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International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea

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Conseil International pour
l'Exploration de la Mer

PRESS RELEASE

17 July 2013

Copenhagen, Denmark

For immediate release

State-of-the-art stock assessment methods in focus at a global conference in Boston this week

More than 200 top fisheries scientists have gathered in Boston, USA this week, for the **World Conference on Stock Assessment Methods for Sustainable Fisheries (WCSAM)**. The conference, taking place 15-19 July, focuses on and discusses fish stock assessment methods – both challenges to their development and needs for future evaluation.

“There are lots of complicated and simple models and methods available,” explains Mark Dickey-Collas, Ecosystem Professional Officer at the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and one of the conference conveners. “We will discuss what the main challenges to these methods are and what they are good and not good for”.

Conference sessions will host discussions on key challenges for single-species assessments as well as consider ecosystem dynamics and structure assessment, spatial complexity, and temporal change issues.

A separate session will be dedicated to data-poor approaches. Scientists from many areas of the world are currently producing methods to assess stocks with limited data, and conference participants will investigate whether a common theme/methodology is developing within this area.

The conference is organized by a large collaboration of regional and national fishery management organizations and research institutes, with Dickey-Collas from ICES and Steve Cadrin from the University of Massachusetts as conveners. Experts in tuna, tropical, temperate, freshwater and marine fisheries are taking part. Sidney Holt, a British zoologist and one of the founding fathers of modern fisheries science, will be kicking off Wednesday’s opening session with his lecture entitled ‘what is a fish stock assessment?’, and asking whether its meaning extends beyond the development and regulation of fisheries.

Visit [the conference website](#) for more information.

For further information, please contact:

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Note to editors

The **International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)** coordinates and promotes marine research in the North Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, and the Baltic Sea. ICES advises competent authorities (international commissions and governments) on marine policy and management issues related to the impacts of human activities on marine ecosystems and the management of the exploitation of living marine resources. ICES is working towards integrated ecosystem assessments and integrated advice, delivered at the regional seas level. For more information, visit www.ices.dk.

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