



WWF

PUBLICATION

2019

WWF PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHING TOURISM

Pescaturismo, Pescaturisme, Pêchetourisme,
Pesca Vivencial, Experiential Fishing, Ribolovni turizam etc.

Front cover

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Published in June 2019 by WWF – World Wide Fund For Nature (Formerly World Wildlife Fund).

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Citation of this report: Gomei M., Bellia R. (2019). *WWF Principles for Sustainable Fishing Tourism*. WWF Mediterranean Marine Initiative, Rome, Italy. 20 pp.

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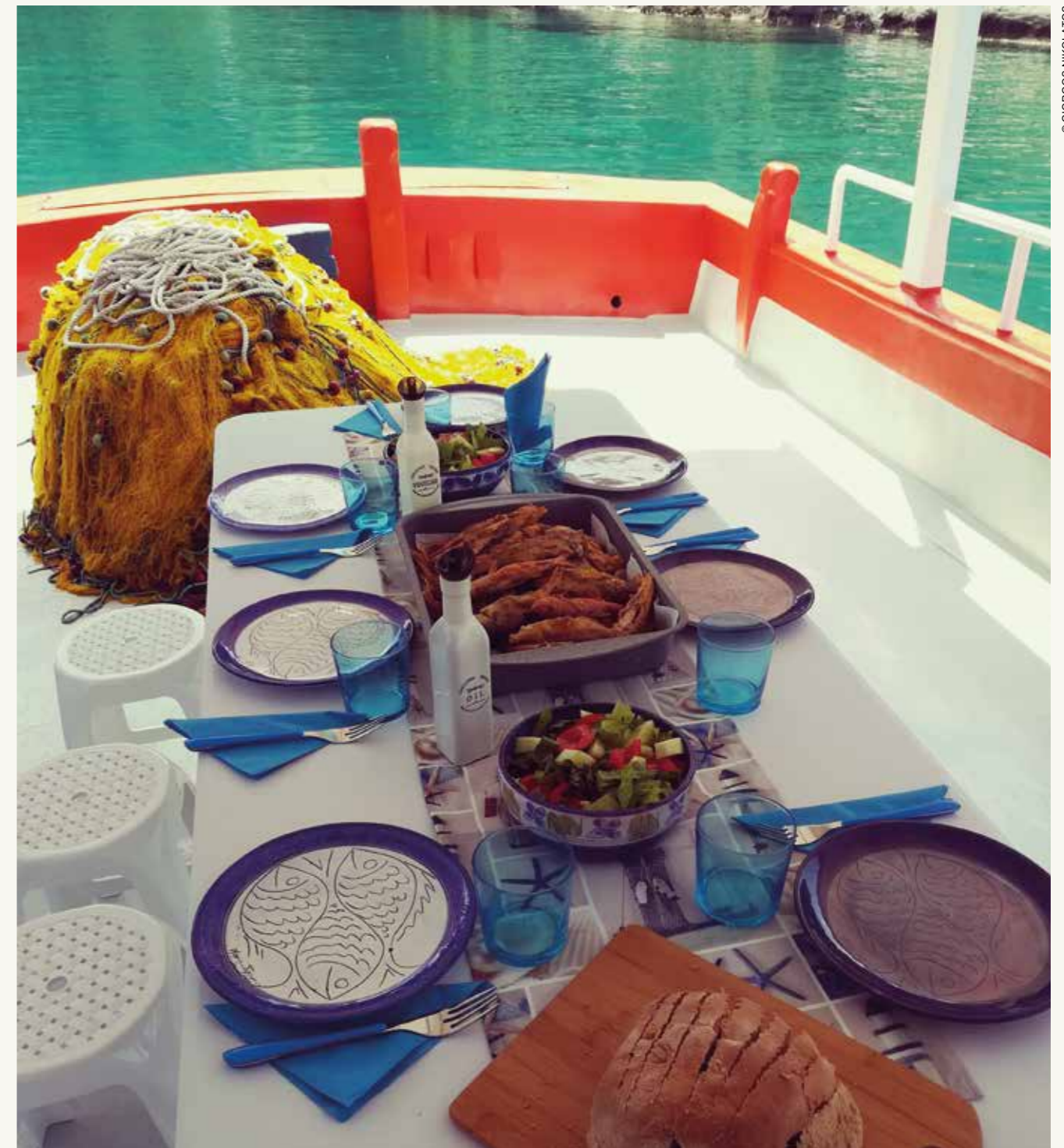
We would like to thank the following people in particular: Oscar Esparza Alaminos, Mariuxi Fariás Mejía, Jumanne Mohamed Sobo, Vishwanie Maharaj, Catherine Piante, Mosor Prvan, Nadia Ramdane.

