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PUNTA HIGUERO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

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SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

MAY 1, 1975

Prepared for the Puerto Rico Water Resources Authority

By the Staff of Puerto Rico Nuclear Center of the

University of Puerto Rico

OPERATED BY UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO UNDER CONTRACT

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PUNTA HIGUERO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

by

James D. Parrish

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SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON FISHES AND? FISHING
AT PUNTA HIGUERO AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

A limited number of collections were made during this study in the very shallow waters near shore. A substantial volume of information is also available regarding fishes in deeper waters and slightly more distant areas. These data appear in published and unpublished sources. (Erdman (1961, 1963), FAO (1962), Juhl (1972).)

Erdman (1963) is a data compilation made from A.B.

Cochran's collections, for the most part, on total landings

in the Agvadilla area! These data present catch by common

name, number of fish caught and weight. The bulk of the catch was landed at "Crashboat" beach, north of Agvadilla, and some landings may have been made at the beach of the town of Agvadilla.

In general, there is a heavier fishing effort northwestward

from "Crashboat" beach and Aguadilla than toward Punta Higuero, and most of the fishing is done over a mile from shore, The Erdman (1963) data are primarily useful in that they give an extended historical record of the fishing activity in the general area. More recent statistics on commercial fish landings at nearby ports appear in Juhl (1972).

FAO (1962) relates exploratory fishing efforts for tuna and tuna live bait west and south of Aguadilla. Three of the stations were located within about a mile of Punta Higuero (see Figure 1), Others were somewhat farther away. The stations were within 1 or 2 miles of shore but some were much closer, Erdman (1961) lists species and numbers of specimens collected during the baitfishing. Table 1 is based on this list with estimates of locations corresponding to the FAO (1962) stations.

Juhl (1972) summarizes exploratory fishing results for the Punta Higuero region based on sampling done in November 1970-

January 1971 and May-June 1972 by the Laboratorio Pesquero of the Department of Agriculture. The data are reported by locations, total weight of catch, and gear type. Nore complete information is available from the Department of Agriculture in the original data sheets. The locations of the collections are shown in Figure Z as numbered squares, each 3.5 kilometers per side.

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Crash Boat

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Rio Culebra

Punta Higuero % Rio Grande

@ Fishing stations

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Fig. 1 Balt survey fishing stations. - October 1961. From FAO (1962).

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REFERENCE AREA

Fig. 2 Phase XVI Rincon. Exploratory and test fishing area showing
or 8 Grid pattern covered. May 6, 1972-June 30, 1972 {from Juhl (1972)}

The relevant data extracted from these sheets* for the
region appear in Table 2. The data in Table 2 are derived
from a total of 5 fish and 10 lobster trap sets in winter,

70 fish trap sets in summer and 15 total gill net sets. All

fish were originally reported by local Spanish common name.

The most likely identifications of the species were later made
from Erdman (1971) and other sources. Some errors may have
occurred in identifications and the most doubtful cases have
been noted in Table 2. In addition to the species reported it
is likely that some smaller and less commercially valuable
species were caught but not reported. This crude information

is the best available to date for the area. It represents a considerable effort in exploratory fishing.

Among other fishery statistics in the Contribuciones Agropecuarias y Pesquerias series, numbers of fishermen and boats in various coastal ports are reported, There is no harbor within many miles of Punta Higuera, but most fishing vessels are small craft which can be beached at any convenient location when not at sea therefore the fishery statistics may not be entirely accurate or complete on the number of boats in the area.

* Generously provided by Mr. Jon Cole of Laboratorio Pesquero.

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Fig. 3. Portion of coast where census of fishing boats was made 2 October 1974.

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1963. Unpublished notes on Aguadilla commercial fish catch during 195-1956.

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Project F-4-i (unpublished) .

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Juhl, R. 1972. A report on exploratory fishing and gear tests in Puerto Rico from 1969-1972. Contribuciones Agropecuarias Vol. 4, No. 3.

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