

BLACK SEA 4 FISH

PRESENTATION SERIES 1 (2021)

"Bycatch reduction in towed fishing gears"

by

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Questions and answers session

1. Huseyin Ozbilgin, BS4Fish coordinator

(1) What would you suggest to reduce the bycatch of dogfish, skates and turbot during target fishing for small demersal species like whiting and red mullet in the Black Sea?

Gökhan Gökçe, Turkey: What do we know about the Black Sea trawl fishery? Recently we know a lot about the catch composition. This is very important point for the trawl fishery if you want to reduce the catch of certain species. To avoid the catch of large fish when fishing for small ones, you can use TEDs and when you want to reduce the catch of the flatfish, there are other modifications of the gears that can be tested for this purpose. A combination of different mesh sizes can also be used for avoiding unwanted catch.

Huseyin Ozbilgin, BS4Fish coordinator: I wanted to ask if it's technically possible to reduce bycatch of this type. With your answer I understand that it is technically possible. The big question of adoption of these measures comes to the fishery managers.

Gökhan Gökçe, Turkey: Yes, this is another issue.

(2) Paolo Carpentieri – GFCM

(2) What was the reaction of the fishermen about the application of different measures like using TED devices or other bycatch reduction devices?

Gökhan Gökçe, Turkey: I can share my experience with North-Eastern Mediterranean. In the Mediterranean the stocks are poor and not perfectly managed. When we started to test BRDs there, the fishermen didn't want to use it. For them it is not easy to use this additional device and they believe that they will lose commercial catch. The biggest issue is that fishermen don't find it a problem to select the fish on the deck. They prefer to catch everything and separate the catch by their hands. This is important, because when they don't see small individuals on the deck, they believe that they are losing commercial ones as well. The fishers were happy to use this type of devices for deep water rose shrimp, because the catch was very clear.



Huseyin Ozbilgin, BS4Fish coordinator - I want to highlight something. Whose problem is it? Is it fishermen's problem? Because when it becomes their problem, they cooperate very well to find a solution. In most cases, where the fisheries are not well managed, this is not fishermen's problem. They take everything on the deck first and then throw it back, there is nothing illegal about it. With doing this they are sure that they are not losing anything commercial catch. But in case when the fishers are punished for catching some of these species, this becomes their problem and they are ready to cooperate and to start using BRDs. If in some cases the fishing in some area is banned, because of the existence of sharks or rays, and you allow them to fish there with the condition that they use such kind of reduction devices, then it becomes their problem to find a device that will avoid the catch of vulnerable species. We have such experience in Turkey. When the longline fishing for grouper was banned, we went to work with fishermen and they were ready to cooperate and share information. But at the moment, fish can be caught and if not in marketable size, discarded. So it is not a fishermen's problem at the moment. For them the problem starts when they land small fish. To catch a small fish or vulnerable species is not a problem. They can catch and throw it back. And their main aim is to not lose the marketable fish. The problem owning is very big keyword here, we need to make it sure that it becomes fishers problem, as well as managers problem at the beginning.