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INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON THE CONSERVATION  
OF THE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE SEA

International conservation problems requiring solution...

The Secretary-General has the honour to communicate the following summary of a paper by Mr. G. Belloc, submitted by the Principality of Monaco. The full text of this paper will be issued in French as A/CONF.10/L.12.

THE CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN COASTAL WATERS

by

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# SUMMARY

1. As long ago as 1921, Prince Albert I of Monaco drew attention in his writings to the urgent necessity for a conference such as the present one. He stressed the need for regulations to prevent the excessive destruction of immature fish and pointed out that such regulations must be international, since the fish were no respecters of frontiers.
2. The destruction of young fish is by no means confined to the coastal waters of France and Monaco but is to be found as a pressing problem in Greek waters, in the Antilles and off the West African coast. Most of these fish are of species capable of attaining considerable size and therefore a high value both from an economic and a nutritional point of view.
3. It should be possible to prohibit the sale of fish below a certain minimum size, the size in each case corresponding to that which the fish attains after having spawned once. It appears that we will shortly be able to define this size for the majority of the edible species of the Mediterranean on the basis of observations made at Monaco, on the French coast, in the Gulf of Genoa, in Greece, Turkey and off the north coast of Africa. It appears that, with the exception of tunas and a few others, the rate of growth of fish is slower in the Mediterranean than in the Atlantic and the size at any given age is smaller.
4. Certain fishing techniques and types of gear have particularly harmful effects; one of the most regrettable of these techniques is that of fishing for sardines off the coast of Monaco with a net of microscopically fine mesh, which has already resulted in an almost complete absence of adult fish in the area.
5. Many experiments have been carried out into the question of mesh sizes and the mechanical behaviour of the nets in use. It would be desirable to obtain a net the mesh of which would remain extended while being pulled through the water, when there is a tendency for the strands to be drawn together on the diagonal.
5. The protection of nurseries would contribute greatly to an increased availability of fish.
6. For conservation regulations to be effective, it is most important to obtain the co-operation of the fishermen.