

Foreword

Fisheries research is progressing beyond the traditional target-oriented paradigm to incorporate whole ecosystem constraints in the sustainable use of marine living resources, under the concept of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries. In this context, it is necessary to promote coordinated research by scientists from natural and social domains, as well as to provide advice to fisheries managers and stakeholders. The policy needs of the European Commission led to the Concerted Action “CREAM”, some of whose scientific results are included in this volume.

The purpose of CREAM “Coordinating research in support to application of EAF (Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries) and management advice in the Mediterranean and Black Seas” (a project funded from 2011 to 2104 by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme) is to establish an effective collaboration network among key players in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries research and management. The participants in the project include national research institutes from Mediterranean and Black Sea countries with a long history and active participation in fisheries research and assessment, who provide advice to national, regional and international fisheries management bodies. CREAM sought the active collaboration of these regional and international fisheries management bodies as external participants in the project, in order to identify the gaps (in terms of data, knowledge, training and coordination) which currently hinder the full application of the EAF in the management of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries. The project has involved a strong training and capacity building component in order to help harmonize data collection and methodologies used in fisheries assessment and management in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. The project has served to establish the guidelines for the application of the EAF in the Mediterranean and Black Seas in both EU member states and third countries. CREAM was divided into six work packages: i) project coordination, ii) review of current knowledge on data collection and methodological practices in assessment and management, iii) identification of data needs, quality, harmonization, methodologies and models for EAF, iv) establishing coordination with the international/regional assessment and management bodies, v) training, capacity building and dissemination, and vi) strengthening the scientific basis of EAF application in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.

One of the main products of the project has been the organisation, at the end of the project, of an International Dissemination Conference on the “Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea” (Barcelona, 9-10 June 2014). This conference has placed special emphasis on practical applications and socio-political recommendations derived from the project, and will be addressed to European and non-European Mediterranean scientists, stakeholders and decision-makers concerned about fisheries and environmental management.

The present volume is the result of the above-mentioned conference and we hope it will be useful in the near future to contribute to the implementation of the EAF in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

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Guest Editors