

## How to facilitate data collection in small-scale fisheries? The case of La Restinga, El Hierro (Canary Islands, Spain)

José J. Pascual-Fernández; Carmelo Dorta-Morales;

Usually, the available data on small-scale fisheries and their performance is scarce. In Spain, as in many other European countries, there is a mandatory control of the first sale of fishing products often carried out by local fisher organisations (*cofradías*). However, the quality of the information is often far from perfect, and the data are controlled by the government, not by fishers. In this research, we analyse some of the shortcomings of data collection in relation to fisheries management, taking into account traditional local fishing strategies. Specifically, we examine the case of La Restinga, a fishing community on the island of El Hierro (Canary Islands, Spain), where fishers and scientist have developed a joint venture that has allowed the collection of precise catch data from 1990 onwards. Furthermore, responding to a request of fishers, a Marine Reserve was implemented in this area in 1996. In La Restinga, the key factor that has facilitated data collection has been the provision of appropriate software to the local cooperative, *Pescarestinga*, which has made it easier for fishers to manage catch and selling data. This way, fishers obtain a tangible benefit at the same time as collaborating in data collection. We show how collecting this data has also facilitated the analysis of small-scale fishing unit strategies, making it possible to focus on essential fisheries. This has assisted the development of specific measures to protect relevant stocks, and has contributed to fisheries governance in the area. The interaction of fishers and scientist has set an example that is being followed in other areas of Spain.

Keywords: small-scale fisheries, data collection, governance, software, small-scale fishing unit strategies