

CM 477: Putting fishing communities on the map in ICES regions

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ICES wishes to improve the integration of human dimensions in its work. One of the advice products that are developed are Ecosystem Overviews (EO's). EO's provide a description of the ecosystem, identify the main human pressures, and explain how these affect key ecosystem components. WGSOCIAL recommends that the scope of EOs be broadened to recognize the importance of fishing dependent livelihoods as part of the ecosystem. As a first step WGSOCIAL developed a method to put fishing communities on the map in the EO's. The first EO that has used this method is the Celtic Seas EO. With this method fishing ports have been used as a proxy for fishing communities. Furthermore, some of the socio-economic importance of fishing is shown by using several indicators that can be linked to the communities (e.g. value and amount of landings). In this paper we describe why putting fishing communities on the map is so important for an ecosystem approach to fisheries, the process that was undertaken and the methods that were used to 'put fishing communities on the map' in the Celtic Seas EO. We will discuss ways that a fishing community can be defined and why that is not a straightforward task as 'A fishing community' has multidimensional characteristics, is dynamic and the 'right' definition is context dependent. Finally, we will discuss ways to better understand the social, cultural and economic value of fishing, and why this matters for applied marine research and fisheries policy and the (more recent) developments in relation to the blue economy. The challenges surrounding this work and how they can be overcome will also be discussed.

Keywords: fishing communities, social impact, fisheries management, indicators, ecosystem overview