

**COMMON
OCEANS
PROGRAM**



PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY
IN THE OCEAN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

Deep-sea fisheries project



Update to the EU Long Distance Fleet Advisory Council
17 October 2024

Implementing Agency

FAO

Executing Agency

GFCM

Partners

RFMOs

GFCM, NAFO, NEAFC, NPFC,
SEAFO, SIOFA, SPRFMO

Government

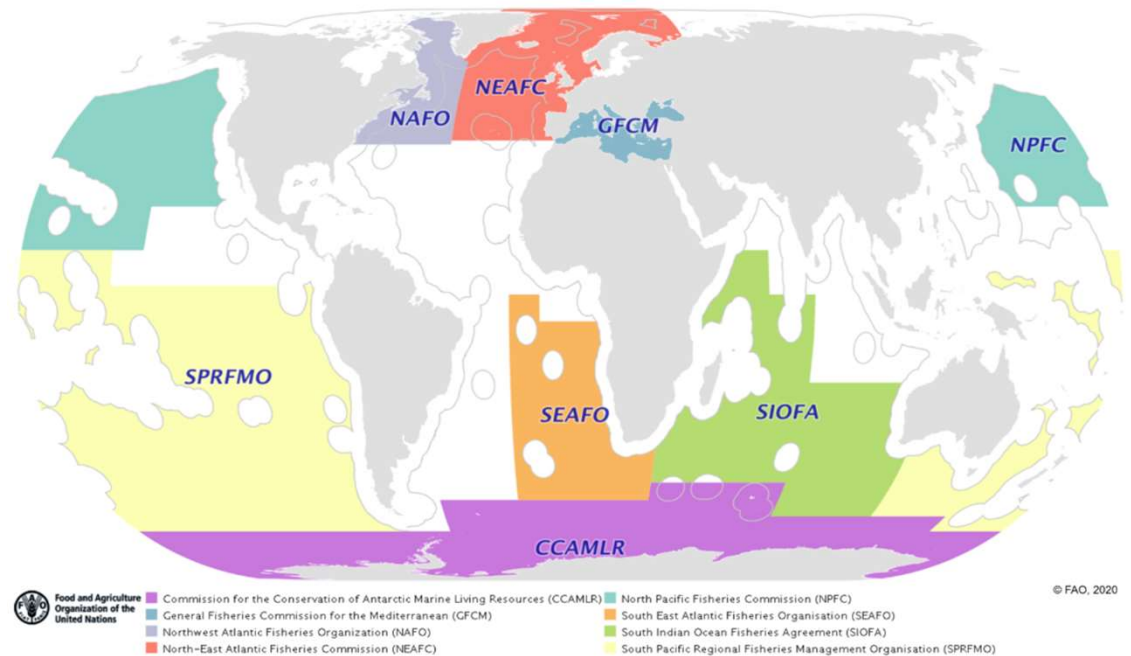
NOAA

Science advisory body

ICES

Private sector

SIODFA, ICFA



Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) with the competence to manage small pelagic and deep sea fisheries

