

CIESM Congress Session : Fishery and aquaculture issues

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Moderator's Synthesis

This session focused on knowledge of the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on the ecosystem and the impact of external drivers on fisheries. Fisheries and aquaculture provide food and livelihood for many people in the Mediterranean and the continued or increased benefit delivered by these activities relies on sustainable and adaptive management of the resources, to deliver an ecosystem where numerous activities coexist and continue to do so. Over time, yields in capture fisheries have declined somewhat as important stocks such as hake were overexploited whereas aquaculture continues to increase. At the same time, the Mediterranean ecosystems faces changes in climatic conditions, invasive species, few alternatives for fishers to continued fishing and new developments in marine policies, including the upcoming obligation to eliminate discards of major commercial species. The presentations gathered knowledge on the effects of aquaculture on fish biology, nutrient load and biodiversity, on the effects of fishing on biodiversity, the effects of climate on fisheries yield, the effect of technical regulations on fisheries yield, the availability of data and the use of modelling in estimating fisheries indicators.

The success of future management of fisheries and aquaculture relies on the provision of reliable scientific knowledge on the possible effects of these activities on the marine ecosystem and on the ability of scientists to make the value of management clear to both managers and stakeholders. This is particularly true in the Mediterranean where local involvement in fisheries and aquaculture is often large. Reliable scientific knowledge requires information and data on the ecosystem as well as knowledge of processes and dynamics. Both issues need further attention as time series are often short and spatially and taxonomically restricted and methods used in other systems are therefore not directly applicable. In addition to this, science needs to be communicated to managers, policy makers and stakeholders in a way which acknowledges the ties placed by existing legislation and policies. Scientific advice needs to use collaboration with stakeholders to suggest appropriate management measures instead of the traditionally used top-down process which is unlikely to be successful when applied to local fisheries.

