



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

### Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Muscat, Oman, 3-5 October 2010

### STOCK STATUS REPORTING IN SUPPORT OF LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE RECOFI REGION, INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF A DRAFT RECOMMENDATION FOR TRANSMISSION TO THE SIXTH SESSION OF RECOFI

#### BACKGROUND

1. Stock status reporting is fundamental to the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) mandate. However, little progress has been made since the establishment of the Commission in 1999. At its fourth session (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 7-9 May 2007) RECOFI addressed the issue and referred it to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) for further analysis.
2. The second meeting of the WGFM (Cairo, Egypt, 27-30 October 2008) reviewed briefly the major fisheries in the RECOFI region and identified a set of species of primary concern, agreeing on a gear-boat classification to be used for further work.
3. The fifth Session of the RECOFI (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12-14 May 2009) agreed to move towards an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) with adaptive management procedures and decided to hold a workshop specifically focusing on a review of data and statistics available in the region and stock status reporting.
4. The FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop on "Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting" (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26-29 July 2009) focused its attention on identifying key issues in the region and determining the minimum data requirement to address those key issues from the perspective of monitoring stocks and fisheries status (refer document RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/Inf.5).

#### REGIONAL RESOURCE MONITORING STRATEGY

5. A RECOFI regional resource monitoring strategy including minimum data reporting was developed at the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop to monitor:

- ecosystem-wide impacts of shrimp trawls;

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- exploitation of coastal finfish resources using groupers and emperors (identified as the most vulnerable component within this group) as reference indicators of fishing pressure, and
  - stock management of priority species with narrow-barred Spanish mackerels as the first target species.

6. The WGFM at its third meeting (Doha, Qatar, 20-22 October 2009) reviewed and adopted the regional resource monitoring strategy as developed by the Workshop on “Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting”, including the minimum data reporting necessary to estimate the relevant monitoring indicators. The WGFM also agreed to establish a regional database to maintain such information that supported directly fisheries management in the region as a public asset of the Commission. Moreover, the need for a follow-up workshop, including actual data reporting and examination to ensure the smooth implementation of the minimum data reporting, was also agreed.

7. The protocols for minimum data reporting required to estimate the monitoring indicators are as follows:

#### Ecosystem wide impacts of shrimp trawls

- Dates of opening and closure of the season;
- Species composition of discards, if available;
- Total number of vessels operating shrimp trawls as well as the number of vessels by size categories (e.g. steel/speed boats/dhows);
- Annual effort in terms of the average tow duration and number of tows per day, and the number of days at sea, according to vessel size categories;
- Quantity of annual catch of shrimps, swimming crabs, cuttlefish, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, emperors, groupers, sharks, rays, other fin fishes and the annual amount of discards;
- Shrimp species composition within the shrimp catch, if available [optional], and
- Catch composition of discards.

#### Exploitation of finfish resources

- Annual effort of driftnet/gillnet gear, wire traps, and hook-and-line fisheries, respectively, and description of efforts used. Members may decide to define the type of effort used but are encouraged to include the “number of days at sea”;
- Annual total catch, the amount of catch of narrow-barred Spanish mackerels, emperors, groupers, sharks and rays, and amount of discards. For emperors and groupers, species should be identified to the extent possible, and
- Species composition of discards, if available.

#### Stock status of selected species (Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel)

- Monthly catch and its fork length composition;
- For operations targeting narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (e.g. fixed nets, driftnets/gillnets and hook-and-line gear), monthly catch with length composition and effort by gear type, together with a clear description of types of effort used, and
- Any results obtained through surveys and research work relevant to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel that could include fishery-dependent and fishery-independent stock indicators, biological parameters (e.g. growth rate, age-length relationship, reproductive information, natural mortality) and ecological information (e.g. distribution, feeding habitat, habitat preferences).

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## **RECOMMENDATION ON MINIMUM DATA REPORTING**

8. The third meeting of the WGFM agreed that a resolution<sup>1</sup> should be prepared for the fourth meeting of the WGFM (Muscat, Oman, 3-5 October 2010) concerning minimum data reporting for submission to the sixth session of RECOFI (Manama, Bahrain, 10-11 May 2011) for consideration. The Secretariat advised the meeting that it would draft a recommendation for review and consideration by the fourth session of the WGFM. The draft recommendation entitled “Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area” is attached in Appendix 1.

9. Consideration of the recommendation by the WGFM is an important development for RECOFI Members and fisheries management in the region because it is the time that a recommendation will be submitted to the Commission for its consideration and adoption.

