



Newsletter

July – September 2024

Introduction

This newsletter covers the results of the Northern Small Pelagic Stock Assessment Working Group, which was held in Dakar from June 25 to July 2, 2024, and the meeting on the development of guidance notes on management options for the implementation of the COPACE recommendations concerning sardinella fisheries in the Northwest African region.



COPACE-FAO Small Pelagics Group, June 25–July 2, 2024

From June 25 to July 2, 2024, the twenty-third meeting of the FAO Working Group on the assessment of small pelagic fish off the Northwest coast of Africa took place in Dakar, Senegal.

Scientists from Gambia, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Spain, and the Netherlands participated in the meeting, along with representatives from the European Commission (DG MARE) and the Russian Federation.

The overall objective of the working group is to assess the status of small pelagic resources in Northwest Africa and to provide recommendations on fisheries management and exploitation options to ensure the optimal and sustain-

able use of small pelagic resources for the benefit of coastal countries.

Species-specific information was discussed during the meeting, and stock assessments (including exploratory methods) were conducted before formulating final management recommendations. The meeting was held at the premises of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission in Dakar, Senegal, under the aegis of the COPACE secretariat. The EAF-Nansen program provided substantial support for the organization of this meeting.

The working group assessed small pelagic species distributed between the southern border of Senegal and the northern Atlantic border of Morocco.

The species evaluated include:

- Sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*)
- Sardinella (*Sardinella aurita* and *Sardinella maderensis*)
- Horse mackerel (*Trachurus trecae*, *Trachurus trachurus*, and *Caranx rhonchus*)
- Mackerel (*Scomber colias*)
- Bonga (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*)
- Anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*)

The group also took into account the fisheries of the Canary Islands.



We present the summary of the stock assessments.



Stock status of the different assessed stocks

Species	Zone	Under-exploited	Fully exploited	Over-exploited
Sardine (<i>S. pilchardus</i>)	Zone A+B		★	
	Zone C			★
Round sardinella (<i>S. aurita</i>)	Whole subregion			★
Flat sardinella (<i>S.maderensis</i>)	Whole subregion			★
European horse mackerel (<i>T. trachurus</i>)	Whole subregion			★
Cunene horse mackerel (<i>T. trecae</i>)	Whole subregion		★	
Chub mackerel (<i>S. colias</i>)	Whole subregion		★	
Anchovy (<i>E. encrasicolus</i>)	Zone N & Zone A+B		★	
Bonga (<i>E. fimbriata</i>)	Maur /Sen /Gam			★

The sardine stock was under-exploited in 2023. Biomass has shown a declining trend since 2021, which worsened in 2023, coinciding with a drop in catches throughout the region and an exceptional warming in the area. Additionally, the decline in catches has continued since 2019, particularly in the Mauritanian zone, a period that coincides with the implementation of several management measures (zoning, segmentation, etc.). The average size of sardines caught in the sub-region has shown an overall downward trend, which necessitates careful management of this stock.

The working group made the following recommendations:

- Reduce fishing mortality on the sardine stock in zone C
- Protect sensitive habitats
- Implement emergency measures
- Study the resilience of stocks to fishing in the context of climate change



In Mauritania, sardine catches have been decreasing for several years, and nominal effort (number of coastal and offshore purse seiners) has been declining since 2019

Situation of Sardinella in the Mauritanian Zone

The period from 2017 to 2019 was marked by intense exploitation of the sardinella stock, particularly the round sardinella stock, due to the presence of an efficient fleet in the coastal zone. Since the implementation of the new small pelagic management plan at the beginning of 2023, along with emergency measures (restrictions on fishing areas, bans on fishing during the spawning period, etc.), we have observed a slight improvement in catches of the species at the beginning of 2024. This improvement will need to be monitored until the end of the year to quantify its extent.



Meeting on the development of guidance notes regarding management options for the implementation of COPACE recommendations concerning sardinella fisheries in the Northwest African region.

