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REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK

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IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Secretary of
COFI

NEWS

ABNJ Deep Seas Project

APFIC

Coordination for sustainable
fisheries in the Western Central
Atlantic Region

CSR

CTMFM

FAO statistical activities and RFBs

GFCM

IPHC

NAFO

NAMMCO

NPAFC

OSPESCA

Shark Measures Database

Message from the Secretary of COFI

Dear RSN Colleagues,

I would like to ask your kind attention and cooperation with regard to nominations for Margarita Lizárraga Medal Award (MLMA) for the biennium 2016-2017.

At its Twenty-ninth session in November 1997, the FAO Conference decided, by Resolution 18/97, that a “Margarita Lizárraga Medal” be awarded biennially by the Director-General, upon the proposal of the Council, to a person or organization that has served with distinction in the application of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code).

The Award pays tribute to Ms Margarita Lizárraga, a Mexican national and an officer in the Fisheries Department at the time of her passing away in 1997, for her productive work in the field of fisheries for almost forty years, and for her great dedication to FAO and strong commitment towards fostering the promotion of the fisheries sector, especially in developing countries, as well as for her decisive role in promoting the Code.

Nominations are now being invited for the MLMA 2016-17. Any person or organization that has served with distinction in the application of the Code is eligible for the Award. According to the list of the [past winners](#), three out of nine past winners have been Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), namely the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in 2007, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) in 2011 and La Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA) in 2013. Furthermore, the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP), the winner in 2005, is also an initiative taken by the

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), which provides the Secretariat services for the Agreement. The last winner in 2015, the Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF) Working Group, is not a RFB, but a regional initiative in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this sense, more than half of the past winners have been selected with the recognitions of their regional initiatives. This is the reason why I am strongly expecting new nominations from RSN Colleagues.

The basic criteria, ranked by order of importance, for the selection process as established in 1999 by the Selection Committee and applied since then, are:

- an outstanding, practical hands-on contribution to the application of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- the output should be tangible;
- the activity should be a sustained effort, and not a one-off initiative; and
- the output should have the potential for a snowball or catalytic effect.

The Award winner will be chosen by a MLMA Selection Committee consisting of the members of the bureau of the Committee on Fisheries (i.e. the Chairperson, the first Vice-Chairperson and the five other Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee), the Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, and the Director-General, acting as Chairman of the Selection Committee.

The Selection Committee for MLMA 2016-17 will meet during the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on Fisheries in July 2016. The outcome of the Selection Committee will then need to be endorsed by the 155th Session of the FAO Council in December 2016. The Award will be presented by the Director-General during an award ceremony to be held before 31 December 2017.

The Award will be in the form of a commemorative medal, which will be inscribed with the name of the person or organization selected, as well as a scroll describing the achievements of the recipient. In addition, a round trip fare to Rome and Daily Subsistence Allowance, at approved UN rates, will be paid to the Award recipient.

Proposals for nominations are expected to be submitted by 31 May 2016. You may propose a person or organization that has diligently applied the Code with the electronic nomination form, which can be retrieved from the relevant [FAO Website](#), or by e-mail directly to the Secretary of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (Hiromoto.Watanabe@fao.org) with the following information requested on the nomination form:

1. Name of the person or organization nominated with contact information
2. Background of the nominee
3. Rationale why the nominee is proposed for the Award
4. Description of the achievements and why you consider them unique
5. Indication of any catalytic or potential catalytic effect of the achievements
6. Explanation of the way the achievements are sustainable and replicable and how they could contribute to the promotion of the responsible fisheries or environmentally sound aquaculture
7. Any other information that you perceive as relevant in assessing the eligibility of the nominee or Institution for the Award

Your kind and positive consideration and cooperation would be really appreciated.

Best regards,

Hiromoto Watanabe

Secretary of COFI



ABNJ Deep Seas Project fishing for sustainability

ABNJ (Areas beyond national jurisdiction) Deep Seas Project partners met in Rome in December on the occasion of a combined Project inception and steering committee meeting. The Project is being implemented by the FAO and UNEP through the World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and has 20 partner organizations — including six regional deep sea fisheries management organizations: General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic. [Continue...](#)

APFIC (Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission): Updates

Guidelines on “Responsible stocking and enhancement of inland waters in Asia”

Stocking through formal stocking programmes is generally recognized as an important tool to compensate for losses in fish productivity and fish species diversity. If the conditions are conducive and the enhancement measures well-designed, such programmes are effective in increasing fisheries yields for food or income. In practice, many enhancements have proved to be ineffective and some. [Continue...](#)



Regional Fisheries Bodies sign Agreement to Improve Coordination for Sustainable Fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic Region

Cartagena, Colombia, 27 January 2016

Three Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs): the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM); the Organization of the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA); and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations - Western Central Atlantic. [Continue...](#)

CSRP (Commission sous-régionale des pêches): mises à jour

Formation sur la mesure du jaugeage des navires de pêche industrielle. Atelier régional organisé les 16 et 17 décembre 2015 à Dakar, Sénégal par Greenpeace et la Commission sous régionale des pêches. [Lien ...](#)

Restitution de la consultation sur le Registre sous-régional des navires de pêche. Atelier régional organisé du 1er au 5 décembre 2015 à Banjul, Gambie par la Commission Sous Régionale des Pêches, en partenariat avec la Banque mondiale. [Lien...](#) [Continue...](#)

CTMFM: Updates

Scientific work recently undertaken by the CTMFM in support of sustainable fishery management

The Joint Technical Commission of the Maritime Front (CTMFM) convened a regional workshop for the elaboration of joint initiatives for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of sharks in the Argentine-Uruguayan Common Fishing Zone. The meeting was held in Colonia del Sacramento (Uruguay) from 2 to 4 December 2015. [Continue...](#)

FAO statistical activities and Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs)

FAO has been active since the 1970s in supporting efforts by national institutions to improve national data collection systems, through the development of projects, training activities, publications and software. Whenever possible, collaboration with Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) has been always sought to develop such activities. [Continue...](#)

GFCM: Highlights on current and future activities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (7–9 March 2016, Algiers, Algeria)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the FAO, including its Mediterranean regional projects, in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries [Continue...](#)

IPHC: outcomes of the 92nd annual meeting

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its 92nd Annual Meeting in Juneau, Alaska, on January 29, 2016, with Dr. James Balsiger presiding as Chair. More than 280 halibut industry stakeholders attended the meeting, with over 80 more participating via the web. All of the Commission’s public and administrative sessions during the meeting were open to the public and broadcast on the web. [Continue...](#)

NAFO - New Scientific Council Coordinator

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) is pleased to announce the appointment of their new Scientific Council Coordinator, Mr. Tom Blasdale, beginning March 1, 2016. Tom replaces Dr. Neil Campbell who has returned to his home port of Aberdeen, Scotland. [Continue...](#)

NAMMCO: Whales and seals: Management matters

The increasing stocks of narwhal, beluga and walrus are a clear result of sound and science-based management, following advice from NAMMCO, the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission.

This was one of several positive results and initiatives presented to the Council of NAMMCO at its 24th annual meeting in Oslo on February 10-11, 2016. [Continue...](#)

NPAFC: Preparing a New Bulletin

The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) is currently preparing a new scientific bulletin. This will be number six in the bulletin series. NPAFC bulletins are compilations of peer-reviewed scientific articles written by specialists who have presented the material at symposia hosted by the Commission.

