

In Defense of the Squid

• In the November number of *MFR*, I made some remarks on the preparation of squid that aroused the indignation of Richard Shomura, Director of the NMFS laboratory in Honolulu. He writes:

"Sir, I resent your snide remark noted in the Editor's section of the November *MFR* issue that eating raw squid was like 'trying to chew your way through the sole of a tennis shoe.' Alas, your training in the gourmet sciences in Hawaii leaves much to be desired. In any event, I will try to set you straight. Firstly, eating raw squid on what you quaintly refer to as 'little rice patties' is strictly for the tourists. What one needs to start with is a fresh squid, preferably still panting and squirting. Clean the squid rapidly, slice diagonally across the grain in 3 by 5 cm sections, and set on a shallow, oval shaped porcelain dish. Secondly, prepare a garnish made of soy sauce, fresh hot chili pepper. Thirdly, face the north pole if you are located in the northern hemisphere (the south pole if in the southern hemisphere), dip a piece of the squid sashimi into the sauce. Fourthly, with a slurping sound and with mucho gusto swallow the delicacy. The reason for the latter is to avoid ruining your taste buds; the reason for the former (direction to face) is to get as much of the polar winds into your windpipe as possible.

"If you still feel the same after trying my recipe, I would suggest that you try chewing the soles of a little old lady's tennis shoes and then tell me that you prefer tennis shoes to raw squid."

My only alibi is that I have never—in either hemisphere—eaten squid prepared this way. Be willing to give it a try, though.

• W. L. Klawe of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission has brought to my attention a possible

misinterpretation of an article in the December number of *MFR*:

"In the most recent issue of the *Marine Fisheries Review* I found something which I feel ought to be brought to your attention, as the same problem may arise in some articles which will be submitted for future publication.

"Professor Konopa in his paper 'Marketing practices of retailers handling fish in the Akron and Cleveland areas' (*MFR* 36:12, p. 33-40) refers to recall of contaminated tuna as well as the pollution warnings and their impact on sales of canned products. What is more, by indirect implication he links presence of mercury (not mentioned by name) in tuna with pollution. From my own observation I find that the view that mercury in tuna is an outcome of pollution is very widely accepted. Although in the case of the trends in canned fish sales discussed in the article by Prof. Konopa, it did not matter whether the recall of tuna was because they were contaminated with a pollutant or naturally occurring substance, I think that it would be appropriate for your journal to point out the difference. I am sure that *Marine Fisheries Review* is read by a very large and widely diversified group and thus your journal has considerable influence on the formulation of public opinion relating to the marine fisheries. In such cases the reader should be given facts as accurate as is possible."

Right. Professor Konopa was dealing with the public's "attitudes," not its understanding of the "facts." The facts on mercury in tuna are well set out in a paper of which Klawe is a co-author, "Mercury in tunas: A review," by C. L. Peterson, W. L. Klawe, and G. D. Sharp, which appeared in the *Fishery Bulletin*, Vol. 71, No. 3, p. 603-613. The presence of mercury not only in tunas but also in other fishes

is treated in another *Fishery Bulletin* paper, "Effects of regulatory guidelines on the intake of mercury from fish—the MECCA project," by Roland Finch, Vol. 71, No. 3, p. 615-626.

• These paragraphs are being written at what is but the onset of winter. Even so, it seems almost perverse to have arranged for the publication, in chill February, of the sun-drenched photographs that illustrated Aurelio Solórzano's article on sport fishing off Mexico, or, in bleak March, of the evocative picture on our cover of the lucky fisherman in Alaska.

It will be some months before the Alaskan scene can be repeated. But northwestern Mexico in February and March is at its best.

Some years ago, San Felipe, on the east coast of Baja, where one could buy the best of shrimp directly from the boats and could catch 100-pound totuava from the shore, was a favorite vacation spot and I believe still is. One camped on the dunes bordering a sea still warm enough in winter for swimming. (Although the nights were, well, nippy.) On the west coast of the Mexican mainland there are fine roads leading through the desert toward the tropics and the central plateau. One ritual of a trip along this coast was to stop at Guaymas to eat fresh-caught oysters in a brightly painted wooden pavilion on the shore. Some of the best fish I have ever tasted was eaten in restaurants in some of the towns of the Mexican west coast. Los Mochis, near Topolobampo Bay, comes to mind. And San Blas, farther south. There, if one got up early, one could see the fishermen bringing to the restaurants great gleaming fish slung over their shoulders. One particular delicacy I remember from that old pirate hangout, San Blas, is snook. I don't know if it was the *Centropomus ensiferus*, *C. parallelus*, *C. pectinatus*, or *C. undecimalis* of the American Fisheries Society's list, or any of them. Under any name, though, it was unforgettable.

T.A.M.

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