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Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON) Biodiversity and Fisheries
Athens, 7-8 April 2025

Agenda Item 5: Proposal to revise the IMAP on Biodiversity, Non-Indigenous Species (NIS) and fisheries (EO3)
5.2. Way forward to update common indicators factsheets related to fisheries (EO3)

Way forward to Advance EO3 Indicators for Harvest of Commercially Exploited Fish and Shellfish

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Note by the Secretariat

The Contracting Parties (CP to the Barcelona Convention adopted (CoP 19, Athens 2016) the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP) (Decision IG.22/7) within the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process. The IMAP requirements focus on agreed Ecological Objectives (EOs) and their related common indicators.

This document provides information on GFCM reporting the status of fisheries and aquaculture in the GFCM region through the State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SOMFI) reports, its contribution to the MedQSR, and the way forward related to (EO3) Harvest of Commercially Exploited Fish and Shellfish.

Way forward to Advance EO3 Indicators for Harvest of Commercially Exploited Fish and Shellfish

1. The Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Barcelona Convention agreed to implement the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) process. In their 19th COP (Athens 2016), the CPs adopted the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea (IMAP) (Decision IG.22/7). Regarding Biodiversity component, the current IMAP only covers the common indicators of the Ecological Objectives (EO) related to biodiversity (EO1), non-indigenous species (EO2) and harvest of commercially exploited fish and shellfish (EO3).
2. The complete set of main fishery indicators adopted to assess status of Mediterranean stocks as well as their temporal trend is reported in the 22nd SAC Report (FAO, 2021). The list of these indicators for which a common methodology has been already developed (GFCM, 2017.) and discussed during the meeting of the Correspondence Group on Monitoring (CORMON), Biodiversity and Fisheries (UNEP/MAP, 2017a) as well as the 6th meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (UNEP/MAP, 2017b) and the 11th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group (UNEP/MAP, 2024), is : - Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) (Indicator assessment factsheet code EO3 CI7). - Total Landings (TL) (Indicator assessment factsheet code EO3 CI8). - Fishing mortality (F) and/or Exploitation rate (E) (Indicator assessment factsheet code EO3 CI9).
3. Within the GFCM mandate a series of stocks are assessed on an annual basis. The species/stocks that should be assessed and for which stock assessment form should be provided are determined by the list of priority species agreed by the 42nd annual session of the GFCM in 2018 (Appendix 1). In addition to this, on a yearly basis, GFCM Subregional Committees (SRCs), the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) and the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) identify stocks for which benchmark assessments should be performed. Collectively these stocks, along with non-priority species for which experts deem stock assessments important, provide the basis for the scientific advice formulated by the SAC and the WGBS on stock status in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, respectively. Indicators CI7, CI8 and CI9 are assessed according both to the Mediterranean and Black Sea geographical sub-areas (GSAs) and GFCM sub-regions (Appendix K; GFCM-DCRF, 2018) according to the stock units determined by the Working groups on stock assessment in the Mediterranean (WGSAs) and the Sub-regional Group on Stock Assessment for the Black Sea (SGSABS). The detailed results of all GFCM stock assessments are provided in Stock assessment forms (SAFs) and Stock Assessment Results (STAR) files, all publicly available on the GFCM website (<https://www.fao.org/gfcm/data/en/>).
4. Based on the above, the GFCM reports the overall status of the Mediterranean stocks and their trends within its flagship publication, the State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries report (SoMFi), every 2 years. The bycatch of vulnerable species status is also included in the SOMFI, but the analysis is still mostly qualitative as data collection is still underway. In the Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MedQSR), the Status of EO3 Harvest of Commercially Exploited Fish and Shellfish (CI7, CI8 and CI9) is provided by the GFCM based on the most recently published SoMFi, as was done within the MedQSR 2017 (based on SoMFi 2016) and MedQSR 2023 (based on SoMFi 2022).
5. The update of the IMAP EO3 guidance factsheet adopted at the 6th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Coordination Group will be done in the next biennium for CI7, CI8 and CI9 by the GFCM in coordination with SPA/RAC and considering the SOMFI 2025 methodology.
6. Common Indicator 10: Fishing effort, and Common Indicator 11: Catch per unit of effort are non-mandatory indicators pending new updates for common regular monitoring.
7. Common Indicator 12: Bycatch of vulnerable and non-target species (EO1 and EO3) may benefit from updates based on the latest advances in the next biennium. GFCM developed a standardized protocol “Monitoring incidental catch of vulnerable species in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries: Methodology for data collection” (FAO, 2019) and is developing a regional bycatch Database. The list of the Vulnerable Species for data collection is in Appendix F of the GFCM-Data Collection Reference Framework (GFCM, 2018).

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Appendix 1. List of GFCM priority species driving fisheries for which assessments are regularly (or planned to be) carried out.

	Western Mediterranean	Central Mediterranean	Adriatic Sea	Eastern Mediterranean	Black Sea
Pelagic species	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>
	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sardinella aurita</i>	<i>Trachurus mediterraneus</i>
				<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>
Demersal species	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>
	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Saurida lessepsianus</i>	<i>Scophthalmus maximus</i>
	<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>	<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>
		<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> (GSA 18)	<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>	<i>Rapana venosa</i>
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	<i>Solea solea</i> (GSA 17)	<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>	
			<i>Sepia officinalis</i>		
Species of regional importance		<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>			
Species of conservation concern	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>				
	<i>Corallium rubrum</i>				<i>Squalus acanthias</i>
Non-indigenous species	<i>Pterois miles</i>				
	<i>Lagocephalus sceleratus</i>				