

International implementation of the ecosystem approach to achieve the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources

Dr. Andrew J. Constable

Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre,
Private Bag 80, Hobart, Tasmania, 7001. Australia. and
Australian Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage Australian Antarctic Division,
Channel Highway, Kingston, Tasmania, Australia. 7050

Contact email: andrew.constable@aad.gov.au

ABSTRACT

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which held its first meeting in 1982, was the first international organisation charged with achieving an ecosystem approach to the conservation of exploited stocks, notably krill, as well as the conservation of the wider ecosystem. Since its beginning, the Commission has evolved from (i) initially reacting to over-exploitation of stocks, a situation largely inherited from previously

this phase was to interpret the ecosystem objectives of the Convention in population and ecosystem quantities that could be defined and measured scientifically. In so doing, the new methods used to assess catch limits were designed to take account of scientific uncertainties and estimate the likelihood of achieving the population and ecosystem objectives of the Convention given a specific harvest strategy, which at present is total allowable catch. Approaches to new and exploratory fisheries were also developed that restrict harvesting until such time as sufficient data are available to properly assess whether a harvest strategy would be consistent with the objectives of CCAMLR. In most cases, the Commission has specified, in conservation measures, the data required to be collected from the fisheries to facilitate assessments in the future. This is achieved primarily through the annual submission of catch and effort data, and through the CCAMLR Scheme of Scientific Observation, which requires 100% coverage on finfish vessels to obtain suitable data. The third phase has been the implementation of compliance and enforcement measures, such as vessel monitoring systems, catch documentation schemes and Port and Flag State controls. These