

Another environmentally sensitive fishery is located in the state of Quintana Roo, near the border with Belize, where the Great Maya Reef is located. The reef has been damaged by pressure from tourism, fishing and pollution, and it has been studied by scientists from around the world. This has created conflict with local fishing cooperatives. New regulations prohibiting fishing for lobster with hooks have been particularly controversial.

## TRANSPORTATION

Poor distribution systems is one of the reasons that Mexican seafood consumption is relatively low. There are opportunities for the design, construction and operation of systems for refrigerating and transporting fish products. Freezing and frozen-storage facilities will become increasingly important as Mexico develops its fish export business.

## THE NATIONAL FISHERIES INSTITUTE

The *Instituto Nacional de la Pesca (INP)*, National Fisheries Institute, is a government agency charged with the responsibility for research into the efficient exploitation of Mexico's live marine resources. The *INP* has carried out advanced studies of biological characteristics of the main species with a view to estimating their maximum sustained yield. The *INP* has 17 research centres in Mexico, the majority of them along the northern Pacific Coast. The nation also has several research ships.

The Government of Mexico is anxious to foster technological exchanges with other countries, regarding both scientific and commercial issues. Mexico is a signatory to the International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing, signed in Cancún in 1992.

## JOINT VENTURES

Industry observers believe that there are opportunities for joint ventures with Canadian companies who could assist fishing and processing operations to modernize and integrate. Most of them, however, lack capital and expect the Canadian partner to bring financing as well as expertise.

Although Canadian companies should be cautious in the selection of partners, there are emerging opportunities in this area. For example, *Formex-Ybarra* entered into a joint venture with an American company to build a processing plant in Chiapas that will become the third-largest in Latin America. The plant includes freezing, smoking, and ice-making facilities. The company is now looking for partners to start exporting squid.