Source: FAO Fisheries Division

Timeframe

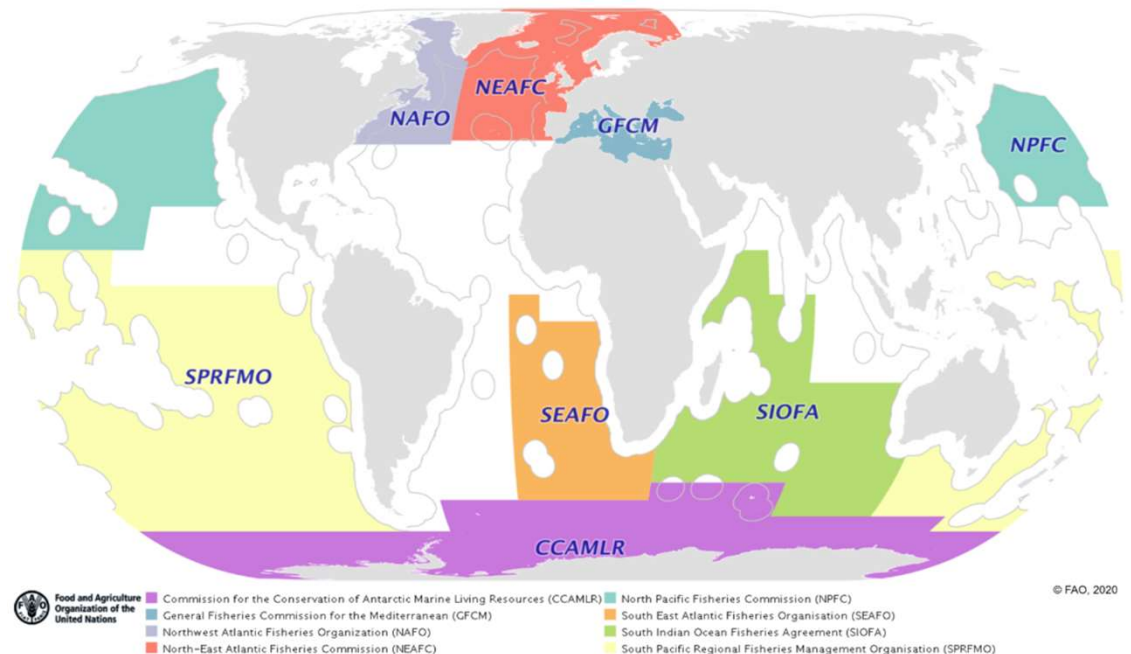
2022-2027

Project Objective

DSF in the ABNJ are managed under an ecosystem approach, with stocks at levels capable of maximizing sustainable yields and minimizing impacts on biodiversity, with a focus on data-limited stocks, deepwater sharks and VMEs

Areas of work

- Strengthen and implement regulatory frameworks
- Improve deep-sea fisheries management
- Reduce environmental impact



Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) with the competence to manage small pelagic and deep sea fisheries

Source: FAO Fisheries Division

Deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ

- The total catch (everything brought up by the gear) includes species that can only sustain low exploitation rates; and
- The fishing gear is likely to contact the seafloor during the normal course of fishing operations



Key Achievements 2023-2024



REVIEW OF IMPL. OF DSF GUIDELINES:
Review of the implementation of the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas



What has been the progress in implementation by RFMOs in the last 15 years, with respect to the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and the management of DSF stocks?

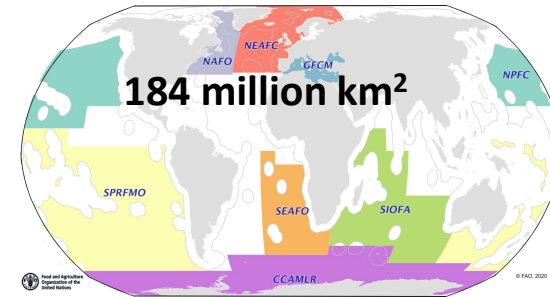
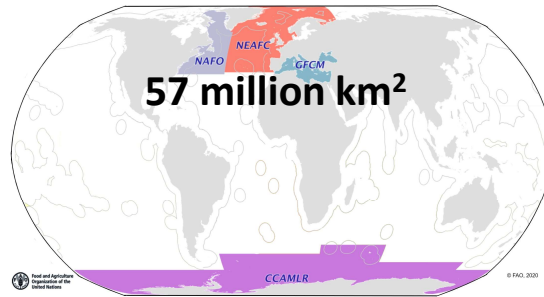


Changes to the management of bottom fisheries in the ABNJ

2000

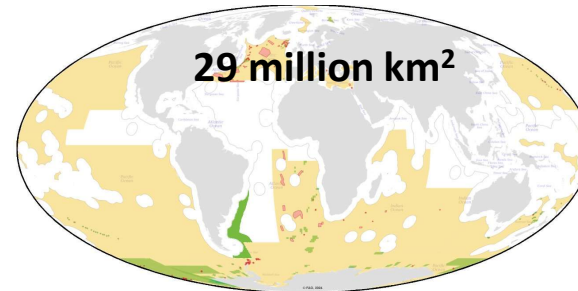
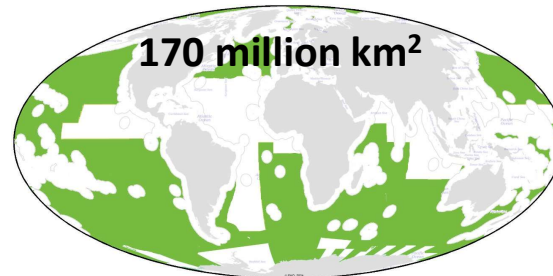
2024