Design/Layout/Infographics: Bianco Tangerine Snc

This report is available at:
wwfmmi.org/sustainablefishingtourism



Publication produced with the support of the **MedMPA network project** and the financial contribution of the European Union.



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Sustainable Fishing Tourism has different names in different countries: Pescaturismo, Pescaturisme, Pêchetourisme, Pesca Vivencial, Experiential Fishing, Ribolovni turizam etc.

Sustainable Fishing Tourism around the world

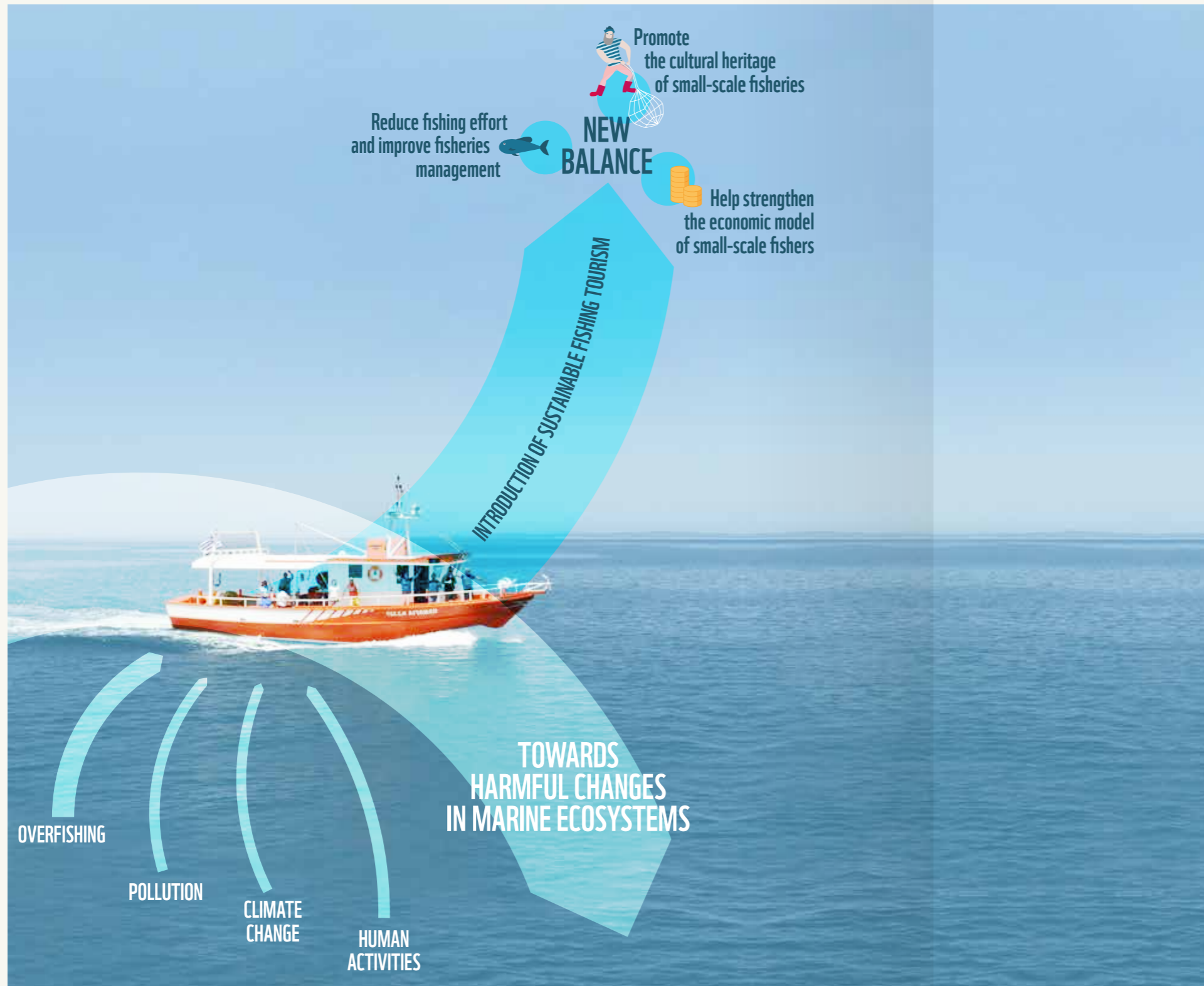
Sustainable Fishing Tourism – when tourists pay professional fishers to show them what life at sea is really like – is an increasingly popular way of diversifying artisanal fishers' activities. If it's done right, it can help fish stocks and the marine environment, spread understanding of the sea and its traditions, and bring in alternative income for fishers.

