



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR
THE MEDITERRANEAN



SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2nd Transversal Working Group on by-catch

(in collaboration with ACCOBAMS)

Antalya (Turkey), 7-9 December 2011



Participation

- 30 participants from Bulgaria, France, Greece, Malta, Morocco, Romania, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine
- Representatives of FAO and GFCM Secretariat
- 25 contributions

Terms of Reference

- Review of **available data on by-catch** in GFCM area
- Evaluate the **quality** of currently available by-catch data (by year, GSA, fishery and stock).
- Consider **by-catch indicators** and necessary supporting data on by-catch rates by stock and fishery for trends interpretation.
- Interactions between **marine mammals and fisheries** in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.
- Consider ways to start and/or expand **by-catch monitoring** schemas, specially in the context of by-catch reduction issue in GFCM area.

General conclusions on existing information (I)

- **Very irregular monitoring** on by-catch among GSA's and fisheries. Special difficulties within small scale fisheries.
- Much of the existing information is not easily available (**grey literature**).
- Collection of **appropriate data** as the first step to propose measures and tools for the mitigation of by-catch and discards.
- **Minimum landing size** may not be an effective tool for by-catch mitigation when it is not followed by strong surveillance.
- Consideration of the **utilization of up to now regularly discarded organisms** has been initiated. Promising steps and efforts towards this direction were shown.

General conclusions on existing information (II)

- **Overcapacity** has been seen as a general characteristic of most fleets. Improvement of gear selectivity is not enough and should be followed by a reduction in fishing effort and capacity in such cases.
- Problem of **Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing**. Prohibited gears like driftnets continue to operate in certain areas, all around the GFCM area.
- Importance of developing and using **indicators related to by-catch and discards** as tools to monitor relevant activities. It was reminded that it is best to use a suite of, instead of using a unique indicator.
- The meeting recognized the importance of **collecting data about by-catch and discards** all over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. GFCM Secretariat urges member countries to comply with the Recommendation in force and **fill in Task 1.4**.

Conclusions on mitigation measures for marine mammals

- **Regulation of fishing activities:** a) seasonal closures of preys for juveniles marine mammals (Tunisia, Greece), b) to ban the dogfish fishery using nets as it has a high rate of cetacean by-catch (Ukraine)
- **Increase gear selectivity** with regards to the turbot fishery in the Black sea
 - The use of 40 cm stretched mesh size and twine thickness less than 0.5mm diameter was suggested (Romania)
 - Trials of targeting the turbot with trammel nets having a larger mesh size than the currently used gill nets was suggested
- **Gear adaptation:** Test if increasing the net filament thickness can prevent holes in the net made by the dolphins (Tunisia).

Research programme proposed by the WG to be considered under GFCM Framework Program

Strategy on marine mammals by-catch reduction in gillnets and longlines fisheries. Assessment of main causes of by-catch . A pilot study project.

The aim is:

- Expand and improve data collection
- Increase awareness of fishers
- Case studies identified as harmful to marine mammals

Conclusions on management and conservation measures

- Prohibition of the use of inoxidable materials in hooks and metals in snoods in long lines so that caught protected animals (for example sharks) will be able to cut the line and release themselves unharmed.
- Member countries should make every effort possible in order to eliminate ghost fishing, especially when this occurs due to fishermen dumping unwanted, old gear at sea instead of disposing of it appropriately.
- Strengthen current national fishery regulations by stating that for legal purposes when an illegal fishing gear is carried on board it shall be considered to have been used.
- GFCM should recommend an increase in gill net mesh size.



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SUB-COMMITTEE ON STOCK ASSESSMENT (SCSA)

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**REVIEW OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE ON FISHERIES BY-CATCHES
AND DISCARDS IN THE GFCM AREA
(by V. Vassilopoulou)**

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**BACKGROUND ON MARINE MAMMALS' BY-CATCH ISSUE IN
MEDITERRANEAN and BLACK SEA
(by J. Sacchi)**

