

Coral Triangle Fishers Forum: Outcomes and New Opportunities

Introduction

WWF's Coral Triangle Program, together with the Government of the Indonesia (Department of Marine Affairs) and the Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Commission (SEAFDEC) co-hosted the Coral Triangle Fishers Forum (CTFF) at the Sanur Paradise Plaza Hotel in Bali Indonesia, June 15-17 2010. Bringing together over 130 regional stakeholders from 10 countries, including leaders in the fishing community, fishing organizations, seafood companies, scientists and technicians, the CTFF was well-implemented and highly successful.



Mr. Anang Noegroho, Head of the International and Inter Institutional Cooperation Center (MMAF), Mr. Bundit Chokesanguan, Information and Training Division Head of SEAFDEC, and Dr. Efransjah, CEO of WWF-Indonesia, official open the CTFF.

The atmosphere at the CTFF was friendly and semi-formal, yet earnest and determined with regard to the peer-to-peer sharing of perspectives and ideas related to sustainable fisheries generally and bycatch best practices specifically.

There was a general sense of consensus on many issues, for example:

- ☑ that it is in the shared interest and responsibility among all supply line stakeholders to adopt better fishing practices;
- ☑ that the role of fishers is critical and central in development and implementation of bycatch reduction;
- ☑ that bycatch issues should be made mainstream in regional legislation and policy and implemented and enforced on the ground

- ☑ that bycatch of species of special concern such as turtles remains a major issue not yet adequately solved;
- ☑ that the term “bycatch” may have special meaning in a region like the Coral Triangle, where for the majority of fisheries most if not all harvested species are retained;
- ☑ that some bycatch solutions, such as Circle Hooks, appear to work well and should be more widely adopted;
- ☑ that the adoption of bycatch best practices can help businesses mitigate some of the negative impacts of fishing as well as set them on a more responsible path;
- ☑ that there needs to be more vertical integration among supply chains on bycatch reduction and more partnerships formed, as well as a more level playing field for businesses engaged in more responsible seafood;

Discussion Highlights

With well over half the meeting time dedicated to either breakout groups or plenary several interesting and provocative dialogues developed. For example, the management of “trash fish” fisheries became a fervent topic of discussion. Several participants pointed out that the demand for trash fish for aquaculture and domestic consumption is what drives the problem and needs to be better addressed (and with a different approach than conventional bycatch mitigation). While solutions are extremely challenging, there was productive discussion and thoughtful ideas shared, such as linking certification of aquaculture farms to fishing better practices, and working with the expanding surimi industries in the region on models to reduce the bycatch of non-target fish such as juvenile snapper and grouper.



Peer-to-peer sharing of ideas during fisherfolk breakout session.

Not surprisingly, the conversation did not remain limited to bycatch. Issues such as over-capacity, weak data management, IUU fishing and livelihoods – as overarching problems and traits of fisheries in the region – were raised. Along this thread, connections back to bycatch mitigation were made. For example, the need for formalized regional management of more species, the potential of broader observer programs to assist management, and the use of “positive” subsidies, such as support for bycatch projects instead of other types of subsidies which tend to have negative impacts on sustainability.

The future potential of bycatch-reducing gear in problematic fisheries such as gillnets was also given attention. While no “global solution” exists, there are technologies emerging that can help address the issue and these need to be looked at comprehensively. It was suggested that more passive gear types such as set nets hold some potential as an alternative industry, which reinforced the importance of addressing economic incentives, equity and vulnerability in coastal communities when considering options for bycatch mitigation.

On the market side, while the general lack of integration along supply lines was noted as a current obstacle, several encouraging dialogues developed related to the promotion of bycatch-appropriate seafood. For example, the distinct link between bycatch technology, better quality fish, and higher value, was highlighted. Examples of products that currently or potentially utilize the growing demand for more responsible seafood were discussed, leading to informal networking and business-to-business engagement.