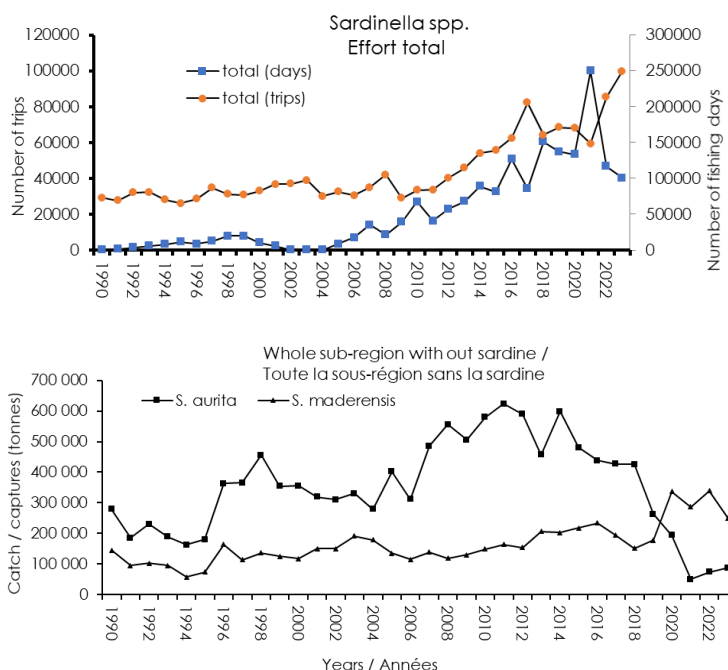
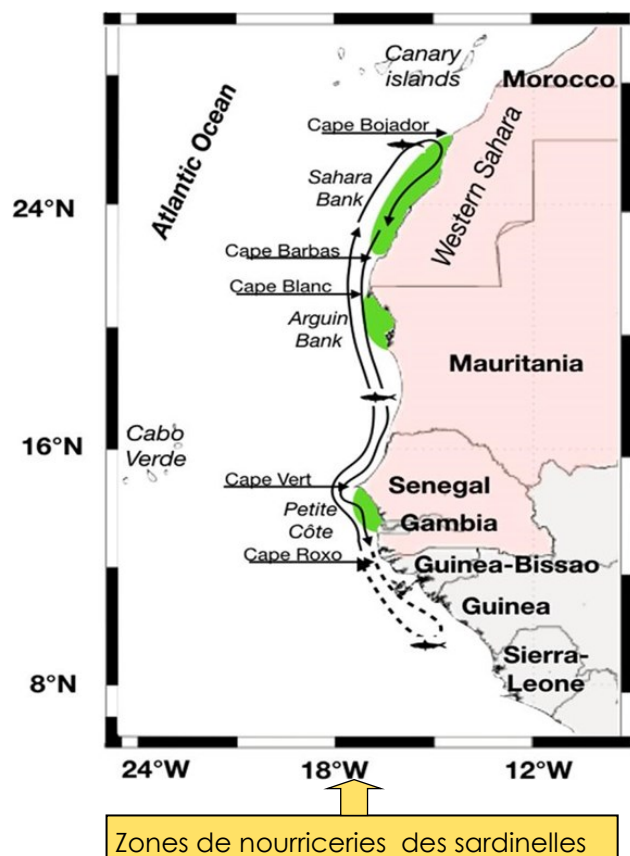
The CSRP organized a meeting from July 3 to 4, 2024, alongside the 23rd meeting of the COPACE Northwest Working Group on small pelagics, which brought together experts from the sub-regional countries. This workshop was held in collaboration with the FAO as part of Phase II of the "Shared Sardinellas" project funded by the EAF NANSEN program. The objective of this workshop was to initiate the process of developing guidance notes on management options to implement COPACE recommendations for the management of sardinella fisheries in Northwest Africa.



"A guidance note aims to provide a concise summary of scientific information that can help managers and decision-makers make informed decisions about the sustainability of fisheries."

This workshop was organized following the COPACE meeting to:

- Define priority topics to be addressed in order to develop guidance notes on management options to implement COPACE recommendations at the sub-regional and national levels.
- Define the structure of the guidance notes, writing methodology, review committees, validation of the notes, teams, and work schedule.



	Taille 1 ^{ère} capture en vigueur en cm		
Espèces	Mauritanie	Sénégal	Gambie
Sardinelle plate	18	18	
Sardinelle ronde	18	18	
Ethmalose	24	18	15

Working Group of the CSRP on the Management of Sardinella Stocks in Northwest Africa

From September 11 to 13, 2024, the Research-Management Working Group on sardinella management met at the CSRP headquarters in Dakar. The objective of this meeting is to examine various possibilities and strategies that can be implemented to respond to the recommendations of the COPACE-FAO Working Group regarding small pelagics.



Scientists primarily recommend reducing fishing mortality by 60%. The most effective options for achieving a 60% reduction in fishing mortality are:

- A 60% reduction in fishing effort (nominal or effective for countries managing by fishing effort, achieved by reducing the number of fishing units targeting sardinella through a decrease in the number of licenses).
- A 60% reduction in catches through a decrease in the overall quota for countries managing quotas.

However, such an approach to reducing fishing mortality would be difficult for fishermen to accept. During this meeting, alternatives were suggested as indirect methods to decrease fishing mortality:

- Spatio-temporal closure of areas with high abundance of juveniles and spawners
- Banning fishing in critical sardinella zones
- Harmonizing minimum catch sizes across the entire area
- Harmonizing fishing gear characteristics, particularly mesh size
- Prohibiting harmful fishing gear

Next meeting of Small Pelagics FIP

At the beginning of December 2024, the second meeting of the FIP will take place to discuss the progress of FIP activities and to set the agenda for 2025. The objective of this meeting will be to encourage fishmeal factories not affiliated with the FIP to take the initiative to join the FIP-PP before the end of 2024.



<https://www.fip-petitspelagiques-mauritanie.org>

Next meeting of IFFO-RS in Lisboa-Portugal

The IFFO-RS is organizing an international meeting on the global value chain of marine ingredients from October 21 to 23, 2024, in Lisbon, Portugal. This conference will provide a dynamic overview of market trends and technical developments, discussing the diversification of sources and uses of marine ingredients, as well as fisheries management. Through a series of parallel events and networking opportunities, participants will gain unparalleled access to the marine ingredients industry and its value chain.



To learn more : www.iffocom.com/annual-conference-2024

Infos/contact :

Mme Jo Gascoigne (jo.gascoigne@cantab.net); Mr Cheikh Baye Braham (baye.braham@gmail.com)