



International Ocean Noise Coalition Statement

**34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries
FAO Headquarters, Online, February 1 – 5, 2021**

Agenda Item 11: Addressing climate change and other environment-related matters in fisheries and aquaculture

Dear Chairperson,

I again have the honour to address you on behalf of the International Ocean Noise Coalition representing more than 150 non-governmental organisations. As noted, the Coalition is concerned by the impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine ecosystems and marine life.

The Ocean is home to a vast variety of marine species and delivers vital ecosystem services. The Ocean is the basis of our lives and plays a major role in providing food security and a critical source of income for communities the world over. Yet, levels of underwater noise have doubled every decade, in some regions, for the past 70 years. The increase in human-induced underwater noise presents a growing threat to fish stocks and the sustainability of fisheries globally.

Studies have shown that fish catch rates can drop substantially, with larger fish leaving an area coincident with ocean noise events. By-catch rates have also been observed to increase and fish abundance decreases in the presence of noise. Across the world, unchecked propagation of ocean noise is undermining efforts to restore fish stocks, with serious implications for human livelihoods (SDG1) and food security (SDG2).

SDG14.4, which calls for a restoration of fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, can only be implemented if adequate consideration is given to the issue of anthropogenic ocean noise by all stakeholders involved. At COFI 33 the Committee noted with concern, the issue of anthropogenic underwater noise and encouraged the FAO to consider conducting a review of its impact on marine resources, and its socioeconomic consequences. (FIAP/R1249, Para 108). We would like to take this opportunity and inform the Committee that the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), in partnership with OceanCare, is currently preparing a study on the potential effects of underwater noise on demersal fisheries in the Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) of Jabuka/Pomo Pit in the Adriatic Sea. We wish to thank the Government of Switzerland for the support provided to make this study possible. A great sense of gratitude ought to also be extended to the GFCM Secretariat for the great collaboration thus far.

We thank you Chairperson and all the people in attendance for your attention.

International Ocean Noise Coalition (IONC) Representatives attending COFI:

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Mrs Fabienne McLellan (fmclellan@oceancare.org), Representative IONC Europe, Middle East and Africa

Dr. Johannes Müller (jmueller@oceancare.org), Ocean Policy Expert and OceanCare Focal Point for socio-economic study on noise impact on fisheries

Dr. Kerstin Glaus, (kglaus@oceancare.org), Scientific Officer at OceanCare