Fisheries Bycatch Mitigation Strategies :

Time-Area Closures for Bycatch Reduction

Date Time: 2026-03-26 12:16:18

Meeting Marine Beacon : Malaga

JV

Summary

This lecture compiles summaries from discussion group on Time-Area Closures for Bycatch Reduction

Group 1 concluded that time-area closures are not currently a viable primary solution for reducing bycatch, particularly for highly mobile species, due to immature predictive science, the risk of piecemeal solutions that harm other taxa, and high implementation and enforcement costs.

Knowledge Points

1. Group 1: Time-Area Closures for Bycatch Reduction

- **Conclusion on Time-Area Closures**
    - Time-area closures are currently a challenging and suboptimal solution for bycatch reduction.
    - Real-time prediction of optimal closure timing and locations to protect highly mobile species is not yet scientifically feasible.
    - Predictions for highly mobile species carry significant uncertainty.
- **Risks of Piecemeal Solutions**
    - Closures aimed at protecting one species or taxon (e.g., sharks) can inadvertently create problems for another (e.g., sea turtles).
    - The consensus is to avoid piecemeal bycatch solutions and consider impacts across all taxa groups.
- **Implementation Challenges**
    - Closures entail high costs and require strict enforcement.
    - Monitoring compliance is more straightforward for large vessels than for small vessels.
- **Incentives and Industry Rewards**
    - Rewarding industry adoption of measures like closures is important.

    - Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification was identified as a potential incentive, as large companies use it to access markets.
    - The MSC could become more restrictive, raising certification standards to increase its value as a reward.
- **Future Action Plan**
    - Continue scientific research on the spatial-temporal distribution of highly mobile species.
    - Future technology may enable real-time prediction.
    - For now, prioritize other mitigation strategies that reduce bycatch interactions rather than recommending time-area closures until the science matures.

00:00:00
Speaker 1
It's your, you are the room presenter. Okay, congratulations.

00:00:06
Speaker 2
Okay, so we have been discussing the topic on time area closures. The first thing we discussed whether is it a good solution for reduction by accident? And our conclusions have been that first of all. It's a difficult topic and it's difficult to close a fishery. From a scientific point of view, We think that the science is not there yet to predict in real time time area closures. Most of us here work with highly mobile species. It would be a different topic if we were working with non-mobile species.

00:00:52
Speaker 2
So, because the science is not there yet, our predictions have high uncertainty. It's really difficult to say what would be the best time and the best area to close, you know, so to protect or reduce bycatch of species. Second level of difficulty is you might be proposing a solution for one species and taxon group, for example sharks. And you might be creating for another tax group, sea turtles. So that's what we call proposing piecemeal by-catch solutions. So we need to ensure that piecemeal by-catch solutions are not advised. What they will discuss is very case-specific, but the starting consensus was.

00:01:49
Speaker 2
That in order to avoid piecemeal bycatch solutions, you need to look across taxa groups. The second point of discussion was whether it was easy to implement. And I think we can understand with this, but we talk about there is a high cost, harsh enforcement. It would not be the same to monitor large vessels than in small vessels in terms of enforcement.

00:02:19
Speaker 2
Some of you make the point of rewarding. So, it's important that the fishing industry gets reward for these type of measures. We talk about the MSC certification. Large companies already have the MSC certification to access new markets, so what can we do to reward them? But maybe the MSC certification could get more restricted. How higher standards before officially get certified. And last, action plan, how to move forward. I think there was consensus that we need to continue. It doesn't

mean that we have to stop doing our science and our research. We still should continue to try to understand the spatial - temporal distribution of high mobile species. Perhaps in the future we will have the technology to predict in real time.

00:03:17
Speaker 2
Where to find them and spend some time. But at the moment, We would recommend to focus mitigation strategies to reduce the number of interactions before we are ready to give advice on time area closures. Anybody would like to add anything else?

00:03:37
Speaker 1
No, thank you. You can applause. Do you have any questions or comments? Zero group, about that. Oh, it's okay. Yeah? Are you agreeing? So.