

Aru, Arafura and Timor Seas, Indonesia Snapper - Grouper Workplan (1 January – 31 December 2015)

Status of the fishery

- Three species - *Lutjanus malabaricus* (Malabar blood snapper), *L. erythropterus* (crimson or scarlet snapper), and *Pristipomoides multidens* (goldband snapper) - are the most economically important fish for export from Indonesia. Total landing of snapper in Indonesia was 118,608 tonnes in 2011, with Eastern Timor Sea, Aru Bay, and the Arafura Sea being the major fishing grounds for this species, contributing to more than 30 percent of the total catch, with 46,236 tonnes landed (MMAF 2011).
- Three main grouper species – *Epinephelus bleekeri* (Duskytail grouper), *Epinephelus tauvina* (Greasy grouper) and *Epinephelus poecilonotus* (Dot-dash grouper) are among the catch of bottom longline vessels beside snapper. These three grouper species are also important fish for export. However, surprisingly grouper data is not yet available from the Government catch statistic for Arafura, Aru and Timor Seas Fishery Management Area. This situation can be interpreted that data on grouper catch has not been reported.
- Information on the National status of the stock for both for snapper and grouper is not available. The only comprehensive stock assessment at the regional scale is the Indonesia and Australia shared stock of red snappers in the Arafura and Timor Seas that was conducted between 1999 and 2003.
- There are no set biological reference points, therefore the status of the Indonesian snapper and grouper populations cannot be accurately determined.
- There are no specific management objectives set and no fishery management plans have yet been developed. As with all other fisheries in Indonesia, the management strategy so far has only been to try to control the fishing efforts by limiting the number of fishing licenses issued, and trying to limit the types of fishing gear used.
- Other challenges in this fishery include:

- Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a major issue in the Timor and Arafura Seas.
- The use of trawls in the wide shallow shelf of the Arafura Sea pull in bycatch that often exceeds the intended catch.
- The main improvement need identified in this fishery is the development of a management plan for snapper-grouper fisheries in Aru, Arafura and Timor Seas. The FIP can contribute to this effort by improving the availability of accurate data on catches for stock assessment, improving monitoring and compliance by using vessel monitoring system (VMS), and promoting traceability by engaging supply chains to ensure that the origin and status of snapper products are well-known and all products are sourced from legal fisheries.

Workplan

FIP aims to support and contribute to the improvement and sustainability of the snapper-grouper in Indonesia, through FIP development in Arafura and Timor Sea. The current workplan does not yet address all the improvement needs identified above since this is just the beginning of improvement process. The FIP steps are to start with some improvement measures, which will likely be further developed as time progresses:

- Support improvement of catch data collection.
- Support the collection and analysis of fishery dependent data for stock assessment
- Support the national program on eliminating IUU
- Support the development of snapper-grouper fishery management plan in Arafura and Timor Sea

TOPIC	DELIVERABLES	DEADLINE	STATUS
1. Improve catch data reporting Better logbook data recording and submission to MMAF	1.1.Submission of improved logbook data to the Authority	December 2015	on going
	1.2.Data inputted into database, analysis of data and reported to the authority	December 2015	Ongoing
2. Improve	2.1.Submission of ERS,	December 2015	Ongoing

Ecological Related Species (ERS), retained and bycatch (discard) data reporting	retained and bycatch data		The recording of retained and bycatch (discard) species has been done but still needs to be improved, including to group the size of retained catch into 3 categories: smaller than 300 grams; between 300 and 2000 grams, and above 2000 grams.
3.Improve compliance for vessel monitoring and surveillance	3.1. Renew all VMS licenses that have expired.	July 2015	On going
4. Onboard observer program (collect scientific data e.g. size measurement, species caught, (bycatch – discard and retained)	4.1.Implement observers onboard the vessels. 4.2.	December 2015	The plan is to have 6 observers onboard in 2015
5.National Snapper Fishery Management Plan	5.1.Seek feedback from MMAF on the observer onboard program 2014 and corrective actions needed for logbook. Letter sent in March requesting feedback	June 2015	Letter has been sent to MMAF in March, and there has been no response received.
6. Improve Traceability	6.1. Implement pilot program for traceability and e-logbook	December 2015	Preparation on going
7. FIP meetings	7.1. FIP meeting to discuss the implementation of improvement activities and progress conducted.	December 2015	FIP meeting conducted in Boston 2015 to discuss workplan 2015

	7.2. Meeting with MMAF updating FIP progress conducted.	December 2015	Plan to be held 2nd of December
	7.3. Attend snapper roundtable hosted by SFP and participants are Government, Industries (buyers, processors)	December 2015	TBD