



Ministero dell'Agricoltura,

della sovranità alimentare e delle foreste

DIPARTIMENTO DELLA SOVRANITÀ ALIMENTARE E DELL'IPPICA
DIREZIONE GENERALE DELLA PESCA MARITTIMA E DELL'ACQUACOLTURA

Joint Recommendation of the Italian Member State

Management plan on Transparent goby fisheries in certain Italian territorial water (Gulf of Manfredonia).

Following Article 18 of Regulation (EU) n. 1380/2013, the Italian Member State is proposing a Joint Recommendation (JR) for the renewal of the Management plan on transparent goby fisheries (*Aphia minuta*) in certain Italian territorial water (Gulf of Manfredonia) that applies only to the Italian fleet.

Italy, as the single Member State with a direct management interest in this fishery, developed the proposed Management plan that involves only the Apulia region which has proposed to the Central Administration, in collaboration with the appointed scientific institute.

The Management plan in **Annex (A)** to this JR for this type of fishing activities has great historical and cultural value for the area. Therefore, it represents a traditional fishing technique from which derives typical products.

The request of renewal of this management plan which follows other plans approved over the years, it demonstrates that the fishing operation and the management of the specie *Aphia minuta* is in place from several years and the fishing operation are fully controlled and monitored.

It is necessary to underline that Italy involved in this process also the MEDAC. In this regard, MEDAC has been requested to evaluate the documentation that will be presented to the STECF and provide its advice on the management plan (reference MEDAC advice Ref:

139/2024 - **ANNEX B**).

The management plan was therefore presented to the plenary of the STECF last July, and following the advice given and the subsequent communication to the Italian Administration by the Commission, some integrations were necessary. The updated plan containing the requested integrations is attached to this JR (**ANNEX A**).

Considering the requested additions and the implementations to the management plan, it was necessary to resubmit the plan to MEDAC, which expressed its opinion in the attached as **ANNEX C** (reference MEDAC advice Ref:XXXXX).

Objectives of the proposed Management Plan.

- a) As a result of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (Regulation (EU) n. 1380/2013), adopted in 2013 and entered into force from 1st January 2014, there is a provision under Article 18 that allows Member States to elaborate Joint Recommendations for regional management measures specific to their fisheries, applying to a relevant geographical area and submit these to the European Commission for adoption *via* delegated acts.
- b) The scope of these recommendations is laid down in Article 18(1) of Regulation (EU) n. 1380/2013 and Article 15(1)(2) of Regulation (EU) n. 2019/1241 (TMR).
- c) The proposal of this management plan is requested to derogate to Annex IX part. B (point 4) “Mesh sizes” of Regulation (EU) n. 2019/1241; art. 9 and art 13(5) of Regulation (EC)n.1967/2006 “Minimum distances and depths for the use of fishing gears”.
- d) The adoption of such a specific plan is considered paramount to the survivability of this artisanal and traditional fisheries technique with a high historical value.

Definitions

- a) For the purposes of this plan the definitions used shall be those specified in Article 4 of Regulation (EU) n. 1380/2013.
- b) “Certain Italian territorial waters” means Gulf of Manfredonia.

Duration and adaptation

- a) This specific Management Plan shall have duration of three years, ending on the 31st of May 2027.
- b) Indeed, it is the joint responsibility of the Commission and Member State to maintain oversight of the implementation of the provisions of this plan and to call into question any element which may need revision and adaptation at any time.

Geographical scope and fisheries covered

This management plan will be applicable to Transparent goby (*Aphia minuta*) fishery in the Italian territorial waters, only in Gulf of Manfredonia.

Management measures

Fishing capacity control

- a) **Fleet limitation:** No more than 55 fishing vessels will be authorized to fish transparent goby in the Gulf of Manfredonia, based on an annual authorization as established in article 19, paragraph 6 of the Regulation (EC) n. 1967/2006, 30 per day of these vessels can effectively operate, due to a shift mechanism.
The authorization shall report the fishing gears, the validity period of the fishing license and the unique target species (Transparent goby, *Aphia minuta*). Each vessel shall operate only within the Manfredonia Maritime District.
The vessel's list with their technical characteristics is reported in Annex 2 of the Management Plan.

- b) Vessels' shifts:** The shifts are weekly based. The "Organizzazione dei Produttori Ittici Sud Adriatico" (O.P.), at least upon a 3-day forewarning, provides the Manfredonia Harbour master's office (CP, Harbour Master Office) with the list of the 30 vessels operating the following week. The CP provides to the O.P. the authorizations mentioned in the previous bullet. The authorizations shall be exhibited by the vessels' captains to the authorities, in case of control on fishing activities.
During the weeks in which a vessel is not involved in the scientific survey, its authorization is kept by the CP. Modifications to the vessels' shifts can be communicated to the CP, which, if applicable, replaces the unit providing the related authorization.
- c) Gear limitation:** During the transparent goby fishing operation, it is prohibited to carry onboard any other fishing gear type, complete in all its parts and ready for use.

Fishing activity control

a) Fishing season limitation: the transparent goby fishery can be operated exclusively from 1st November to 31st May. Each vessel can operate for a maximum of 60 days during each fishing season. A total of 600 days at sea can be operated in each fishing season.

b) Weekly days limitation: transparent goby fishery is allowed up to four days *per* week, from Monday to Thursday.

c) Working time limitation:

The authorized vessels can operate exclusively during daylight:

- from November to February: from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.
- from March to May: from 5.00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

d) Species limitation:

The fishery can target transparent goby (*Aphia minuta*) only.

