

Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/6

on management measures for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16)

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING 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 that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

RECALLING that in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall foster, as appropriate, a subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall adopt management measures based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries to guarantee the maintenance of stocks at levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

CONSIDERING that the GFCM shall apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

RECALLING the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 August 1995, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas;

CONSIDERING that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides that states “should apply the precautionary approach widely to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment, taking account of the best scientific evidence available. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species and non-target species and their environment”;

CONSIDERING that all measures formulated by the GFCM shall be based on the best scientific advice available, taking into account relevant environmental, economic and social factors;

RECALLING that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration (MedFish4Ever Declaration) calls upon Mediterranean riparian countries to enhance multilateral cooperation and implement actions to improve the sustainability of resources, particularly with regard to data collection and scientific advice, the implementation of an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, compliance and elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, support to sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and greater solidarity and coordination;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7 on a regional plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the GFCM area of application;

CONSIDERING the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) at its twenty-first session to extend precautionary management measures contained in Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/3 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Levant Sea (geographical subareas 24, 25, 26 and 27) and in Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/4 on a multiannual management plan for sustainable trawl fisheries targeting giant red shrimp and blue and red shrimp in the Ionian Sea (geographical subareas 19, 20 and 21);

CONSIDERING that fishing mortality should be kept below safe thresholds to ensure long-term high yields while limiting the risk of stocks collapse and guaranteeing stable and more viable fisheries;

CONSIDERING the socio-economic importance of fisheries and the need to ensure their sustainability;

CONSIDERING that certain fisheries management measures need to be revised and adapted to the evolution of both the status of exploited stocks and scientific knowledge and that an appropriate method shall be established to this end;

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

PART I

General objectives, geographical scope and definitions

General objectives

1. The present recommendation establishes management measures for sustainable trawl fishing activities in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas [GSAs] 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16).
2. The contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) whose vessels are actively fishing in GSAs 12 to 16 agree to implement such management measures for the concerned fisheries in accordance with the general and specific objectives set by this recommendation.

Geographical scope

3. The management measures established by the present recommendation shall apply to GSAs 12 to 16.

Definitions

4. For the purpose of this recommendation, the following definitions shall apply:
 - a) “Strait of Sicily” means GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 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;
 - b) “vessel actively fishing” means any trawler in the Strait of Sicily targeting the key species listed in the annex to this recommendation and entitled by the CPC whose flag it is flying to carry out specific fishing operations, during a specified period, in a given area or for a given fishery under specific conditions;
 - c) “fishing day” means any continuous period of 24 hours, or part thereof, during which a vessel

is present within GSAs 12 to 16 and is searching for fish, shooting, setting, towing, hauling of a fishing gear, taking catch on board, transshipping, retaining on board, processing on board, transferring and landing fish and fishery products;

- d) “key species” means marine organisms pertaining to the species as defined in the annex to this recommendation;

PART II

Scientific monitoring, adaptation and revision

5. CPCs shall ensure annually an adequate scientific monitoring of the status of the key species in the Strait of Sicily.

6. The SAC shall assess the biological, economic and social implications of implementing several management scenarios with the objective of restoring and maintaining the species population above levels that can produce MSY.

PART III

Fleet management measures

7. Vessels authorized to fish for the key species listed in the annex to this recommendation in the Strait of Sicily shall be listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying. Vessels not listed by the CPC whose flag they are flying shall not catch, retain on board, transship, land, store or sell any of the key species.

8. CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat, not later than 30 June of each year, the list of the vessels flying their flag and actively fishing for the key species listed in the annex to this recommendation for the current year or for the forthcoming years. This list shall include, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 3 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5 on a multiannual management plan for bottom trawl fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), repealing Recommendations GFCM/39/2015/2 and GFCM/40/2016/4.

9. The vessels actively fishing for the key species listed in the annex to this recommendation shall comply with the obligations established under Resolution GFCM/37/2013/2 on guidelines on the management of fishing capacity in the GFCM area of application, and provide national authorities with a detailed report of their fishing activities, including as minimum requirements: operating days, operating area and total catch of key species. This information shall be transmitted to the GFCM Secretariat at least on a yearly basis.

10. CPCs may designate, where applicable, additional spatio-temporal restrictions to those already established where fishing activities may be banned or restricted in order to protect aggregation areas of juveniles of the key species. Where applicable, CPCs shall notify to the GFCM Secretariat, by 1 January 2020, the list of these areas and the restrictions applied.

PART IV

Management of fishing effort

11. CPCs shall communicate to the GFCM Secretariat for the first time, not later than 1 June 2020, the list of all their vessels actively fishing for the key species listed in the annex to this recommendation together with their historic level of fishing effort.

12. Such list shall contain, for each vessel, the information referred to in Annex 3 of Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5.

13. CPCs shall ensure that their fleet capacity or fishing effort is maintained at the levels authorized and implemented during the recent years for the exploitation in the Strait of Sicily of the key species listed in the annex to this recommendation.

14. CPCs shall promptly notify the GFCM Secretariat of any addition to, deletion from and/or modification of the fishing fleets for key species at any time such changes may occur.

15. The GFCM Secretariat shall maintain and update the list of fishing vessels authorized to fish for the key species and publish it on the GFCM website in a manner that is consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.

16. Each CPC shall ensure the set-up of adequate mechanisms for the recording of each fishing vessel in a national fleet register and for the recording of vessel catches and fishing effort via the logbook.

PART V
Specific measures to address IUU fishing

17. The obligation to declare catches shall apply irrespective of the volume of the catch.

18. Each CPC shall designate landing points where the landings by vessels actively fishing for key species in the Strait of Sicily shall take place.

19. It shall be prohibited to land or transship from fishing vessels any quantity of key species fished in the Strait of Sicily at any place other than ports designated by CPCs.

20. CPCs shall engage in cooperation for the fight against IUU fishing, in particular by sharing information and gathering intelligence to fight against illegal activities.

21. Part V is without prejudice to Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/7.

PART VI
Final provisions

22. The SAC shall provide, on an annual basis as from 2020, advice on the status of the key species in the Strait of Sicily including specific objectives to maintain fishing mortality within agreed precautionary fishing mortality reference points and to maintain or restore the stocks of the key species at levels that can produce MSY.

23. In 2022, the SAC shall provide scientific advice in order to enable the GFCM to establish a multiannual management plan for the species listed in the annex to this recommendation for the Strait of Sicily.

List of key species to be considered in this recommendation

Name	Scientific name	GSA				
		12	13	14	15	16
Giant red shrimp	<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Blue and red shrimp	<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>	X	X	X	X	X