



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE
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Status of the GFCM Actions in the Black Sea

by

GFCM Secretariat

13th Session of the SAC
(7th – 11th February 2011 Marseille, France)

Main Black Sea Peculiarities

Dramatic environmental changes suffered since the 1960s not only attributable to one major driver, but instead to:

- *Eutrophication*
- *Overfishing*
- *Alien Species*
- *Removal of top predators; trophic cascade*
- *Climatic variations*

**The cause and effect role of fisheries remains unclear or unresolved.
Although there are signs of recovery, the system is ecologically unstable.
The best approach to manage fisheries is taking into account the whole dynamic ecosystem.**

13th Session of the SAC, (7th – 11th February 2011 Marseille, France)

Main commercial species

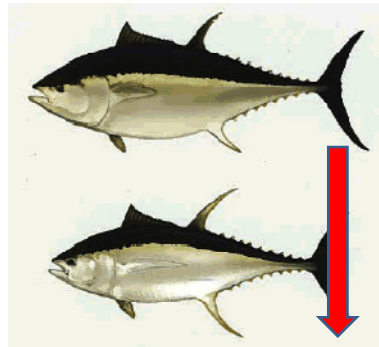
According to study charged by the GFCM to J. Caddy in 2008 these are the commercial species considered by Black Sea scientists to be shared resources, whose exploitation should be regulated cooperatively.

Species	Characteristic
<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i> (Anchovy)	Endemic
<i>Trachurus m. ponticus</i> (Black Sea horse mackerel)	Endemic
<i>Sprattus sprattus phalericus</i> (Black Sea sprat)	Endemic
<i>Merlangius m. euxinus</i> (Whiting)	Endemic
<i>Squalus acanthias</i> (Piked dogfish)	Endemic
<i>Psetta maeotica</i> (Black Sea turbot)	Endemic
<i>Mullus barbatus ponticus</i> (Black Sea striped mullet)	Endemic
<i>Liza aurata</i> (Golden grey mullet)	Endemic
<i>Mugil cephalus</i> (Flathead grey mullet)	Endemic
<i>Rapana thomasiana</i> (Rapana whelk)	Introduced from the Pacific
<i>Sarda sarda</i> (Atlantic bonito)	Migratory
<i>Scomber</i> spp. (Mackerels)	Migratory
<i>Alosa caspia</i> (Caspian shad)	Anadromous
<i>Pomatomus saltator</i> (Bluefish)	Migratory



SAC meetings of the Sub-Committees (SCSI, SCSA, SCESS, SCMEE) (29th November – 2nd December 2010 St. George's Bay, Malta)

Stocks situation



Stocks of large pelagics top predators, started to decline several decades ago



Stocks of important benthic species such as turbot, red mullet and whiting have continued to decrease.



stocks of several sturgeon species are threatened



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Stocks situation

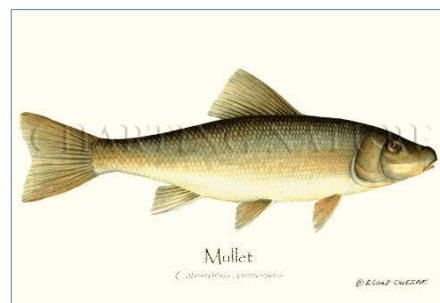


To summarize, stocks of some small pelagics (and occasionally bonito) are in good shape, while stocks of most other commercial species are low and decreasing (Knudsen, 2008).

SAC meetings of the Sub-Committees (SCSI, SCSA, SCESS, SCME) (29th November – 2nd December 2010 St. George's Bay, Malta)

Stocks situation

Stocks of commercially important invasive species, such as Japanese sea snail and pacific mullet have increased



SAC meetings of the Sub-Committees (SCSI, SCSA, SCESS, SCME) (29th November – 2nd December 2010 St. George's Bay, Malta)

Fisheries

Significant differences in fleet composition among countries.

Purse seiners play an important role given the higher “small pelagic” biomass proportion compared to the Mediterranean

Trawlers and multi-purpose artisanal vessels, irregularly distributed in different areas.

It seems to be consensus on the Overcapacity of Black Sea fisheries.

Decisions and discussions arisen during GFCM sessions (last 5 years)

- **2006**. The first Permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodologies (PWGAM) was jointly organized with the [Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization](#) and was held in Istanbul. The PWG of the SCSA in closed collaboration with the [The Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution](#) analysed and compared different methodologies for stock assessment of both demersal and small pelagic species in the Mediterranean and in the Black sea.

- Some objectives for a possible Cooperation Project were first drawn at this meeting:

- Development of **common methodologies for collecting, processing and analyzing data for stock assessment** of commercial species using experience and advice from GFCM and ICES.

