



ICYMARE

International Conference for
YOUNG Marine Researchers

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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FROM SCIENCE TO POLICY: VARIOUS CONSERVATION CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS

1.2.4

Spearfishing: tools for sustainable management

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The impact of recreational fishing, especially spearfishing, on the ecosystem is a subject of debate. To date, there have been few studies on spearfishing in different regions. To fill this gap, we conducted an online survey to identify and characterize the individuals who practice this activity/sport in Portugal and to analyze their habits related to this activity. We tried to evaluate the target species and to identify the most frequently caught species. We also asked respondents what happens to the fish they catch, whether they are for personal consumption, to give away or to sell. The survey targeted practitioners and social media associations or groups and received 101 responses. In summary, all participating spearfishermen were male and started this activity at the average age of 20. They enjoy what they do and catch only the species they want to eat. The average catch per person per dive is 5 kg. The main target species are cuttlefish and sea bass, and most of the catches have been cuttlefish and bream (*Diplodus* spp.). In terms of current recreational fishing regulations, respondents agreed with a closed season, the minimum length and weight of species, and the number of fish they are allowed to catch. They also agreed that some measures must be taken for people applying for a license, such as a course on species identification and their biology to be able to identify the animals correctly and another course on free diving techniques. In conclusion, spearfishing in itself does not seem to harm the environment or threaten endangered species and can be considered a sustainable activity or sport, in Portugal.