

## **Recommendation GFCM/44/2021/11**

### **on management measures for the use of anchored fish aggregating devices in common dolphinfish fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1**

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 it is the responsibility of a regional fisheries management organization to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72 on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and to ensure management measures are established consistently with the precautionary approach;

*RECALLING* the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 1.3 “Efficient area-based conservation measures, technical and nature-based solutions strengthened to conserve biodiversity and enhance the productivity of marine living resources” that “also addresses the use of other area-based management measures as well as bycatch- and impact-reduction technical measures, such as those aimed at improving fishing selectivity, deterring depredation and decreasing the mortality of incidentally caught vulnerable species”;

*RECALLING* that the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration requires, in the context of establishing an ecosystem-based fisheries management framework, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable species and sensitive habitats;

*CONSIDERING* the impact of the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) on essential fish and marine habitats and vulnerable marine ecosystems, their possible interactions with other fisheries and the need to establish a minimum set of management measures, in particular for better monitoring and control;

*CONSIDERING* the advice expressed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries at its twenty-first session (Egypt, June 2019) on measures to be implemented for the management of FADs, in particular in relation to the identification of fishing gear, fishing authorizations and improved information on catch and effort for the assessment of common dolphinfish, a GFCM priority species;

*CONSIDERING* the need to improve scientific advice by 2022;

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

#### **Amendment of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1**

1. Paragraph 8 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1 shall be amended as follows:

The objective of the transitional management measures is to prepare for future management measures while reducing the risk that, in the absence of relevant scientific assessment, the biomass level of the common dolphinfish stock would drop below biologically sustainable levels, with negative consequences on the socio-economic viability of the fisheries concerned. The transitional measures shall apply in international waters in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

2. Paragraph 13 of Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1 shall be amended as follows:

A GFCM working group shall be established in 2022 in order to develop a multiannual management plan for common dolphinfish fisheries that comprises measures for the management of FADs, taking into consideration socio-economic elements as well as efforts made by CPCs in managing relevant fisheries and in applying, in some cases, stricter rules than those defined in this recommendation.