

5th World Fisheries Congress, Yokohama, Japan, 20-24 October 2008

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Symposium: Seamount Fisheries – From Unregulated Exploitation to Sustainable Use

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Seamounts are submerged mountains in the ocean's floor, generally caused by volcanic activity or tectonic uplift. Their summits can vary from a few meters below the surface to several kilometers. Seamounts have been sampled since the time of the Challenger expedition, but only in the last few decades have deep-water trawling gear and underwater vehicles allowed for thorough community sampling. Seamounts have distinct biological communities from the surrounding seafloor, and display high apparent rates of endemism. Some of the seamounts were heavily fished in the past resulting in commercial stock depletion, habitat destruction, and changes in fish communities. Despite the long period of exploitation of fisheries resources on seamounts, these ecosystems remain poorly understood. The focus of this session is to bring attention to fisheries on seamounts, their history, current status and future prospects, the impact of fisheries on seamount ecosystems, ecology and life histories of seamount fishes and the importance of research programs in improvement of the knowledge of seamount biodiversity and fisheries resources. Moreover, it is also important to focus on mitigation measures against sea bottom impact of fishing operations through gear designs and operations.

This symposium will emphasize several elements:

- 1) historical overview, current status and prospects of fisheries on seamounts;
- 2) impact of fisheries on seamount ecosystems;
- 3) specific features of the ecology and life histories of seamount fishes;

- 4) role of research programs in improving understanding of seamount biodiversity and fisheries resources;
- 5) conservation measures to make fisheries on seamounts sustainable;
- 6) technical innovations to reducing sea bottom impact.

Participation: Colleagues interested in attending and contributing to this symposium should contact us (see email addresses above) detailing their proposed contributions: provisional title, authors and presenters, format of presentation (oral or poster) **by 01 January 2008** at the latest. See you in Yokohama next year!