Yellowtail Flounder: 6-Month Report

# Summary

Progress against both Actions has been slow due to a number of issues. After the FIP was launched in May 2022, the FIP organised a [questionnaire in Spanish](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1OqmOGNEN-bFsuw0XDeXy0q2AcWw3bJShLHzds2htupw/edit) to be distributed to all stakeholders in the FIP. This remains public but has only received one response.

The reason for this dearth in responses is likely due to a lack of understanding within the fishery about what a FIP is and what it is trying to achieve. INAPESCA and CONAPESCA are skeptical to work with the FIP and fishermen do not understand what the FIP is doing that cannot be achieved through the more conventional means of fisheries management. Specifically, fishers and scientists alike feel that the success of the fishery in recent years makes the presence of the FIP unwarranted.

In August, the FIP asked for all documentation relating to the annual governance meetings and in particular those documents pertinent to MCS and data collection. However, this work was thrown off course when a formal complaint was lodged against the fishery citing Human Rights abuses, which was dealt with swiftly and directly by the fishery and FIP. In addition to this, Hurricane Kay fell upon Baja California Sur 9-10th September making communications with the region difficult throughout September. Lastly just as things were calming down, a personal tragedy befell the key stakeholder linking the FIP to the fishery (Don Savely).

The FIP is currently working with a Mexican employee of Don’s Gulf Select to prepare documents for the 6M review. However, Don Savely is the one with access to the documents and has a clearer oversight of how the fishery works. Until he returns to work we cannot broach the subject of accessing documentation on MCS and data monitoring.

Figure 1 - Incidents of IUU Fishing in Baja California Sur. Source: [CONAPESCA](https://datos.gob.mx/busca/dataset/denuncias-de-pesca-ilegal)

However, CONAPESCA recently released data for IUU violations throughout Mexico. **Figure 1** shows the number of violations committed in Baja California Sur. This success in the reduction of IUU violations may be attributed to the [MCS partnership between CONAPESCA and FONMAR](http://fonmar.gob.mx/se-decomisa-una-tonelada-de-almeja-catarina-en-bahia-magdalena/), who have been working together to identify vessel extracting resources without a permit.

Although the FIP itself has started out on a rocky path, the fishery has performed well securing promising results for the future of its sustainability. In 2019, the fishery was officially opened by CONAPESCA given the [healthy stock status of the fishery](https://sepada.bcs.gob.mx/aperturaran-nuevo-periodo-de-aprovechamiento-de-almeja-catarina/). This news was also announced publicly through [a public news outlet](https://elcentinelabcs.com/del-15-al-25-de-julio-pescadores-podran-capturar-almeja-catarina-en-bahia-magdalena/).

Although fishing has occurred since the end of the Covid pandemic, the administrative processes have not been able to publish the latest stock assessments. In light of this, it is important to note that the fishery, having recovered from the El Nino event 5 years ago, was consistently showing sustainable growth with CONAPESCA authorizing the [opening of the fishery in 2018](https://www.gob.mx/agricultura/bajacaliforniasur/articulos/se-reactiva-la-captura-de-almeja-catarina-en-baja-california-sur?idiom=es).

At this time, there is not reason to suspect that the health of the fishery has decreased or been undermined and the FIP remain alert to forthcoming management decisions.

# Record of Meetings

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| Date | Participants/Affiliation | Subject | Outcome |
| 12/04/2022 | Alexander Ford – Sustainability IncubatorKatrina Nakamura – Sustainability IncubatorDon Savely – Don’s Gulf SelectJeff Bolton – Atlantic Cape FisheriesKenny Melanson – Northern Wind | * Initial meeting to launch the FIP
 | * Stakeholders introduced
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| 15/05/2022 | Alexander Ford – Sustainability IncubatorDon Savely – Don’s Gulf Select | * Meeting to discuss practicalities and confidentiality of information relating to the FIP
 | * Professional relationship of trust created
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| 22/05/2022 | Alexander Ford – Sustainability IncubatorDon Savely – Don’s Gulf SelectHerman de Orduna - Don’s Gulf Select | * Introduction to Herman
* Explanation of questionnaire
 | * Agreement to launch and facilitate questionnaire
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| 29/06/2022 | Alexander Ford – Sustainability IncubatorHerman de Orduna - Don’s Gulf Select | * Follow up about questions
 | * Explanation that fishers are ambivalent to the FIP and do not see how the questionnaire will help with the management of the FIP.
* Agreement to continue trying to gather responses from questionnaire
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| 28/08/2022 | Katrina Nakamura – Sustainability IncubatorAlexander Ford – Sustainability IncubatorDon Savely – Don’s Gulf SelectHerman de Orduna - Don’s Gulf Select | * Discussion concerning the complaint lodged against fishery
 | * Agreement to coordinate a response to complaint by asking the federation heads to draft formal letter
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| *\* these meetings were held informally over Whatsapp with no formal agenda or minute taking.* |