The scientific information in Bulletin 6 represents the culmination of scientific information resulting from the Commission's five-year science plan (2011-2015). This plan was conceived with the goal of explaining and forecasting annual variation in Pacific salmon production. [Continue...](#)

OSPESCA (Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America): Updates

The SSF guidelines in the “Policy of Integration of Fisheries and Aquaculture”

As an indicative reference, the Policy of Integration of Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2015-2025 of SICA countries (System of the Central American Integration) has defined the SSF guidelines (Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainability in Small-scale Fisheries in the framework of Food Security and Poverty Eradication) promoted by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). [Continue...](#)

FAO Shark Measures Database goes live Online

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in cooperation with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and with the support of the European Union and the Government of Japan, has developed a [database](#) to document international, regional and national shark measures. [Continue...](#)



ABNJ Deep Seas Project fishing for sustainability

ABNJ Deep Seas Project partners met in Rome in December on the occasion of a combined Project inception and steering committee meeting. The Project is being implemented by the FAO and UNEP through the World Conservation and Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and has 20 partner organizations—including six regional organisations with a mandate for the management of deep sea fisheries: General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR); North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC); Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO); North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC); South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO); and South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO).

The FAO Project Coordinator, Dr Chris O'Brien described the December meeting as a "major step forward for the Project" as there is now a "full complement of project staff on board and clear instructions from the PSC on how to proceed". Dr O'Brien also added that there is a range of activities planned for the Southern Indian Ocean region, and that he hoped that the fledgling Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Arrangement (SIOFA) will also become a partner in the project.

The project is striving to achieve sustainability in the use of deep-sea living resources and improve biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ, through the application of an ecosystem approach.



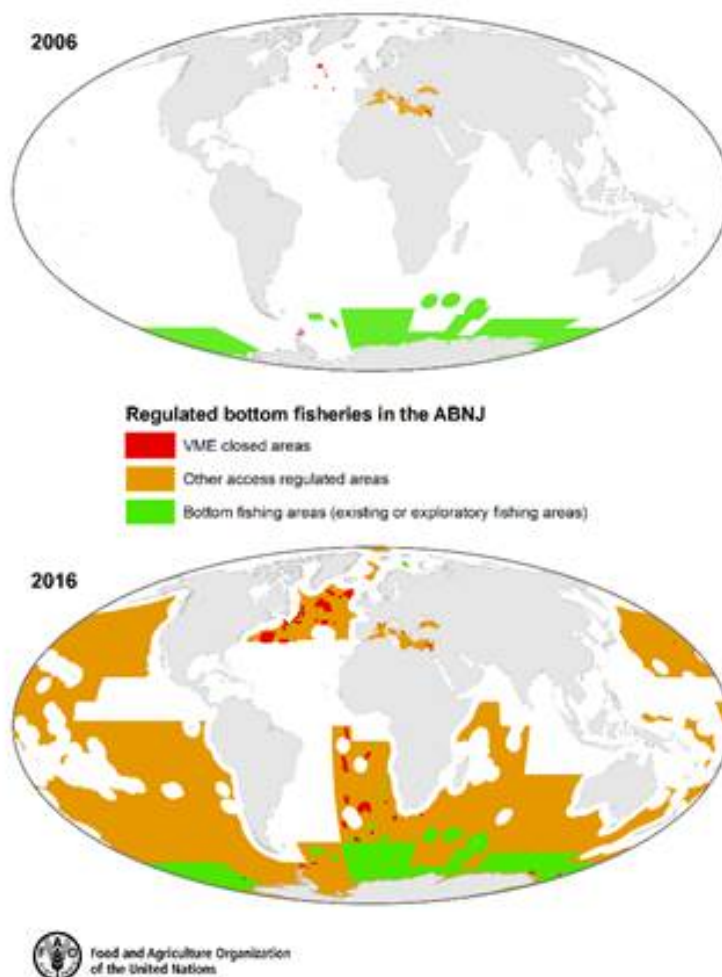
Mr Fred Kingston, Executive Secretary of NAFO, was the inaugural Chair of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project Steering Committee.

In 2016, the project will embark on a range of activities to develop information tools such as at-sea data collection applications, species identification guides and web-based data sharing platforms. Other activities include supporting dialogue between the different sectors that operate in the high seas; and gaining a better understanding on a range of topics that are highly relevant to sustainable fisheries and conservation management in the deep seas, including: best practices in the implementation of policy and legal instruments, the biology and assessment of orange roughy, decent work in deep seas fisheries, value chain analysis in selected fisheries, ecosystem services valuation, and investigating fishing impacts on biodiversity.

The project also has a major role in maintaining and further developing the vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) database and portal. VME's are ecosystems considered to be vulnerable to effects of bottom fishing activities, and for which fisheries managers have an obligation to mitigate any significant adverse impacts. VMEs support unique or rare species, or species with life history traits that make recovery difficult. VMEs may also include fragile habitats, habitats with structural complexity that could be vulnerable to bottom fishing impacts, and habitats important for biological processes. The VME portal contains amongst others information on relevant UN resolutions and other international guidelines, available VME related tools and the VME database includes information on the relevant measures taken by RFMOs and procedures involved in the VME process, and it has interactive maps that show existing management areas, such as VME closures.

The VME Database can be accessed via <http://www.fao.org/in-action/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems/en/>, and can be used for a range of purposes. The 2006 UNGA Resolution 61/105 called upon regional fisheries management bodies with the competence to regulate bottom fisheries, to adopt and implement measures in accordance with the precautionary approach, ecosystem approaches and international law, for their

respective regulatory areas as a matter of priority. The below example compares the extent of deep seas fisheries management measures relevant/related to VMEs in 2006 with that in 2016. The maps illustrate a substantial increase in management measures in the ABNJ since 2006, including the addition of VME closed areas in many regions.



For further information, please visit our website www.commonoceans.org



APFIC: Updates

Guidelines on “Responsible stocking and enhancement of inland waters in Asia”

Stocking through formal stocking programmes is generally recognized as an important tool to compensate for losses in fish productivity and fish species diversity. If the conditions are conducive and the enhancement measures well-designed, such programmes are effective in increasing fisheries yields for food or income. In practice, many enhancements have proved to be ineffective and some have caused demonstrable ecological damage. A major weakness of many stocking programmes in Asia is their failure to evaluate fully the outcomes of the activity in terms of benefits as well as adverse impacts. This document (available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5303e.pdf>) provides guidance on the development of responsible stocking programmes and on how such programmes should be evaluated objectively with the aim of assisting those who are involved in stocking programmes and their management throughout the Asian region.

6th Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)/FAO Regional Consultation on improving the contribution of culture-based fisheries and fishery enhancements in inland waters to Blue Growth.

These are some conclusions and recommendations emanated by the consultation:

There is a need for clarity on the concepts and terms used for Blue Growth

It is recommended to clarify the concepts, definitions and terms used for Blue Growth which explain clearly how it is a way of implementing key normative frameworks that support it. Such frameworks include for example: global frameworks like CCRF, EAFM, IPOA’s (IUU), PSM, VGSSF, SDG’s regional frameworks. Other non-fishery related frameworks may be linked such as: CBD, UNFCC, Regional Seas, ILO, and IMO.

Opportunities for Blue Growth in marine fisheries

Blue Growth through application of ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) has been achieved. The RCFM cautioned that growth in many capture fisheries may not be achieved in terms of increased production. It is recommended to support recovery of overfished or overexploited capture fisheries to ensure that they can make an optimal contribution to Blue Growth. It is also recommended to develop Blue Growth management plans using an EAF approach. In many capture fisheries where increased production is not possible, benefits can be gained by improved value chain, reduced losses and reduced IUU.

Blue Growth in inland fisheries

Much of the focus for Blue Growth in inland fisheries lies in the potential to increase the productivity of inland waters. This can be achieved through enhancement, habitat manipulation and stocking. Therefore Blue Growth may not seek to increase productivity, but rather secure its sustainability and the economic benefits it generates. It is recommended to: sustain ecosystem services critical for inland fisheries; promote monitoring and knowledge for management and; support and empower inland fishers.