Unfortunately, in many cases, fishing tourism does not comply with legal requirements or it is performed without any regulatory framework, potentially becoming an unsustainable activity and going against the long-term benefit of the marine environment.

That's why WWF has developed a set of principles and recommendations for making fishing tourism truly sustainable. This publication provides a definition of Sustainable Fishing Tourism, as well as background information, practical case studies, and a summary of the principles themselves.



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Finding ways to reduce the pressure on fish stocks

Small-scale fisheries have played an important socioeconomic and cultural role worldwide for hundreds of years. Small-scale fisheries are a multi-dimensional sector, where modern developments and cultural heritage coexist and are embedded in the surrounding environment. They are important vectors of local knowledge and good practices and they have a relatively low environmental impact.

But today they're under more pressure than ever before.

33% OF GLOBAL FISHERIES ARE OVEREXPLOITED AND 59% ARE EXPLOITED TO THE MAXIMUM LEVEL

With 33% of global fisheries classed as overexploited and 59% exploited to the maximum level,¹ current catch trends will soon lead to widespread stock collapses. Add to this decades of progressive degradation of marine ecosystems through climate change, pollution and maritime activities, and it's clear that the world is facing an unprecedented fisheries crisis.

This steep decline in ocean health and productivity threatens the wellbeing of hundreds of millions of people.² It's a particularly serious prospect for some small coastal communities which rely on small-scale fishing for income and food security, whose cultural heritage is based on a way of life that has changed little for centuries. Dwindling catches and falling revenues put all of this at risk.

To compound the problem, such communities are often in regions which receive a high number of tourists, and some small fishing ports are gradually becoming more like marinas for summer visitors. Some small-scale fishers have seen their work areas shrink to the point where they don't fish at all during the tourist season.

There's no single magic solution to the crisis facing small-scale fisheries: action is needed on many fronts to make fisheries sustainable. **However, one particular practice that's gained in popularity around the world is Sustainable Fishing Tourism.** Finding an effective way of merging the fisheries sector with the tourist market is a fishing diversification activity that could not only limit excessive exploitation of marine resources, but also create an alternative source of income for fishers and their communities, based on the promotion of local and marine heritage.

