IMPROVING INFORMATION OF DATA-POOR STOCKS AND FISHERIES: A NEW SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER PROGRAMME ONBOARD A SHRIMPER FLEET IN ANGOLA (SW AFRICA)

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BACKGROUND

SMEFF REGULATION & DIRECT AUTHORIZATIONS
The EU’s Regulation on the Sustainable Management of External Fishing Fleets (SMEFF, 2017) was established within the framework of the External Fisheries dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) with the SMEFF, scientific evaluations to demonstrate the sustainability of the fishery must be provided to fish in a third country with direct authorizations (i.e.: Spanish shrimper fishery in Angola).

THE SHRIMPER SPANISH FLEET IN ANGOLA
Since the 1960s, Angola has been a traditional fishing ground for a Spanish fleet of deep-sea shrimp trawlers. Since 2004, this fishery has been conducted through direct fishing authorizations and currently, in compliance with the SMEFF, scientific evaluations to demonstrate the sustainability of the fishery must be provided to fish in Angola.

DATA-POOR STOCKS
Only P. longirostris has been assessed so far by the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), with great limitations due to the lack of consistent fishery-dependent information and biological data.

METHOD

DESIGN OF THE NEW PROGRAMME OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVERS
IMPLEMENTED SINCE 2018 BY IEO
Observers collect information such as:
- Catch by species and biological data enabling the estimation of volume and length frequency of all catch fractions
- Biological parameters of target stocks
- Information for assessing the fishing impact on the marine ecosystem
- Detailed data on the activity of the fleet.

MONTHLY PERCENTAGE OF SPECIES COMPOSITION IN RC

RESULTS

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION: FLEET ACTIVITY

OBSEVER COVERAGE
- 137 observed fishing days (3%)
- 3 fishing trips (6%)
- 4 quarters covered (80%)

CATCH: RETAINED & DISCARD FRACTIONS

BIOLOGY OF A. varidens
- Length frequency distributions available for all observed months.
- Sex-related differential growth, females reaching larger sizes than males.
- Mature individuals through all the year. No clear spawning peaks.
- Length at First Maturity (LFM) estimated for females.

CONCLUSIONS
- The new Programme of observers is designed with the aim of obtaining the most reliable fishery and biological information for assessment purposes.
- Main fishery and biological information during the first observed annual cycle will be used as a starting point of a long-term monitoring program that together with other sources (logbooks, VMS) would increase the quantity and quality of the data needed for improving the assessments of these Angolan stocks.