Opportunities for Blue Growth in aquaculture

The RCFM agreed that Blue Growth in aquaculture can contribute significantly to meeting the increasing demand for fish in the Asian region. Blue Growth in aquaculture will require both improved efficiency of production, sustainable intensification as well as expansion of production area in the region. It is recommended to strengthen aquaculture planning and regulatory frameworks; promote innovations in culture systems and technology that allow higher productivity, greater intensity of production and in some cases more efficient use of inputs and; promote integrated culture systems as a means to reduce environmental footprint and improve the efficiency of utilization of nutrients.

Capturing the potential of the value chain

Seek to increase the prospect of local level communities to benefit from their production. It is recommended to: try to capture opportunities of certification/GAP and better marketing; promote increased preparedness to address non-tariff barriers with trade from importing countries; promote and develop new products from seafood; explore value adding and product transformation.

Climate change responses

Blue Growth is climate smart and there are a range of ways to capture opportunities in existing or innovative production systems in both capture fisheries and aquaculture.

Ensure that Blue Growth contributes to gender mainstreaming

Women play an important role in fisheries and aquaculture production and value chains and their empowerment will contribute positively to Blue Growth.

Adequate safeguards and precautions

As countries become interested in Blue Growth the RCFM cautioned that to be truly “blue” there must be safeguards built in that ensure human and environmental well-being. Blue Growth should not push inappropriate technology or drive producers into production systems that are beyond their financial or technical capacity to manage sustainably or economically. Poorly conceived Blue Growth initiatives may conflict with small-scale fisheries. It is recommended to develop adequate safeguards and precautions and clarify the linkages between the Voluntary Guidelines on Small Scale Fisheries (VGSSF) and Blue Growth and build this into safeguards.

Knowledge to support Blue Growth

Decision making, policy development and EAF planning all require adequate information and knowledge. It is recommended to strengthen the assessment and monitoring of fisheries; improve general understanding of the potential for Blue Growth; improve communication of and linkage to science and local knowledge to support management decision making; improve monitoring of intensive aquaculture development and develop carrying capacity models for different systems and; conduct valuations of different production systems to develop economic arguments for Blue Growth.

Coordination with the private sector and consumers

It is recommended to coordinate with businesses, private sector and consumers as they are a major driver of investment in Blue Growth and markets. It is important to ensure that their investments and actions contribute positively to Blue Growth.

Opportunities for regional cooperation

There is potential for developing a regional cooperation programme for promoting Blue Growth, in particular how to ensure that Blue Growth initiatives are truly blue. A range of technical and thematic areas are provided.

The full report of the meeting is available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5152e.pdf>.



Regional Fisheries Bodies sign Agreement to Improve Coordination for Sustainable Fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic Region

Cartagena, Colombia, 27 January 2016

Three Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs): the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM); the Organization of the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA); and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations - Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (FAO-WECAFC) on Wednesday 27 January signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate, support and strengthen the coordination of actions among the three RFBs to increase the sustainability of fisheries.

This initiative to improve coordination for sustainable fisheries is supported through the UNDP/GEF-Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) Project. This 5-year regional project seeks to support the implementation of a 10-year politically endorsed Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ SAP), through the full implementation of ecosystem based management/an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EBM/EAF) within the CLME+ region.

The 3 RFBs agreed to work on a number of priority areas such as the provision of advice in support of management of fisheries of spiny lobster, queen conch, shrimp and ground fish, recreational fisheries, flying fish, FADs fisheries, sharks, Spawning Aggregations, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fisheries. Joint Working Groups on these species and fisheries have been established in recent years and are now better coordinated. The 3 RFBs have also agreed to work on areas and actions identified in the CLME+ Project and CLME+ Strategic Action Programme that are of relevance to the scope of work. The 3 RFBs have also committed to working towards the harmonization of their respective fisheries policy and legal frameworks.

The Interim Coordination Mechanism, to be tested through this MOU, will increase the uptake of information and fisheries management advice generated at national and sub-regional level to the regional level. This will support dissemination of best practices, harmonization and boost the impact of measures, decrees and regulations adopted within the frameworks of these RFBs. It will provide a pilot structure that may lead at some point to the establishment of one or more Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in the Western Central Atlantic Ocean.

The Executive Director of the CRFM, Milton Haughton, said, “this is a strategically significant development that should produce significant tangible benefits for our countries, coastal communities and other stakeholders in the fisheries sector. It will ensure that our policies, programmes and plans for sustainable use, management and conservation of the living marine resources are more coherent, integrated and holistic, and hence more appropriate for addressing the challenges we face in the Caribbean Sea and adjacent Atlantic Ocean.”

“I am very happy with this MOU which formalizes collaboration between OSPESCA, CRFM and WECAFC that started some 4 years ago through joint working groups. This is good for the region’s fisheries. The members of the three RFBs will benefit hugely from this development”, said Raymon van Anrooy, Secretary of WECAFC.

The Executive Director of SICA / OSPESCA, Mario González Recinos said, “the signing of this MOU responds to the objectives of the new Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Integration Policy (2015-2025), and the Central American region’s commitment to promote better coordination frameworks at both national and regional levels, with the idea of harmonizing management strategies, especially for species of high commercial value that are characterized by their migratory nature in the Caribbean Sea.”

The MOU between the 3 RFBs was signed during the First Steering Committee Meeting of the Project which took place in Cartagena, Colombia from 26 to 28 January 2016.

For more information, please contact: Milton Haughton for CRFM at milton.haughton@crfm.int; Mario Gonzalez for OSPESCA at mgonzalez@sica.int; and Raymon van Anrooy for FAO-WECAFC at Raymon.VanAnrooy@fao.org.





CSRP: mises à jour

Formation sur la mesure du jaugeage des navires de pêche industrielle. Atelier régional organisé les 16 et 17 décembre 2015 à Dakar, Sénégal par Greenpeace et la Commission Sous Régionale des Pêches. [Lien ...](#)

Restitution de la consultation sur le Registre sous-régional des navires de pêche. Atelier régional organisé du 1er au 5 décembre 2015 à Banjul, Gambie par la Commission Sous Régionale des Pêches, en partenariat avec la Banque mondiale. [Lien ...](#)

2e Conférence Internationale ICAWA 2015 « Approche écosystémique de la gestion des pêches et de l'environnement marin dans les eaux ouest-africaines », organisée par la CSRP en collaboration avec l'Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), à Dakar - Sénégal du 17 au 19 novembre 2015. [Lien ...](#)

Propositions de mesures d'amélioration de la conservation des requins en Afrique de l'Ouest. Atelier régional organisé par la CSRP en partenariat avec l'Administration Océanique et Atmosphérique Nationale des États-Unis d'Amérique (NOAA), du 10 au 12 novembre 2015 à Dakar (Sénégal). [Lien ...](#)

Side-event de la CSRP au 8e Forum Régional Marin et Côtier d'Afrique de l'Ouest. « Mise en œuvre effective de la Convention sur les Conditions Minimales d'Accès aux ressources halieutiques (CCMA): l'avis du Tribunal international du droit de la mer ». [Lien ...](#)

CTMFM: Updates

Scientific work recently undertaken by the CTMFM in support of sustainable fishery management

The Joint Technical Commission of the Maritime Front (CTMFM) convened a regional workshop for the elaboration of joint initiatives for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of sharks in the Argentine-Uruguayan Common Fishing Zone. The meeting was held in Colonia del Sacramento (Uruguay) from 2 to 4 December 2015. Twenty nine participants from the fishery laboratories, academia and government agencies of both countries attended the workshop. The objective of this event was to set the basis for the preparation of two instruments: a joint shark research programme and a regional plan of action (RPOA-Shark) for the management of the about 100 species of sharks, rays and chimerae of the area.

