



FISHERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

FIP MÉXICO GULF OF CALIFORNIA
BROWN SHRIMP - TRAWL

ACTION 3 **EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF THE FISHING** **GEAR ON THE HABITAT AND ITS** **RECOVERY TIME.**

ONE YEAR PROGRESS REPORT - FEBRUARY 2026

Prepared by:
Victor Vargas
Fisheries Consultant

Action 3. Design and implement a research project to assess the area's recovery impacted by trawling to ensure that there are no serious or irreversible impacts to the habitats.

This action only includes the development of a single task, aimed at designing a study on the impact of the fishing gear on the habitat and estimating its recovery time. This activity is specifically oriented toward the implementation of the Benthic Impact Tool; however, the information requirements are considerable.

Task 1. Design and implement a research project to assess the area's recovery impacted by trawling to ensure that there are no serious or irreversible impacts to the habitats.

This year, the FIP generated key intermediate results to support the habitat impact and recovery assessment. Fleet fishing effort analyses were completed to delineate the FIP trawling grounds, and spatial heat maps are being produced to describe trawling time and intensity and to identify the area's most frequently trawled by the fleet. In parallel, the benthic habitat types associated with these fishing grounds were identified, establishing the baseline needed to interpret trawling impacts by habitat. These outputs provide the technical foundation to apply the Benthic Impact Tool using three seasons of data (2023–2024, 2024–2025, and 2025–2026) in the second half of the year, with completion of the task remaining on track for May 2027.

Figure 1. Heat map of industrial trawling effort within the fishing grounds, showing the spatial distribution of relative trawling time/intensity and highlighting areas of higher cumulative trawling activity (December 2023 – January 2024).

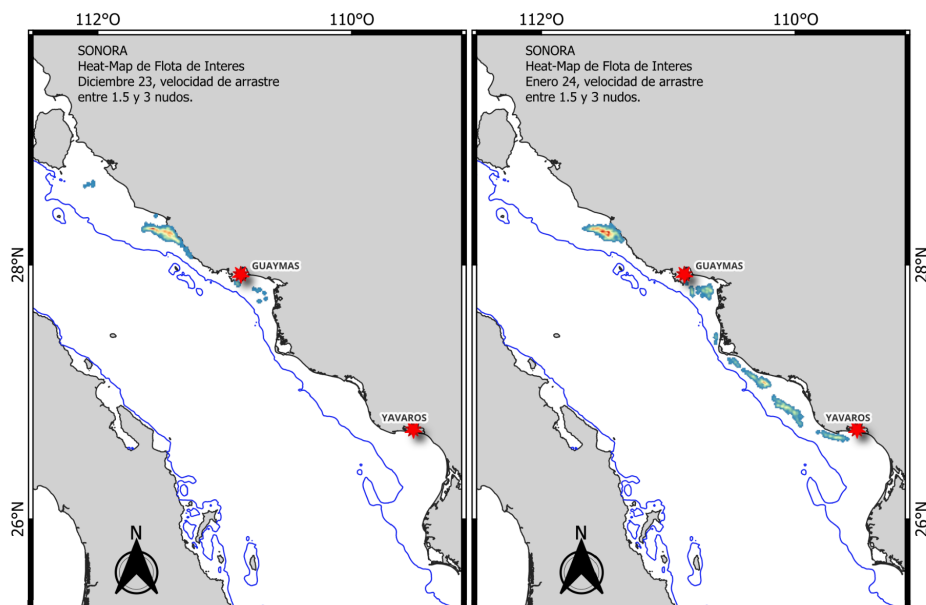
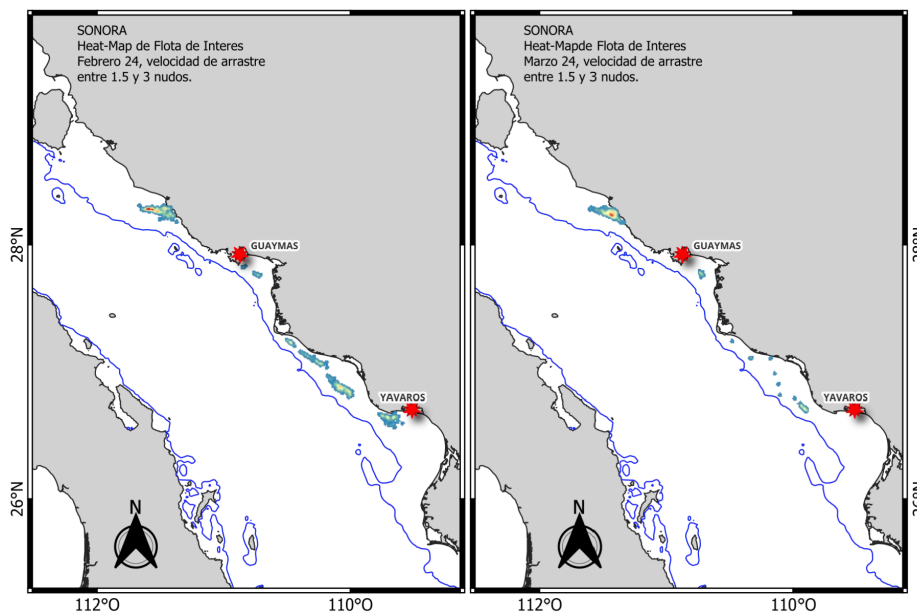


Figure 2. Heat map of industrial trawling effort within the fishing grounds, showing the spatial distribution of relative trawling time/intensity and highlighting areas of higher cumulative trawling activity (February 2024 – March 2024).



A set of core technical inputs has now been generated to enable the Benthic Impact Tool analysis. A technical document is being prepared that validates the fishing zone boundaries by season, and the georeferenced fishing-effort database is nearing completion. In parallel, technical gear profiles are being finalized to describe the trawling configuration and operational characteristics relevant to benthic impact estimation. Habitat maps are also under development, including an ecological description of the benthic fauna associated with the fishing grounds. Collectively, these deliverables provide the required inputs to configure the model and begin running impact simulations within the Benthic Impact Tool framework.