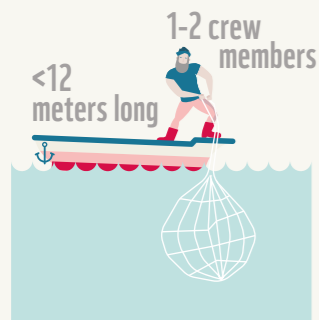
SUSTAINABLE FISHING TOURISM IS AN EFFECTIVE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE FISHING ACTIVITY

¹ FAO 2018. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018 - Meeting the sustainable development goals. Rome. <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>

² WWF 2018. Living Planet Report - 2018: Aiming Higher. Grooten, M. and Almond, R.E.A.(Eds). WWF, Gland, Switzerland.

Definition of Sustainable Fishing Tourism

Sustainable Fishing Tourism is an economic activity run by professional fishers, and more specifically by small-scale fishers, with tourists aboard, and results in fishing activity diversification. This alternative income stream should reduce the intensity of fishing activities, contribute to sustainable management of fishery resources, and promote the cultural heritage of artisanal fishing.



SUSTAINABLE FISHING TOURISM IS ONLY INTENDED FOR PROFESSIONAL FISHERS

Whether it's referred to as *Pescaturismo*, *Pescaturisme*, *Pêchetourisme*, *Pesca Vivencial*, *Experiential Fishing*, *Ribolovni turizam* etc. the concept remains the same: it is only intended for professional small-scale fishers, allowing the diversification of their activities while continuing their traditional trade. They host paying tourists on their boats to show them what a working day is like and teach them about the immense value and fragility of the sea.

At sea, small-scale fishers often work alone and rarely with more than two crew members, on boats of usually less than 12 metres. In fishing tourism they carry a small number of guests on board, showing them what they do at sea, sharing their intimate knowledge of marine ecosystems and life beneath the waves.

Depending on the regulations in the country concerned the tourists are sometimes given the chance to handle fishing gear, and even taste freshly-caught fish cooked on board. Fishers can also offer the tourists meals on land, traditionally prepared with fresh or processed fish they or their colleagues have caught. In some communities, fishers also offer tourist accommodation.

What is NOT Sustainable Fishing Tourism?

It's important to stress that Sustainable Fishing Tourism doesn't mean organizing passenger transport, sport and big game fishing, sightseeing trips, or seaside catering and accommodation solely to attract money.

Sustainable Fishing Tourism has been actively promoted as an alternative income-generating activity for small-scale fishers, and various guidelines and best practices have been disseminated (see Bibliography).

Even though we don't have enough data to fully assess the negative impact on the environment of non-sustainable practices, WWF urges all organizations promoting Sustainable Fishing Tourism to apply the fundamental principles and recommendations to ensure the environmental sustainability of their operations.

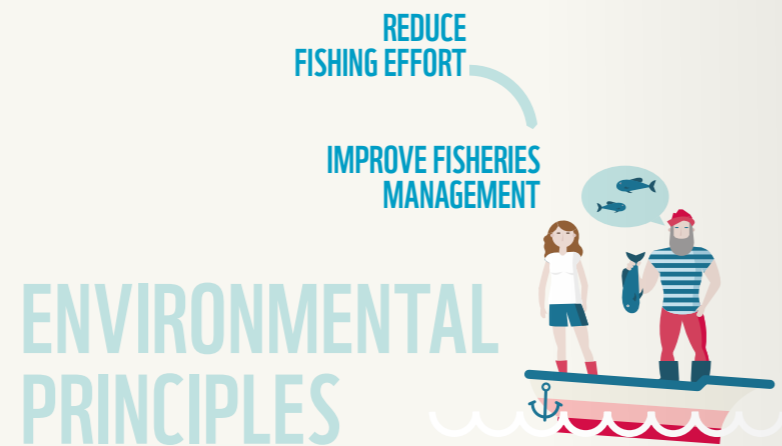


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Key principles of Sustainable Fishing Tourism

To achieve the goal of environmental sustainability, Sustainable Fishing Tourism has to be based on three main principles:

- **ENVIRONMENTAL** to reduce fishing effort and improve fisheries management
- **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL** to promote the cultural heritage of small-scale fisheries
- **ECONOMIC** to help strengthen the economic model of small-scale fishers



