

FISHERY COUNTRY PROFILE	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FID/CP/DJB
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DJIBOUTI

STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDUSTRY

Marine fisheries

The generally turbid conditions of Djibouti reefs are very similar to those prevailing in the southern Red Sea. On the south coast of Djibouti, close to the border with Somalia, the effects of upwelling of nutrient-rich water begin to be discernible in fish assemblages. They support fewer species and lower abundances of reef-associated fish than reefs further north. Non-reef species are more productive, however, and this area represents the main artisanal fishing ground in Djibouti.

There are no large-scale fisheries in Djibouti. Much of the fishing is carried out at the subsistence level, using hook and line and target its demersal and reef species. To a lesser extent, gill and throwing nets are also used. Lobsters are of minor importance, and are collected by local divers. Fishing effort is generally low. Landed catches consist almost entirely of large fish that fetch higher prices in the market. Fish are marketed fresh and there is no processing that can be considered of much relevance.

At present, fisheries play a limited role, although subsistence fisheries are locally important. There are about 90 artisanal fishing boats, of which 75 are small, open boats (6 - 8 m) powered by outboard engines. Each boat operates with an average of three fishermen over one day trips. Some 15 of the boats are longer (10-14 m) and equipped with inboard engines. These carry an average of five fishermen each and go out for four days.

The introduction of the Program for the Development of Artisanal Fisheries, initiated in 1980, resulted in substantial growth of the fisheries sector. The program supplied fishing gear, outboard engines and boats. Ten years after completion of the program, the number of fishermen had increased significantly. However, the average age of the fishermen ranged from 40 to 55, and a rejuvenation of the crew became imperative for the continued development of this sector. A revitalization program is currently underway.

At current levels of landings of 350 tons per year, Djibouti's fisheries are considered underutilized. The Direction d'Élevage et des Pêches (DEP) is currently implementing policies to recruit and train Djibouti citizens as fishermen to increase production, towards a projected Maximum Sustainable Yield of 5 000 tons annually. While at the national level

fisheries resources are clearly under-utilized, at the local level there may be over-utilization, especially of small restricted areas of high productivity.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture is not a traditional activity in Djibouti and there is no significant aquaculture production.

Catch utilization

All fish is landed whole, fresh and consumed locally. There is some small-scale drying and salting of anchovies and sardines, much of which is exported to neighbouring countries.

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Total landings and the number of fishermen have remained static since the 1980s although some development took place as a result of training initiatives by the Government from the 1980s onwards. Most new fishermen pass through a government training program to provide them with fishing skills.

The industry, however, remains essentially artisanal in nature although opportunities to develop an export industry to the European Union may significantly impact the nature of the industry in the future.

ECONOMIC ROLE OF THE FISHERY INDUSTRY

Although the present contribution of fisheries to GDP is small (less than 0.1%), its potential role could be enhanced. If the projections of a 5000 t sustainable catch can be realized, the potential contribution to Djibouti's GDP could rise substantially to around 5%. However, realization of that potential will depend on the continued upgrading of infrastructure and the development of export markets.

Despite its current low contribution to overall GDP, fisheries are locally important from a socio-economic viewpoint in some rural communities.

DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

Fisheries in Djibouti are generally considered to be significantly under-exploited, particularly the pelagic resources such as bonito in the Gulf of Tadjourah and small tuna species. The reef and demersal fisheries are probably more intensively exploited and have lesser potential for development. In 2001, the World Bank estimated that only 3 percent of national fisheries resources are being tapped.

There may also be prospects for increasing lobster production and for shrimp fishing in the north since the area is close to the major shrimp fishing areas around Bard al Yemen.

As an additional assistance to fisheries development, the Government is aware of the potential of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) for pelagic species and are considering developing appropriate ones for local conditions.

Aquaculture potential is probably more limited, given the low availability of capital and suitable coastal and offshore sites.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

There are very few management measures in place in Djibouti and it is generally acknowledged that this lack of control on fishing will become a major problem in the future as the industry develops. Spearfishing, though legally banned, is widely practiced. Artisanal fishermen are apparently not subject to any limitations, and their impacts in the future will likely multiply as their gear technology improves in catching efficiency. There is already a

move away from traditional practices such as the substitution of natural fibers with monofilament line, and the use of modern spear guns in place of locally made wooden ones.

Fisheries management in Djibouti has the singular advantage that most new fishermen pass through the government training program. This provides an opportunity to inculcate appreciation for conservation and stock management among fishermen and to develop participatory strategies between the government and fishermen.

Djibouti is a member state of the Program for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), which has as one of its objectives to develop regionally consistent strategies for environmental protection in the marine areas of the region.

DEMAND

Demand is flexible and related to the affordability of local and imported products. The quantity of imports has remained steady in the period 1996-2001 at around 250-400 t. Exports are mainly salted anchovies and sardines. Landings have remained stable at around 400 t since 1985.

RESEARCH

There is no dedicated fisheries research facility in Djibouti although research programs funded by aid agencies and UN organizations have provided the basic data on the resources of the country. The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) is currently coordinating the regional Program for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) of which Djibouti is a member.

AID

Djibouti receives significant aid for development, including development of its fisheries resources and infrastructure. The latest fisheries-specific aid was the Djibouti Agriculture Integrated Fisheries Development Project - Supplementary Loan 1 provided in 2001 by the African Development Bank. Infrastructure aid has included the building of a food standards laboratory, and bringing the facilities at the fishing port up to standards, thereby making it possible to exploit the country's and region's fisheries resources through exports to the European Union countries.

INTERNET LINKS

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