

## **Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2**

### **on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom trawling fisheries of demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily, pending the development and adoption of a multiannual management plan**

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 to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources in the area of application;

*REAFFIRMING* the principles of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (hereafter the “FAO”) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fishery management;

*RECALLING* the Guidelines on precautionary conservation measures pending the development and adoption by the GFCM of multiannual management plans for relevant fisheries at the subregional level in the GFCM area, as agreed during its thirty-seventh session;

*NOTING* that the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee (hereafter the “SAC”) has recurrently considered that the assessed demersal stocks were overexploited in the geographical subareas (hereafter “GSAs”) 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16;

*CONSIDERING* that the state of stocks as assessed by the SAC requires the development and adoption of management measures aimed at ensuring the conservation of demersal stocks in the above subareas with a view to adopting a multiannual plan as soon as possible;

*CONSIDERING* the conclusions of the SAC subregional technical workshop on multiannual management plans that took place in October 2013;

*CONSIDERING* the conclusions of the SAC Follow-up workshop on the implementation of management measures in selected case studies in the Mediterranean that took place in February 2015;

*CONSIDERING* the socioeconomic importance of fisheries exploiting demersal stocks and the need to ensure their sustainability;

*CONSIDERING* the conclusions of the seventeenth session of the SAC, and in particular those regarding the management of selected fisheries in the Strait of Sicily;

*ADOPTS* in conformity with the relevant provisions of the GFCM Agreement, pending the development and adoption of a multiannual management plan, that:

#### **PART I**

#### **Scope and geographical area of application**

1. In order to ensure adequate conservation of demersal stocks, the GFCM Contracting parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties (hereafter the “CPCs”) shall adopt fisheries management measures or national management plans in GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 (hereafter the “Strait of Sicily”) as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2
2. The CPCs shall actively cooperate with a view to establishing, as soon as possible, the necessary requirements for the adoption of a management plan, at the GFCM scale, which should therefore draw on the experience of existing national management plans.

**PART II**  
**Technical conservation measures**

3. As from the entry into force of this recommendation, deepwater rose shrimp and hake whose size is smaller than the minimum reference conservation size in total length (TL), for fish, or carapace length (CL), for crustaceans, as reported below and measured to the lowest centimetre, shall not be caught, retained on board, transhipped, transferred, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale:

Deepwater rose shrimp ( <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> )	20 mm CL
Hake ( <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> )	20 cm TL

4. For deepwater rose shrimp, such obligation enters into force no later than 31 December 2016, unless the GFCM decides otherwise.
5. The CPCs shall communicate annually to the GFCM Secretariat the specific modalities they apply under the provisions stipulated in paragraph 3, including landing obligations aiming at avoiding discards which are in force in some CPCs as well as landing inspection modalities when a flexibility scheme is foreseen at the national level.
6. In order to define appropriate spatio-temporal restrictions in view of the sustainable management of the stocks referred to in paragraph 3, the CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, by 31 December 2016, the spatial restrictions in the waters under their jurisdiction that they apply with a view to protecting spawning and nursery areas for hake and deepwater rose shrimp.

**PART III**  
**Fleet management measures**

7. Operating bottom trawling vessels targeting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily shall only be allowed to carry out specific fishing activities if these are indicated in a valid fishing authorization issued by the competent authorities and specifying the technical conditions under which such activities shall be carried out (see Annex 1). Such vessels shall be equipped with a vessel monitoring system (VMS) in accordance with Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7.
8. The CPCs shall maintain an updated register of the above mentioned fishing authorizations. Unless expressly provided for within the GFCM data collection programme, the CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat:
- The list of operating vessels for which such authorization has been delivered for the current or the following years, no later than 30 November each year;
  - A report on fishing activities carried out by the vessels referred to in paragraph 7, in an aggregated format, including the following minimum information: number of exploitation days, exploitation area and captures of hake and deepwater rose shrimp, no later than 31 August each year and starting from 31 August 2016;
9. In order to facilitate the exchange of information regarding inspections to be done, the CPCs may communicate with each other their information on the fishing vessels authorized to carry out fishing activities in a given fishery.
10. The CPCs that have introduced, since 2010, fishing capacity reduction measures or fishing effort restrictions, including through the establishment of spatio-temporal closures, shall be encouraged to ensure that such measures, or their effects, are maintained. If no such measure has been taken, the CPCs shall adopt them in their national management plans, by the end of 2015. The SAC shall be invited to formulate advice aiming at improving the efficiency of such measures.

**PART IV**  
**National management plans**

11. The CPCs shall ensure that the measures outlined in Parts II and III are integrated in their national management plans.
12. The CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat, starting from 31 January 2016, the management measures or management plans adopted at the national level. Where appropriate, should these measures be modified, the CPCs shall communicate such modifications by 31 January of the following year.

**PART V**  
**Assessment by the SAC**

13. The SAC shall evaluate yearly the effectiveness of the management measures under this recommendation regarding the status of the concerned stocks and of any measure applied under national management frameworks. In addition, the SAC shall formulate an advice on the measures to be implemented in order to achieve the objective of fishing mortality reduction, providing also an analysis of potential socio-economic indices for the concerned fleets based on available information.
14. In conducting the evaluation referred to in paragraph 12, the SAC shall take into consideration the assessment of the implementation of this recommendation performed by the GFCM Compliance Committee.
15. Based on the evaluation referred to in paragraph 12, the SAC shall provide advice on the management measures to be developed with a view to establishing, at GFCM scale, a multiannual management plan for demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily, taking into consideration the national measures adopted by the CPCs. This shall be done taking into account the advice expressed by the Compliance Committee as referred to in paragraph 14.
16. The SAC shall perform an assessment and formulate advice on the establishment of fisheries restricted areas considered as spawning or nursery grounds for hake and deepwater rose shrimp. In this respect, it shall also provide advice on fisheries restricted areas that are already part of national management frameworks.

## Annex I

Subject to more detailed provisions under the GFCM data collection programme, the list referred to in Part III shall contain, for each vessel, the following information:

- Name of vessel
- Vessel register number (code assigned by CPCs)
- GFCM registration number (country ISO 3-alpha code + 9 digits, e.g. xxx000000001)
- Port of registration (full name of the port)
- Previous name (if any)
- Previous flag (if any)
- Previous details of deletion from other registers (if any)
- International radio call sign (if any)
- VMS (indicate Y/N)
- Vessel type, length overall and gross tonnage (GT) and/or gross registered tonnage (GRT) and engine power expressed in kW
- Name and address of owner(s), and/or charter and/or operator(s)
- Main target species
- Main gear(s) used for turbot and fleet segment allocation and operational unit as identified in TASK 1 statistical matrix
- Time period authorized for fishing with trawlers, gillnet or any other gear likely to fish turbot (if any of such authorization)