- Sustainable Fishing Tourism comes with reduced fishing effort. Receiving passengers aboard and the time dedicated by the fishers to the activity logically leads to a reduction in the amount of gear they can use and time spent fishing.
- More selective types of fishing gear, often used by small-scale fishers (e.g. fish traps, longlines), are promoted to the visitors and traditional less intensive fishing techniques can be reintroduced.
- On board, tourists are educated on the value of marine biodiversity and about how a healthy marine environment is crucial for local communities who rely on marine resources.
- In marine protected areas (MPAs) or locally-managed marine areas (LMMAs), Sustainable Fishing Tourism is supported as a diversification activity to improve sustainable fisheries management and reduce illegal fishing.

FOCUS: CORSICA, FRANCE

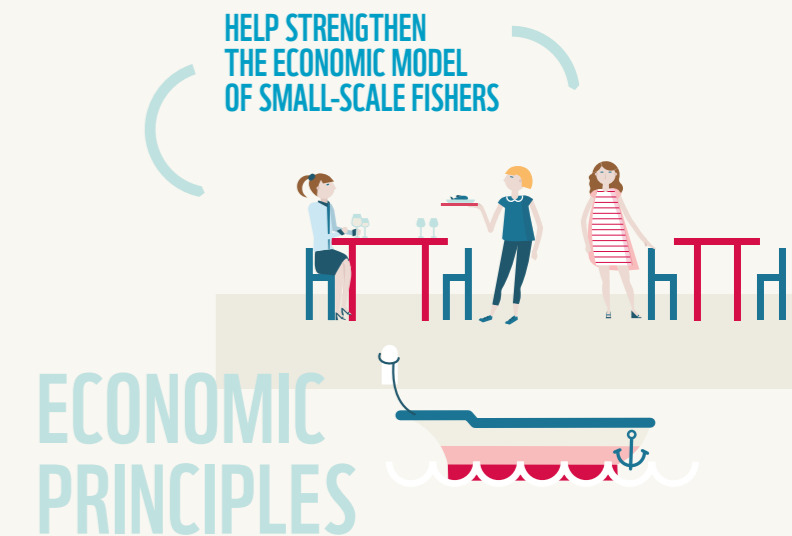
In the Strait of Bonifacio Natural Reserve in Corsica, a 2-year monitoring study was carried out aboard a ship specially designed for Sustainable Fishing Tourism. The results showed a decrease in the fishing effort by 15% - which represents one tonne of fish not caught.



- During the boat trip, fishers share their personal experience and know-how about this ancient profession and their intrinsic connection with the sea and the coast; but they also discuss current issues they are facing like their competition for space and resources with maritime traffic, nautical tourism and recreational fishing.
- Local fishers' culture, knowledge and traditions are given value through first-hand experience. Visitors can participate in the preparation and processing of seafood, taste fishery products and stay in local accommodation in coastal villages, where fishers' families have lived for many generations.
- Through creating meaningful connections between tourists and local fishers, sustainable tourism is promoted. By choosing Sustainable Fishing Tourism, visitors create a positive impact on the communities they visit; in turn their cultural sensitivity is enhanced and their respect for local cultures and the dignity of fishers is fostered.

FOCUS: LIGURIA, ITALY

A local cooperative promotes a fish species with low commercial value through a branded traditional recipe. The market value of this fish is 0,5€/kg. When canned following this recipe, the corresponding price increases to 15€/kg. When served as the daily menu, its value increases to 40€/kg.

