

40th GFCM Session

TIME FOR ACTION TO RECOVER STOCKS AND PROTECT JUVENILES

St. Julian, Malta, May/June 2016

The 40th meeting of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (GFCM) represents an opportunity for its Contracting Parties to consolidate the role of this Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, by translating the recently reformed Agreement into effective fisheries management.

In recent years, GFCM has made progress in its approach to fisheries management, sealed by the 2014 adoption of a new agreement which binds Contracting Parties of GFCM to halt overfishing and ensure that the precautionary approach is incorporated into fisheries management.

With 97% of the stocks under its purview assessed as overexploited, GFCM's implementation of the Agreement is a priority and a matter of urgency.

97%

of the stocks under GFCM's purview are overexploited

Source: Report of the 18th session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) - Nicosia, Cyprus, 21-23 March 2016

STRAIT OF SICILY: FROM SCIENCE TO MANAGEMENT

In the **Strait of Sicily**, demersal stocks of deep-water rose shrimp and hake are overexploited, with **fishing mortality of up to five times sustainable levels**. Moreover, up to **50% of the hake** caught in this area is **undersized**, which undermines the productivity of this stock¹.

In 2015, the 39th session of GFCM adopted the basis for a multiannual management plan². It is now time to see it established.

At the 40th GFCM Commission, Oceana urges you to adopt a **multiannual management plan (MAP) for demersal stocks of hake and deep-water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily** aimed at rebuilding these stocks.

This plan should include the establishment of three **Fisheries Restricted Areas** as an immediate measure to reduce fishing mortality of juveniles, in line with the best available scientific advice from the Scientific Advisory Council³.

Up to 50%

of the hake caught in the Strait of Sicily is undersized

Source: Stock Assessment Form of Hake (*M. merluccius*) in combined GSA 12-16 Reference year: 2013

¹ Colloca *et al.* (2015) The Seascape of Demersal Fish Nursery Areas in the North Mediterranean Sea, a First Step Towards the Implementation of Spatial Planning for Trawl Fisheries. PLoS ONE 10(3): doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0119590

² GFCM Recommendation GFCM/39/2015/2

³ Report of the 18th session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) - Nicosia, Cyprus, 21-23 March 2016

FISHERIES RESTRICTED AREAS (FRAs)

GFCM scientists have identified the designation of three **Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) in the northern part of the Strait of Sicily** as the most effective way to contribute to improving the sustainability of demersal stocks of hake and deep-water rose shrimp, while ensuring the long-term profitability of the fishery³.

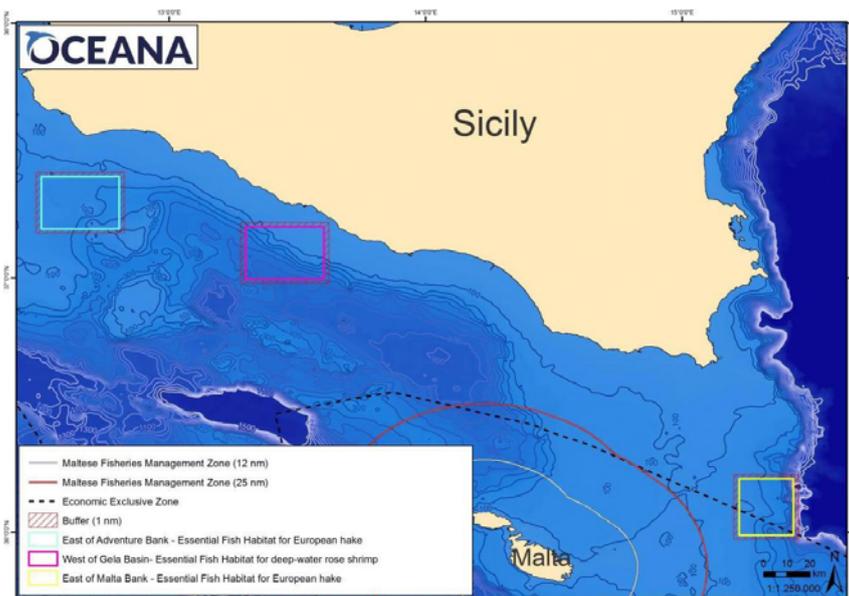
The establishment of FRAs has also received the **support of the fishing sector**.

Within a MAP for the Strait of Sicily, these FRAs will contribute to:

- **Reducing and gradually eliminating catches of juveniles**, mainly of hake;
- Reducing fishing mortality and **moving towards the recovery of the stocks to sustainable levels**



Deep-water rose shrimp
(*Parapenaeus longirostris*).
Strait of Sicily © OCEANA



by Océana, on the basis of the most recent scientific studies, were validated by the 17th session of Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and finally included in the technical advice on the multiannual management plan of the demersal fishery in the Strait of Sicily at the 18th session of the SAC.

Fisheries Restricted Areas in the Strait of Sicily would contribute to reducing the catches of juveniles and ensuring the long-term profitability of the fishery

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