



**Public Hearing on
“Trawl fisheries and bycatch Management”
REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF**

3 August 2015
Nana Buri Hotel, Chumphon province

Report by

Dr. Mala Supongpan, Ms. Jinda Petgamnerd and Ms. Sasina Tochua

1. Background to REBYC-II CTI Project

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (“FAO”) and the Department of Fisheries, Thailand has signed the Letter of Agreement (LOA) for the execution of the GEF supported project “Strategies for trawl fisheries bycatch management” (REBYC-II CTI; GCP /RAS/269/GFF). Thailand by the Department of Fisheries, Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau is implementing the project at two sites in the Gulf of Thailand. At Prachuab Kiri Khan and Chumphon the focus is on the implementation of enlarged mesh sizes in trawl cod-ends. The Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center (CMDEC), located in Chumphon is taking the lead on this research. The second site is in Trad province and focuses on the implementation of management measures for closed areas and closed seasons, to protect fish larvae and spawners. The Eastern Marine Fisheries Research and Development (EMDEC), located in Rayong province is taking the lead for this research.

Results from studies carried out under the REBYC-II CTI Project have already been presented to local stakeholders in Prachaub Kiri Khan and Chumphon provinces. Now the DOF would like to hear the ideas and opinions of local fishers in other areas of the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. The public hearing is an important step in helping the DOF to develop more effective approaches to trawl fisheries and bycatch management.

2. The Public Hearing:

Under the 2nd LOA between FAO and DoF for implementation of the REBYC-II CTI Project, the following objectives and activities have been included:

- To raise fisher awareness of the present status of trawl fisheries;
- To hear fisher opinions about the DOF’s plans to implement a 4.0 cm minimum mesh size for trawl cod-end; and
- To hear fisher opinions about the DOF’s plans for other trawl fisheries and bycatch management measures.

The Public Hearing was held at the Nana Buri Hotel in Chumphon province on the 2-3 August 2015. The participants at the Public Hearing included 100 fishers from the Gulf of Thailand and

Andaman Sea; 32 government officials, 4 invited experts and 4 secretariat staff and organizers The Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center and Chumphon Fisheries Office were responsible for facilitating the meeting.

3. Summary of the Public Hearing

Mr. Pairochan Saiklieng, Marine Fisheries Expert of DOF, welcomed the participants, and opened the meeting “Public Hearing on Trawl fisheries and bycatch Management”. He informed the meeting about the current situation in trawl fisheries. He also mentioned on the results of the experiments made by DOF (in collaboration with fishers) that showed good evidence that by using a 4.0 cm mesh size in cod-end in trawl, trash fish caught was bigger in size and the overall economic return of trawler was a bit better than with the smaller mesh size. At the meeting further ideas were shared on how to manage the trawl fishery and bycatch issue. It was emphasized that enlargement of cod-end the mesh size from 2.5 cm to be 4.0 cm would be an important step. Mr Saiklieng concluded by thanking everybody for their contribution and for their further cooperation.

Mr. Suchart Sangchan (National Coordinator of the REBYC-II CTI Project) introduced the Trawl fisheries and bycatch Management Project and details of the two project sites in Trad and Chumphon/ Prachuap Kiri Khan Provinces. The research work done under the project in Trad looked into seasonal and area closure measures, whilst in Chumphon examined trawl cod-end mesh size measures. Research results have shown that small sized low-value fish make up between 63-80% by weight in the trash fish catch. Experiments to enlarge otter board and pair trawl trawl cod-end mesh size to 4.0 cm have showed that the juvenile fish escape rates range from 34-43%. These results were compared to results of the Department of Fisheries that has already run similar experiments in the areas of Eastern, Central and Southern Gulf and in the Andaman Sea. Results indicate that the optimal mesh size is 4.0 cm. The REBYC-II CTI Project and DOF have conducted economic analysis of an introduction of enlarged mesh size of 4 cm and it was concluded that fishing would still be economic if a 4.0 cm mesh was introduced, even if there were some catch losses.

Mr. Sayan Eaimrod (Provincial Fisheries Official, Chumphon Province) explained the steps required for the implementation of a mesh size regulation. The regulation should be based on scientific results and should carry out public hearings to gain fisher support and cooperation. He presented data and information about the mesh size regulation of several gear types but not yet for trawlers. From a past DoF meeting in Songkla, fishers gave their opinions about mesh enlargement measures. The key observations were: (i) expenditure of fuel may be less due to less water resistance during towing, (ii) less time would be required for sorting of the catch, and (iii) captured fish may be bigger, cleaner and fetch a higher price. The higher price attained for fish catches would compensate, at least to some degree, for the fish lost through the enlarged mesh. Mr. Sayan closed his talk by asking for the participants’ co-operation in the process for sustainable food security and future prosperity.

Mr. Charoonsak Petsri (Lawyer, Administrative and Management Division of the Department of Fisheries) referred to the Fisheries Acts 1947 and informed that the Fisheries Act of 2015 is an issuance in the Royal Gazette on 28 April 2015 and became effective on 27 June 2015. This included an order from The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), ‘To solve the Illegal, Unrecorded and unregulated fishing issues’. Furthermore the National Council for Peace and Order has established the Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF) which is a special Unit directly under the Prime Minister. The NCPO issued Order Number 10/2015 on 29 April 2015 which became effective on the same day. Under this order fishers, including trawler operators, must know that:

