2018

HIGH SURVIVABILITY EXEMPTION OF RED SEA BREAM FOR ARTISANAL FLEET OF VORACERA OPERATING IN THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR

SWW REGIONAL GROUP+ MEDITERRANEAN
PESCAMED REGIONAL GROUPS

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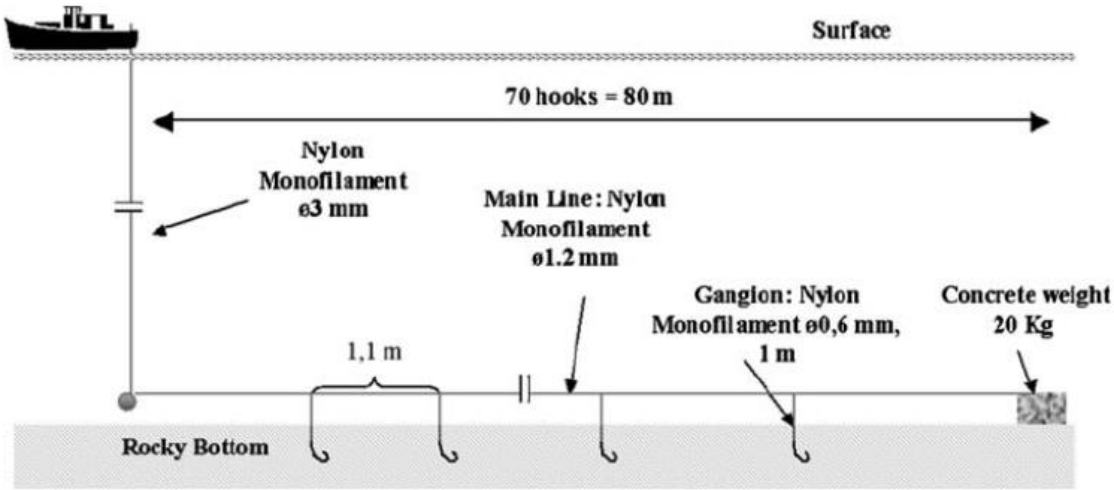
Introduction and gear definition

The red sea bream (*Pagellus bogavareo*) is a demersal species that can be found in north east Atlantic waters and in the Mediterranean Sea. In Spain we can find landings of this fish mainly in some ports of the Mediterranean Sea, and much more abundant in the zone of the Strait of Gibraltar. This is the reason why this exemption is requested for both areas from the Strait of Gibraltar, Atlantic (SWW) and Mediterranean (PESCAMED).

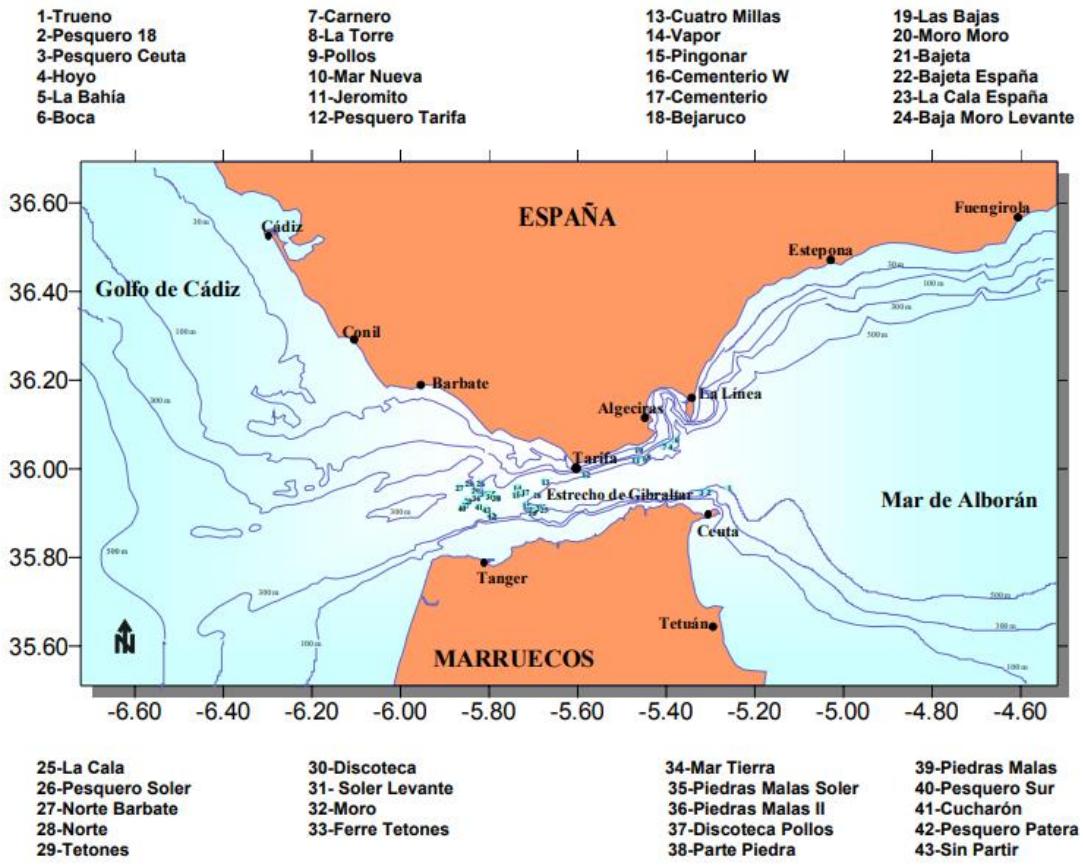
Picture 1. *Red sea bream (Pagellus bogavareo). Photo source: taken from https://www.pescaderiascorunesas.es/.*

