncertainties, however, the advice is sounder.

In this session we will discuss data requirements for age-structured models; Jean Chesson provides an example of improving the collection of fisheries data particularly when fishing practices change. Norm Hall drew the short straw and will talk on data requirements for multi-species, spatial and ecosystem models. Neil Klaer is the first panellist. He will talk on effort standardisation. This is an area I believe that appears to have been somewhat overlooked in recent years yet it is fundamental to so many of our models.