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Glossary of terms

Artisanal fishery: A small-scale, low-cost, and labour-intensive fishery in which the catch is consumed locally.

Bilateral and multilateral agreements: An arrangement whereby foreign fishers pay a fee for access to fish stocks not fully utilised by national fishers.

Biodiversity (biological diversity): The variety of living material in terms of genes, species and ecosystems within a given area.

Biomass: The total weight of a stock of a marine species.

Brackish water: A mixture of sea water and fresh water (as occurs near the mouths of rivers).

Carnivore: An animal which eats another animal.

Catch quota: The maximum catch permitted to be taken from a fishery; such a limit applied to the total catch from a fishery is often referred to as a global quota (as distinct from an individual quota).

Closures: The banning of fishing either during particular times or seasons (temporal closures), or in particular areas (spatial closures), or a combination of both.

Co-management (cooperative management): Either informal or legal arrangements between government representatives, community groups and other user groups, to take responsibility for, and manage, a fishery resource and/or its environment on a cooperative basis.

Community-based resource management: Arrangements under which a community takes, or is encouraged to take, responsibility for managing resources.

Coral polyp: A small individual coral animal with a tube-shaped body and a mouth surrounded by tentacles.

Critical habitats: Habitats which are crucial in the life-cycle of marine species; typically, nurseries and spawning areas, such as estuaries, mangroves, seagrass meadows and reefs.

Customary Marine Tenure (CMT): Legal, traditional or de facto control of areas of water by indigenous people.

Demersal: Living on, or near, the sea floor.

Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD): Use of the environment which aims to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to have the same privilege; development based on the sustainable use both of species and ecosystems, the maintenance of essential ecological processes, and the preservation of biological diversity.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): The assessment of the effects of a development or activity on the environment and people.

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): An area of sea out to 200 nautical miles from coastlines or outer reefs, in which an adjacent country has control and responsibilities.

Extinction: The total disappearance of a species.

Fisheries extension: Working with the community to provide, or to build on, skills and knowledge to achieve particular goals, such as an increase in seafood production, or the conservation of fish stocks and the environment.

Fisheries regulations: Controls designed to either restrict the amount, or efficiency, of fishing (input controls), or to restrict the total catch (output controls) to predefined limits in a fishery.

Herbivore: An animal which eats plant material.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM): Coastal management which takes into account the inter-dependence of ecosystems, with the involvement of many different agencies (for example, those responsible for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, public works and water supply) and other stakeholders.

Joint ventures: A partnership between foreign and local fishers.

Larvae: The young stages of many marine animals including corals. Most larvae are small and drift in the sea before becoming adults.

Marine Protected Area (MPA): A marine reserve, park, or other area protected from uncontrolled human access and use by the application of various restrictions on activities, development and exploitation.

Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY): The largest annual catch that may be taken from a stock continuously without affecting

the catch of future years; a constant long-term MSY is not a reality in most fisheries, where stock sizes vary with the strength of year classes moving through the fishery.

Minimum legal size: A regulation in which captured individuals smaller than a prescribed minimum size must be returned to the sea; usually justified on the grounds that growth of smaller individuals produces a greater harvestable biomass, and that the size of the spawning stock is increased.

Minimum mesh size: The smallest size of mesh permitted in nets and traps; imposed on the basis that smaller individuals will escape unharmed.

Nutrients: In the context of the marine environment, dissolved food material (mainly nitrates and phosphates) used by plants.

Overexploitation: The situation where so many fish are removed from a stock that reproduction cannot replace the numbers lost.

Pelagic: Living in the surface layers of the sea.

Photosynthesis: the process by which plant material is formed from water, nutrients and carbon dioxide using energy absorbed from sunlight.

Phytoplankton: Small (microscopic) plants, which drift in the sunlit surface layers of the sea.

Predator: An animal which hunts another (prey) species.



Primary producers: Plants, including algae and phytoplankton, which use sunlight and nutrients.

Property rights: A degree of resource ownership by an individual fisher, group or community.

Quota: A limit on the weight/number of fish which may be caught in a particular stock or area; a bag limit is a quota (usually in numbers of fish caught) applied to recreational fishers.

Recruitment: The addition of young or juveniles to an adult fishable stock.

Species: A distinct group of animals or plants able to breed amongst themselves but unable to breed with other groups.

Stakeholders: The different people, groups, communities and organisations that have an interest in a particular activity, resource or area.

Subsistence fishery: A fishery in which indigenous peoples catch fish for their own consumption.

Symbiosis: A relationship between two different creatures which live together for the benefit of both; zooxanthellae have a symbiotic relationship with coral polyps.

Target species: The resource species at which a fishing operation is directed.

Total Allowable Catch (TAC): The maximum catch allowed

from a fishery in accordance with a specified management plan.

Zooplankton: Small animals, or the larvae of larger animals, which drift in the sea.

Zooxanthellae: Small plant cells living within coral polyps and the mantle of giant clams.