

Untangling the tentacles: fisher perceptions on the octopus fishery management in the Algarve

Mafalda Rangel (1), *Cristina Pita* (2), *Manuela Oliveira* (3); *Maria Helena Guimarães* (4), *Carlos Sonderblohm* (1), *Ana Antunes* (1); *André Barreto* (1), *Pedro Monteiro* (1), *Frederico Oliveira* (1), *Leila Pereira* (1); *Jorge M.S. Gonçalves* (1), *Karim Erzini* (1)

(1) Centre of Marine Sciences (CCMAR), University of Algarve, Campus de Gambelas, FCT Ed 7, 8005-139, Faro, Portugal; (2) Centre for Environmental and Marine Studies (CESAM) & Department of Biology, University of Aveiro, Campus Universitário de Santiago, Aveiro, Portugal; (3) INESC TEC and Faculty of Engineering, University of Porto, Dr. Roberto Frias St., 4200-465 Porto Portugal; (4) Landscape Dynamics and Social Processes Group, Instituto de Ciências Agrárias e Ambientais Mediterrânicas (ICAAM), University of Evora, Núcleo da Mitra, Edifício Principal, Apartado 94, 7002-554 Évora, Portugal

Presenter contact details: mrangel@ualg.pt, Phone +351 936 747 853

Summary

The common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) trap and pot small-scale fishery is an important activity in the Algarve (southern Portugal) with significant socio-economic implications. Octopus fisheries are not managed under the Common Fisheries Policy, and each member-state is responsible for its own management. In Portugal this fishery is managed by a top-down approach with episodic participation of fishers, leading to low satisfaction regarding the existing regulation. With this in mind, seven monthly participative workshops with fisher associations, management authorities, and researchers were organized in the Algarve (2014-2015). During these meetings, representatives of octopus fishing associations were asked to propose and discuss management measures for the fishery. The current work investigates the perceptions of local octopus fishers regarding these management measures employing face-to-face questionnaires. Proposed management measures were analysed and aggregated. Overall, improving communication amongst associations, and implementing and enforcing a closing season were ranked by the fishers as the most important management measures. During the workshops, representatives of fishers also acknowledged the deficient communication between associations. Furthermore, they unanimously considered the closing season as the most important measure to be discussed and implemented. Results should be carefully analysed when including management proposals of octopus fishing associations in the decision-making process.