



Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the Territorial Waters of Somalia

REPORT BRIEF

Presented January 2016

The Study:

This study was commissioned by Adeso with funding from the European Union and was prepared by a team of consultants in the United States (Trans-Africa Consultancy Services of Barrington, Rhode Island, and the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Center). The consultants conducted a study of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the territorial waters of Somalia between June and November 2014, focusing on 10 major coastal towns and villages in Jubbaland, Benadir, Galmudug, Puntland and Somaliland. The survey communities represent a diversity of landing sites and all segments of Somali's extensive coastline, including the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

The objectives of this study were to: identify and analyze the key factors contributing to illegal fishing and its impacts on marine ecosystems and livelihoods; carry out extensive fact-finding missions and interviews in fishing communities, in the fishing industry and with other stakeholders; gather evidence on illegal fishing and its impacts; and identify specific means of support to enable the Somali government to address the problem.

Overview and Challenge:

At 3,900 km, the coastline of Somalia is the longest in Africa with a declared EEZ of 840,390 km². Yet, only 10 percent of its MSY of 300,000 MT has been realized. The vast scope of Somalia's waters makes fisheries management and enforcement difficult, while the potential abundance of the resources could have a significant and positive economic impact on the country.

The people of Somalia pay a tremendous price for IUU fishing. Losses from foreign illegal vessels are difficult to calculate but have been estimated between US \$100 million and US \$450 million. The human and environmental costs are also great, as depleted fish stocks hurt the marine environment, destroy local fishing communities through loss of livelihood and deprive the government of much-needed revenue from taxes, licensing and landing fees.





A motorized skiff comes ashore, left; fishermen are surveyed at a landing site, right. (Credit: Kifle Hagos)

Surveys and Key Findings:

This study targeted a representative sample of fishermen at each site. Interviews and systematic household surveys were conducted with 372 fishermen, and another 450 were interviewed informally at village meetings. The study found that the Somali fishery is predominantly small-scale (motorized skiffs no larger than 6 meters). The average fisherman has a grade school education and has been fishing for about 15 years, with more than half owning their own boats and belonging to fishing cooperatives. More than half fish within 50 km of their communities. Many are unaware of how vessel registration requirements work or even that such requirements exist. A lack of information on vessel numbers, size and power, as well as gear type and size, complicates fisheries management, as it is nearly impossible to determine optimum sustainable yields. Lack of information on licensing and landing limits is commonplace, and there appear to be significant weaknesses in collection of landing data. This means there is no solid base on which to assess stock status or develop management measures to ensure the sustainability of the fishery.

The majority of those surveyed believes only local residents or Somalis should be allowed to fish in territorial waters. The vast majority (86 percent) reported sighting of foreign fishing vessels near their villages in the preceding year; and half reported constant sightings. This instance was significantly higher in Puntland, indicating more severe illegal fishing in that area. Respondents blamed anti-piracy patrols for making IUU fishing easier. Respondents identified foreign vessels from Iran, Yemen, Spain, China/Taiwan, Oman, India, Kenya and Russia. Much of the illegal fishing was reported between 5 and 50 km of shore, indicating that community surveillance could be useful in reporting of violations and enforcement.

Recommendations:

Survey data indicate a great deal of illegal fishing from both foreign vessels and Somalis, requiring a multifaceted approach to combat what is a regional IUU problem. Some of the recommendations based on analysis of the survey data include: ratifying FAO's Port State Measures agreement and International Plan of Action; updating fisheries laws and enacting new ones that enable uniform enforcement and simplified data and revenue management; introducing a federal Monitoring, Control and Surveillance system for vessel and fisherman licensing, domestic and foreign; extending enforcement to include community-based approaches; establishing systems for long-term stock assessment data collection and analysis; using satellite-aided Vessel Monitoring Systems; decentralizing fisheries administration; soliciting support from international partners regarding infrastructure at landing sites, promotion of fish as a healthy local food source and capacity building of communities and authorities.