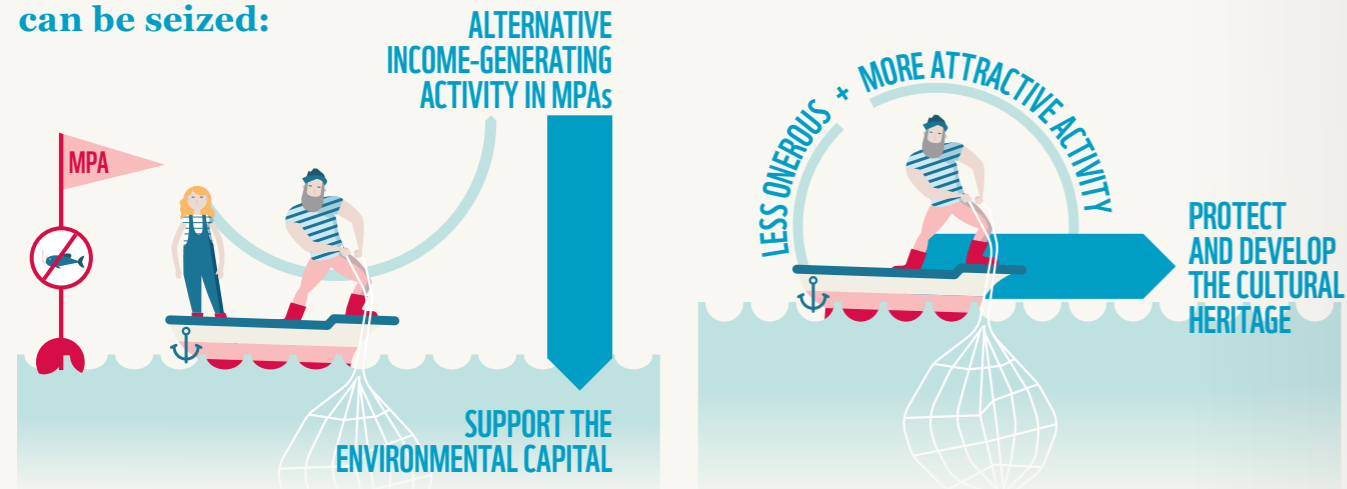


- Unlike standard fishing activities, each boat trip with tourists ensures a fixed income for fishers. They can rely on an activity with higher added value to compensate for variable catches without having to increase their fishing effort.
- Sustainable Fishing Tourism helps attract a new type of tourist, strengthening or developing direct sales while expanding fishing seasonality and increasing fishery products, especially for less commercially valued or forgotten species.³
- The economic benefits for coastal communities are maximized by ensuring that local people are employed, local products purchased, and other local tourism products are promoted.
- Public-private partnerships are created by investing part of the revenue from Sustainable Fishing Tourism in local MPAs or the fishing authority in charge of the management of the area.

³ Results of the 2009-2011 Project by Marco Polo EA: Fishing Tourism 83 Project, Fishing Tourism and Local Maritime Sustainable Development, April 2012. Some fish species were gradually overlooked by consumers in favour of "higher-quality" species widely found in supermarkets.

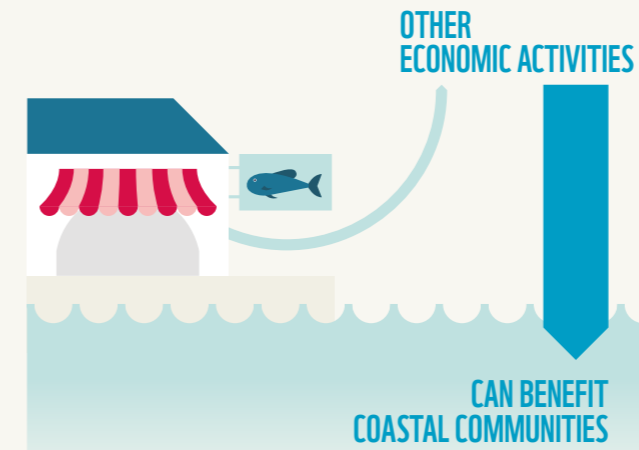
Opportunities of Sustainable Fishing Tourism

Sustainable Fishing Tourism is still an emerging activity, although it has been implemented in some countries for a few years. Many opportunities can be seized:

