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THE ROLE OF CHINESE FISHERIES LIBRARIES IN RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

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Abstract: This paper described a general situation of fisheries libraries in different fields related to responsible fisheries in China and it mainly introduced a role of fisheries library in East China Sea Fisheries Research Institute on enforcement of responsible fisheries.

Keywords: Fisheries library, responsible fisheries, overview, China

Since the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was issued in 1995, great progress has been achieved in global fisheries, in which fisheries libraries have played an important role.

Distribution of fisheries libraries in China

There are about three kinds of libraries related to fisheries in China:

- Libraries in aquatic educational organizations, such as fisheries universities, ocean universities and other aquatic colleges.
- Libraries in marine and aquatic scientific research institutes.
- Public libraries in medium and larger cities.

Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Figure 1. (L) Shanghai Library (Depository Library of the United Nations)

Figure 2. (R) Shanghai Fisheries University Library ((Depository Library of the United Nations)

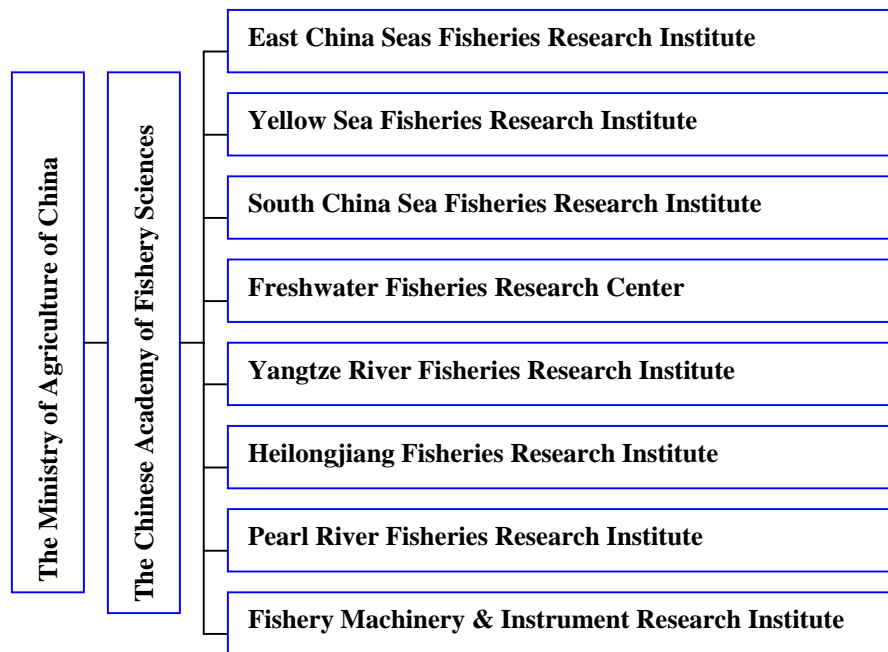
Generally, the libraries of fisheries research institutes and universities are more important and more directly linked to management, scientific research, production and trade in fisheries. Academic libraries are more comprehensive in coverage. By comparison, libraries in fisheries research institutes are smaller but highly specialized.

According to statistics, in China there are more than 200 universities, colleges and research institutes related to aquatic and marine science. About 10 percent of them are located in fish producing regions and play a key role in Chinese fisheries. Most of them have their own library and information service system. National research institutes and universities, which are engaged in basic and applied research, also provide support to aquaculture research and other technological development.

National research institutes are funded by central government and are under the direct administration of the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences (CAFS) within the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Information Center of the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences is engaged in fisheries scientific research information and leads its subordinate institutes in the fisheries information fields including library, web and fisheries databases.

The framework of the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences (CAFS):



East China Sea Fisheries Research Institute

Our institute, the East China Sea Fisheries Research Institute (**ECSFRI**), under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences, the Ministry of Agriculture of China, is a national comprehensive fishery research institute for the East China Sea region. It was founded in October 1958 and is located in Shanghai.

There are about 100 scientific research members in our institute. Over the past 40 years, it has undertaken a lot of innovative research projects in the following fields: fishery resources, fishery environmental conservation, marine fishing, preservation and processing of aquatic products, aquaculture, stock enhancement, aquatic biotechnologies, remote sensing application in fisheries, etc. We have obtained more than 200 research achievements, 15 of which have been awarded a prize for national scientific and technological progress and 92 have been awarded a prize for scientific and technological progress at the ministerial and provincial levels.



