

Harmonisation of the acoustic data in the Mediterranean 2002-2006.

Acoustic surveys have been conducted by Member states of EU on a regular basis in several Mediterranean geographical subdivisions (GSAs) during the last decades. Specifically, in the western Mediterranean the Iberian coast has been regularly surveyed since 1990, the Gulf of Lions since 1995, the western part of the Adriatic Sea since 1976 and the Sicilian Channel since 1998. In the Eastern Mediterranean Sea acoustic surveys were held in northern Aegean Sea since 1995 but with temporal gaps. Regularly the area has been surveyed since 2003 in the framework of the Data Collection Regulation (DCR). All these acoustic surveys operated under a common target which was the estimation of the population abundance of small pelagic fish as well as their spatial distribution per respective surveyed area. Anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) and sardine (

Sardina pilchardus

) were the main target species for all surveys. However these surveys have not been internationally coordinated and data have been analysed and presented in diversified ways. The acoustic surveys in the aforementioned areas are currently being part of the Pan Mediterranean Acoustic Survey (MEDIAS) from 2009 onward. In the 1st and 2nd MEDIAS meeting several issues have been raised that require the harmonization among the different surveys. Therefore, the present study has specific targets aiming to assure the optimization of the design of these acoustic surveys held in the five different geographical areas, promote the compatibility of the acoustic estimations among these areas as well as the compatibility of old and new acoustic data within each area. The lack of harmonization among the different acoustic surveys comprises an impediment to the use and meta-analysis of the existing time-series of acoustic data at large spatial and temporal scales.

Project Objectives:

- Optimization of the acoustic surveys design, strongly related to the accuracy of the acoustic estimates.
- The Target Strength equation used for the target species in each area.
- The effect of the time of day on the acoustic and biological sampling
- The standarisation of a common format for acoustic data and the estimated parameters that would allow a comparable presentation of the data for the requirement of the DCR as well as their integration for common analysis.

. *Palabras clave:* acoustic surveys, data, harmonization, Mediterranean Sea.

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Responsable: Dr. Athanassios Machias (Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, HCMR, Grecia).

Componentes:

- Dr Magdalena Iglesias (IEO, España)
- Angelo Bonanno (CNR-Sicily, Italia)
- Iole Leonori (CNR-Ancona, Italia)
- Jean Louis Bigot (IFREMER, Francia)