

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

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

RECALLING that the objective of the Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and in particular its Plan of Implementation;

REAFFIRMING the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and recalling the precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

RECOGNIZING that some fishing operations carried out in the GFCM area of application can affect marine mammals adversely and that there is a need to implement measures to mitigate these adverse effects;

RECOGNIZING that these fishing operations shall be consistent with the sustainable exploitation and conservation of the fish species targeted;

AIMING to improve knowledge about the impact that certain fisheries have on marine mammals;

AIMING to reduce the incidental catch of marine mammals in certain fisheries;

TAKING into account the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) regarding the need to endorse measures for the reduction of marine mammals bycatch;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, the following recommendation:

PART I

Scope

1. Contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) shall adopt fisheries management measures in the Black Sea region to ensure the adequate conservation of turbot.
2. CPCs shall adopt fisheries management measures to study, monitor, prevent, reduce and, to the extent possible, eliminate incidental catch of cetaceans during fishing operations.

PART II

Definitions

3. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:
- “Black Sea” means the geographical subarea (GSA) 29, as defined in Resolution GFCM/33/2009/2 on the establishment of geographical subareas in the GFCM area of application, amending Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2.
 - “Turbot” means fish pertaining to the species *Psetta maxima*.
 - “Piked dogfish” means shark pertaining to the species *Squalus acanthias*.
 - “Bottom-set gillnet” means any net made up of a single piece of net held vertically in the water by floats and weights fixed or capable of being fixed by any means to the bottom of the sea and maintain the gear in place either close to the bottom or floating in the water column.
 - "Mesh size" means:
 - For knotted netting: the longest distance between two opposite knots in the same mesh when fully extended (stretched mesh);
 - For knotless netting: the inside distance between the opposite joints in the same mesh when fully extended (stretched mesh) along its longest possible axis.

PART III

Fisheries management measures related to turbot in the Black Sea

4. CPCs shall ensure that turbot in Black Sea waters is exclusively fished using bottom-set gillnets and that the following conditions are met:
- Mesh size is greater or equal to 40 mm.
- The mesh size of the net shall be determined as the mean value of a series of 20 selected meshes; in case of different mesh sizes in the fishing net, the meshes shall be selected from the part of the fishing net having the smallest meshes.
- Meshes shall be measured only when wet and unfrozen; meshes that have been broken or have been repaired shall not be included.
- Turbot of a size less than 45 cm, measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin (total length), shall not be caught.

PART IV

Fisheries management measures for the mitigation of cetacean bycatch

5. In order to mitigate the impact of bottom-set gillnet fisheries on cetacean populations, CPCs shall ensure that monofilament or twine diameter shall not exceed 0.5 mm.

Monofilament or twines shall be assessed when unfrozen.

Monofilament or twines within a mesh that are broken or have been repaired shall not be selected.

6. CPCs shall set up adequate monitoring in order to collect reliable information on the impact that bottom-set gillnets targeting piked dogfish have on cetacean populations in the Black Sea.