Coverage by management bodies



3.2 times more area covered

Areas open to bottom fishing



Only 1/6th area now open

Areas to protect VMEs

0 km²

1.2 million km²

182 new VMEs protected



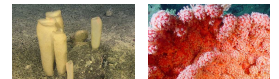
Bottom fishing permitted



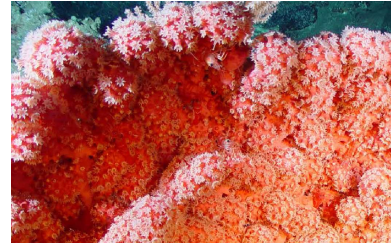
Bottom fishing currently not permitted



Closed to bottom fishing to protect VMEs



Vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs)



Successes

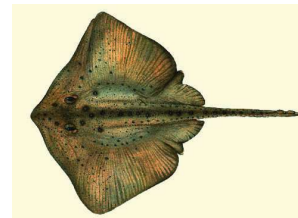
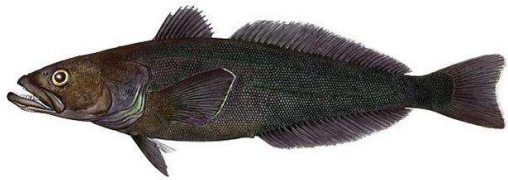
- Encounter thresholds
- Avoiding impacts
- VME closures
- Identification guides

Future challenges

- Reporting encounters
- Identifying VMEs

Average uptake = 73% (for 6 indicators)

Fisheries management



Successes

- Target catch limits
- Permitted bottom fishing areas defined
- Restrictions on new fisheries

Future challenges

- Non-target catch limits
- Reference points
- Long-term management plans

Average uptake = 52% (for 6 indicators)

Key Achievements 2023-2024



E-LEARNING COURSE:
Strengthening deep-sea fisheries management
in areas beyond national jurisdiction

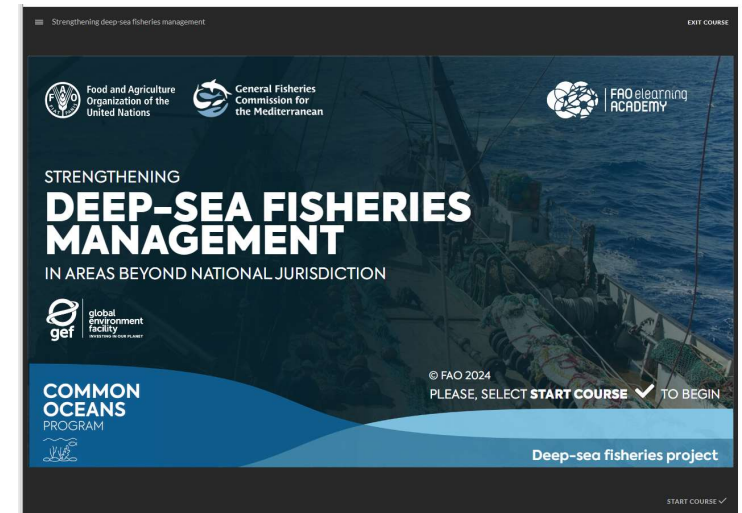
Lesson 1 - Introduction to deep-sea fisheries

Lesson 2 - International obligations and responsibilities
for the management of DSF

Lesson 3 - Regional approach to fisheries management

Lesson 4 - Role of States in DSF management –
national policy and legal considerations

Lesson 5 - Role of States in DSF management – MCS and enforcement



Key Achievements 2023-2024



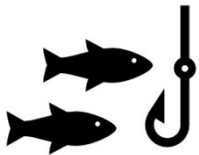
DSF INDUSTRY WORKSHOP

Trawlers and longliners from the Med, and Indian, Pacific and Southern Oceans met in Barcelona

- Key recommendations developed for improving non-target catch reporting, providing a platform for marine science & implementing management measures on the water
- Agreement to conduct second workshop



Key Achievements 2023-2024



WORKSHOP ON THE APPLICATION OF THE PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

