

## **Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/1**

### **establishing further precautionary and emergency measures in 2016 for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18)**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (hereafter the “GFCM”),

*RECALLING* that the objectives of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean are ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources in the area of application;

*RECALLING* that, according to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (hereafter the “FAO”), States should widely apply the precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, and highlighting besides that the lack of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/27/2002/1 on the management of selected demersal and small pelagic species and, notably, Article 2 therein;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic and, notably, Article 2 and 3 therein;

*RECALLING* Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 on a multiannual management plan for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in the GFCM GSA 17 (northern Adriatic Sea) and on transitional conservation measures for fisheries on small pelagic stocks in GSA 18 (southern Adriatic Sea);

*CONSIDERING* Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1 amending Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 and on precautionary and emergency measures for 2015 on small pelagic stocks in the GFCM GSA 17;

*NOTING* that for anchovy in GSA 17 the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee for fisheries (hereafter the “SAC”) at its seventeenth session (FAO headquarters, March 2015) has considered the status of the stock as overexploited and in overexploitation for two consecutive years and that it recently advised to decrease fishing mortality immediately;

*NOTING* that the latest stock assessment of anchovy indicates a declining trend in spawning stock biomass (SSB) since 2005;

*NOTING ALSO* that for sardine in GSA 17 the SAC has considered the status of the stock in overexploitation and advised to decrease its fishing mortality;

*RECALLING* that the SAC has considered that the stocks of anchovy and sardine are distributed in GSAs 17 and GSA 18;

*NOTING* that, due to instability of the stock assessment model, the SAC recommended a comprehensive revision of the input data, including the reference points under Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1;

*CONSIDERING* that, pending the revision of input data and reference points, as for 2015, additional measures for 2016 have to be taken to reduce fishing mortality for anchovy and sardine;

*NOTING* that since temporal restrictions are considered to have a beneficial effect on fisheries, a closed period during the spawning season of anchovy in the Adriatic Sea shall be applied;

*NOTING* that hydroacoustic surveys have the potential of providing latest biomass estimates and their results can support management decisions;

*NOTING* that, under Recommendation GFCM/38/2014/1, a reduction of fishing effort as well as spatio-temporal closures are being applied in 2015 for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17;

*ADOPTS* in conformity with the applicable relevant provisions of the GFCM Agreement that:

### **Reduction of fishing mortality in the Adriatic Sea**

1. For the year 2016, the Contracting parties and Cooperating non-Contracting parties of the GFCM (hereafter the “CPCs”) whose vessels have been fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 shall reduce the fishing effort established under paragraph 27 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1. To this end, by derogation from the provisions of paragraph 27, Part VII, for the year 2016, each fishing vessel targeting anchovy shall not exceed 144 fishing days per year.
2. For the year 2016, in order to protect nursery and spawning areas, the CPCs shall apply spatio-temporal closures of no less than 15 continuous days and up to 30 continuous days for vessels fishing small pelagic stocks in GSA 17 and GSA 18. These closures shall be designated in waters under their jurisdiction and shall take place between 1 April and 31 August.
3. CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Executive Secretary, by 30 November 2015, the closure dates.
4. National control programmes established under paragraph 29 of Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/1 shall be adapted accordingly.

### **Review of the management plan**

5. The SAC shall organise, in 2015, a specific technical meeting to review input data and propose revised targets based on fishing mortality at maximum sustainable yield (MSY) level – or using the exploitation rate as a proxy – and spawning stock biomass, as well as the reference points of the management plan. The SAC shall assist in setting up a joint assessment for both small pelagic stocks covering the Adriatic Sea (GSA 17 and GSA 18).
  6. For the purpose of paragraph 5, the SAC shall assess the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios with the objective of restoring and maintaining the populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield. To this end, the SAC shall also consult its Subcommittee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS).
  7. The SAC shall propose alternatives to make the results of the hydroacoustic surveys of the previous year available during the first month of the year.
  8. Based on the SAC advice, the GFCM shall review, and if necessary adapt, the content of the management plan in 2017.
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