Decisions and discussions arisen during GFCM sessions (last 5 years)

- **2007**. At its 31st Session the Commission acknowledge the efforts made to strengthen the cooperation with the Black Sea research institutions and reiterated the need for a major involvement of SAC and requested the **Secretariat** to draft a project proposal on cooperation in support of fishery research and management for this subregion.
- **2008**. At its 32nd Session the **Secretariat** presented a draft project framework based on a study which produced 4 documents available at ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/DOCUMENT/gfcm/gfcm_32/dma4e.pdf which were the first step towards the preparation of the Black Sea Cooperation Project (BlackSeaFish) with the objectives outlined below:

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Objectives and components of a possible GFCM-executed project in the Black Sea
(GFCM Secretariat)

- *Foster cooperation among fishery scientists and stakeholders from Black Sea coastal within the framework of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries.*
- *Promote technology transfer among countries and support capacity building .*
- *Develop a multidisciplinary databases and regional information systems*
- *Conduct joint data collection schemes including surveys to complete information deficiencies and calibrate national systems, as appropriate.*
- *Cooperate with other initiatives of Black Sea scientific bodies, national entities and international projects, in order to achieve coordinated results.*
- *Promote the attendance of Black Sea national scientists in international fisheries scientific fora, and encourage their effective participation in activities of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee.*
- *Promote the publication of results.*

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Decisions and discussions arisen during GFCM sessions (last 5 years)

- **2009** The GFCM published Studies and Reviews 85 about **small tuna** fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black sea.
- The GFCM Secretariat transferred the elaboration of the Preparatory phase for the Project Document along with its eventual execution to the FAO FIRF Division.
- **2010**. At its 34th Session the, FAO/FIRF Officer announced that the project formulation phase of the **BlackSeaFish project** could probably be initiated soon. The role of the donor countries and of the project coordinators was highlighted.
- The delegate of Romania stated that there is an urgent need that GFCM could focus more on the improvement of sustainable exploitation of fisheries in the Black Sea.
- The EU is ready to support and participate in any development as considered adequate

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Studies or reports on the Black Sea published by the GFCM

GFCM Studies and Reviews No. 85. Rome, FAO. 2009
Regional study on small tunas in the Mediterranean including the Black Sea

GFCM Studies and Reviews No. 87. Rome, FAO. 2010
Status of alien species in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea.

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Participation of Black Sea countries on SAC workshops and working groups (since 2007)

SAC-SCESS-SCSA – Transversal Workshop on the Monitoring of Recreational Fisheries in the GFCM Area, Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 20-22 October 2010

➤ **Characteristics of Marine Recreational Fishery Focusing on Spearfishing in Turkey** (Ünal V. and Özgül A.)

SCMEE – Workshop on Algal and Jellyfish Blooms in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, Istanbul, Turkey 6-8 October 2010

➤ **Gelatinous macrozooplankton composition and seasonal distribution in Sinop peninsula of the central Black Sea of Turkey between 2002 and 2006.** (Birinci Özdemir Z., Bat L., Sezgin M., Satilmis H. H., Sahin F. and Üstün F.)

➤ **Basin-Wide Black Sea Mnemiopsis Leidy Database (MLDB)**

(Myroshnychenko V. and Kideys A. E.)

➤ **Decreasing methods of jellyfish bycatch on the trawl fishery** (Özdemir S.)

➤ **The effect of jellyfish on the small scale fishery in the Black Sea** (Özdemir S., Erdem E. and Birinci Özdemir Z.)

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Active participation of Black Sea countries on SAC workshops and working groups (since 2007)

SCMEE – ACCOBAMS joint Meeting, Rome, Italy, 17-18 September 2008

➤ **Cetacean-Fisheries conflicts in the Black Sea Region** (Birkun A.)

SCSA – Working Group on Demersals, Athens, Greece, 10-12 September, 2007

➤ **Experimental Studies on the Restocking of the Turbot *Psetta maxima* Populations in the Eastern Black Sea Coast (GSA 29)** (Zengin M, Polat H., Kutlu S. and Gümüs A.)

Data submitted in compliance to GFCM recommendations

GFCM Task 1 - Statistical bulletin

Updated (2008) information on fleet segment and stocks exploited within the GSA 29 (Black Sea) are regularly reported by Turkey and Bulgaria along with the Authorised Vessel list.

Stock Assessment Forms (SAF)

In spite of the strong encouragement to scientists of the Black Sea area to actively participate in the subcommittees of GFCM, especially in stock assessments of small pelagic migratory species (see GFCM:SAC9/2006/Inf.14), to date no Stock Assessment Forms from the GSA 29 have been submitted to the GFCM Secretariat.

SAC meetings of the Sub-Committees (SCSI, SCSA, SCESS, SCMEE) (29th November – 2nd December 2010 St. George's Bay, Malta)

To summarize

The black sea member countries as well as the EU and the GFCM are in favour and ready to support any initiative to strengthen cooperation for a sustainable management of fisheries in the sub-region.

A project Document based on the sound knowledge of experts with the assistance of GFCM secretariat is being prepared. Its preparatory phase is being arranged and executed by FAO with some difficulties due to political and legislative constraints what indicates that it is still can be delayed.

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Message to the SAC

independently of the eventual overcome of the present “stand-by” situation of the BlackSeaFish future project

and

In order to launch concrete actions the soonest possible:

We invite the SAC to provide guidelines for specific activities that could be included in our short term workplans to start management of the black sea fisheries at the shortest delay .

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