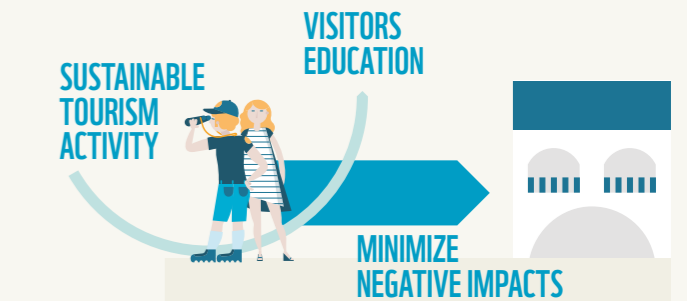


In **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**, Sustainable Fishing Tourism is a more robust tool with a long-term vision than financial subsidies for fishers, and could compensate for restrictions on fishing activities. If well managed, tourism can contribute to sustainable development through the creation of income-generating activities for local people, while supporting the environmental capital of their territory.

The interest of **younger generations** in coastal communities can be stimulated by making the fishing profession more attractive and less onerous. Educating students in coastal communities and bringing young people closer to Sustainable Fishing Tourism will help to protect and develop the cultural heritage value of the fisheries where it is in operation.



In line with Sustainable Fishing Tourism, **other spin off economic activities** can be developed to the benefit of fisher and coastal communities. There are many successful examples, from seafood tasting and restaurants managed by fishing cooperatives, to accommodation in fishing villages; as well as activities introducing the environmental, historical and cultural heritage of small-scale fisheries.⁴



Sustainable Fishing Tourism can be considered and promoted as a genuinely **sustainable tourism** activity⁵ as it minimizes negative economic, environmental and social impacts, educates visitors on the importance of marine biodiversity, and promotes local resources.

⁴ See the bibliography chapter of this publication

⁵ UNWTO Definition: Sustainable tourism can be defined as: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>



Recommendations

To achieve the three principles of sustainability, WWF recommends a focus on the following key areas of work. Recommendations address specific stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS AT NATIONAL LEVEL:



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The first enabling condition for Sustainable Fishing Tourism is to develop robust and efficient national and/or local regulations which cover security and safety aspects for passengers, regulate fishing methods, and recognize Sustainable Fishing Tourism as a fishery-diversification activity. This includes development of a sustainable fisheries tourism action plan and/or national guidelines.

Legal framework for Sustainable Fishing Tourism introduced to support the creation of a new MPA

TAZA NATIONAL PARK, ALGERIA

When the Taza National Park applied to extend its borders and create a new MPA, local stakeholders were engaged in a planning process to ensure that socioeconomic needs were taken into account alongside conservation objectives. From 2013, while waiting for the official declaration of the MPA, local fishers asked WWF for technical support to introduce Pescaturisme as a way of supplementing incomes reduced by new no-take zones. They carried out an extensive capacity building exercise and engagement with fishers and administrations, leading to the first testing of Pescaturisme. In 2017, a new national law recognized Pescaturisme as a diversification of fishing activity.

Key lessons

- **Direct involvement of the state's central services (i.e. coast guards and Ministries of Fisheries, Transport and Tourism) led to the drafting of the new law**
- **Priority was given to insurance and security issues from the very beginning**
- **Exchange visits were organized for the central administrations (in charge of the development of the law) with fishery cooperatives in France and Italy, where sustainable fishing tourism is well developed**
- **It is worth implementing a pilot phase before the final development of the activity.**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FISHERS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ASSOCIATIONS:



BE INCLUSIVE

In the very early stages of the planning phase, leaders of the initiative should apply a multi-sectoral approach, involving professional fishers, fishery and tourism administrations and operators, local associations (e.g. fishery cooperatives, environmental NGOs) and MPA authorities. This will ensure that stakeholders' perspectives, knowledge and support are included, and will in turn give them a greater sense of ownership of the project.

