Relevant provisions related to bycatch
General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

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The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the FAO

- **Established in 1949 in the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN)**
- **Objectives**
  - To ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of **living marine resources** (contributing to the conservation and preservation of the Mediterranean and Black Sea)
  - To ensure the **sustainable development of aquaculture**
- **Area of application:**
  - The **Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea**
- **Membership**
  - **23 Contracting Parties**
    - 19 Mediterranean states, 3 Black Sea states and EU
  - **5 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties**
    - Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Jordan
- **Key function**
  - Adopt **binding recommendations** for fisheries and aquaculture governance including the conservation of ecosystems
Decision-making process within the GFCM

- Proposals by CPCs
- Decision making at the Commission

CPCs National delegates
NGOs
Inter-governmental bodies

Scientific Advice

SAC subsidiary bodies

- Thematic expert working groups:
  - Stock assessment
  - Small-scale and recreational fisheries
  - Spatial management measures (including Fishing Restricted areas, protection of EFH, VME)
  - Data collection
  - etc.

- Subregional Committees (SRCs) integrating advice at the subregional level
GFCM strategy on fisheries

1. **Reverse the declining trend of fish stocks** through strengthened management.
2. **Support livelihoods** for coastal communities through sustainable small-scale fisheries.
3. **Curb IUU fishing** through a regional plan of action.
4. **Minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions** between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment.
5. **Enhance capacity-building and cooperation**.
Understanding bycatch and adopting effective measures to reduce it represent essential steps towards minimizing the impacts of fisheries on vulnerable species, discards, and more generally on marine ecosystems, as well as towards ensuring a sustainable fishery sector.

To address this issue and better understand bycatch, the GFCM is working with fishers, national and international partners, environmental organizations and researchers to develop new tools and approaches for reducing bycatch and to implement management measures.
In the last years, on the basis of the analysis of SoMFi 2018 and the adoption of a dedicated strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, the GFCM has launched a number of initiatives to improve knowledge on bycatch by fleet, subregion and species group across the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The most important of these initiatives include:

• The implementation of **discards monitoring programmes** in several countries;

• The participation in the MedBycatch project «**Understanding Mediterranean multi-taxa bycatch of vulnerable species and testing mitigation – a collaborative approach**» to monitor and mitigate incidental catch of vulnerable species.

• The involvement in the depredation projects «**Towards solutions to interactions between fisheries and cetaceans in Moroccan and Tunisian waters**»

• The participation in the project namely «**Mitigating dolphin depredation in Mediterranean fisheries – Joining efforts for strengthening cetacean conservation and sustainable fisheries**», aiming to reduce depredation by dolphins in fishing gear.
Additionally, two GFCM resolutions and one recommendation have been recently adopted:

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/6 on the establishment of a set of measures to protect **vulnerable marine ecosystems** formed by cnidarian (coral) communities in the Mediterranean Sea

Resolution GFCM/43/2019/2 on **enhancing the conservation of cetaceans** in the GFCM area of application,

Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/2 on fisheries management measures for the **conservation of sharks and rays** in the GFCM area of application

**Complementing previous decisions relevant to incidental catches:**

Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/2 on the mitigation of **incidental catches of cetaceans** in the GFCM area of application

Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/4 on management measures for **piked dogfish** in the Black Sea

Recommendation GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries for turbot and **conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea**

Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 on the progressive implementation of data submission in line with the GFCM **Data Collection Reference Framework** (DCRF)

http://www.fao.org/gfcm/decisions/ru/
The DCRF is the first comprehensive GFCM framework for the collection and transmission of fisheries-related data in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

It aims to be instrumental in achieving a more efficient data collection programme in the whole region, and to better integrate data collection and subregional multiannual management plans.

It could be regularly reviewed by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies in light of possible requirements emanating from the GFCM Commission, including through new recommendations.
List of online data reporting tools by GFCM requirements

The following online data reporting tools will be progressively activated on the DCRF online platform according to the GFCM data submission requirements. The active tools already at disposal of CPCs for data submission purposes are highlighted in orange.

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http://www.fao.org/gfcm/data/dcrf
Collected data

WGSAD; WGSASP; SGSABS

Stock Assessment Forms

Dedicated meeting(s)/WKs for common analysis at sub-regional and/or regional level

DCRF
Thank you for your attention