



# GFCM High-level conference on MedFish4Ever initiatives:

Transformative actions to address new challenges

3–4 October 2023, Malta

## SIDE EVENTS

Tuesday 3 October 2023

### Multidisciplinary panels: transformative actions in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and aquaculture

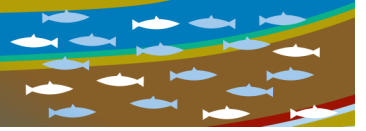
13.15 - 14.15

#### Discovering pathways to sustainable Mediterranean fisheries: MedPath's transformative and participatory approach

Organized by Marine Stewardship Council

The MedPath Project is a collaborative effort to foster higher levels of sustainability in fisheries management across Spain, France, Italy and Greece. MedPath uses the MSC Fishery Standard as a framework to identify sustainability gaps in Mediterranean fisheries, taking a three-step approach to diagnose issues, develop tailored improvement plans, and implement actions in collaboration with resource users. Stakeholder empowerment is an important focus of the project, which aims not just to refine management practices, but also to fill in gaps in fishery information, a key issue in the Mediterranean today. By building synergies between the fishing sector and expert research institutions, MedPath is driving a cascade of scientific technical projects addressing areas such as data scarcity, fishery impact analysis, and information on stocks not yet assessed by the GFCM or European Union.

This session will cover the MedPath journey to date and will examine a series of live projects that are helping to improve management across a diverse range of fisheries. These include: blue and red shrimp fisheries in Palamos, Spain; Corsica's common dentex longline fishery; deep-water rose shrimp fisheries in the Italian Adriatic; and Greece's common octopus fishery in the Northern Aegean. As the session unfolds, these case studies will demonstrate how collaboration, innovation and stakeholder engagement are at the heart of MedPath's success so far and are key to a more sustainable future for Mediterranean fisheries.



13.15 - 14.15

## The importance of protecting the deep sea

Organized by **Oceana**

Oceana is an NGO dedicated exclusively to the protection of the ocean, and is also a long-standing observer at the GFCM. This session will focus on the importance of documenting the deep sea, which is at once the largest and yet the most unknown ecosystem on the planet and which today stands in need of urgent protection from a range of threats, including destructive fishing activities. But what's really down there? As Jacques Cousteau used to say, "You can't protect what you can't see" – so Oceana will be presenting exclusive underwater images from the rich and semi-pristine cold-water corals of the Cabliers Bank, a biodiversity hotspot in the Alboran Sea that is in the process of being formally protected as a GFCM Fisheries Restricted Area. The presentation will also feature a video interview with Claudio Lo Iacono, senior researcher at the Spanish National Research Council, who will explain the peculiarities of this unique Mediterranean deep-sea habitat.

This session will be led by Alexandra Cousteau, award-winning activist and globally recognized advocate for ocean restoration. She has taken part in expeditions in the Mediterranean and around the world since she was a child and has witnessed first-hand the shocking decline of marine abundance over recent decades. As an ambassador for the Cousteau family legacy, she devotes her life to the future of the global ocean.

17.30 - 18:30

## Ending illegal bottom trawling in closed areas: Calling for decisive steps to enhance transparency, compliance, and the enforcement of measures to prevent illegal bottom trawling

Organized by **Med Sea Alliance**

The Med Sea Alliance (MSA) is a campaign that brings together NGOs and civil society groups working to improve the health and productivity of the Mediterranean Sea. Over the past two years, MSA member organizations have been investigating the occurrence and impact of illegal bottom trawling, especially in vulnerable areas where the environmentally damaging practice is prohibited or restricted. The results are documented in the MSA Atlas, which maps the closed areas in several countries around the Mediterranean in which illegal trawling continues to take place.

The MSA panel will discuss the Atlas and will share the results of a series of other investigations carried out by MSA members across the basin. Notably, attendees will hear directly from Zafer Kızılkaya, the president of Akdeniz Koruma Derneği (the Mediterranean Conservation Society), reporting on the work in the field that recently won him the 2023 Goldman Environmental Prize. The panel will also be joined by members of the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), who will present their position on ensuring strong fisheries control and support for small-scale fisher communities. The session will conclude with a look to the future, highlighting success stories and discussing the most promising solutions for putting a permanent end to illegal bottom trawling.