

Obituary – Olle Hagström (21/10/09)

On 12 October, Olle Hagström passed away at the age of 63 after a year-long battle with cancer.

Olle was born and raised in Hunnebostrand, a small fishing town on the west coast of Sweden. His deep interest in and relationship with the sea and fisheries brought him to Gothenburg University, where he graduated in marine biology. In 1971, soon after his graduation, he was employed as research assistant by the Swedish National Board of Fisheries and its Institute of Marine Research in Lysekil. There he became the key person in dealing with the biology and assessments of pelagic fish stocks and especially hydroacoustics. In 1990, he was appointed deputy director of IMR. During preparations for the Swedish membership in EU, he acted as advisor on fishery issues. After Sweden joined the EU, Olle was appointed national expert at the European Commission and moved with his family to Brussels in 1996.

After several years as national expert, Olle joined DG Fish, moving to DG Environment, and returning to DG Fish, where he became the Head of Unit, being in charge of fishery research, data collection, and scientific advice. Earlier this year Olle retired and he and his family returned to the place of his birth.



During Olle Hagström's years at the Swedish IMR, he became increasingly engaged in the ICES community and in different study groups, working groups, and committees. His main fields of engagement were the working groups on herring, sprat, and larval surveys, and he was instrumental in ICES development of hydroacoustic surveys; he headed the planning group of these surveys for almost a decade. For many years, he was also a member of several committees, such as the Pelagic Fish, Fish Capture, and the Consultative Committees, and chaired the Pelagic Fish Committee at the beginning of the 1990s.

During his last year of active ICES work, 1995, he was convener of the Joint Session on Improving Species Selectivity in Mixed Species Fisheries, in addition to remaining a member of committees and working groups.

Olle Hagström was greatly appreciated in the ICES community and was always seen as approachable, helpful, and possessing a good understanding of the issues at stake. In all, Olle Hagström's list of engagement and participation in ICES activities during two decades up to 1995 is impressive, and he has contributed significantly to improving the quality of ICES work.

During Olle's time in Brussels and in the European Commission (1996–2009), he played a key role in the initial development of the European Marine Strategy and in the development of strategic plans for sustainable fisheries. In his position as Head of Unit in charge of fishery research and scientific advice, he was in frequent contact with ICES, in this instance more from the point of view of a client. However, Olle's extensive experience in ICES work must be seen as mutually beneficial, and he was always very keen on popping in at ICES to say hello.

With the loss of Olle Hagström, the ICES community has lost a family member, a skilful marine biologist, a good friend, and a great personality. His friends from many different countries are glad and proud to have known him during the hard work as well as the joyful moments. And the many of us who share this loss, send our deepest sympathies to his wife Monica and his two daughters and two sons.