This workshop completed the 2015 programme of activities scheduled by the CTMFM for the six Working Groups that provide the scientific basis for the management measures (TAC's, seasonal/area closures, etc.) adopted.

COMING SOON:

The CTMFM announces the next issue of volume 24 of FRENTE MARITIMO the official publication of the Commission, containing the contributions from the 17th CTMFM Symposium held in Piriápolis (Uruguay) in November 2014. In addition to contributions dealing with the rebuilding of depleted fisheries, the theme of the Symposium, the volume includes a large session containing the results of the first joint oceanographic survey of the common fishing zone.



FAO statistical activities and RFBs

FAO has been active since the 1970s in supporting efforts by national institutions to improve national data collection systems through the development of projects, training activities, publications and software. Whenever possible, collaboration with Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) has been always sought to develop such activities.

During 2013, “A pan-African Strategy on the improvement of fisheries and aquaculture data collection, analysis and dissemination¹” was developed during a consultative process led by the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and the FAO, through the NEPAD-FAO Fish Programme (NFFP), and the support of the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR). The pan-African Strategy was adopted in May 2014 by the 2nd Conference of Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (CAMFA II) and is now a strategic document of the African Union and of its implementing agency (AU-IBAR).

In collaboration with the Regional Fisheries Committee for the Gulf of Guinea (COREP) and the Fishery Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), FAO is currently implementing the pan-African Strategy in several African countries thanks to two projects funded by FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). Two World Bank’s projects are also following the pan-African Strategy guidelines to improve national statistics in Ghana and in Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique and Tanzania through the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries (SWIOFISH) project.

In the framework of these activities, an application has been developed for the collection, transmission and storage of data through mobile phones or small tablets which uses the free Open Data Kit (ODK) software. In addition, an “International training course in fisheries statistics and data collection” has been also developed (available in English² and soon also in French) which is currently established as a permanent course in two African institutions (i.e the Legon University in Accra, Ghana, and the Institut Sous-régional de Statistique et d’Economie Appliquée in Yaounde, Cameroon).

¹NEPAD, FAO and AU-IBAR. 2014. A pan-African Strategy on the improvement of fisheries and aquaculture data collection, analysis and dissemination. May 2014, 29 p. Available at: <http://www.au-ibar.org/component/jdownloads/viewdownload/5-qi/1958-qi-20140905-pan-african-fisheries-data-collection-strategy-en>

²de Graaf, G.J., Nunoo, F., Ofori Danson, P., Wiafe, G., Lamptey, E. & Bannerman, P. 2015. *International training course in fisheries statistics and data collection*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1091. Rome, FAO. 134 pp. Downloadable at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3639e.pdf>



GFCM: Highlights on current and future activities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Regional Conference “Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” (7–9 March 2016, Algiers, Algeria)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the FAO, including its Mediterranean regional projects, in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries and in partnership with the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-Bari), the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) have organized on 7–9 March 2016 in Algiers, Algeria a regional conference to discuss current and future challenges for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The aim was to share knowledge, raise awareness and foster political commitment towards the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in the region.

The Conference gathered some 200 participants from throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, including national administrations, international organizations, fisheries and socio-economic scientists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), fisher communities, stakeholders and civil society representatives, who assembled together to discuss common issues, concrete priorities and possible solutions for the sector.

This event offered a unique opportunity to intensify efforts, in a concerted manner, to secure common strategies for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the region. Discussions were organized around several thematic panels, which stimulated active discussions among experts and stakeholders and resulted in practical recommendations for the consideration of policy-makers. The main topics addressed included: sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea under the Blue Growth perspective; strengthening the role of stakeholders in the context of management and co-management schemes; improving the efficiency of marine protected areas (MPAs) as a fisheries management tool and benefits from involving the small-scale fisheries sector; enhancing small-scale fisheries value chains; and adapting the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) to the Mediterranean and Black Sea region.

The Regional Conference expanded on the results of the [First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries](#) in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, organized in Malta in November 2013. Some of the countries present at this event had also participated in the Near East and North Africa Regional Consultation Workshop organized by FAO and GFCM and held in Muscat, Oman, in December 2015. Many of the conclusions and recommendations stemming from this workshop informed the discussions held in Algiers, particularly with regard to the implementation of the [SSF Guidelines](#).

[An International Day for the fight against IUU fishing](#)

In the global context of a growing world population and persistent hunger issues, fishery resources represent a precious contribution to food security. However, the increasing incidence of illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing is compromising these resources and is of great concern. IUU fishing continues to eschew international, national, and regional regulations on the conservation and management of fisheries. According to the State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture published by FAO in 2014 (SOFIA 2014), global

losses attributed to IUU fishing activities range between US\$10 billion and US\$23 billion per year. These activities are often intrinsically tied to other criminal activities such as drug smuggling and slave labour.

Against such a backdrop, awareness raising and information sharing have often been cited as effective tools for combatting IUU fishing. Conscious of the need to take action, the 24 contracting parties to the GFCM have staunchly advocated for undertaking appropriate actions to deter IUU fishing, not only in the GFCM area of competence but also globally, thus acknowledging that IUU fishing by nature knows no boundaries. At the Thirty-ninth session of the GFCM (May 2015), countries suggested that an initiative to proclaim an International Day for the Fight Against IUU Fishing be launched.

To spearhead the process, a Task Force has been set up under the coordination of the GFCM Executive Secretary, Mr Abdellah Srour. The Task Force will work on the submission of the proposal relating to the establishment of the International Day for the Fight Against IUU Fishing, which is expected to be examined at the Thirty-second session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in July 2016 for endorsement by COFI Members.



IPHC: outcomes of the 92nd annual meeting

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its 92nd Annual Meeting in Juneau, Alaska, on January 29, 2016, with Dr. James Balsiger presiding as Chair. More than 280 halibut industry stakeholders attended the meeting, with over 80 more participating via the web. All of the Commission's public and administrative sessions during the meeting were open to the public and broadcast on the web.

The Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 2016 totalling 29.89 million pounds. The Commission also addressed other regulatory issues and took actions regarding assessment survey expansion and bycatch management. A news release issued January 29, 2016, announced the catch limits and fishing seasons for 2016, and that information is repeated in this news release. Documents and presentations from the Annual Meeting can be found on the Annual Meeting page of the IPHC website: <http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html>.

Stock Assessment and Harvest Advice

As has been the case since 2012, this year's stock assessment is based on an ensemble of models, incorporating the uncertainty within and among models. This approach reduces the potential for abrupt changes in management advice and provides a more realistic presentation of uncertainty and a stronger basis for risk assessment. As in 2014, the models included in the ensemble consist of two long time-series models, reconstructing historical dynamics back to the beginning of the modern fishery, and two short time-series models incorporating data from 1996 to the present, the period when all sources of removals and surveys are available for all regions. For each time-series length, one model is fitted to coastwide aggregate data and the other to data disaggregated into geographic regions.

The results of the 2015 stock assessment indicate that the Pacific halibut stock declined continuously from the late 1990s to around 2010. That trend resulted from decreasing size at age, as well as recent recruitment strengths that were smaller than those from the 1980s and 1990s. The estimated female spawning biomass appears to have stabilized near 200 million pounds, with a slightly increasing trend.

An executive summary of the 2015 stock assessment is posted on the IPHC website at <http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/interim-meeting/im2015-documents.html>.

