



# FAO AND AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY

**T**he FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department is carrying out a variety of activities in relation to aquatic biodiversity that are considered essential for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF 1995) provide the umbrella for FAO's work in fisheries.

## FAO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

The CCRF, in harmony with major international agreements such as UNCLOS and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, the United Nations Conference on Environment and

Development (UNCED), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), sets out principles for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the environment and the people who depend on aquatic biodiversity. The Articles of the Code are addressed through FAO's normative programme and field programme, in part coordinated by a global FishCode Programme.



## ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

Aquatic biodiversity plays a vital role in rural livelihoods. However, it is being threatened by factors within the fisheries sector, such as overfishing, destructive fishing practices and introduction of alien species, as well as by external factors such as habitat loss and degradation mainly caused by land-based activities.

Thus, the FAO Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service embarked on a programme aimed at constructing an inventory and valuation of inland aquatic biodiversity that is used by rural communities in natural and modified ecosystems with special emphasis on traditional knowledge, sustainable use, enhancement and gender issues.

The conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks need to be promoted urgently by linking ecosystem considerations into capture fisheries management practices and procedures. A set of guidelines on ecosystem approaches to fisheries management has been developed by FAO.



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## INFORMATION RESOURCES

FAO accords high priority to providing and enhancing information resources including facts and data, status and trends, strategic advice and facilitated networking for sustainable world fisheries. Major information resources include:

FAO FISHSAT PLUS Database  
[www.fao.org/fi/statist/fisoft/fishplus.asp](http://www.fao.org/fi/statist/fisoft/fishplus.asp)

UN Atlas of the Oceans  
[www.oceansatlas.org](http://www.oceansatlas.org)

FAO Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS)  
[www.fao.org/fishery/figis](http://www.fao.org/fishery/figis)

FAO Species Identification and Data Programme  
[www.fao.org/fishery/sidp](http://www.fao.org/fishery/sidp)

FAO Database on Introductions of Aquatic Species (DIAS)  
[www.fao.org/fishery/dias](http://www.fao.org/fishery/dias)

GLOBEFISH Markets and Trade  
[www.globefish.org](http://www.globefish.org)

ONEFISH  
 Internet Portal for Fisheries Research  
[www.onefish.org/global/index.jsp](http://www.onefish.org/global/index.jsp)

FISHBASE  
[www.fishbase.org/search.cfm](http://www.fishbase.org/search.cfm)

The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)  
[www.fao.org/sof/sofia/index\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sof/sofia/index_en.htm)

## SPECIES IDENTIFICATION AND DATA PROGRAMME

The FAO Fisheries Management and Conservation Service through its Species Identification and Data Programme contributes to improved knowledge on biodiversity and provides tools for proper species identification. Leading taxonomists in the world collaborate with FAO in the elaboration of regional and national Species Identification Guides, Catalogues and Synopses, which also include species-specific information on conservation status, socio-economic and traditional importance.



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## EXPERT ADVICE AND SUPPORT

The FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department supports CBD activities as related to aquatic biodiversity and aquatic genetic resources. Further, FAO collaborates actively with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) providing recommendations and advice on costs and implications of listing commercially exploited aquatic species. FAO promotes and facilitates international treaties and negotiations relevant to the use of aquatic biodiversity and the conservation of endangered aquatic species including sharks, turtles, seabirds and marine mammals, and supports an expert group on the scientific aspects of marine environmental protection.

Learn more:  
[www.fao.org/fishery](http://www.fao.org/fishery)

Further information about the work of FAO on biodiversity is available at:  
[www.fao.org/biodiversity](http://www.fao.org/biodiversity)



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