



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN

COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES POUR
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**GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN**

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**SYNOPSIS OF THE GFCM STUDY ON SMALL TUNAS IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN INCLUDING THE BLACK SEA**

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* Available only in English

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the ICCAT data bank on catch statistics, it seems that the small tunas are quite important in the Mediterranean Sea, reaching a total of about 80,000 tons (table 1), while no data is available for the Black Sea, even if it is known that important quantities are fished there.

Species	code	year	tons
Auxis thazard	FRI	2005	2488
<i>Euthynnus alletteratus</i>	LTA	2005	1040
<i>Sarda sarda</i>	BON	2005	74375
<i>Auxis rochei</i>	BLT	2003	989
total			78892

Table 1 – Small tunas catches in the Mediterranean according to the ICCAT data base in the last available year.

The countries currently reporting catches of small tuna species are few, while it is strongly suspected that this fishery is carried out in most of the Mediterranean and Black Sea countries. Actually, small tunas are quite common in several artisanal or small scale fisheries in many areas, but catches are only sometimes recorded in the national statistical systems or are believed to be quite often sold on small local markets.

As a matter of fact, even without any scientific evidence at the moment, it is quite reasonable that the small tuna species fisheries are important from a social and economical point of view, particularly for the coastal communities, either in the Mediterranean or in the Black Sea.

II. CONTEXT

During the thirty-first session of the General Fisheries Commission of the Mediterranean (Rome, 9-12 January 2007), the Commission reiterated its interest for strengthened cooperation with ICCAT and agreed that in the short term, priority should be given to the betterment of knowledge on the sustainable exploitation of small tuna fisheries, including their biological and socio-economic aspects.

Indeed, follow-up will be ensured on the Recommendations of the 7th session of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT ad hoc Working Group which focused on small tunas, especially the compilation of statistics and the implementation of scientific research programmes.

III. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The preparation of this work is a response to the GFCM and ICCAT request to prepare the eighth session of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species, on data analysis and studies of small tunas. This meeting is foreseen to be held during 2008. The work will be performed by consultants hired by GFCM.

This study should focus on the following aspects, according to the available literature or knowledge:

- Description of the small tuna fisheries in the Mediterranean including their exploitation.
- Catch and effort per species, gear and GSA-time stratum.
- Biological parameters (lengths distributions, biometric relations between length-weight per species, sex-ratio, etc.
 - Growth studies: growth equation; direct determination of age.
 - Reproduction.
 - Study of the stock structure when existing.
- Description and analysis of the relation between environmental (and oceanographic) factors and spawning and recruitment areas These factors can influence the fishing yields.
- Socio-economic aspects related the exploitation of small tuna fisheries.
- Considerations regarding the management of small tuna management.

IV. CONTENTS OF A GFCM STUDY ON SMALL TUNAS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The study will be structured according to the following index:

1. General introduction

2. Biology and ecology

- Behavior/migrations
- Geographical distribution
- Spawning
- Growth
- Feeding
- Environmental aspects
- etc.

3. Exploitation

- Main commercial species exploited in the Mediterranean
- Associated species
- By catch
- Landings (annual and seasonal trends etc.....)/fishing type/GSA
- Fleet
- Gears
- Fishing techniques
- Existing national regulations
- etc.

4. Socio-economical aspects

- Average price per species
- Annual estimated value per species
- Fishing workers
- Market
- Socio-economic indicators
- etc.

5. General conclusions

- The present and the future of the small tuna fisheries management
- International and regional experiences.
- Frame for the future management of the small tunas in the Mediterranean context.

The report will also provide an updated list of scientific papers, possibly including grey literature and reports, thanks to the participations of local scientists.

Each chapter will be under the responsibility of one or more specialists from various Mediterranean countries, under a general coordinator having the responsibility to ensure the general quality of the report.