Several practical problems were raised and some good progress was made in solving these issues among peers. For example, the “live bait” problem for the circle hook program at Bitung Indonesia (where fishers have been reluctant to adopt alternative gear due to problems in setting bait) was discussed in detail at one of the fisher group breakouts, and through the technical input and sharing of other experienced fishers some encouraging solutions were developed. Similarly, the difficulties that some Vietnamese longline fishers have been having in setting their lines with circle hooks were addressed, with Indonesian and other experienced skippers providing helpful information and technical advice.



Stakeholder breakout session discusses market-based incentives.

The CTFF itself was also widely discussed and endorse as a useful ongoing platform for peer-to-peer regional dialogue and consensus-making among seafood supply chain stakeholders, as well as a means to facilitating the actions of the governments involved. It was suggested that the CTFF should lead a regional CTI initiative for the better sharing of information and more formal networking with appropriate communication channels around sustainable fisheries. The next CTFF was proposed for 2012 and, as was the consensus at the meeting, should focus on fisheries and food security.



Mr. Narmoko Prasmadji, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) Indonesia and Executive Secretary of National Coordination Committee for CTI Indonesia, makes closing remarks.

Participant Feedback

Feedback received by participants included:

“Bycatch of other gears like gillnets, ringnets, purse seine, etc. should also be accounted for not only longline. Also artisanal fisheries catch, which in reality contributes substantial bycatch, should have equal importance to that of commercial fisheries.”

“Harmonizing data and BMP in CTI countries should be done.”

“Indonesia’s presentation by Wudianto was very good; I like the information.”

“CTI should spearhead the organization of the CT Fishers Network.”

“Coastal gillnets have more significant impacts on bycatch...therefore solutions that are friendly to the fishing industry (on these types of gillnets) and the species concerned should be looked at.”

“Bycatch should be classified whether bycatch of species of special concerns (endangered species) or bycatch of species with low economic value or bycatch of so called trash species.”

“BMP for artisanal fisheries would be good for the next forum”.

“Good to have discussions on solutions or options for trash fish caught in trawling for fishmeal and development of new markets-based incentives for domestic market.”

“Hearing other BMPs, I realized that we are on the right track and doing our own initiative parallel to the objectives of the CTI.”

“We learned a lot of new things.”

“Session 3 was very good for me and my organization.”

“The various discussions that followed in Session 1 were very interesting and highlighted concerns of the different stakeholders present at the forum especially contrasting the demand on trash fish bycatch as opposed to the need for sustainability.”

“The forum brought me in touch with people who would be useful contacts for information and data when carrying out marine related (fisheries management) conservation work; a very useful forum for networking as we cannot work in isolation; useful for implementing bottom-up strategies.”

“Topic is good but wider subject is recommended such as purse seiner, gill netter, etc.”

Key Recommendations

The full list of recommendations can be found on the CTFF Communiqué located at: www.panda.org/coraltriangle/fishersforum

Some of the highlighted recommendations from the Communiqué include:

Management and governance:

- ☒ Bycatch issues should be made mainstream in regional legislation and policy and implemented and enforced on the ground.
- ☒ Basic management systems should be strengthened to incorporate right-based management as a suitable approach to sustainable fisheries.
- ☒ Recommendations on mitigating bycatch should always consider impacts on livelihoods.
- ☒ Regional on board observer programs should be established with effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms when needed.

- ☑ For fisheries not covered by them, other international arrangements should be considered (e.g. new bodies and/or modification of existing ones) to fulfil a key management role.
- ☑ Government bodies, and regional organizations should recognize that scaling-up of best practices does bring about both ecological benefits as well as economic benefits that can level the playing field.

Communication and Awareness:

- ☑ Bycatch issues should be brought into the agendas of existing fisheries associations at different levels of the supply chain, to improve vertical integration, and increase awareness.
- ☑ The benefits of circle hooks in producing higher quality tuna should be used as an incentive to motivate the market. In particular, foreign distant water longline fleets should be made aware of the benefits of using circle hooks.
- ☑ Buyers and the consumers, with emphasis on the younger generation, should be made aware of the fact that it takes time for fishers to transform to sustainable practices and reduce their bycatch; and that in the meantime, there are alternative choices in companies that are transforming through fisheries improvement programs (including MSC, Seafood Savers, etc).

