

REC.CM-GFCM/30/2006/3

Establishment of fisheries restricted areas in order to protect the deep sea sensitive habitats

RECALLING that the objectives of the Agreement establishing the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) are to promote the development, conservation, rational management and proper utilisation of living marine resources;

RECALLING the Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of the Fisheries in the Mediterranean held in November 2003 in Venice;

RECALLING the Resolution 59/25 of the United Nations General Assembly and in particular paragraph 66 and 67 calling the regional fisheries management organizations to adopt appropriate conservation and management measures in order to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems;

RECALLING the Recommendation REC.CM-GFCM/29/2005/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deepwater species;

CONSIDERING that integration of environmental concerns in fisheries management is a way to protect the structure and functioning of the marine ecosystems that are in turn fundamental to the overall production of the seas, including the exploited resources and to the benefit of sustainable fisheries;

CONSIDERING that also human activities other than fisheries should care of the structure and functioning of the marine ecosystems to the benefit of healthy environment and sustainable fisheries;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee recommends to ban bottom trawling activity in the deep water coral reefs located in international waters (referred to as Lophelia reef off Capo Santa Maria di Leuca) in order to protect the coral;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee has indicated that the area referred to as “The Nile Delta area cold hydrocarbon seeps” is characterized by an exceptional concentration of cold hydrocarbon seeps which had favoured the development of a unique living community and recommends that the area should be given a full protection status by avoiding demersal fishing practices;

NOTING that the Scientific Advisory Committee recommends to ban trawling activities in the area referred to as “The Eratosthemes Seamount” located in the Eastern Mediterranean between the Levantine Platform to the south and the Cyprus margin to the north near the subduction zone of the African plate, in order to protect the deep sea sensitive habitat;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of paragraph 1 (b) and (h) of Article III and Article V of the GFCM Agreement that:

1. Fishing with towed dredges and bottom trawl nets shall be prohibited in the areas bounded by lines joining the following coordinates:

a) Deep Sea fisheries restricted area “Lophelia reef off Capo Santa Maria di Leuca”

39° 27.72' N, 18° 10.74' E
39° 27.80' N, 18° 26.68' E
39° 11.16' N, 18° 04.28' E
39° 11.16' N, 18° 32.58' E

b) Deep Sea fisheries restricted area “The Nile delta area cold hydrocarbon seeps”

31° 30.00' N, 33° 10.00' E
31° 30.00' N, 34° 00.00' E
32° 00.00' N, 34° 00.00' E
32° 00.00' N, 33° 10.00' E

c) Deep Sea fisheries restricted area “The Eratosthemes Seamount”

33° 00.00' N, 32° 00.00' E
33° 00.00' N, 33° 00.00' E
34° 00.00' N, 33° 00.00' E
34° 00.00' N, 32° 00.00' E

2. For the same areas, Members shall call the attention of the appropriate authorities in order to protect these areas from the impact of any other activity jeopardizing the conservation of the features that characterize these particular habitats.