The complete report of the 2015 stock assessment is available on the IPHC website at http://iphc.int/publications/rara/2015/RARA2015_12Assessment.pdf.

As it has been since 2013, the 2016 IPHC staff harvest advice was presented in the form of a decision table that estimates the risks to stock and fishery status. The final version of the decision table for 2016, incorporating the adopted catch limits, is posted on the IPHC website at <http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html> (titled "Adopted Catch Limits for 2016").

Catch Limits and Seasons

Catch Limits

The Commission received harvest advice for 2016 from the scientific staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and recommends to the two governments the following catch limits for 2016:

	Catch Limit (pounds)
IPHC Regulatory Area	
Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington)	1,140,000
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	193,364
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	34,123
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery (north of Pt. Chehalis)	49,686
Treaty Indian commercial	365,100
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	33,900
Sport – Washington	214,110
Sport – Oregon	220,077
Sport – California	29,640
Area 2B (British Columbia) (includes sport catch allocation)	7,300,000
Area 2C (southeastern Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport ¹)	4,950,000
Commercial fishery (3,924,000 catch and 120,000 incidental mortality)	4,044,000
Guided sport fishery	906,000
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport ¹)	9,600,000
Commercial fishery (7,336,000 catch and 450,000 incidental mortality)	7,786,000
Guided sport fishery	1,814,000
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	2,710,000
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	1,390,000
Area 4B (central/western Aleutians)	1,140,000
Areas 4CDE	1,660,000
Area 4C (Pribilof Islands)	733,600
Area 4D (northwestern Bering Sea)	733,600
Area 4E (Bering Sea flats)	192,800
Total	29,890,000

¹The combined total includes estimated mortality from regulatory discards of sublegal halibut and lost gear in the commercial fishery, plus discard mortality in the guided sport fishery, as mandated in the U.S. Catch Sharing Plan.

Notes Regarding the Catch Limits for Specific Regulatory Areas

Area 2A

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A was accepted by the Commission and is reflected in the catch limits adopted for the Area 2A fisheries. The overall catch limit for Area 2A in 2016 is sufficient to permit non-treaty incidental harvest of halibut during the limited-entry sablefish longline fishery, under the provisions of the CSP.

Area 2B

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) will allocate the Area 2B catch limit between commercial and sport fisheries.

Areas 2C and 3A

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (NPFMC) CSP for Areas 2C and 3A was accepted by the Commission and is reflected in the catch limits adopted for Areas 2C and 3A. That CSP sets the allocation between the commercial and charter sport sectors in those two Regulatory Areas. Note that since 2014, the IPHC catch limits for Areas 2C and 3A include both sectors (commercial and recreational charter), plus discard

and lost gear mortality estimates, as noted in the table footnote above. The Area 2C commercial fishery allocation is 3,924,000 pounds for the commercial fishery catch and 120,000 pounds estimated for incidental mortality within the fishery. The Area 3A commercial fishery allocation is 7,336,000 pounds for the commercial fishery catch and 450,000 pounds estimated for the incidental mortality within the fishery.

Area 4CDE

The IPHC sets a combined catch limit for Area 4CDE. The individual catch limits for Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E reflect the 4CDE CSP adopted by the NPFMC. The CSP also allows Area 4D Community Development Quota (CDQ) harvest to be taken in Area 4E, and Area 4C Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and CDQ to be fished in *Areas 4D and 4C*.

Fishing Season Dates

The Commission approved a season of March 19 to November 7, 2016, for the United States and Canadian quota fisheries. Seasons will commence at noon local time on March 19 and terminate at noon local time on November 7, 2016 for the following fisheries and areas: the Canadian Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery in Area 2B, and the United States IFQ and CDQ fisheries in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E. All Area 2A commercial fishing, including the treaty Indian commercial fishery, will take place between March 19 and November 7, 2016. The Saturday opening date was chosen to facilitate marketing.

In Area 2A, eight 10-hour fishing periods for the non-treaty directed commercial fishery south of Point Chehalis, Washington, are recommended: June 22, July 6, July 20, August 3, August 17, August 31, September 14, and September 28, 2016. All fishing periods will begin at 8 a.m. and end at 6 p.m. local time, and will be further restricted by fishing period limits announced at a later date.

Area 2A fishing dates for incidental commercial halibut fisheries concurrent with the limited-entry sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis and the salmon troll fishing seasons will be established under U.S. domestic regulations by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The remainder of the Area 2A CSP, including sport fishing seasons and depth restrictions, will be determined under regulations promulgated by NMFS. Further information regarding the depth restrictions in the commercial directed halibut fishery, and details for the sport fisheries, is available at the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825). The Area 2A IPHC licensing procedures did not change.

Regulatory Changes

Charter Halibut Sector Management Measures for Areas 2C and 3A

The Commission received a request from the NPFMC to adopt charter halibut sector management measures in accordance with the NMFS CSP for Areas 2C and 3A. The NPFMC proposal is designed to keep removals by the charter fishery within the limits of the CSP. After consideration of the advice of the Council, Commission staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and other fisheries agencies, the Commission approved the following measures:

In Area 2C, 1) a one-fish daily bag limit, and 2) a “reverse slot” size limit restriction (≤ 43 inches or ≥ 80 inches).

In Area 3A, 1) a two-fish daily bag limit, 2) a maximum size limit for the second fish of 28 inches, 3) a four-fish annual limit, 3) a vessel limit of one trip per calendar day, 4) a limit of one trip per charter permit per calendar day, and 5) a one-day-per-week closure of halibut charter fishing on Wednesdays throughout the year. In addition, immediately upon landing a halibut a harvest record is required, for which the angler must record the date and regulatory area in ink on the back of the State of Alaska sport fishing license.

The requirement to retain the filleted carcass on board the vessel until the fillets are offloaded will be removed from IPHC regulations. This requirement now appears in the NMFS regulations.

Longline Pot Gear

The NPFMC and NMFS are developing regulations that allow the use of longline pot gear, as defined by the NPFMC, in the IFQ sablefish fishery in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The NPFMC recommended that the Commission allow the retention of legal-sized halibut, if unused halibut IFQ is available, in longline pot gear during the commercial halibut fishery season in the GOA.

The Commission approved longline pot gear, as defined by the NPFMC, as legal gear for the commercial halibut fishery in Alaska when NMFS regulations permit the use of this gear in the IFQ sablefish fishery. The expectation is that NMFS will implement regulations to allow the use of pot gear in the GOA IFQ sablefish fishery in late 2016 or at the beginning of the 2017 fishery.

The Commission intends to review the use of pot gear as a legal gear for halibut in this fishery after three years.

Halibut with External IPHC Tags

The Commission approved the exemption of halibut with external IPHC tags from sport daily bag or possession limits, size limits, and season restrictions, and from personal use and subsistence daily bag or catch limits. Such tagged halibut are already exempt from commercial IVQs, IFQs, and CDQs, and this change was made to ensure IPHC receives information from all tagged halibut that are caught.

Use of the NMFS eLog in Alaska

The Commission approved the explicit addition of the electronic version of the NMFS Groundfish/IFQ Daily Fishing Longline and Pot Gear logbook to the list of acceptable logbooks for use in the Alaskan commercial halibut fishery.

Area 2A Fish Tickets

The Commission approved changing the wording of regulations to make it clear that the Tribal Identification Number and not the Vessel Identification Number should be recorded on the fish ticket in the Area 2A Treaty Indian fisheries.

Other Actions

Discard Mortality Rate

In response to a motion approved by the Conference Board, the Commission directed the staff to re-examine the appropriateness of the 16% discard mortality rate (DMR) currently assigned to halibut released in the U.S. and Canadian directed halibut fisheries. The Commissioners noted that this would be part of a larger evaluation of DMRs that the IPHC and NMFS staffs are currently engaged in.

