

FISHERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 19378

Mexico Yucatan red octopus - handline (Marativa Seafoods)

Monitoring Report of Catches for the Mayan Octopus (*Octopus maya*) Fishery



Elaborated by : Patricia Jarero Duarte – FIP Coordinator

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1. Introduction

The octopus fishery is a crucial sector in the Yucatan Peninsula, representing the sixth position in national production, the third position in catch value, and the fifth main export species. (SADER, 2023)

According to CONAPESCA data, the fishing effort authorized for the fishery in Yucatan is made up of 788 commercial fishing permits that cover 3,240 smaller vessels and 441 larger vessels. In the state of Campeche, 757 permits cover 1,467 small vessels and one large vessel. (DOF, 2022)

The sustainable use of the red octopus (*O. maya*) fishery is regulated by the fisheries management plan, which establishes actions such as the annual closed season, authorized Jimba fishing gear, minimum catch size, and maximum allowable catch volumes. (DOF, 2014).

Annually, IMIPAS (formerly INAPESCA) carries out biomass monitoring to establish the allowable catch volume. In the 2023 fishing season, the authorized volume was 21,392 tons of fresh weight (DOF, 2023). On December 11, SADER published the official catch figure reported in arrival notices: 19,895 tons of octopus, which represents 93% of the maximum allowable catch for the fishing season. (SADER, 2023)

Currently, the *O. maya* fishery faces many factors that impact the decrease in biomass, such as illegal fishing during the closed season, capture of organisms below the minimum size, use of unauthorized fishing gear such as diving and hooking to obtain mainly females in the recruitment period and protection of young.

Effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms are essential to ensure sustainable management and conservation of octopus stocks. As part of the FIP's efforts, dock monitoring is carried out to record catches at landing, as a first approach to generating a chain of custody of the captured product and adequate registration for the preparation of arrival notices. Therefore, the real value of the catch is expected to be registered with CONAPESCA when requesting the notice of arrival.

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2. Methodology

A first approach to the collection of data from fishing events is the recording of the catch at landing at the dock, with this data can be collected to estimate the fishing effort per fishing event. Small vessels make fishing trips on average of 6 to 10 hours with average catches between 80 to 250 kg per fishing trip.

The participants of the FIP are informed about the importance of recording data at the unloading of each vessel at the dock. The weighing is carried out when each captain delivers it to the cooperative or the permittee holder. Rules are established to identify the information per vessel to keep an adequate record of each landing per fishing exercise.

A data log sheet is designed for each fishing trip where basic information is captured to estimate fishing effort.

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6.3 Medidas de monitoreo de información de capturas en muelle

Bitácora para recopilación de información de salidas a pesca de pulpo.
Temporada de Pesca 2023

Permisionario _____

Fecha del viaje	Ubicación	Hora de salida	Hora de llegada	Duración del viaje (horas)	Lugar de desembarque	Nombre de la embarcación	Tripulantes	Arte de pesca

1 Log for compiling information on octopus fishing trips.

After this, visits were made to explain the use of the logbook and monitor its use by those responsible for registering the reception of vessels with the fishing permit holders, verifying the concordance with the arrival notices that were requested from CONAPESCA for each fishing event.

