

PART I
REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES
1 July 1967—30 June 1968
REPORT OF THE CALCOFI COMMITTEE

The interval of time covered by this report finds the CalCOFI Program between two salients—the future year of major surveys and studies and the past two years of recapitulation and intense reevaluation of the program objectives and accomplishments.

In their Report XI (1966), the CalCOFI Committee outlined the history, accomplishments, and status of the program. In their Report XII (1967) the Committee reevaluated the status of understanding of the pelagic marine resources of the eastern North Pacific and analyzed the factors that limit their present and future utilization.

From this analysis it is clear that the CalCOFI Program has yielded major accomplishments. The program has slowly stripped away a host of unknowns and uncertainties and has brought into sharp perspective the potentials and probable potentials of a number of species of pelagic marine organisms—an understanding quite sufficient for the initial utilization of a number of the stocks.

Despite these advances of understanding, unequaled elsewhere in the world, no substantial domestic pelagic fisheries have been initiated in the eastern North Pacific (although Soviet fishermen have been active in these waters). As analysis shows, this failure is neither scientific nor is it directly economic, or technological. Rather this inability of California to act reasonably and conservatively on the resources that are rightfully hers, stems from institutional and social factors—a statutory inflexibility and a conservative retention of this inflexibility, under the apprehension that such is the only defense against eventual over-exploitation. There is some substantial past and present basis for this apprehension (e.g., the sardine in the past, and the Pacific mackerel at the present) as has been pointed out in previous reports.

This unfortunate history and condition are recapitulated more directly and bluntly as follows:

As a result of the depletion of sardine stocks a quarter of a century ago, the State of California initiated broad studies of the pelagic ocean environment. These continuing studies have placed her in a position of unprecedented advanced scientific under-

standing of her potential commercial fisheries. These are great. Two factors now apparently constrain California from profiting from her farseeing investment in understanding: first, a failure to appreciate the hyper-economic benefits from the development of domestic fisheries, and, secondly, a not baseless apprehension that the state government would not be able to restrict a developing fishery to its supportable yield.

Unhappily, the social results of a great investment in advanced research and the efforts of many dedicated scientists over many years have only delineated the stark symptomatic defects of our California institutions and helped accelerate the availability of the resources of the eastern North Pacific to foreign fisheries.

We have said that the CalCOFI Program, in this interval of time, has found itself between two salients. We have described that of the past, the reappraisal of accomplishments, for which the scientists of the program may feel both professional pride and social disappointment.

Despite the practical disappointment described above, we must presume that the causes will be exorcised in a further enlightened future. Thus this year has seen a number of important steps, vital to the scientific program. There have been preparations for monthly sea surveys to take place in 1969, during which the pelagic resources will be subject to the most intense surveys of the entire life of the program. Also there have taken place preparations for and the first steps in launching a broad study of the causes of fluctuations in the conditions of the North Pacific. This involves the cooperation and major sponsorship of the Office of Naval Research and the U.S. Coast Guard. This program will utilize an array of deep-moored instrument stations and will elucidate a vital and fundamental problem—the fluctuations in marine fish stocks. The results of these and other studies will form major portions of subsequent reports. *J. L. Baxter, J. D. Isaacs, A. R. Longhurst, and P. M. Roedel, October 1968.*