- The Fisheries Act of 1947 has 73 sections, concerned with limiting the types of fishing and the protection of reserve areas. Anyone violating this regulation will be fined 5,000-10,000 Baht or imprisoned for one year or both. All Illegal gear and captured fish confiscated will be forfeited. In cases of no license or incorrect licenses (i.e. license for the wrong fishing gear) the offender will be fined not more than 3 times the cost of the license fee.
- The Fisheries Act of 2015 has 104 sections. Limited areas for fishing focuses on 8 issues; if anyone violates the law they will be fined 10,000-100,000 Baht or imprisoned for less than 1 year or both. Illegal fishing gear and captured fishes confiscated will be forfeited. In the case of no license or the incorrect license, the offender will be fined not more than 300,000 Baht or imprisoned less than 3 years or both.
- The Head of National Council for Peace and Order, Order Number 10/2015 has stated that 'No one can possess illegal fishing gear. Failure to comply will result in a fine of 100,000 Baht'.
- At present the implementation practices for the Fisheries Act 2015 have not yet been completed. Until that, the daughter laws under the Fisheries Acts 1947 will be used.
- The 7 issuances of the Fisheries Act of 1947 still in use are:
 1. No fishing within 3000 m of the shoreline;
 2. From the Multi-Committee Agreement of the provinces, the shoreline zone was extended to 3.0 nautical miles in 10 provinces (Rayong, Chantaburi, Naratiwas, Pattani, Nakorn Sri Thammarat, Chumphon, Prachaub Kiri Khan, Satul, Trang and Krabi provinces);
 3. No fishing around Ko Tao at a distance 3000 m except for longlines, gillnets and traps;
 4. Fisheries officials must make local public and outsiders known about local notifications and regulations;
 5. Fishers must know the law and regulations, as well as changes in laws and regulations including social issues,
 6. Officials have to strengthen enforcement of the law; and
 7. Issuing any law and regulation should be based on public hearing from fishers, stakeholders and results on scientific works. Then fishers can practice and maintain sustainable fishery livelihoods.

Mr. Pairochan Saiklieng (DOF Marine Fisheries) confirmed that when enlarged mesh sizes in trawl cod-ends are used, there is clear evidence that escaped fish could survive in the open sea, if the trawling time was not too long. If these fish were left to grow up they would reach a bigger size and be more valuable. Escapees from 4.0 cm trawl cod-end mesh size could grow up and mature. Fishers would lose some catch in the short term but over the long term they would have bigger fish of higher quality.

The Fisheries Act of 2015 became effective on 27 June 2015. Anyone who wants to fish has to inform the Government and request for a fishing gear license. The Government will improve some regulations such as banning illegal fishing boats and punishing those who do not have the correct license. To raise awareness of the new law, public hearings are on-going. Fishers should follow up for updates of information and will have to adapt to the changes.

3. Recommendations from the Public Hearing

3.1. The Official side:

- DOF should consider contracting a net manufacturing factory that can produce the enlarged mesh materials;
- Fisher groups should participate in experiments on a volunteer basis. Thereby fishers will come to know and understand research work and findings better. The Government should pay for compensation for time when they are involved in experiments;
- Seasonal and areas closure should be expanded and extended for better protection of natural resources.

3.2. From the Fishers:

- Representative of the fishers accepted the idea of enlarged mesh size but they requested to use 3.0-3.5 cm mesh and apply a gradual, stepwise, increase;
- Public Hearings should be held in many places to cover all stakeholders;
- In the case of the push net ban, fishers requested the DOF to compensate those holding legal licenses;
- Participants of the meeting should show their licenses to exclude those who were fishing illegally;
- The DOF should invite the media to make announcements, publish data and information for wider dissemination;
- The DOF should be clear and effective in enforcing the illegal types of fishing gear;
- The size of fishing boat (engine Horse Power) should be considered in licensing;
- The DOF should note and take into account that each type of trawl gear has not the same target species (there are fish trawl, shrimp trawl, pair trawl, otter board trawl); and
- It should be noted that each province has different area and fish composition. Mesh size measures for different areas should not be the same.

Mr. Pairochan Saiklieng thanked the participants for their contributions and reported that the DOF will gather all ideas and present them to Senior Officials to help resolve issues for better management. He was pleased that the meeting had met with the objectives. Lastly, he wished the participants a safe journey home. The Public Hearing closed at 16:30.



Public Hearing Meeting
“Trawl fisheries and by-catch Management”
 REBYC-II CTI; GCP /RAS/269/GFF

.....

2-3 August 2015
Nana Buri hotel, Chumphon province

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 August 2015
16.30 – 18.30 hr. | Registration of the participants at hotel |
| 3 August 2015
08.30
09.00 – 12. 00 hr | <p>Registration</p> <p>Opening by Marine Fisheries Expert: Mr. Pirochana Saiklieng</p> <p>Short Presentation:
 Results of trawl cod end mesh experiment, and new Fisheries Acts concerned to trawl fisheries and bycatch issues.
 Chairperson: Mr. Pirochana Saiklieng
 Presenters: Mr. Suchart Sangchan; Mr.Jaroonsak Petsri;
 Mr. Sayan Eaimrod;
 Secretary: Chinda Petkamnerd; Sasina Tochau</p> <p>Open Disscussion</p> |
| 13.00 – 15.30 hr | <p>Enlargement measure 4.0 cm cod-end mesh for trawl fisheries.</p> <p>Chairperson: Mr. Pirochana Saiklieng
 Presenters: Mr. Suchart Sangchan; Mr. Sayan Eaimrod: Mr. Jaroonsak Petsri
 Secretary: Chinda Petkamnerd, Sasina Tochau</p> |
| 15. 30 – 16.30 hr | <p>Ideas and recommendation from the participants and close the Meeting: Mr. Pirochana Saikliang.</p> |