

## WIOFish continues to spread its fins widely in the WIO region

*A total of 238 fisheries have now been recorded in the WIOFish data base comprising 30 from Mozambique, 23 from Comoros, 36 from Tanzania, 33 from Kenya, 20 from Mauritius, 41 from the Seychelles and 55 from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

**By Melckzedek Osore & Bernadine Everett**



**Fish Market in Moroni Comores (Photo credits – Bernadine Everett)**

The project on Western Indian Ocean Fisheries (WIOFish) database was initiated in 2000 to provide end-users with direct access to data and information relating to fisheries in the western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. Its ultimate mandate is to ensure that the coastal fisheries of WIO are sustainable based on a cohesive and scientific management approach enabled through the availability of adequate information to researchers and fisheries managers. The database intends providing not only a useful forum for addressing fishery stocks that transcend national boundaries, but also creates a useful scientific base for the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC).

The WIOFish database is essentially a repository for descriptive information about the fisheries that can enable end-users to generate reports that address:

- Biological and socio-economic aspects of WIO fisheries, including non-traditional and lesser-known species;
- Insight into the monitoring of fisheries, including by-catch and an ecologically representative sample of other species;
- Management systems, policy, legislation, governance and institutional capacity for the fisheries;
- Development of sustainable and appropriate livelihoods that are both fishery and non-fishery based.

The institutions that are involved in the implementation of WIOFish cut across the entire WIO region with National Nodes based at the Ministry of Agricultural Production -Fisheries Division (Comoros), Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (Kenya), Albion Fisheries Research Centre (Mauritius), Instituto Nacional de Investigação Pesqueira (IIP) – the National Institute of Fisheries Research (Mozambique), Seychelles Fishing Authority (Seychelles), Oceanographic Research Institute (South Africa) and Institute of Marine Sciences (Tanzania). South Africa is also the Regional Node of WIOFish and Ms Bernadine Everett, who is based at ORI, is the Regional Coordinator.

### **Collaboration with ASCLME and SWIOFP**

WIOFish is currently funded by the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project (SWIOFP). It has contributed towards the project by providing information for the data gap analyses undertaken by the crustacean, demersal and pelagic components of SWIOFP. WIOFish will continue to contribute fisheries data and information to SWIOFP through the project's lifespan. In particular, its main contribution will be to the biodiversity component. The main objectives of this component are to assess the state of knowledge in biodiversity, identify its values and the existing interactions with fisheries and, finally, link biodiversity with bio-indicators of ecosystem health. WIOFish also contributes new knowledge about small scale fisheries of the two regional large marine ecosystems that are addressed under the auspices of the Project known as the Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystem (ASCLME).

### **Input from Workshops at the national nodes**

During the first quarter of 2011, the Regional Coordinator, Ms Everett, facilitated a series of workshops round the WIO region in collaboration with experts from the national nodes. The purpose of these workshops, which are conducted annually, is to collect as much descriptive information as possible on catch, vessel type, gear type, habitats utilized, socioeconomics, management and references. It also serves as an opportunity to ensure that all the information in the database is as current as possible. The first workshop was held with staff from National Institute of Fisheries Research (IIP) in Maputo, Mozambique from 21 to 25 February. Ms Paula Santana Afonso (IIP) worked in collaboration with Rui Mutombene (IIP) who provided information on demersal line fishing and sport and recreational fishing, Isabel Chauca (IIP) assisted with the artisanal fisheries and Lucinda Mangué from the National Directorate of Fisheries Administration (ADNAP) provided information as required.

From March 7 to 11, Ms Everett held a data inclusion workshop with members of the Ministry of Agricultural Production -Fisheries Division from Grand Comoros, Anjouan and Mohéli in Comoros as well as from the Mohéli Marine Park and the Fisheries and Maritime School. Despite have some technological difficulties the group was able to describe 23 fisheries that occur in the Comoros Archipelago. This was the first workshop conducted in French and while the Regional Coordinator's French skills are still limited, having the data collection templates available in French contributed enormously to a very successful workshop.

The Regional Coordinator proceeded to the Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS) in Zanzibar, Tanzania from March 14 to 18 and was hosted by Dr. Narriman Jiddawi and the very capable group that she assembled. This group included from IMS: Salum Hamed, Saleh Yahya, Daudi Msangameno and Muumin Hamadi. From the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research: Issa Ameir and Hamadi Khatib, and from Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute: Patroba Matiku and Lugendo Bunto. Data verification and entry sessions were conducted at the IMS where 35 fisheries were updated and verified.

The Workshop in Kenya took place at KMFRI from March 21 to 25 and was attended by Esther Fondo, Rashid Anam and Jane Moraa Nyamora. The key activity undertaken was the updating of information for the small scale fisheries of Kenya. The group also paid a visit to the Ministry of Fisheries Development – Fisheries Department to encourage ties between the Statistics Department and WIOFish so that they will contribute to WIOFish in the future.



**Inside the Zanzibar Fish market (Photo credits – Bernadine Everett)**

Ms Everett met with the Mauritian WIOFish participants from April 5 to 7. The team of Satish Khadun, Sanyageeta Ramkisson and Ravi Mohit, all from Albion Fisheries Research Centre, were very well prepared for the workshop which made the work progress quickly. This left time for verification of the French translations of the dropdown lists in the database.

From April 11 to 15, the Coordinator visited the Seychelles and held the workshop at Seychelles Fishing Authority. The Seychellois group is very experienced in using the database and was made up of the following participants: Cindy Assan, Jan Robinson, Aubrey Lesperance, Danny Julie, Naddy Esparon, Sabrina Lawrence, Claire Pierre Louis, Cecile Botsoie, Evangeline Roucou and Maria Cedras. Besides updating the 38 fisheries already in WIOFish, a further 3 fisheries were added: two gillnet fisheries for sharks and for humphead parrot fish and the illegal shore gathering fishery for turtles.

The final work to be completed for this year is the verification and update of the fishery profiles for KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. So far all the line fisheries have been concluded with the assistance of Bruce Mann, Jade Maggs and Stuart Dunlop all of the Oceanographic Research Institute. All other fisheries will be updated as data becomes available.

On completion of the visits and workshops at national nodes, much has been accomplished in updating the WIOFish database. To date, a total of 238 fisheries have now been recorded in the WIOFish data base comprising 30 from Mozambique, 23 from Comoros, 36 from Tanzania, 33 from Kenya, 20 from Mauritius, 41 from the Seychelles and 55 from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Research capacity has been enhanced in the various countries through training of a total of 36 staff attached to the Project. New challenges have also emerged as expected, some of which may be regarded as blessings in disguise. For instance, despite the fact that the high turnover rates of project staff in some national nodes has slowed down progress in data entry, it has create opportunities for new personnel to work for the project. And in the process, the newly assigned personnel acquire new skills in data entry and identification of appropriate fisheries.

Madagascar is the last country to be included in WIOFish. Once negotiations to embrace WIOFish activities in Madagascar have been concluded - including the identification of the appropriate

government departments, a workshop will be held in Madagascar to train participants in the use of the database and to enter fisheries profiles for the country. This task is earmarked for late June or early July.

As the fins of the WIOFish database continue to spread widely across the WIO region, it is hoped that the end-users and all stakeholders will continue to appreciate its usefulness and will contribute towards improving and strengthening the database further to enable it to serve more effectively. For more information about WIOFish or to view the data collected go to [www.wiofish.org](http://www.wiofish.org).



**Net fisher at work in the Comoros (Photo credits – Bernadine Everett)**