

Marpesca meeting with ARAP

1st September, 2022

Attendees

ARAP	Marpesca	Thai Union	Key Traceability
Yesuri Pino	Roger Gonzalez	Dario Abrego	Emily Wardrop
Dario Lopez	Pablo Guaraca		Iain Pollard
			Lia Hayman

Meeting summary

Introductions to all attending parties and a quick overview of the fisheries and FIPs in general.

The aim of this meeting is to discuss each of the FIPs and their route to certification by the MSC. The FIPs also require the support from ARAP so the meeting aims to discuss those needs and gain relevant information to start the FIP proceedings.

The FIP meets regularly, every month to discuss progress or and needs from the FIP participant in progressing the FIP workplan. The FIP has invited ARAP to join the monthly meetings whenever possible, to keep updated on the FIP.

Observer data

ARAP does not have observers for the longline or bottom trawl vessels.

Bottom trawl FIP

For the bottom trawl FIP, where there is very limited information about the health of the stocks, it is important that have at least some research or information to confirm that the fishing vessels are operating in a sustainable manner.

This means organising and collaborating with ARAP and other fisheries researchers.

There are MSC certified bottom trawl fisheries around the world, including:

- [Chilean squat lobster and nylon shrimp modified trawl](#) (2022);
- [US Pacific pink shrimp demersal trawl fishery](#) (2022);
- [US Northeastern longfin inshore squid small mesh bottom trawl fishery](#) (2018); and
- [Poland flatfish trawl and gillnet](#) (2021).

There are some differences between the fisheries in terms of their gear types and mitigation efforts to reduce the impact on seafloor habitats and non-target species. For example, the US Pacific pink shrimp demersal trawl fishery knows that there is only one specific area that the fishery operates in, which means they can map the seafloor habitat and understand more about the larger ecosystem and report that it is not detrimental. Furthermore, the Poland flatfish trawl and gillnet fishery uses rubber gears on the anchor line of the net to reduce the weight of the net, and thus the depth of impact on the seafloor. These are potential improvements that could be made to ensure the habitats and ecosystems are not detrimentally impacted by the fishery.

The fishery also has the advantage that it operates in one particular area at about 250 m deep, which means that only the target species are caught in that area. There is very little, if any interference with other species at such depths.

The fishery also uses Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) to ensure that any large megafauna, including turtles, can escape the net if they become trapped. This reduces the total impact that the fishery has on endangered, threatened, or protected species.

ARAP has location data for the bottom trawl vessels to understand where they fish. It is not as highly detailed as EM systems, but can pinpoint where the vessels operate, which will be very useful in getting an idea of the habitats and ecosystems that they come into contact with. Marpesca should have the mandatory GPS monitoring systems on board, but ARAP can access this information and provide it to KT.

It is of high importance that we have as much information about these vessels and the fishery as possible in order to make an educated and well-informed assumption about the FIP as a whole and the potential to lead to MSC certification. The data is raw, but is ordered into different categories and given coordinates.

NOAA have also been involved with the fisheries, to check them when they enter the port. It would be great to connect with them and discuss the reasons for their checks, as well as whether there have been any issues, and if so, how those issues were addressed to improve the fishery. Lia to connect Emily with a contact from NOAA to discuss this further. NOAA identified the specific area of the shrimp, which is how we know that this is the area that is fished. However, we would also need particular evidence of this to ensure that it is legitimate.

The last time that an assessment or research was conducted on the fishery was in 1970, but was robust and evidenced that, historically, only 11 vessels were authorised to fish in that area. Currently, there is only five vessels, all of which are Marpesca-owned. This means that the current fishery is using less than 50% of the fleet size that was considered a sustainable amount and could evidence that the stock is not being negatively impacted. There is no size or catch limit for this species. The Marpesca bottom trawl fishery for northern nylon shrimp has only been active for one year, before this, the last time the stock was fished was in 1970. The 1970 study used catch data from deep water shrimp species (of which, there were a few), but each species data was segregated. Thus, it would be easy to separate the data from the target northern nylon shrimp species.

ARAP have suggested to run a biomass analysis of the stock to assess the size, which we can then use as a basis for future comparisons

Questions from ARAP

If the fishery becomes certified, does this include the non-Marpesca fisheries? And if so, does this impact if the Marpesca FIPs can become certified? – No, the Marpesca fishery will become certified regardless of the state of the other fisheries and it will receive its stand-alone certificate.

Longline FIP

ARAP visits Vacamonte port every time the vessels come in from a trip to survey them and assess that they are complying with the regulations. It checks the number of hooks, hook size, type of net, turtle excluder devices (TEDs). ARAP will provide the information relevant to the regulations imposed on these vessels and this fishery, including net size and type of net that is used.

ARAP will provide the information document about tuna, mahi mahi, and shrimp fishery regulations. The information has all requirements of Panama with regard to MSC Principle 3 performance indicators, like roles and responsibilities of interested parties and stakeholders.

Next steps

1. Key Traceability has provided a statement of support that we wish ARAP to sign and agree to collaborating with the FIP across the duration of the project, including joining stakeholder meetings and addressing the paucity of data regarding fisheries management and stocks.
2. ARAP to provide KT with the necessary information discussed, including the regional fisheries management and regulations for Panama that affect each of the FIPs, especially the longline and bottom trawl ones.
3. ARAP to provide KT with the vessel monitoring (coordinates data) for the bottom trawl vessels, to learn more about their actual fishing locations.
4. ARAP to provide KT with the observer data from the purse seine vessels and KT to start working on the analysis of the catch data and writing a report on the findings.
5. ARAP to provide the 1970 research paper about the deep-sea shrimp stocks in the Panama Bay basin that could help with understanding more about the current state of the fishery.