Economic Incentives:

- ☑ Tariffs and other economic and administrative obstacles should be removed on all eco-friendly fishing gear.
- ☑ Incentives should be given to fishers to transform their fishing methods, considering their bottom-line as critical to their adoption (economic motivations) e.g. work with fishers on alternative livelihoods.

Research and development:

- ☑ Studies on seasonal movements and distributions, location of spawning aggregations of target or bycatch species should be supported, to aid policy-based decisions such as spatial-temporal measures (e.g. closures) to mitigate bycatch.
- ☑ After careful research, certain small-scale, low-impact and low-technology fisheries such as handline, traps and green stick fishing practices should be promoted (including through the use of positive subsidies).

Pledges, Commitments and Actions

Some of the specific pledges, commitments and Actions include:

- ☑ The Fishers Forum Association in the Solomon Islands will work with Indonesian pole and line bait fishers to build capacity of pole and line fishers on bait fishing.
- ☑ IKHLAS invites SEAFDEC, WWF and FAO to come to Malaysia to share knowledge and experiences with local fishers.
- ☑ The CTI Secretariat will bring forward the CTFF Communiqué to CTI members.
- ☑ Luen Thai Fishing Venture, Ocean Mitramas and Widegrowth Marine Products, intend to join the Seafood Savers Program.
- ☑ The Fisheries Research Institute (Philippines) will promote further research on bycatch to improve bycatch management efforts in the Coral Triangle.

- ☑ The Fish Processors Group (Philippines), will work aiming to forge an agreement with government and local stakeholders on bycatch of sardines.
- ☑ FAO and WWF agree to partner on FAO/GEF/SEAFDEC project on bycatch management and reduction of discards in trawl fisheries.
- ☑ The Secretariat of the Pacific Community will work on a solution to the problem of circle hooks not being appropriate for live bait.
- ☑ WWF commits to find opportunities to produce a documentary to showcase the plight of the tuna fishermen.
- ☑ WWF South Pacific Program Office will prepare a reconnaissance document on bycatch issues in the Pacific region.
- ☑ All participants will share outcomes of the CTFF with their constituencies and promote vessel registration and data sharing.
- ☑ WWF commits to facilitate and help the next CTFF and include other sectors and RFMOs.

Media Coverage

Opening Day Press Interviews (June 15) – several reporters came to the opening day and interviewed WWF-Indonesia's CEO, Dr Efransjah and MMAF representative, Mr Anang Noegroho; foreign journalists likewise made follow-up queries on the forum and conducted a phone interview with WWF CTNI Leader, Dr Lida Pet-Soede.

Closing Press Conference (June 17) – several reporters came to a closing press conference on the last day of the forum, chaired by Dr Lida Pet-Soede; press conference speakers included Mr Charles Capricho of PAMPANO, George Chiu of Luen Thai Fishing Ventures, Mr Bundit Chokesanguan of SEAFDEC and Mr Narmoko Prasmadji of MMAF

Field Trip (June 17) – 3 national reporters from Jakarta Post, Antara, and Viva News joined the field trip to Benoa harbor and a fish processing plant.



Dr. Efransjah, CEO of WWF-Indonesia, talks to media.

Media Pick-Ups:

Jakarta Post

Fishers call for action against bycatching

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/06/18/fishers-call-action-against-bycatching.html>

Wildlife Extra

Coral Triangle fishers work together to stop indiscriminate killing

<http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/coral-triangle-fishing.html#cr>

Seafood Source

Conference addresses bycatch problem

<http://www.seafoodsource.com/newsarticledetail.aspx?id=4294996532>

Bycatch tackled at Coral Triangle meeting

<http://www.seafoodsource.com/newsarticledetail.aspx?id=4294996643>

Online Resource

http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/coraltriangle/events/coraltrianglefishersforum (includes agenda, presentations, speeches and future communication portal)