Figure 3. East China Sea Fisheries Research Institute

Our library possesses 80,000 volumes, over 10,000 journals in 300 categories with different languages such as Chinese, English, French, Russian and Japanese. All of the collections are related to the fisheries research orientation of our institute including aquaculture, fish biology, water environment research, marine fishing and responsible fishing technology, protection and evaluation of fishery resources, aquatic food safety and quality inspection and control, fishery information technology, etc. We currently subscribe to 150 different types of journals and periodicals,

most of them in Chinese, covering the main fisheries journals of China. Subscriptions to foreign publications are declining as more and more foreign papers and information is made available online. Rising prices, especially of European journals, are also responsible for reduction in our subscriptions.

We have for many years received a variety of publications from FAO's Fisheries Library, such as Fisheries Circulars, Fisheries Reports, Technical Papers and other documents. These materials support our research and we appreciate FBL's assistance.

Like most fisheries libraries, the main task of our library is to provide electronic and print information services for our research members. We:

- Provide reference books, academic journals, serials and consultation;

- Organize various kinds of seminars;
- Compile and publish the Academy's journals, papers and publications such as Marine fishery and Modern Fisheries Information;
- Construction and maintenance of the website, development of a specialized database and digital library;
- Engage in fisheries research, such as fisheries management, fisheries statistics and fisheries information.

In recent years , digital information has become more and more important for fisheries research as IT develops rapidly, so we make great efforts in this area. We have set up a digital information service. In order to use internet information effectively , we also cooperate with some universities to get access to special data bases such as VIP, the largest academic papers database in China, Wangfang , the doctoral thesis database, Superstar, the digital library and some foreign database like Springer. Most databases in our library are subscription.



A part of the academy's journals and publications compiled and published by ECSFRI

It is obvious that the fisheries library is very important for the sustainable development of fisheries in China, especially in fisheries management, scientific research, training and some other aspects.

The library is a collecting and distributing center for knowledge and information; as a mediator, its favorable position has led to its playing an important role in cooperation and exchange in fisheries information, both domestic and international, so as to contribute to Responsible Fisheries. In China the library is usually called “a bridge” for it is connected with all trades and professions.

Innovation of management in fisheries libraries

In 1994, the book published by Singapore predicted that some changes would take place in libraries at the end of the 20th century:

- From book keeper to intelligencer;
- From single media to multimedia;
- From library collections to the boundless library;
- From going to the library to the library going to readers;
- From on time to in time
- From local services to international services.

These changes should have great impact on library management from theory to practice and standards. Library management faces a pressing task of innovation.

All kinds of Chinese libraries, including professional libraries and big public libraries, have been discussing several topics extensively in recent years: that is, how to innovate library management when faced with the knowledge explosion and social information tidal wave; how to face the challenges and opportunities provided by the rapid development of modern information technology; how to combine conventional libraries and modern electronic information technology closely; how to face the challenge of information commercialization; how to develop the spirit of the library and take responsibility for serving society; and to give thought to complex issues such as what is the spirit of the library and fair access to information, and so on. Some of the issues have been discussed and explored for many years. These problems also exist in fisheries libraries.

Most fishery research institutes, except libraries, have their own website and electronic information service platform. Because of the small scale of professional fisheries libraries and the development of electronic information technology, the service style, system and contents of the traditional fisheries library has changed a lot. Many research institutes have merged their traditional libraries, departments dealing with website and electronic information and editorial board which published professional publications into an information center. The function and personnel of the branch under the information center are inter-linked, which is good for resources utilization. In this sense, traditional libraries are presented to the readers and customers in a new form.

Although we have been trying to service our readers better and more effectively, some deficiencies still remain in fisheries libraries:

- Their professional characteristic is not distinct: A fisheries library may need to introduce one or two specific services, in addition to its common function and service. In the last ten years, science and technology have developed rapidly; subjects keep expanding. New disciplines and cross-disciplinary subjects add to the challenge of the librarian's job. The knowledge explosion leaves the librarians of small professional libraries feeling at a loss. They may not have

enough money to buy all kinds of books, or lose their specificity by trying to cover every aspect of the subject. Professional libraries should give prominence to the word “professional” so as to improve their service and develop themselves, and acquire their own competitive capabilities.

- The low degree of information resource sharing;
- The spiraling costs of publications, and the lack of funds;
- The function and model of service should be diversity;
- Not enough domestic and international cooperation and exchange.

There is potential for international cooperation and exchange for fisheries libraries.

- Promote international cooperation and intercommunication in fisheries libraries by internet and seminars;
- Exchange journals and publications, promote fisheries information sharing;
- Research and approach the subject of fisheries library development, such as management, techniques, the specialty of fisheries libraries and so on.

In these times when science and technology are developing rapidly, fisheries libraries are also faced with new challenges and new opportunities. There are many problems for us to resolve and much hard work for us to do and explore.

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