

IN MEMORIAM ROBIN ALLEN



Our colleague and friend Robin Allen passed away on 18 March 2015, in New Zealand. He was a remarkable person both professionally and personally, respected and cherished, and all those privileged to know him and work with him have only the best of memories. The fishing community has suffered a great loss.

Dr. Robin Allen was born in Tauranga, New Zealand, in 1943, and studied mathematics and statistics at Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Otago. He began his career in fisheries as a statistician with the New Zealand Fisheries Management Division. Subsequently he earned his Ph.D. at the University of British Columbia, where he studied modeling of fish population dynamics under the late Professor Peter Larkin. His research involved the application of age-structured models, including stock-recruit relationships, to fisheries data.

The then Director of the IATTC, Dr. James Joseph, encouraged him to make use of data for the eastern Pacific Ocean yellowfin tuna in his thesis work, initiating his connection with the IATTC. After completing his degree, Dr. Allen returned to New Zealand and became involved in the population dynamics of a number of commercial and recreational fisheries, and in particular that for the New Zealand oyster. In 1976, Dr. Joseph invited him to join the staff of the IATTC where, initially, he investigated the use of linear models to make standardized estimates of abundance of tunas. In 1978, he was asked to establish a tuna-dolphin program for the IATTC, fulfilling the mandate that the Commission adopted when it decided that it should concern itself with the problems arising from the tuna-dolphin relationship in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Dr. Allen returned to New Zealand in 1981 as Assistant Director, and subsequently Director, of the Fisheries Research Division. At that time New Zealand had recently introduced a 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone; the domestic industry was growing rapidly to take advantage of expanded opportunities in deep-water fisheries that had been revealed by the presence of foreign vessels, and was suffering from the consequences of overfishing in inshore waters. Together with a few other fisheries officials, he advocated the introduction of a comprehensive system of management using individual transferable quotas, which remains the heart of New Zealand's current fishery management system. He assumed a number of other positions within the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, culminating in his appointment as Group Director of Fisheries Policy, where he was responsible for policy development and drafting of what eventually became the New Zealand Fisheries Act of 1996.

He was invited to return to the IATTC as Assistant Director in 1995, and upon Dr. Joseph's retirement in 1999 was appointed Director. He remained in that position until 19 September 2007, when he retired. During his tenure, there have been several important changes within the IATTC. The number of member countries increased from 10 to 15, the Commission's new Convention, the "Antigua Convention," was negotiated and adopted, and the legally-binding Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program replaced the previous "La Jolla Agreement."

He was appointed by South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) at its first meeting in January-February 2013 as its Acting Executive Secretary until such time as a permanent Executive Secretary was recruited in 2014.

Dr. Allen was well known internationally, particularly in the area of cooperation among Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). He chaired the second and third Meetings of FAO and Non-FAO Regional Fishery Bodies or Arrangements (2001-2004) and was the first Chairman of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS) Steering Committee (2004-2006), being instrumental in establishing a global list of vessels authorized to fish for tunas. He worked closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, particularly with its project on the management of tuna fishing capacity, and chaired a Technical Advisory Committee for that project.

He has published numerous papers and articles in scholarly and trade journals.