

ABSTRACT

Scattered information on marine fisheries was gathered to evaluate the status of Jordan's marine fishery during the last three decades. In addition, assessment of some commercially valuable species was conducted during July 1999 until June 2000 in Jordan's Gulf of Aqaba. Fish landing size, composition, gears and efforts expanded by Jordanian fishermen were compared and analyzed. Variation in the landing size was observed accompanied with gradual decline of commercial fish production. The Jordanian fishermen employ artisanal methods using different fishing gears that differ according to species kind and density. Fluctuation in total landing of marine fish could be attributed to the strict security measures and the depletion of bottom soft communities due to rapid urban development in coastal areas of the Gulf of Aqaba. The majority of the commercial catch comprised of the following fish families; Scombridae, Carangidae, Triakidae, Scaridae, Mullidae, Caesionidae, Siganidae, Mugilidae, and Serranidae. Fish species of Scombridae represented about 60% of the total catch. Fish imports were substantially increased in the last decade. Local marine fish production does not exceed more than 1 % of the total fishery consumption of Jordan. At the same time, Fresh fish in relation to the total consumption was extremely low (0.04%). Similarly, the per capita consumption is considerably low (3.4 kg/head) in comparison to the world's average (13 kg/head). These figures are continuously changing according to the undulation in fish production and imports which are strongly affected by the political and economic conditions in the country. The marine fishery resource would continue to decrease in the future if the past and present restrictions are to continue. Deep-water fishery and mariculture have good potential to reduce the exploitation rate of Jordan fishery resources in the Gulf of Aqaba. Measures to manage these resources are discussed in the context of the present study.

