

TROPICAL SHRIMP FISHERIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON LIVING RESOURCES



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Shrimp fisheries in Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines; in the Near East: Bahrain and Iran; in Africa: Cameroon, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania; in Latin America: Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela

PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

In December 1998 the FAO Fisheries Department started the execution of a Project Development and Preparation Facility (PDF) funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): “Reducing the impact of tropical shrimp trawling fisheries on living marine resources through the adoption of environmentally friendly techniques and practices”. In the process leading up to the project approval, thirteen countries with important shrimp fisheries in tropical regions decided to participate: in Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines; in the Near East: Bahrain and Iran; in Africa: Cameroon, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania; in Latin America: Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

A workshop of National Coordinators of the participating countries, held at FAO Headquarters in March 1999, agreed on a common approach to development of a full project and later, in 1999/2000, four regional workshops (in Africa, Latin America, the Near East and Asia) were held to agree on regional priorities and content of a possible main phase project.

As background for the discussions, the participating countries agreed to carry out detailed reviews of their shrimp fisheries and basic studies on the environmental impact of these activities. These findings were summarized in national reports.

Distribution:

National Coordinators

Workshop participants

Fisheries Officers in FAO Regional and Subregional Offices

GEF Focal points in participating countries

Directors of Fisheries

FAO.

Tropical shrimp fisheries and their impact on living resources. Shrimp fisheries in Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines; in the Near East: Bahrain and Iran; in Africa: Cameroon, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania; in Latin America: Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela

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ABSTRACT

As part of the development of the project “Reducing the impact of tropical shrimp trawling fisheries on living marine resources through the adoption of environmentally friendly techniques and practices”, mainly funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), thirteen countries in tropical regions carried out a detailed review of their shrimp fisheries and studies on the environmental impact of these activities. The findings were summarized in national reports.

The national reports include: general description of the shrimp fishery (resources, fishing methods and vessel, fishing practice, effort data, shrimp catches and by-catches (including species and size composition and its utilization); regulations and management measures; research activities; impact of present exploitation and fishing practices on the shrimp and fish resources and on the bottom habitat; perception of the present situation by industry, the authorities and environmental organizations; social implications of adjusting fishing to more environmentally friendly practices; priority issues requiring actions to meet acceptable standards of environmentally friendly shrimp exploitation and, finally, a proposal for a relevant National Plan of Action.

In general, the national reports show that capture and discard of juvenile food fish and high discard levels of most of the non-shrimp catch are very serious problems for the countries. Many countries report existing regulations to reduce bycatch (including in some countries the mandatory use of the Turtle Excluder Device) and discarding, as well as management measures, like mesh size regulations and seasonal closure. A few countries also report the collecting, processing and marketing of bycatch. Conflicts about the use of fishing grounds and resources between industrial and artisanal fishers are commonly reported. The impact of trawling on the bottom habitat is an area where little knowledge exists, in general. A few countries also report, for the first time on observations made during systematic opinion poll survey.

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