

## Oceana recommendations

# GFCM COMPLIANCE: CONSERVATION AND MCS MEASURES IN FRAS

Since 2003, the GFCM has designated 6 Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) in its area of competence. However, the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) of these critically important areas for the conservation of fisheries resources has been challenging and uneven.

The lack of transparency and information concerning vessels authorised to fish inside these areas has undermined the effectiveness of FRAs. Making the lists of vessels authorized to fish in FRAs public and adding these on the Authorised Vessel List (AVL), which CPCs already provide to the GFCM Secretariat for most FRAs, would improve accountability of fishers and CPCs and assist enforcement efforts.

Inconsistencies in the requirements and rules between FRAs create an uneven playing field and affect MCS of these areas. Table 1 below summarizes some of these inconsistencies across current FRAs and illustrates some of the MCS challenges.

Oceana therefore recommends the following measures to harmonize MCS measures in all existing and future GFCM FRAs and to strengthen their effectiveness and compliance.



### 1) Improve public information on fishing activities in GFCM FRAs:

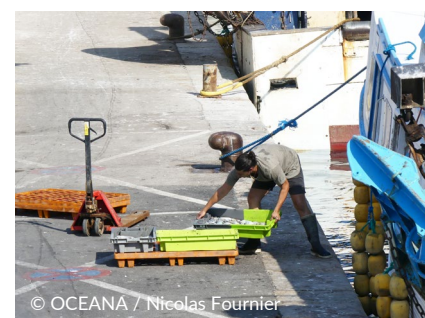
a. The GFCM Authorised Vessels List (AVL) should provide detailed information on every vessel authorised to operate in FRAs, including: FRA name, authorised gear(s), targeted species, authorised periods, authorised number of days, authorised zones; CPCs are already required to provide these data to the GFCM secretariat for most FRAs (see Table 1), and adding this information to the AVL would facilitate easy cross-checking of information and detection of non-compliance cases.



### 2) Strengthen Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

a. The GFCM should require that fishing vessels above 15 meters LOA be equipped with and continually transmit positions via AIS, in line with what is currently required by the EU;

b. The GFCM should adopt specific VMS/AIS reporting requirements to monitor vessels authorised to conduct fishing activities within and around FRAs, enabling differentiation from those not authorised (e.g. increased ping frequency to improve MCS). This is especially relevant for vessels with authorisation to use several types of fishing gear or for small-scale vessels;



Fisherman unloading catches from trawler. Sète, France.

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Trammel nets and trawlers in the port of Santa Maria di Leuca, Italy.

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Trawler arriving to port followed by seagulls. Sète, France.

c. It is recommended that buffer zones be established around FRAs as, combined with real-time alerts (AIS/VME), they are effective measures to prevent and alert vessels approaching FRAs.



### 3) Adopt effective sanctions for non-compliance

a. The CoC should regularly review MCS measures currently in force in FRAs by each CPC as an integral part of the annual Compliance Assessment Scheme (CAS) pursuant to Resolution GFCM/43/2019/5;

b. The CoC should pay particular attention to the full transposition of the GFCM FRA decisions into CPCs' national legislation as a basic indicator of compliance. Failure to report should be considered significant non-compliance;

c. When non-authorised vessels operate inside FRAs, the CoC should categorise this under "category C" as significant non-compliance and adopt deterrent sanctions accordingly, including listing the non-compliant vessels on the Provisional GFCM IUU Vessel List;

d. In case CPCs do not provide the required information about implementation of MCS measures in FRAs or do not report information on the AVL list about vessels operating in FRAs, the CoC should categorise this under "category B" as significant non-compliance, and adopt deterrent sanctions accordingly.



Driftnets and gillnets on the dock in Port de L'Estaque, Marseille, France.

TABLE 1

Comparative table of GFCM FRAs and their current MCS requirements

✓ Green tick: information required

✗ Red cross: information not required

GFCM FRA	Is there a list of the authorised vessels in the FRA?	Is there a requirement to make the list public?	Are there specific VMS/AIS requirements?	Is there a scientific monitoring programme?
Gulf of Lion (GFCM/33/2009/1)	✓	✓	✗	✗
Santa Maria di Leuca Eratosthenes Seamount Nile delta (GFCM/2006/3)	✗	✗	✗	✗
Strait of Sicily (GFCM/42/2018/5)	✓	✗	✓	✗
Jabuka/Pomo Pit (GFCM/41/2017/3)	✓	✗	✓	✓

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