



**GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

**Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Marine
Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)
Malaga, Spain, 30 November – 3 December 2009**

WWF PROPOSAL:

**WORKING PAPER ON RECOMMENDATION GFCM/33/2009/1:
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FISHERIES RESTRICTED AREA IN
THE GULF OF LIONS TO PROTECT SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS AND
DEEP SEA SENSITIVE HABITATS**



Working paper: Rebuttal of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1: On the establishment of a fisheries restricted area in the Gulf of Lions to protect spawning aggregations and deep sea sensitive habitats

SCMEE, Málaga, 30 November – 3 December, 2009

Introduction

In 2008, a proposal for a fisheries restricted area (FRA) in the high seas of the eastern Gulf of Lions was put forward to the SCMEE, which proposed to prohibit any kind of demersal fishing in the FRA, towed or not, including trawl, bottom longline, bottom nets and traps, in a region² where a high concentration of mature individuals of several commercially important bottom-dwelling species aggregate. The proposal received strong support from the SCMEE, and later also the SAC, and was recommended for adoption to the GFCM at its 33rd meeting in Tunis, in March 2009. Consequently, Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1 was adopted, which established the FRA in the Eastern Gulf of Lions, but with the unique restriction of freezing the fishing effort at the level applied in 2008. The measure recommended by the SAC was rejected by the GFCM on the grounds of the need for an analysis of the biological and socio-economic impacts (see Appendix H in GFCM Report 33).

Rebuttal

The adoption of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1 was an important first step towards attempting to protect spawning aggregations and deep sea habitats in the Gulf of Lions. However:

- Point (2) of this Recommendation states that “Members and cooperating non-Members of GFCM shall communicate to the GFCM Executive Secretary not later than June 2009 the list of vessels that have used towed nets, bottom and mid-water longlines, and bottom-set nets in the area referred to in paragraph 1 in the year 2008”. WWF urges the GFCM secretariat to put at the disposal of the SCMEE for consultation and analysis the lists of vessels received and the dates of their reception.
- The standard format for submitting proposals for fisheries restricted areas to the GFCM was agreed upon, and adopted in February 2008 (see GFCM Report 32). This standard format was used to submit the proposal for the FRA on the continental slope of the Eastern Gulf of Lions in October 2008, and all required information was provided (see GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.5). Nevertheless, the advised management measure by the SAC for this FRA was refused by the GFCM. WWF believes that it is not appropriate to reject SAC advice when the pre-agreed requirements have been fulfilled.
- The continental shelf of the eastern Gulf of Lions has been identified as an important refugium for spawners of several commercially exploited species, including hake. Fishing pressure in the area, however, is expected to increase in future years, due to the dismal state of stocks closer to shore and the increase of fishing power and time at sea. The complete prohibition of any kind of demersal fishing in the area is the only real measure that would ensure the sustainability of these fisheries in the long term.

² (42°40'N, 4°20'E), (42°40'N, 5°00'E), (43°00'N, 4°20'E), (43°00'N, 5°00'E)

- The latter is not only supported by the conclusions of studies where MPAs and no-take boxes have been implemented, but would also follow the recommendations of many national and international policies, including those from the EU, as well as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- Since “the GFCM is instrumental in coordinating efforts by governments to effectively manage fisheries at regional level”,

WWF calls on the SCMEE to ask the SAC to strongly recommend to the Commission again this year the adoption and urgent implementation of the original management measure proposed for the FRA on the continental shelf of the eastern Gulf of Lions, namely: to prohibit any kind of demersal fishing, towed or not, including trawl, bottom longline, bottom nets (gillnets, trammelnets) and traps.