Pescaturismu project: 10 fishers obtain fishing tourism licence

CORSICA, FRANCE

The success of the Pescaturismu project, supported by the European Fisheries Fund, was due to the involvement of several official bodies in Corsica: a professional fishery organization (Regional Committee on Marine Fisheries and Fish Farming in Corsica), the Corsican Environment Office, the Corsica Tourist Board, and the office of maritime affairs. Through coordinated support, these administrations were able to guide the fishers through the complex process of setting up sustainable fishing tourism operations.

Key lessons

- **Project was integrated as part of a territorial development approach**
- **Multi-sectoral partnership was established from the very beginning**
- **Participants were trained in best practices, guided through the steps needed to equip their vessels, and assisted in obtaining official authorizations.**

Recommendations



ADAPT TO LOCAL NEEDS

Learning from existing and successful experiences is always a good first step. However, planners should develop a tailored initiative for the local community, based on its real needs, rather than a mere copy-and-paste from activities existing in other areas. Even within the same country, fishing tourism might be organized differently from place to place.

Experiential fishing programme reduces overall fishing pressure and offers socioeconomic benefits

GALÁPAGOS, ECUADOR

Galápagos is one of the best conserved archipelagos in the world. However, the Galápagos Islands are facing a socio-environmental crisis that could put at risk the biodiversity and the conservation efforts that have made the islands famous throughout the world. Authorities put their weight behind the successful introduction of Experiential fishing or Pesca vivencial in the Galápagos Marine Reserve as a sustainable way of supporting small-scale fishing communities and reducing pressure on the highly vulnerable local ecosystems.

Key lessons

- **Recognition of Experiential fishing as a sustainable tourism activity, included in the Natural Protected Areas Tourism Special Law (RETANP in Spanish) in 2015**
- **Increased understanding of the local culture with Experiential fishing, making the Galápagos National Park more than just a 'natural' destination for tourists; the islands support a society too, and fishing tourism involves that society in preserving the resources people depend on**
- **Full support of WWF-Ecuador together with the Galápagos National Park Service and the Ministry of Tourism to develop business plans that include marketing plans and strategic alliances, while proactively embedding environmental sustainability and social responsibility into business.**



INVEST IN TRAINING AND COACHING

Fishers' backgrounds do not generally include tourism, marketing, communication or awareness-raising. Specific support should be provided to fishers to strengthen their capacities in environmental and tourism education to create local ambassadors for sustainable principles in the marine environment.



BUILD A STRONG ECONOMIC MODEL

To ensure a long-term environmental and social impact a solid business model should be defined and built from the very beginning. Fishers and fishing organizations should be guided and supported to achieve this objective and integrate Sustainable Fishing Tourism in the economy of the territory.

Family uses one boat to fish, one boat as a restaurant

IMPERIA, ITALY

The Pinga family have been fishing for generations. Today their fishing and diversification activities are managed on separate boats which work together, and results have been impressive: one boat is engaged in small-scale fishing, while a second boat offers fishing tourism trips and serves some of the best seafood in the region. This diversified model brings in valuable extra revenue for all the family.

Key lessons

- **Initial support from from the LEGAPESCA Liguria – the Regional Organization of Fishery Cooperatives in Liguria**
- **Development of entrepreneurship and business skills to ensure the promotion and effective communication of their activity**
- **Family project with a balanced distribution of tasks.**



ENSURE SCIENTIFIC MONITORING

Especially in MPAs, LMMAs and fishery managed areas, the impact of Sustainable Fishing Tourism on the marine environment should be monitored over time to demonstrate that the reduction in the intensity of fishing activities is ultimately reflected in the recovery of local fish populations.



Bibliography

This publication is not an instruction manual for launching Sustainable Fishing Tourism activities. Many organizations have developed guidelines and operational recommendations and an essential reference list is provided below:

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100%
RECYCLED



59%

of global fisheries
are exploited
to the maximum level

7.59%

of the world's oceans are
covered by protected areas

<\$1 per day

is the daily pay of 5.8 million
small-scale fishers
in the world
(United-Nations 2012)



120 MILLION

people are working
in small-scale fisheries
in the world
(United-Nations 2012)



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and
to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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