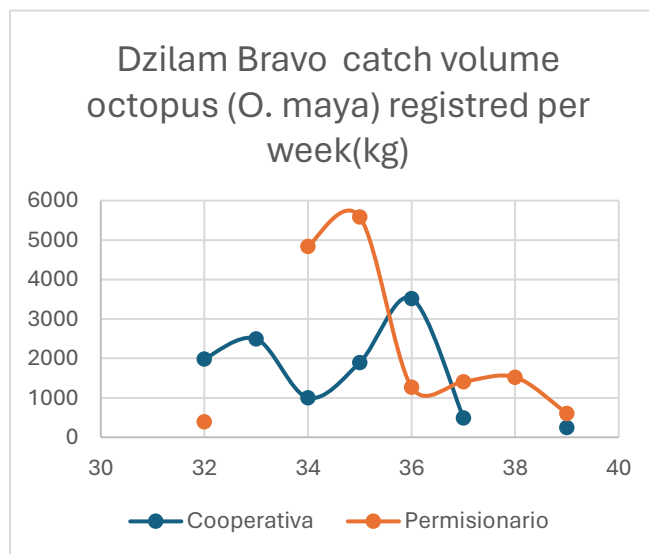
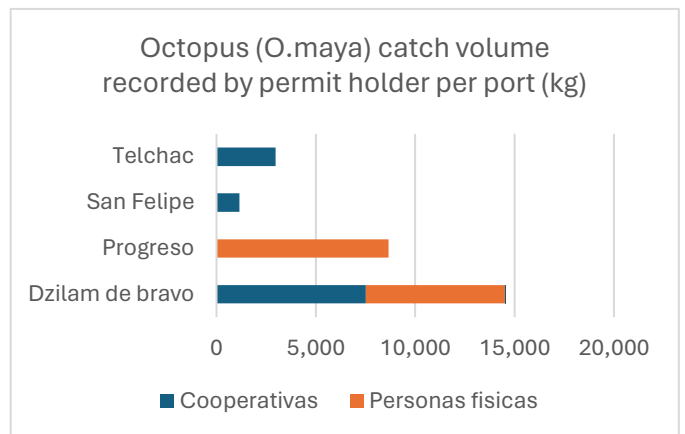
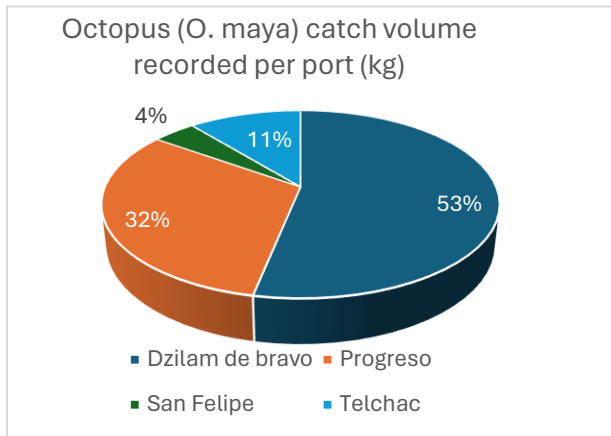
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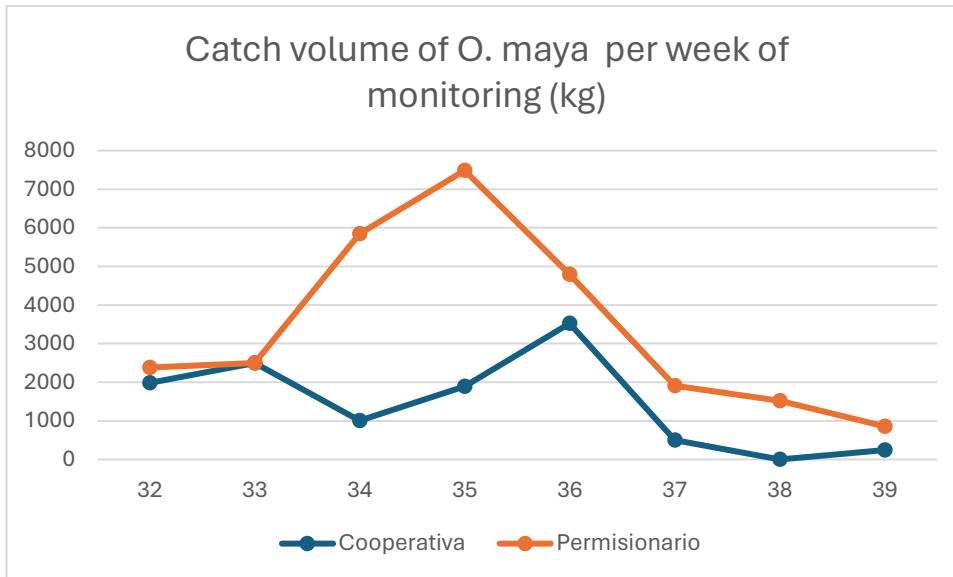
3. Results

The monitoring of fishing events was carried out in 4 locations with a duration of 8 weeks, with the participation of 4 cooperatives and 3 permit holders. Records of fishing events were made between the beginning of August and the end of September 2023, recording a total of 46 fishing events, with a cumulative catch volume for a total of 27.29 tons of fresh product. 84.7% of the data were collected in Dzilam de Bravo, presenting records every week that the monitoring was carried out. In progress, voyages of larger vessels were recorded with an average time of 20 days of fishing trip, which means that the volume of catch is reported in only 2 weeks at the conclusion of the trip. For the town of Telchac, fishing trips of 5 days were recorded for an average of 2 weeks for each larger vessel.



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4. Challenges and Recommendations

- **Standardization of Procedures:** There is a need to establish standardized protocols and procedures for dockside monitoring across all landing sites to ensure consistency and comparability of data.
- **Investment in Technology:** Utilizing technology solutions such as electronic monitoring systems and digital data recording tools can improve the accuracy, efficiency, and transparency of data collection and reporting.
- **Capacity Building:** Providing training and capacity-building programs for personnel involved in dockside monitoring can enhance their skills and competencies, leading to improved data quality and reliability.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging fishing communities in the monitoring process can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to increased compliance with reporting requirements and regulations.
- **Enhanced Enforcement:** Strengthening enforcement measures to deter illegal fishing activities and ensure compliance with fisheries regulations is essential for maintaining the integrity of dockside monitoring data.

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5. Conclusions

- Improving monitoring of fishing events is crucial for ensuring the sustainable management and conservation of the octopus fishery in the Yucatan Peninsula. By implementing the monitoring efforts, stakeholders can enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and transparency thereby supporting more informed decision-making and effective resource management. Collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders are essential to achieve sustainable fisheries management goals in the region.

6. References

- DOF (2014) AGREEMENT by which the Fisheries Management Plan for octopus (*O. Maya* and *O. vulgaris*) of the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea is announced. Published on 28 March 2014.
- DOF(2022) AGREEMENT announcing the update of the National Fisheries Charter. Published 26 July 2022
- DOF (2023) Agreement establishing the allowable catch volume for the use of the red octopus resource (*Octopus maya*) in waters under federal jurisdiction in the states of Campeche and Yucatán for the 2023 fishing season. Published 7 November 2023.
- SADER (2023) Octopus fishing in Yucatan concludes favorably. Published 11 December 2023 in <https://www.gob.mx/agricultura/yucatan/articulos/concluye-favorablemente-la-pesca-del-pulpo-en-yucatan>