

Cuba expands her aquaculture industry



Sr. Enrique Oltuski, Fisheries Deputy Minister of Cuba

From a production of 20 thousand tons of fish — captured and raised — and a per capita fish consumption of four kilograms, Cuba, with a modern deep-sea fishing fleet and improved coastal fishery, has been in recent times averaging 250 thousand tons a year. Of this, a mere 5000 tons is from aquaculture. Cuba's 9.5 million population has increased its per capita fish consumption to 12.5 kilograms.

At present, however, the State has trained its attention on developing its aquaculture industry for several reasons, chief among which, according to Cuban Fisheries Deputy Minister Enrique Oltuski Ozacki, are (1) the new regime of the seas which extends nations' economic zones to 200 miles offshore and (2) the presence of a 2,500-kilometer virtually untapped brackishwater resource.

In an interview with ASIAN AQUACULTURE at the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department, Sr. Oltuski said Cuba has two main areas for aquaculture expansion — the freshwater dams and reservoirs of which there are presently 60 thousand hectares of water surface and thrice that area when all the hydro projects of the country are completed; and the extensive mangrove belt around Cuba.

This aquaculture resource base has a potential production of from 50 to 100 thousand tons of fish yearly, Oltuski estimates. Cuba has also a few big lakes and numerous rivers that can be cultivated for fish, he added.

Eventually, and if properly utilized, the country's brackishwater resource should be able to make up for whatever the marine fleet will not be able to capture, agreed Dr. Benjamin Cer. Gabriel of the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department Freshwater Aquaculture Center who is also chairman of the Philippines' mangrove committee. Dr. Gabriel visited Cuba recently on the request of the Cuban government to assess its brackishwater potentials.

Minister Oltuski said they have been stocking freshwater bodies with tilapia, silver carps, bigheads and grass carps, and bass. They are expanding their oyster farms from the present fifteen to some thirty farms by 1982. The 30 farms are expected to yield 10 thousand tons per year, he said.

We shall try to cultivate mullets in our brackishwater areas, Oltuski said, hastily adding that he received the tip from Dr. Hiralal Chaudhuri of the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department "just now."

Chaudhuri is an artificial breeding (carps, milkfish) specialist who had been India's Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute aquaculture division head and presently SEAFDEC's regional aquaculture coordinator and in charge of AIA's technology verification program.

Sr. Oltuski and four of his fisheries specialists were in the Philippines on 4 to 11 November to visit various fisheries and aquaculture projects. He said that Cuba's interest in Philippine aquaculture stems much from the obvious similarities in the climatic conditions of the two countries. Cuba and the Philippines are in the same latitude and have similar climates that it should be fairly easy to transfer Philippine-developed aquaculture technology to Cuba, he deduced.

At Panay Island, the Cuban Mission observed, aside from the facilities and projects of the Department's main station in Tigbauan, Iloilo, the progressive aquaculture farms of Atty. Ceferino delos
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The first trainees from Nigeria of the University of the Philippines-SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department graduate program, Messrs. Cyprian I. Ohazulike, Sunday Ikoton, and Jonathan O. Omoloyin (left to right) discuss pond management principles with Dr. Hiralal Chaudhuri of the Asian Institute of Aquaculture and faculty member of the University of the Philippines. The three Nigerian government scholars are now enrolled in the University of the Philippines for a 2-year course leading to the degree of Master of Science in Fisheries major in Aquaculture. They are Fisheries Officers assigned to the extension service. Nigeria has a big program on fish seed multiplication and has launched an accelerated fish production program, they reported. The three are involved in organizing cooperatives, and assisting the clients of the seed multiplication project.

Cuba expands...

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Santos and the Jamandres (Tirso and Ernesto), and the rice-fish culture farm of Dr. Parra. Their observation tour brought them to various hatcheries and nurseries for prawn and milkfish and to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources research and production/demonstration farm in Molo, Iloilo City.

Cuba has a fisheries research center staffed with some 100 university graduates with training in biology and oceanography. These same researchers, and others who will be recruited, will form the core group for Cuba's expanded aquaculture research and development program, Oltuski said. They will however need further training and re-orientation for work in aquaculture.

Cuba's main fisheries export is the spiny lobster caught offshore at a quantity of 10 thousand tons yearly and which generates US\$50 million annually.

There are five aquaculture enterprises, all state-run, currently operating. They handle the processing and marketing components of the fishery industry.

While Cuba's economy is largely based on sugar, the country needs to generate as much return as it could obtain from its other resources to fuel its accelerated socio-economic developmental activities, Oltuski concluded. ●

Notes from our readers

It was indeed a very pleasant surprise to receive a copy of the *Asian Aquaculture*, Vol. 1, No. 1, recently . . . I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the AIA on producing the *Asian Aquaculture*. It is most informative and the articles are well written. I should be grateful if you can continue to place me on the mailing list and, at this stage, since our Field Station is badly in need of scientific literature, I should be most grateful if you can also put the Station which is under the coordinatorship of Dr. Ong Jin Eong under your mailing list as well.

—Dr. Wong Tat Meng
Acting Dean, School of Biological Sciences
Universiti Sains Malaysia
Penang

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I have a copy of your *Asian Aquaculture* magazine, Vol. 1, No. 1 July issue, which we have found as good reference material for the "Lingap ng Pangulo sa Barangay" school-on-the-air program and Masagana Farm Program aired over two radio stations weekly and daily, respectively, in Roxas City.

—Bienvenido P. Cortes
Punta Tabuc, Roxas City
Philippines

In the July issue of the *Asian Aquaculture*, it was reported that Mr. Rolando Platon has developed a small-scale hatchery for prawns. The hatchery's advantages were featured in our August 1978 issue under fishing tips, one of the regular departments of our magazine.

We will run another story on how to construct the said hatchery in our next issue. Could you please send us immediately a copy of the guideline for the design, construction and operations of the hatchery?

—Leo A. Deocadiz
Editor, Philippine Farmers' Journal
Quezon City

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Dear Joe,

I appreciate having the copy of *Asian Aquaculture* of July 1978 and have mixed feelings about extending congratulations to you on your appointment as Director of the AIA. I do wish you all the best in this important new post . . .

—A.H. Moseman
International Agricultural Development
Service (IADS)
New York



Members of the Cuban mission led by fisheries deputy minister Enrique Oltuski (with the dark glasses) take a look at the *Tilapia nilotica* culture trials of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Briefing them is BFAR Region 6 director, H. Magsuci. To the right of the minister is Sra. Maria Consuelo Kautzman, a fishery biologist at the Cuban Centro Investigaciones Pesqueras.

ERRATUM

Dr. Richard Neal is Aquaculture Advisor for USAID, Washington, not a staff member of the Oceanic Institute as he has been identified in *Asian Aquaculture* Vol. 1, 5 (Nov.). Our apologies.

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