

Small-scale fisheries in Greek waters: reviewing past information, aiming towards future management perspectives

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Introduction

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) is a sector characterized by high spatio-temporal heterogeneity in gears used and resources targeted. Discussions on their management have begun since the late 1970s, but still legal provisions are practically lacking, due to their high socio-economic importance and because they are considered as having a rather minor impact on the ecosystem/resources.

Scope

With an extended coastline (>18,000 km) and numerous islands, SSF in Greece is crucial for supporting local communities. Here we present an overview of the accessible information on SSF in Greek métiers, with respect to: species composition, production and discarding, métier identification and socio-economic data/fishers' perspectives.

Results

Compilation of the relevant information revealed:

- high number of vessels (>16000; 94% of the Greek fleet)
- high contribution in the overall fisheries production (55% of the total landings in 2008)
- multi-gear practice (more than 15 gear types)
- multi species catches (> 60 target species)
- multi-métiers according to their targeted species
- relatively low fish discarding
- "family" business, with the majority being full time professionals

Fishing gear	Target species
Trammel nets	<i>Mullus</i> spp., <i>Sepia officinalis</i> , <i>Pagellus erythrinus</i> , <i>Sparus aurata</i> , <i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i> , <i>Diplodus sargus</i> , <i>Scorpaena</i> spp., <i>Palinuridae</i> , <i>Solea solea</i> , <i>Melicertus cerathurus</i> , <i>Dentex dentex</i> , <i>Pagrus pagrus</i> , <i>Lithognathus mormyrus</i>
Gill nets	<i>Boops boops</i> , <i>Mullus</i> spp., <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> , <i>Sepia officinalis</i> , <i>Dentex dentex</i> , <i>Pagrus pagrus</i> , <i>Scomber</i> spp., <i>Sardina pilchardus</i> , <i>Atherina boyeri</i> , <i>Spicara smaris</i> , <i>Oblada melanura</i> , <i>Sphyaena sphyraena</i> , <i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>
Long-lines	<i>Xiphias gladius</i> , <i>Thunnus alalunga</i> , <i>Epinephelus</i> spp., <i>Seriola dumerili</i> , <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> , <i>Dentex dentex</i> , <i>Pagrus pagrus</i> , <i>Diplodus sargus</i> , <i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i> , <i>Pagellus erythrinus</i> , <i>Lithognathus mormyrus</i> , <i>Sparus aurata</i>

Table 1. Main gears and target species of small-scale fisheries in the Aegean Sea, Greece (data from Adamidou *et al.* 2013: 15th Panhel. Symp. Ichthyol., 15: 9-12).

Conclusions

Results suggested that SSF in Greece remain understudied: the existing information is sporadic and outdated, the majority of which dates prior to 2005, and it is of fragmented spatial coverage.

Thus, the need for proper characterization (i.e. métiers) of fishing activities on a spatio-temporal basis through the identification of existing métiers, under the auspices of GFCM, RAC-MED and other related bodies, and the establishment of effective monitoring system, constitute crucial prerequisites for the adoption of effective management measures, aiming at the sustainability of the sector.