DSF stakeholders discussed the current application of the PA to DSF stocks and possible future work



The virtual workshop aimed to:

- take stock of the application of the PA to the management of DSF stocks
- explore the steps necessary to advance on the development of harvest strategies/long term management plans for some stocks
- identify activities to be delivered under the project

102 Participants:

- ✓ Scientists
- ✓ Government officials from 15 countries
- ✓ NGOs
- ✓ Academia
- ✓ Industry



Key feedback received:

1. General recognition that long-term management plans/harvest strategies are beneficial for application of the PA and ensuring long term sustainability of stocks
2. Challenges to establish these for DSF stocks include lack of data; the multi-species nature of many DSF; onerous, time-heavy process to conduct management strategy evaluations; difficulty communicating results to managers
3. DSF Project could help with training of managers, facilitating science-manager dialogue, and sharing available tools, good examples and guidance



Upcoming 2025 - EAFM Symposium

- Three-day symposium to be held from 11–13 March 2025 at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
- Global in scope with a focus on applying EAFM in deep-sea RFMOs and other management organizations
- Focus on the ecological aspects of EAFM: retained species, discarded species and ecosystem effects and science-management interface



EAFM Symposium

- Draft Programme:
 - Day 1 – Scientific aspects of EAFM
 - Day 2 – Management aspects of EAFM
 - Day 3 – Development of guidance for the implementation of EAFM by dsRFMOs
- Further information: <https://eafm-symposium.nafo.int/>



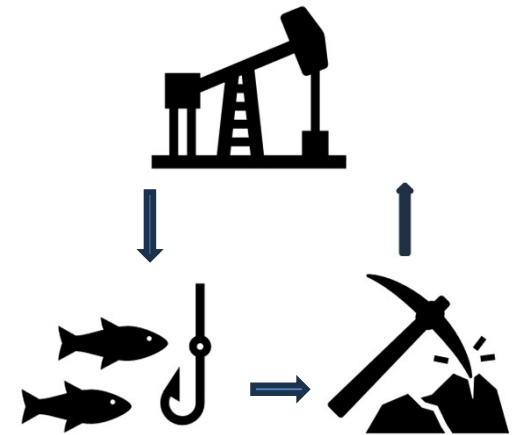
Upcoming 2025 – 2nd DSF industry workshop

- 9-10 May 2025, Barcelona, Spain
- Objective: Broaden engagement of DSF industry sector, discuss merit and process for formally establishing group, define key technical focus areas



Upcoming 2025 - Workshop on cross-sectoral interaction with DSF

- The DSF Project is aiming to assess the interactions between DSF and other sectors
- Potential sectors to be considered include oil & gas, deep-sea mining and submarine cables, but this is still to be agreed with partners
- Planned workshop in May 2025 to evaluate the nature and spatial extent of sectoral interactions with deep-sea fisheries for selected sectors and regions



Upcoming 2025 - Workshop on deepwater sharks

- The DSF Project is aiming to assess the impacts of DSF on deepwater sharks
- As a first step, we have reviewed catch reporting requirements by RFMOs, and the data arising from their implementation
- Preliminary results suggest that the level of reporting on deepwater sharks is highly variable, both in terms of quantity and quality



Workshop on deepwater sharks

- Importantly, reporting was often at a taxonomic level that prevented even basic distinction between sharks, skates, rays and chimaeras, impeding further analyses
- Follow-up work will include a global workshop, in 2025, to address key issues related to reporting quantity and resolution, as well as reporting formats



Contacts



DSF TECHNICAL FORUM:

Forum hosting technical discussions related to the sustainable management of DSF



Eszter Hidas

Manager/Technical Advisor

Common Oceans Program, Deep-Sea Fisheries Project

E-mail: eszter.hidas@fao.org

Internet: <https://www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans/what-we-do/deepsea/en/>

COMMON OCEANS | Deep-sea fisheries project



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



General Fisheries
Commission for
the Mediterranean



The Common Oceans Deep-sea fisheries project brings together a global partnership dedicated to advance responsible deep-sea fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). Funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), led by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and executed by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), it works in collaboration with the seven deep-sea RFMOs, private sector, national and international organizations.

IN COLLABORATION WITH:



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