## **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

10. The Working Group is invited to review the draft recommendation and to comment on it, as appropriate, with a view to submitting it to the sixth session of RECOFI for adoption.

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<sup>1</sup> Under Article III (Functions) of the RECOFI Agreement, the Commission shall, *inter alia*, “formulate and recommend, in accordance with the provisions of Article V, (i) appropriate measures for the conservation and management of living marine resources, ... “. In this respect the Commission adopts “recommendations” rather than “resolutions”.

**Draft Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1**  
**On Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area**

The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI),

*RECALLING* that the purpose of RECOFI is, *inter alia*, to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture;

*RECALLING* that the third meeting of RECOFI's Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) (Doha, Qatar, 20-22 October 2009) agreed that a recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI Area should be drafted for review by the the fourth meeting of the WGFM (Muscat, Oman, 3-5 October 2010) for submission to the sixth session of RECOFI (Manama, Bahrain, 10-11 May 2011);

*REAFFIRMING* the strong desire of RECOFI Members to promote closer international cooperation and harmonization in fisheries of mutual interest;

*AWARE* that minimum data reporting requirements for the RECOFI Area are fundamental to promoting long-term sustainable fisheries, especially for shared stocks;

*ADOPTS* in conformity with the provision of paragraph 1 (b) and (h) of Article III and Article V of RECOFI Agreement that:

1. (a) Each Member shall take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the collection and submission of information required under the paragraph 2, 3 and 4 of this recommendation.

(b) Nothing in this recommendation shall constrain each Member pursuing data collection and sharing of them with the Commission for the purpose of improving management of fisheries and fishery resources in the RECOFI Area beyond this recommendation.

2. (a) Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to shrimp trawl fishery:

- (i) opening and closing dates of the fishery;
- (ii) number of vessels engaged in the fishery according to its own vessel type/ size categories (e.g. steel-hulled/speed boats/dhows);
- (iii) annual average of tow duration, annual average of number of tows per day, and total number of days at sea, according to vessel type/ size categories;
- (iv) live-weight equivalent of annual catch of shrimp, swimming crab, cuttlefish, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, emperors, groupers, sharks, rays, and other finfishes, taken by the fishery;
- (v) annual amount of discards, and
- (vi) species composition of by-catch and discards, if available.

(b) If any of by-catch reduction devices (BRD) are used or other mitigation measure are taken, each Member should advised the Commission on details of such BRD/mitigation measures used and submit the catch and effort of those vessels with mitigation measures separated from those vessels operating normally.

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3. Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to “driftnet/gillnet”, wire-traps, and hooks-and-line fisheries, respectively:

- (a) annual effort in individual fisheries, in terms of “number of days at sea” to the extent possible, and if not with brief description of efforts used, and
- (b) live-weight equivalents of annual total catch, and of annual catches of narrow-barred Spanish mackerels, emperors, groupers, sharks and rays, and amount of discards, taken by individual fishery with species identification of emperors and groupers to the extent possible.

4. (a) Each Member shall make available to the Commission the following information with respect to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel *Scomberomorus commerson* taken in any fishery in the country:

- (i) monthly catch in live-weight equivalent;
- (ii) monthly fork length composition of catch, and
- (iii) for operations targeting narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (e.g. kingfish fixed net, driftnet/gillnet, and hooks and line), monthly catch with length composition and effort by gear type, together with clear description of kinds of effort used.

(b) Each Member shall make available to the Commission any result obtained through surveys and research work relevant to narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, including fishery-dependent and fishery-independent stock indicators, biological parameters (e.g. growth rate, age-length relationship, reproductive information, natural mortality) and ecological information (e.g. distribution, feeding habitat, habitat preferences).

5. Each Member shall, to the extent practicable, make available to the Commission the following additional information:

- (a) shrimp species composition within the shrimp trawl catch, and
- (b) species composition of discards.

6. Each Member shall submit to the Commission the information required under paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this recommendation, and any modifications occurred in those information reported previously, before the end of May of the following year. Each Member shall cooperate in exchanging any historical information relevant to those described in this recommendation.

7. Each Member shall cooperate in sharing survey plans and protocols prior to their implementation, as well as results of such surveys upon their conclusion, to the relevant Members through the Commission.

8. The Commission shall collate, maintain and promptly disseminate the information provided under paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this recommendation. The Commission may, subject to the request from a Member who provided information, impose restrictions on access to the information by the public.

9. The Commission shall monitor and evaluate regularly the status of implementation of this recommendation.