Circle Hook Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6oVTz8OBgA>

Next Steps

1. Establishing CTFF as a formal network and communication channel (web portal and communications plan).
2. The Secretariat of the Coral Triangle Initiative will present recommendations to its members.
3. Briefing notes to national and CT6 government and other regional bodies related to bycatch best practices and the CTFF recommendations, will be developed and communicated.
4. Specific supply chain partnerships on bycatch will be further refined and developed.
5. The Seafood Savers program outreach will include links to companies interested in reducing bycatch,

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ANNEX 1: Participating organizations, companies, agencies and management bodies

Some of the key **seafood companies and organizations** attending included:

- ☒ Indonesia: Phillips Food, ANOVA, Indonesian Tuna Longline Association, Indonesian Tuna Association
- ☒ Philippines: Barangay Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council, PAMPANO (Fisherfolk Organization), D&L Seafood Export Inc.
- ☒ Malaysia: Persatuan Usahawan Industri Perikanan Sarawak (IKHLAS), Kudat Fishing Boatowner's Association, QL Resources
- ☒ Hong Kong: Luen Thai Fishing Ventures
- ☒ Thailand: Thai Fish Marketing Organization; Overseas Fisheries Association of Thailand
- ☒ Vietnam: Vietnam Longline Tuna Association (Binh Dinh and Phu Yen province)
- ☒ USA: Clearsmoke Technologies
- ☒ Europe: BlueYou; ANOVA BV

Government agencies and regional bodies included:

- ☒ Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia
 - Directorate General of Capture Fisheries
 - Agency of Marine and Fisheries Research
 - Research Centre for Capture Fisheries
 - Centre of Analysis for International and Institutional Cooperation
- ☒ Philippines Bureau of Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
 - BFAR Regions 1, 5 and Central Office
 - LGU-Tiwi, Albay (Region 5)
 - National Fisheries Development Institute
 - Department of Science and Technology
- ☒ Department of Fisheries, Malaysia
 - Sabah (Malaysia) Department of Fisheries
- ☒ Fiji National Fisheries Authority
- ☒ Palau National Congress
- ☒ Timor-Leste Department of Fisheries
- ☒ Vietnam Department of Capture Fisheries Management
 - Binh Dinh Department of Capture Fisheries
- ☒ Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Mgmt Council
- ☒ Forum Fisheries Agency
- ☒ Secretariat of the Pacific Communities
- ☒ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- ☒ Inter-Americas Tropical Tuna Commission
- ☒ Marine Stewardship Council
- ☒ Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
- ☒ Coral Triangle Initiative

ANNEX 2 – CTFF Participant Feedback

	5 - Strongly Agree	4 - Agree	3- Neutral / Uncertain	2- Disagree	1- Strongly Disagree	Number of Respondents
Session 1: Review of Key Issues for Fisheries Best Management Practices (BMP) and Bycatch						
The session is relevant to my organization	27	19	3	1		50
The session is interesting and offered new knowledge	23	22	4	1		50
The speakers' style and delivery were effective	10	29	11			50
Session 2: Mitigating Bycatch and Improving Fisheries Practices in the Coral Triangle: Lessons Learned						
The session is relevant to my organization	25	20	4	1		50
The session is interesting and offered new knowledge	20	24	5	1		50
The speakers' style and delivery were effective	8	29	13			50
Session 3: Developing and Scaling up Partnerships and Bycatch Reduction and BMP Adoption in the Coral Triangle						
The session is relevant to my organization	20	25	4	1		50
The session is interesting and offered new knowledge	20	23	6	1		50
The speakers' style and delivery were effective	8	32	10			50
Others Aspects						
Facilities / Materials / Secretariat						
The event facilities are adequate	27	19	3	1		50
The presentation materials are of good quality	24	22	4			50
The event secretariat was helpful	24	20	5	1		50
General Event Rating						
The event was well implemented	23	23	3	1		50
The event met my expectations	18	27	4	1		50
TOTAL	277	334	79	10	0	
	Too Short	Just Right	Too Long			
Is 2 days enough for the summit?	6	44	0			