Nunivak Survey

In response to a Conference Board motion that the IPHC consider the feasibility of including in the annual IPHC setline survey additional sites around Nunivak Island, the Commission directed the staff to look at all available sources of information on abundance and distribution around Nunivak. The Commission invited fishers in that area to participate in the IPHC logbook program as a ready source of such information, and asked the staff to continue its outreach to the communities there.

Harvest Policy Analysis

The Conference Board recommended that the Commission prioritize and assign sufficient resources for the staff and the Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB), in conjunction with the Scientific Review Board, to review and update the harvest policy and harvest control rules. The Commission confirmed that such a review is a priority for the staff and the MSAB, and noted that it has provided additional resources for the project in this year's budget.

Halibut Bycatch

The Commission affirmed its commitment to bycatch reduction. The Commission directed the staff to continue its work to quantify bycatch and its impact on the halibut stock, and to promote the reduction of bycatch. The Commission also noted that bycatch management is a primary focus of the IPHC's developing relationship with the NPFMC.

Expanded Survey

The Commission approved the next in a series of expansions to the Commission's standardized stock assessment survey. In 2016, the Commission's survey in the Area 4D Edge will be expanded. The purpose of the expansion series is to reduce potential biases in the surveys among regulatory areas and to encompass

depths to which the commercial fishery has recently expanded. The Commission will continue to review survey expansion at the next Annual Meeting.

IPHC Merit Scholarship

The Commission honored Ms. Shalie Dahl of Petersburg, Alaska, as the fourteenth recipient of the IPHC Merit Scholarship. Ms. Dahl was able to attend the 2015 Interim Meeting in Seattle, but due to class commitments she was unable to be present at the Annual Meeting to accept the scholarship.

The Commission decided to change the format of the scholarship to an award of \$4,000 per year, renewable for up to four total years of study, with new scholarships awarded every other year. The first scholarship at the \$4,000 level will be awarded in 2016, and the next will be awarded in 2018. Solicitation for the 2016 IPHC merit scholarship was announced in a recent news release (<http://www.iphc.int/news-releases/444-n420160201.html>), with an application deadline date of June 30, 2016.

Upcoming Meetings

The Commission's 2016 Interim Meeting will be held November 29-30, 2016, in Seattle, Washington in a venue accessible to the public and will be webcast. The next Annual Meeting of the Commission will take place January 23-27, 2017 in Victoria, British Columbia. The 2018 Annual Meeting is planned for January 22-26, 2018 in Portland, OREGON.

Commission Membership

Canadian Government Commissioner Paul Ryall of Vancouver, British Columbia, was elected Chair for the coming year. United States Government Commissioner Dr. James W. Balsiger of Juneau, Alaska, was elected Vice-Chair. The other Canadian Commissioners are David Boyes of Courtenay, British Columbia, and Ted Assu of Campbell River, British Columbia. The other U.S. Commissioners are Robert Alverson of Seattle, Washington, and Jeffery Kauffman of Wasilla, Alaska.

Executive Director

The Commission announced the selection of Dr. David Wilson to succeed Dr. Bruce Leaman as its Executive Director.

Dr. Wilson comes to the IPHC with a wide range of experience in international and domestic fisheries management and administration. He is currently serving as Interim Executive Secretary of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). Prior to joining the IOTC, he was head of the International Fisheries Section of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and Sciences, and he served as the head of the Australian scientific delegations to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the IOTC. Dr. Wilson has also spent time working for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), and almost 10 years working in Panama (as a research fellow at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute), American Samoa (as a fisheries biologist at the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources), and the Turks and Caicos Islands (as director of the Boston University Center for Marine Resource Studies). Dr. Wilson earned his doctorate at James Cook University in 2001, in association with the Australian Institute of Marine Science and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

Dr. Wilson is expected to join the IPHC staff in August 2016.



NAFO - New Scientific Council Coordinator

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) is pleased to announce the appointment of their new Scientific Council Coordinator, Mr. Tom Blasdale, beginning March 1, 2016. Tom replaces Dr. Neil Campbell who has returned to his home port of Aberdeen, Scotland.

Mr. Blasdale also hails from Aberdeen, Scotland and brings a wealth of fisheries knowledge with him. Previously, Mr. Blasdale held the position of Senior Marine Fisheries Advisor for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), which acts as a statutory advisor to the UK national and devolved governments on matters related to nature conservation. Additionally, he has considerable experience in stock assessment and the delivery of advice on the management of commercial fish stocks developed through regular participation in the ICES advisory process, particularly with the Working Group on Deep-sea Fisheries Resources and the Working Group on Elasmobranch Fisheries. His extensive experience working at sea includes a period working in the NAFO Regulatory Area as an EU observer.

The NAFO Secretariat looks forward to the arrival, and addition, of Mr. Blasdale to the Scientific Council team and wishes Dr. Campbell all the best in his future endeavours.



Dr. Blasdale



NAMMCO: Whales and seals: Management matters

The increasing stocks of narwhal, beluga and walrus are a clear result of sound and science-based management, following advice from the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO).

This was one of several positive results and initiatives presented to the Council of NAMMCO at its 24th annual meeting in Oslo on February 10-11, 2016.

NAMMCO Council also recognised the threat that increased human activities (shipping, mining, etc.) may represent to the ecosystem.

Of particular concern was a large scale iron-ore project (Mary River Project operated by Baffinland Iron Mines Corp) which may include shipping up to 10 months a year through some of the most important areas for narwhal, beluga and walrus. The increased shipping activities and noise disturbances could lead to the marine mammals abandoning these areas, something that could have severe consequences for local communities, both in Canada and Greenland.

Climate change carries serious consequences for marine mammals, evidenced by the decreasing blubber thickness of harp seals and minke whales in the Barents Sea, and the changes in geographical distribution of minke whale and fin whale around Iceland.

The member countries of NAMMCO, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway again confirmed their commitment to ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine mammals through active regional cooperation and science-based management decisions.

The Governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan and the Russian Federation were represented by observers at the meeting, as well as other international governmental organizations within the fields of fisheries (Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Organization, NAFO; North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, NEAFC) and whaling (International Whaling Commission, IWC) and conservation (IWMC World Conservation Trust).

Key events and conclusions from the meeting included the following:

Ecosystem-Based Management of Marine Mammal

Dr. Nicola Beaumont of the Plymouth Marine Laboratory talked about marine mammals in the framework of an ecosystem approach. She underlined the importance of assessing the full array of services they provide to the ecosystem as well as their interdependencies with the other components of the ecosystem. Their immense importance to nature and human beings made it essential to work toward their conservation. She was impressed to see how NAMMCO had applied an ecosystem approach since its very beginning.

Improving hunting methods gives results

NAMMCO's 2nd expert group meeting (November 2015) to assess killing data in the large whale hunts in the member countries, and also in Japan, Canada and USA confirms positive development in quick and efficient kills. The continuous development of hunting methods through equipment improvement and a strong emphasis on training and knowledge transfer gives results and benefits both the hunter and the animal welfare. The number of animals killed instantaneously has increased significantly in many hunts, and the introduction of the explosive grenade has resulted in an increase in the instant death rate from 17 % in 1982 to 82 % in 2012 in the Norwegian minke whale hunt.

Inspection and Observation of Hunts

NAMMCO operates an international observation scheme to monitor whether national legislation and decisions made by the Commission are respected. Observers are appointed to report on hunting activities in member countries. The scope for 2016 is minke whaling in Norway.

