

Mexican Pacific Shrimp - Bottom Trawl Fishery Improvement Project

Talking points for the conversations with Mexican fisheries authorities about the need of robust, updated and publicly available stocks assessments.

- The sustainable seafood movement has been increasing in the last 30 years.
- It was driven by the declining status of fish stocks worldwide.
- Developed countries (North America and the European Union) have been leading the movement. After the release of the 1997 FAO's report "that stated that 60% of the major global fish resources were under high exploitation levels.
- Since then, various intersectorial initiatives have been building networks of collaboration to developed objectives that incentivize sustainable fisheries and improve fisheries management.
- As a result of such initiatives eco-labels and/or certification schemes were created, including MSC and Seafood Watch, perhaps the most demanded and recognized criteria among markets and consumers.
- For both, the MSC and SFW standards, the status of the fishing stocks is the first factor to measure the fishery's sustainability.
- The standards measure the status based on publicly available information. when robust stock assessments are not available, both standards tend to score using a precautionary approach that could reduce the final scoring for the fishery.
- The standards also consider the existence of limit/target reference points, and harvest control rules and the outcome of their application in the fisheries management outcome (stocks status).
- When reference points and harvest control are in place, the stock assessment confirms their pertinence for the stocks management or highlights the need for adjustments to bring the stocks health to sustainability levels.
- While in Mexican Pacific Ocean the shrimp fishery has well defined harvest control rules and reference points since decades ago, which, based upon the fishery landings, are the appropriate for the stocks inherent vulnerability, the absence of a robust and updated stocks assessment impedes the confirmation of such pertinence.
- A robust, updated and publicly available stock assessment for each of the three main shrimp species is needed to demonstrate the strength of the fishery management and to meet the increasing market sustainability demands the Mexican shrimp is facing.