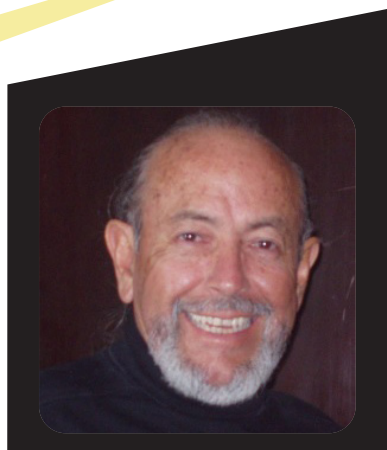


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FISHERIES POTENTIAL OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

In the Gulf of Mexico with an area of 1,600,000 km², American and Mexican fleets exploit about 535,000 t. From these, a harvest of nearly 500,000 t belongs to the Gulf menhaden. A higher presence in recent years, of the catch of mud feeders fish like mullets, suggests a bottom-up process in the trophic web. By comparing catch records from the northern and southern Gulf of México, it was assumed an unexploited biomass of the Gulf menhaden or other similar sardine-like stock, suggesting that a significant harvest could be obtained in the southern portion. A difference in Cla of an order of magnitude higher in the northern Gulf than in the southern Gulf, explains these differences. It seems that juveniles of the Gulf menhaden have been overexploited since the middle eighties in the northern Gulf; in order to demonstrate this, the age structure was reconstructed. Then by simulation, a higher size of first catch was tested, from the current 12 cm (age = One year) to 19 cm (age = Three years), then a potential yield of one Million t was estimated. The promising perspective suggests that yield may be doubled by opening the mesh to the required size, restoring the harvest levels of the Gulf menhaden once caught.

Biography

Ph D (1978). Professor of the Marine Sciences Research Centre in La Paz, Mexico. Interests, Bio-economic assessment of fisheries, impact of climate on fisheries, coral reef ecology. He is teacher of the courses Fisheries Management and Coral reef Ecology at his research Centre. Has been adviser of 25 M Sc thesis B Sc, 16 at the M Sc Program and 5 at Ph D level. He has led 17 research projects and has collaborated on another 16. He has published more than 150 scientific papers, including the co-edition of a book on the coral reefs of the south Gulf of Mexico (2007), translated into Spanish (2010).

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