Whale Surveys

New surveys were carried out in the NAMMCO member countries in 2015 to update knowledge on abundance and distribution of cetaceans in the North Atlantic. Although the weather was not always cooperative in all areas, the amount of area covered by the surveys and the number of sightings was good, and new abundance estimates are expected for fin, humpback, common minke and pilot whales.

Shared resources between Canada and Greenland

NAMMCO and the Joint Commission on Narwhal and Beluga, have developed a catch-allocation model that allows managers to assign catches from the different narwhal stocks that are shared by Canada and Greenland.

Council welcomed this new methodological development for this complex management situation. The development and implementation of the allocation model is considered a step forward and could potentially be applied in many situations where migratory populations are exploited in several areas under various jurisdictions.

International Cooperation

With climate change and unforeseeable consequences for marine mammals, it is essential to increase the cooperation between organisations dealing with marine mammals. NAMMCO aims therefore at strengthening its cooperation with the Arctic Council, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) and any other international instrument which may require the advice of NAMMCO.

Scientific Advice

The best scientific evidence forms the basis of management advice in NAMMCO. Through the Scientific Committee, many specialist topics are addressed by Expert Working groups. During 2016, topics to be dealt with include stock assessments of coastal seals, fin, minke and humpback whales, as well as by-catch issues. The Scientific Committee has also been tasked to assess the impact of the Mary River Project.

In 2015 Dr Christina Lockyer retired as General Secretary to NAMMCO after 10 years of service. She was replaced by Dr Geneviève Desportes. Desportes is French but has lived in three of the four NAMMCO member countries and the last 23 years in Denmark. Furthermore, she has been involved with the Scientific Committee of NAMMCO since its inception in 1992 and chaired the Committee from 2005 to 2009.



NPAFC: Preparing a New Bulletin

The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) is currently preparing a new scientific bulletin. This will be number six in the bulletin series. NPAFC bulletins are compilations of peer-reviewed scientific articles written by specialists who have presented the material at symposia hosted by the Commission.

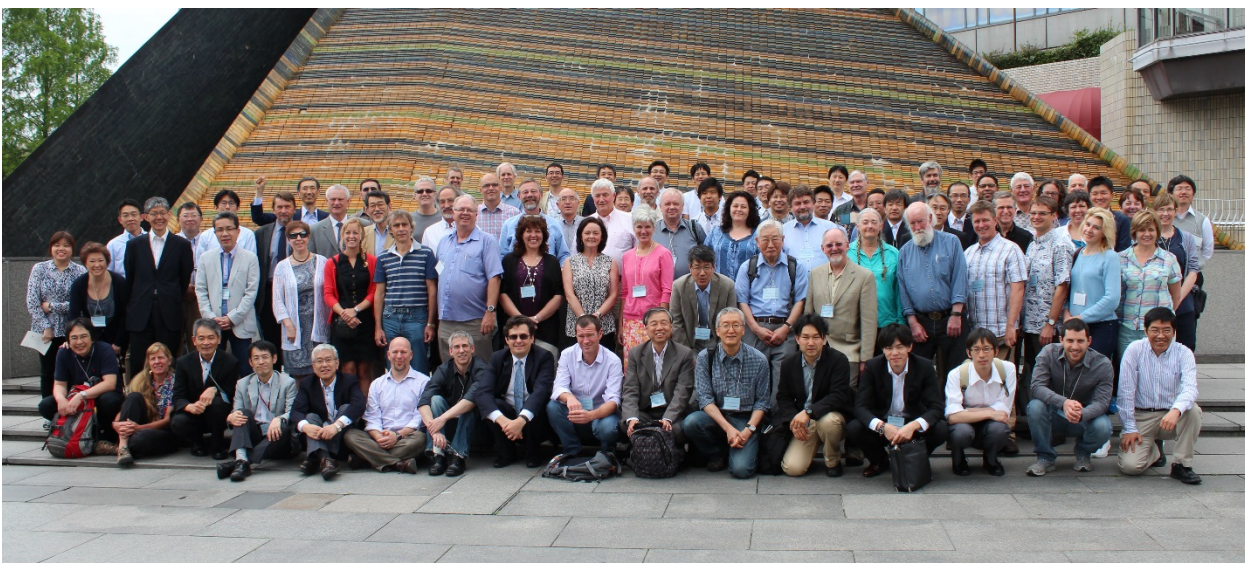
The scientific information in Bulletin 6 represents the culmination of scientific information resulting from the Commission's five-year science plan (2011-2015). This plan was conceived with the goal of explaining and forecasting annual variation in Pacific salmon production. The science plan acts as a comprehensive guideline for cooperative international research efforts aimed at achieving the mission of NPAFC—conservation of anadromous stocks in the North Pacific Ocean.

To assemble the best scientific information, NPAFC hosted an international symposium “Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Production in a Changing Climate: Past, Present, and Future”, which was held in May 2015 in Kobe, Japan. This symposium provided an opportunity for North Pacific Rim salmon specialists to gather, present, and discuss new research results. Presentations at the symposium provided the basis for manuscripts that were submitted to NPAFC for inclusion in Bulletin 6.

NPAFC Bulletin 6 will contain approximately 40 scientific articles by scientists from NPAFC member countries on various topics such as ecological mechanisms regulating marine distribution and production of anadromous populations; climate change impacts on salmonid production and their marine ecosystems; retrospective analysis of key salmonid populations as indicators of marine ecosystem conditions; stock identification development and applications for management; and forecasting salmonid production and linked ecosystems in a changing climate.

Bulletin 6 will be completed and published sometime in the early autumn 2016. Upon publication, articles will be freely available for download from the NPAFC website (www.npafc.org), and the bulletin will also be printed in hard-copy.

This bulletin represents a significant step forward in the capacity to forecast variation in salmon production and to gain greater insight into the mechanisms regulating salmon and steelhead populations in the ocean.



Participants of the NPAFC International Symposium on Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Production in a Changing Climate: Past, Present, and Future, which was held in May 2015 in Kobe, Japan.



OSPESCA: Updates

The SSF guidelines in the “Policy of Integration of Fisheries and Aquaculture”

As an indicative reference, the Policy of Integration of Fisheries and Aquaculture 2015-2025 of SICA countries (System of the Central American Integration) has defined the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainability in Small-scale Fisheries in the framework of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) promoted by FAO.

In this regard, small-scale fisheries (both, marine and inland), will be addressed through special programs that consider the association for the sustainable responsible fishing, management and marketing, as well as the socioeconomic context and the implementation of participatory management models.

It will look that small-scale fishing is carried out with dignity, with access to social security and reducing the risks during fishing journeys.

The SSF Guidelines and the participation of CONFEPESCA (Confederation of Artisanal Fishers of Central America) will be considered as part of the planning related with small-scale in SICA countries.

The OSPESCA’s (Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization)) Executive Committee agreed to establish an intersectoral and interagency group composed by representatives of the fisheries authorities, small-scale fishers and the industry, for the implementation and monitoring of the SSF Guidelines. FAO has been invited to join to this group.

On the other hand, OSPESCA’s member countries have been developing bilateral arrangements to promote and implement the SSF guidelines.

Jointly with CONFEPESCA, works will be held in order to promote the SSF Guidelines in the region, such as a regional forum and actions under OSPESCA’s projects. These actions will count on the support of the international cooperation that will join to this effort of the government and the productive sector.

