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Fisheries biology and natural history since the publication of “Jasaneobo”

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Sustainable fisheries production is dependent upon a broad knowledge of life history and biological characteristics of the fishes concerned, including spawning, aging and growth, and migration. In addition, when, how and where to catch target species must be known. This address will discuss our understanding of these topics over the years since “Jasaneobo”, a natural history of fishes published early in the 19th Century in Korea. 1) “Jasaneobo” was written by JEONG Yag-Jeon in 1814, following his stay on the Heuksan Islands, southwest coast of the Korean Peninsula, from 1801. Included were descriptions of morphology and ecology, including life histories, of 116 fishes, 10 other marine animals and 35 marine algae. 2) Natural history and its role in the 17 through 19th Century in Europe is thought to have been based on the viewpoint of plants, animals and minerals being evidence of the existence and attributes of God, although they were also regarded as natural resources for man. John Ray (Great Britain) described “species” as a basic unit of reproduction in his “Historia Plantarum”, published in 1686, and Carl von Linné applied both generic and specific names to species in the mid-18th Century. Exploratory expeditions around the world by various European countries in the 18th and 19th Centuries resulted in many exotic plants and animals, as well as mineral samples, being returned to Europe. In particular, plants and animals were recognized and recorded following the classification of “Systema Naturae”, published by Linné (1753, 1758). 3) European expeditions reached East Asia in the latter half of the 18th Century, European naturalists describing East Asian plants and animals on the basis of the Linnaean classification system. The latter has been widely used by East Asian naturalists since the end of the 19th Century. 4) Korean ichthyology and natural history was covered in “Korean Fishes” (1954), published by Chyung Moon-Ki after World War II. Later, he published “The Fishes of Korea” (1977), including many fish illustrations. These two books have played an important role in the development of Korean fisheries. Subsequently, many authoritative atlases of Korean marine and freshwater fishes have been published. 5) Notwithstanding, it must be stressed that marine fishes do not “obey” geopolitical boundaries. For example, *Takifugu rubripes* spawns on the coast of northwestern Kyushu, Japan, but grows to maturity in the Yellow Sea, off the Korean Peninsula. Clearly, for such fishes, joint efforts of Korean and Japanese researchers are necessary for research into sustainable fisheries production.