Restrictive technical measures

a) Gear dimensions limitations: the net cannot be longer than 300 meters, and have to be set with neutral flotation, to avoid the sea bottom impact.

b) Mesh size limitation: the minimum net mesh size shall be within 3 and 5 mm.

c) Fishing area limitation: within the Manfredonia Maritime District, the vessels can operate even nearest the distance of 3 nautical miles from the coast.

d) Protected habitats: fishery in protected habitats is prohibited.

e) By-catch limitation: The total by-catch shall be under the share of 10% of the total catches. They shall be reported in the logbook or on the monitoring modules for the transparent goby catches. The species with an established minimum size (Reg. (CE) n.1967/2006, art.15) will be landed and not sold for human consumption (Reg. (UE) n.1380/13, art. 15).

Monitoring actions

A scientific body will be appointed and will be in charge of monitoring the status of the resource. The evaluation of the status of the stock and the fishery management will be carried out based on the collection of the following data:

- **Surveys on board:** upon request of the scientific body, the fishermen beneficiaries of the Management Plan have to allow the scientists to get on board to check directly the fishing

operations, the gear characteristics, spatial monitoring, the catches on target species and by-catch, and to get biological samples, which will be given away free of charge.

- **Record form filling:** Authorized vessels shall fill the record form and the e-logbook with the data on all the catches, and the position of the vessel. This will be done daily. All following listed elements will be duly reported: the minimum data to collect the quantity of transparent goby, the date, the fishing area, the duration of each fishing operation, the number of fishing operations in a day, the by-catch. During the validity of this management plan, a digital system for computerizing the data will be adopted to replace the paper form.

- **Real-time data collection:** The O.P. shall collect daily the logbooks or the record forms compiled by the fishermen and forward them to the scientific body, within 48 hours from the landing.

- **Spatial monitoring:** Authorized vessels have to be equipped with a specific spatial monitoring system (ex. GPS).

- **Socio-economic data collection:** The O.P. shall collect socio-economic data, as the changes in the stakeholders' income, in the enterprises' revenue, the evaluation of the impact of the Management Plan on employment, the improvement on enterprise competitiveness. The collected data will be forward, once finished the fishing season, to the scientific body, for the analysis of the information.

- **Intermediate and final report:** the scientific body shall fill an Annual Report on the activities carried out and on catches operated by the fleet. The report will be focused, in particular, on the catch *per* unit effort and on all the necessary information to get sustainable exploitation of the resource.

Control and correction actions

The control entity is composed of a member of the O.P., a member of the appointed scientific body, a member of the Manfredonia Harbour master's office and a member of the Municipality of Manfredonia.

The control entity monitors the data related to the precautionary limit described in paragraph 3.5 of the Management plan (**ANNEX A** of this JR).

Reference point

The reference point is established at 35 kg/vessel/day.

Considering the need to take prompt action once the trigger is exceeded, the following pre-defined corrective measures are set:

Alert values

The following alert values, in terms of CPUE, are set:

1. The daily average CPUE falls below the LRP for 3 consecutive days.
2. The daily average CPUE falls, four times within 2 consecutive weeks, below the LRP.

Corrective measures pre-defined

The fishery is allowed from Monday to Thursday (according to the schedules detailed in paragraph 5.1.2.c of the Management Plan). On Friday the week data will be processed and:

-In case 1 (daily average CPUE below the LRP for 3 consecutive days): the fishery will be suspended for one week.

-In case 2 (daily average CPUE below the LRP for 2 times within 2 consecutive weeks days) the fishery will be allowed only for 2 days Monday and Wednesday in the following 2 weeks.

Beyond that, the control entity (compare paragraph 5.4 of the Management Plan) can take more actions, concerning the fishing period, the number of vessels effectively in operation, the value of the daily average CPUE recorded, and the other biological parameters considered as important for the general evaluation.

Where necessary, the Control entity can decide for the temporary suspension of the activities or, if necessary, an early closure.

Surveillance activity

The transparent goby Management Plan needs a surveillance system able to ensure compliance with the management measures envisaged by the Plan.

The Coast Guard (Manfredonia Harbour master's office) will control and check compliance with the rules set out in the Plan in particular, through the annual release of licenses and controls on fishing activities in the sea.

Duration of the measures

The planned management measures are activated, starting from the date of approval of the management Plan attached as **ANNEX A** to this JR, for a period of three years during which annual monitoring will be carried out which will concern the state of the resource, and the possible application of corrective measures as provided in the Management Plan.

Conclusion

The purpose of this JR is to propose the renewed Management Plan for the transparent goby fishery in certain territorial waters (Gulf of Manfredonia), has of great importance from a historical and cultural point of view as this fishing activity with a high traditional value like the associated products and their value chain. The plan is therefore also important from a socio-economic point of view and in the valorisation of regional and local products.

ANNEXES

Annex A: "Management plan for Transparent goby (*Aphia minuta*) in certain Italian territorial water (Gulf of Manfredonia)- Updated October 2024".

Annex B: "MEDAC advice- 139/2024"

Annex C: "MEDAC advice- XXXX 2024"