

Meeting Report
CeDePesca - ARAP
Panama mahi-mahi and tuna FIP

Date: January 15, 2024

Location: ARAP

Participants:

- Alexis Peña – Secretary General of ARAP
- Karla Adames – General Director of Research and Development
- Roberto Duarte – Biologist, General Directorate of Research and Development
- Yazmín Villarreal – Biologist, General Directorate of Research and Development
- Ernesto Godelman – Executive Director of CeDePesca
- Gabriela McLean – Deputy Executive Director of CeDePesca

Development of the meeting:

The objective of the meeting was to agree with ARAP on a course of action to follow in the short term to advance with the Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) of the longline mahi-mahi and tuna fishery in the waters of the Republic of Panama .

The CeDePesca team briefly summarized the main weaknesses of the fishery compared to the MSC sustainability standard, and commented on the FIP objectives in relation to regional research and management of mahi-mahi. In particular, emphasis was placed on the need to promote the collection of data on mahi at the national and regional level with the objective of undertaking a stock assessment for the northern mahi-mahi stock within the scope of OSPESCA, and on the need to collect data on the interaction that this Panamanian fishery has with other components of the ecosystem.

Regarding work with OSPESCA, ARAP renewed its intention to promote that OSPESCA includes mahi among its species of regional interest. CeDePesca commented on the content of a draft it had prepared as a contribution. The intent of the draft is that ARAP can substantiate the importance of evaluating and managing the resource at the regional level, in a similar way to what is done with resources such as cambomba or lobster. Ms. Villarreal indicated that a letter addressed to OSPESCA will be drafted to present the initiative and that she will carry out the pertinent consultations at the OSPESCA level so that the issue can be discussed in an upcoming executive meeting in which CeDePesca could be offered the opportunity to explain aspects related to the pre-assessment of the fishery and the Fishery Improvement Projects that are being implemented in other countries in the Central American region.

Regarding data collection on board, the ARAP team reported their interest in sampling mahi. For its part, CeDePesca commented on the data collection work carried out at the Bajamar plant as part of the FIP, and informed that a technical report will be available in February; while Eng. Godelman commented on the need to carry out additional sampling in other areas to resolve the bias that appears because the data collected are from specimens previously selected for commercialization. Ms. Adames indicated that ARAP is interested in carrying out sampling on board, in ports and at the processing plants, but

that these initiatives are subject to the future existence of funds for this purpose, either from the State or the private sector. Ms. McLean offered to collaborate with ARAP to identify potential sources of financing for specific aspects of an eventual monitoring program, for which Mr. Duarte will share the details of a project designed by the General Directorate of Research and Development for this purpose.

Furthermore, CeDePesca consulted on the possibility of creating a management commission for the longline mahi-mahi and tuna fishery in Panamanian waters. Mr. Peña indicated that the Panamanian fishing law calls for the creation of said commissions, so the ARAP will be carrying out preliminary steps in that regard.

Reiterating the interest of both entities in advancing with the activities proposed in the FIP Action Plan for the mahi-mahi and tuna fishery, the meeting was concluded.

Follow-up:

ARAP will hold internal meetings to inform the teams of the General Directorate of Management and the General Directorate of Development. Once these internal meetings have been held, ARAP and CeDePesca will agree to a new meeting to discuss the next steps. CeDePesca will be communicating with the ARAP team at the beginning of February to follow up on the different activities indicated in this report.