

Foreword

Spanish research in Namibia dates back to 1979. Since then, the Scientific Research Council (CSIC) has played a leading role in marine scientific production. The origin of this research activity must be sought within the historic framework of this country, which was not recognised as such until 1990. Before this date, Namibia's waters were open to all, and since they contain one of the world's most important fishing grounds, the 1960's saw the start of intense fishing activity by vessels flying various flags. This international fleet was already a reality by the mid-1960's, but it was not until 1972 that a commission, named the International Commission for the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries (ICSEAF), was created to manage the stocks of the South-East Atlantic. This commission, which at the time was responsible for the management of the fishery, held its first working group meeting in 1972. Three years later the first management measures were implemented, and later the responsibility for the monitoring and investigation of the different commercial species was distributed among a number of countries. Within this sphere of action, Spain was entrusted with sampling and monitoring the hake populations in Namibian waters. The Fisheries Ministry, as the financing body, and the Instituto de Ciencias del Mar of Barcelona, as the research centre, made it possible to perform intense research activity during the 1980's.

This research activity was much more ambitious than anticipated, and those monitoring surveys generated a high volume of published science. Among these publications, many doctoral theses were produced, the last one being presented in 1999. It is this last thesis which is presented here as a monograph whose quality and painstaking work are clear to see and fully explain the time that has been required to complete it. This excellent work, which will be extremely useful for the new generations of Namibian researchers, has the special characteristic of having been developed in two clearly differentiated historical periods, and demonstrates once again that scientific values are permanent and not constrained by circumstances. I also want to thank the Namibian Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Spanish Agency of International Co-operation (AECI) which made possible the present scientific cooperation between the National Marine Information and Research Centre and the Spanish Scientific Research Council (CSIC). The gratefulness is extended to the environmental system of Namibian waters which has such great scientific interest that those of us who have had the opportunity to work in this region are well aware of the privilege this represents.

Finally, I would like to take advantage of the publication of this monograph to thank Dr. Jan Jurgens for the great interest in science and the generous support for scientists he has always shown. His unconditional support both before and after Namibia's independence has made it possible to carry out scientific works such as the study presented here.

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