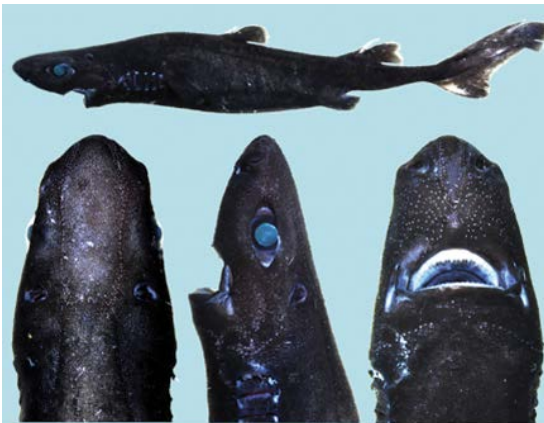
The goal is that the results of the actions to take will lead to the establishment of a binding rule in the framework of the communitarian law in SICA countries.



New species in the Central American Pacific (*Etmopterus benchleyi*, and *Leptoderma ospesca*)

Specimens caught during the prospection conducted by the B / O Miguel Oliver in 2010, have been identified as new species. This activity was implemented under the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA) of the Kingdom of Spain, and the Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), with support of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI).

The first specie is a shark of the Central American Pacific, identified by scientists of the Research Center of Sharks of the Pacific in California. It has been denominated as “lantern ninja shark” (*Etmopterus benchleyi*). It has jet-black skin, bulging eyes and special cells that allow it to glow in the dark. It can grow up to half a meter long, and camouflage that allows it to hide with few light that penetrates in the deep. These features facilitate it to stealthily hunt small fishes and shrimps.



Also, scientists of the University of Costa Rica, the State Paulista University “Julio de Mesquita Filho” and STRI, have identified a new fish species denominated as *Leptodermis ospesca*.



This fish is characterized by having a space between the rear ends of the dorsal and anal fins, dermal papillae absent along the lateral line, pectoral-fin rays 6, pelvic-fin rays 5, pre-dorsal length 54.9% of SL, both dorsal and anal fins separated from the caudal fin, dorsal- and anal-fin rays long, procurrent caudal-fin rays numerous and extending far forward on caudal peduncle, caudal-fin rays 16, and total pleural vertebrae 60.



FAO Shark Measures Database' goes live Online

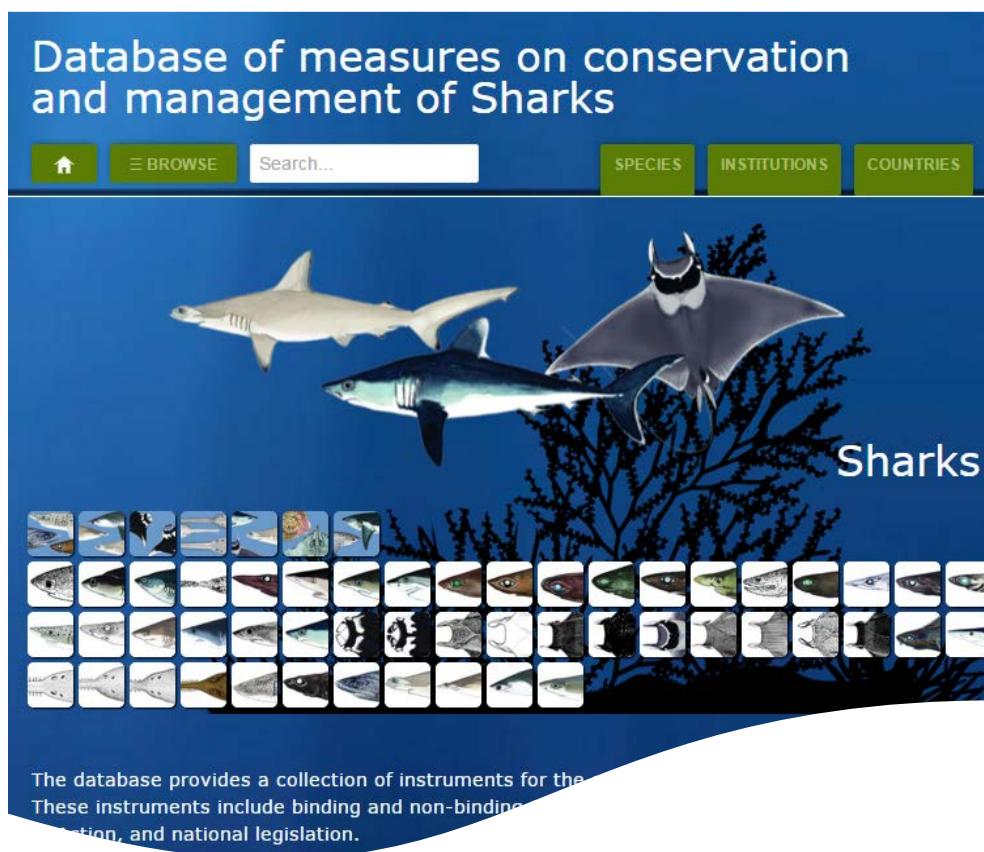
The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in cooperation with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and with the support of the European Union and the Government of Japan, has developed a database to document international, regional and national shark measures (<http://www.fao.org/ipoa-sharks/database-of-measures/en/>).

The Shark Measures Database collates management measures to assist sustainable use and conservation of shark resources; making all shark related regulations and guidance to fishery and conservation managers accessible in one website.

This database provides information on measures and guidance from Regional Fishery Bodies, Convention on Migratory Species and CITES on sharks, skates, rays, and chimaera, as well as national level information. The instruments listed in the Shark Measures Database include binding and non-binding conservation and management measures, plans of action and national legislation.

The Shark Measures Database was well received when demonstrated recently in Costa Rica at the Second Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks, which was attended by shark experts, country delegates, UN Agencies and NGO observers.

Sustainable fisheries and healthy ecosystems are embedded within the Blue Growth concept advanced by FAO. The Shark Measures Database assists in the productive and sustainable management of these marine resources.



Database of measures on conservation and management of Sharks

↑ BACK

🏠 [BROWSE](#) [SPECIES](#) [INSTITUTIONS](#) [COUNTRIES](#)

Bigeye thresher



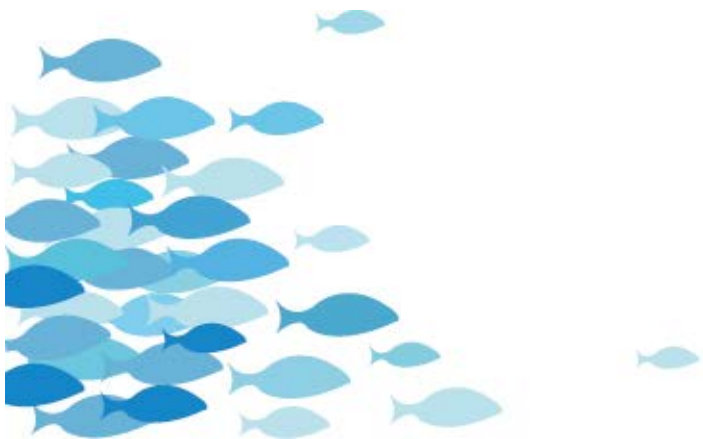
<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>
En: BIGEYE THRESHER
Es: ZORRO OJÓN
Fr: RENARD À GROS YEUX
FAO 3-ALPHA CODE: BTH
FAO Species fact sheet

CMS

APPENDIX	year 2015
Appendices I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)	➔
Binding Replaces	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	year 2014
CMS Appendix II - <i>Alopias superciliosus</i> (Bigeye thresher)	➔
CONVENTION TEXT	year 2014
Text of the Convention	➔
Binding	

ICCAT

RECOMMENDATION	year 2012
Recommendation by ICCAT on Compliance with Existing Measures on Shark Conservation and Management	➔
Rec. 12-05 Binding	



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Photographs provided courtesy of the various regional fishery bodies.