



EAF-Nansen Programme

Mesopelagic transects with the RV *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen*

Post-survey meeting

Rome, 6-8 November 2018

ABITART HOTEL, Via Pellegrino Matteucci, 10

Research on mesopelagic communities has been included in the EAF-Nansen Science Plan as part of a dedicated theme (Theme 3) due to the increasing awareness of their ecological role and potential for sustained harvest. Recent acoustic studies suggest substantial mesopelagic biomasses (10 billion tons or more) in the world's subtropical and tropical oceans (between 40° S and 40° N), which is an order of magnitude higher than the previous global estimate based primarily on net and trawl sampling, triggering considerable international efforts towards research and harvest of these resources.

Dedicated surveys with the RV *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen* were carried out in 2017 and in 2018 in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to collect acoustic data, obtain biological samples, and carry out experimental work with the overall objective of developing survey methodology and increasing the knowledge on abundance and ecology of this poorly known community. Mesopelagic transects, from shallow productive waters to offshore oligotrophic waters, were carried out off Morocco and Namibia in contrasting conditions in terms of overall productivity, while oceanic spatial distribution across oceanographic gradients and structures were investigated off Tanzania, in the central Indian Ocean and in the Bay of Bengal.

The proposed meeting aims to:

- review data and samples collected so far and identify gaps;
- review protocols for mesopelagic surveying and sample/ data collection
- Inform on status of the production of the mesopelagic fish guide, including the production of a species guide

- provide inputs for planned future survey work on mesopelagic fishes (with special emphasis on the 2019 and 2020 survey plans)
- review draft survey reports for finalization
- as part of Theme 3, review the status of proposed research tasks, identify scientific papers for publication, responsibilities and needed action.

Participants:

Participants in the surveys or in Theme 3 with competence in fisheries acoustics and/or biology/ecology of mesopelagic fishes.

Day 1		
Time	Agenda item	Responsible
09.00-09.30	Welcome Introduction to the workshop and participants Objectives of the workshop and agenda	M. Tandstad, FAO (EAF-Nansen Programme Coordinator) G. Bianchi, IMR (Research Coordinator)
09.30-10.30	Introduction to mesopelagic work in the EAF-Nansen Programme Discussion	B.E. Akselsen, IMR (cruise leader and IMR focal point for mesopelagic work in the EAF-Nansen Programme)
10.30-11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11.00-12.00	Overview of historical and recent mesopelagic surveys carried out so far by the RV <i>DR Fridtjof Nansen</i> Discussion	B.E. Akselsen
12.00-13.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.00-14.00	Overview of samples/data collected in 2017 and 2018	B.E. Akselsen
14.00-14.30	Identified research projects on mesopelagic fish so far	A.G.V. Salvanes, Professor (University of Bergen)
14.30-15.00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
15.00-16.00	Mesopelagic fish guide for West Africa	Edoardo Mostarda, FAO
Day 2		
09.00-10.30	Overview of mesopelagic studies carried out in the different regions NW Africa, BCC East Africa BoB	Najib Charouki Janet Coetzee Silas M. William

	Discussion	TBD
10.30-11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11.00-12.00	Mesopelagic fish distribution, light and productivity	Dag Aksnes
12.00-13.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.00-15.00	Feedback on surveys reports (following presentation of reports by cruise leaders)	All
15.00-15.30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
15.30-17.00	Data gaps	All
Day 3		
09.00-13.00	Research projects, timeline and responsibilities (discussion)	(group work)
10.30-11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11.00-12.00	Research projects, timeline and responsibilities (reporting)	Each group presents
12.00-13.00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
13.00-15.00	Planning the surveys in 2019 and 2020	All
15.00-16.00	Summary and conclusions	All

