

Fauna & Flora
Spoken NGO statement to the COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management
First Session
15th January 2024

Fauna & Flora welcomes FAO's commitment to improve the effectiveness of fisheries management based on the precautionary principle and ecosystem approach as well as the recognition that fisheries management needs to look beyond just maximising production.

A key aim of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other policy instruments - and indeed the Sustainable Development Goals - is to prohibit destructive fishing practices. The review of the implementation of the Code of Conduct presented in the meeting documents identified that prohibiting destructive fishing methods and practices are some of the most common management tools or processes implemented by Members. However, the term 'destructive fishing' does not yet have a [globally accepted definition](#), which hinders its effective use in policy, the implementation of management solutions and the measurement of progress towards ending these practices. As with the work the FAO is doing on IUU fishing, clarifying the meaning of 'destructive fishing' can help to gain a better assessment of the magnitude and impact of these fishing practices globally and can help Members identify areas where management should be prioritised. Having an operational definition of 'destructive fishing' can also help support the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, looking at the impact of practices beyond production and support the measurement of whether fisheries management solutions are having the intended result.

We therefore call for fisheries actors and decision-makers to increase the global dialogue around "destructive fishing" and call for the term to be better defined and measured. This new sub-committee on fisheries management could provide an important forum to lead this work and to further understand how social and economic concepts could also fit into a definition, helping to eliminate destructive fishing practices across all scales. Fauna & Flora has already begun working on defining 'destructive fishing' and has developed, in collaboration with BirdLife International, UNEP-WCMC and the University of Cambridge, an illustrative global-level [monitoring framework](#). Fauna & Flora would be willing to work with any Member that wanted to lead an initiative on destructive fishing within the sub-committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

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