The fishing gear called "Voracera" is a special type of longline used historically in the south of Spain around the Strait of Gibraltar. This fishing line is directed to red sea bream *(Pagellus bogaraveo)* and is used by a small fleet from Tarifa, Algeciras and Ceuta ports mainly. Just a closed census of authorized vessels form this artisanal fleet that fish both in Atlantic and in Mediterranean waters.



Picture 2. *Diagran of the fishing gear "voracera". Photo source: Czerwinski, Ivone & Erzini, Karim & Estrada, Juan & Hernando, Jose. (2009). Deep water longline selectivity for black spot seabream (Pagellus bogaraveo) in the Strait of Gibraltar. Fisheries Science. 75. 285-294. 10.1007/s12562-009-0071-7.*

Therefore, the "Voracera" is a gear developed to fit the special characteristics of this area and to be adapted to the particular conditions of the Strait of Gibraltar. This longline is set using stones or concrete blocks in order to reach the seabed and counteract the strong marine currents of the zone. Once the gear is set in the bottom, it remains around 15-30 minutes before the collection. Sea fishing area in the picture below.



***Picture 3**. Location of fishing areas through the Strait of Gibraltar. Photo source: Tesis Juan Gil "Biologia y pesca del voraz Pagellus bogaraveo (Brünnich,1768)] en el Estrecho de Gibraltar"*

This particular kind of fishing is specifically regulated by Spanish regulation from 1999 and nowadays by regulation AAA/1589/2012, from 17th July 2012 where the fishing effort is limited up to a maximum of 5 days per week and 140 days per year to each vessel. In addition the regulation establishes a closure period from the 1st of February to the 31thof March.

The minimum conservation reference size of the red sea bream is regulated in the Mediterranean Sea by Regulation (CE) Nº 1967/2006 which establishes the minimum legal size at 33 cm.

In the case of the Atlantic, there was established in the Spanish regulation a minimum legal size of 25 cm. Looking for an improvement in the stock conservation and a facilitation in the management and control of the fishery, it was necessary to reach the same level of regulation in both areas at EU level as in this zone there are no separation between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

Thus in order to unify this measure, it was established the same minimum conservation reference size, 33cm, for Atlantics waters for all EU vessels by the REGLAMENTO DE EJECUCIÓN (UE) 2017/787 DE LA COMISIÓN de 8 de mayo de 2017.

As this fishery has a specific management plan that makes it sustainable its exploitation in this area, the voracera fleet from Tarifa has developed a quality brand called "Besugo de la Pinta. Voraz de Tarifa" to highlight the good quality of his captures and the good practices carried out during the fishing operations in order to improve the protection and promoting the responsible management of this resource.

Picture 4. *Seal of the brand of "Besugo de la Pinta. Voraz de Tarifa" Photo source: taken from http://www.besugodelapinta.com/*

Because of the high selectivity of this gear as we can see in a selectivity study carried out by the University of Cádiz and the short period that it remains in the water, it is perceptible that the fishes caught with the voracera arrive at the vessel alive and in good conditions.

This video shows how a vessel with voracera gear operates during its fishing trip.

Experiences of capture – marking – recapture of individuals of red sea bream were carried out by the Spanish Oceanographic Institute (see annex II).

Regarding the data of recaptured individuals we can affirm that the age range that has higher survivability are those with smaller size. It seems that they are better at bearing the stress associated with both fishing manoeuvres as to the tasks of marking: its behaviour after the release showed obvious signs of rapid recovery, heading towards to the bottom.

According to the survivability study carried out by the Secretaría General de Pesca (Spanish Ministry) through the collaboration with the Biology's department of the University of Cadiz in 2017 (see Annex I) individuals under 33 cm total length captured in the Strait of Gibraltar using voracera as fishing gear present survivability rates of 90.6 ± 6.2% and the surviving animals manage to recover their basal homeostatic levels, being able to speak of an effective physiological recovery between 5 and 24 hours after the capture.

All the information presented in annexes I and II and the file with additional information is submitted to ask for a high survival exemption in the Strait of Gibraltar both sides (Atlantic SWW and Mediterranean) for the fleet using voracera from 1st January 2019.

Annex I

Annex II