

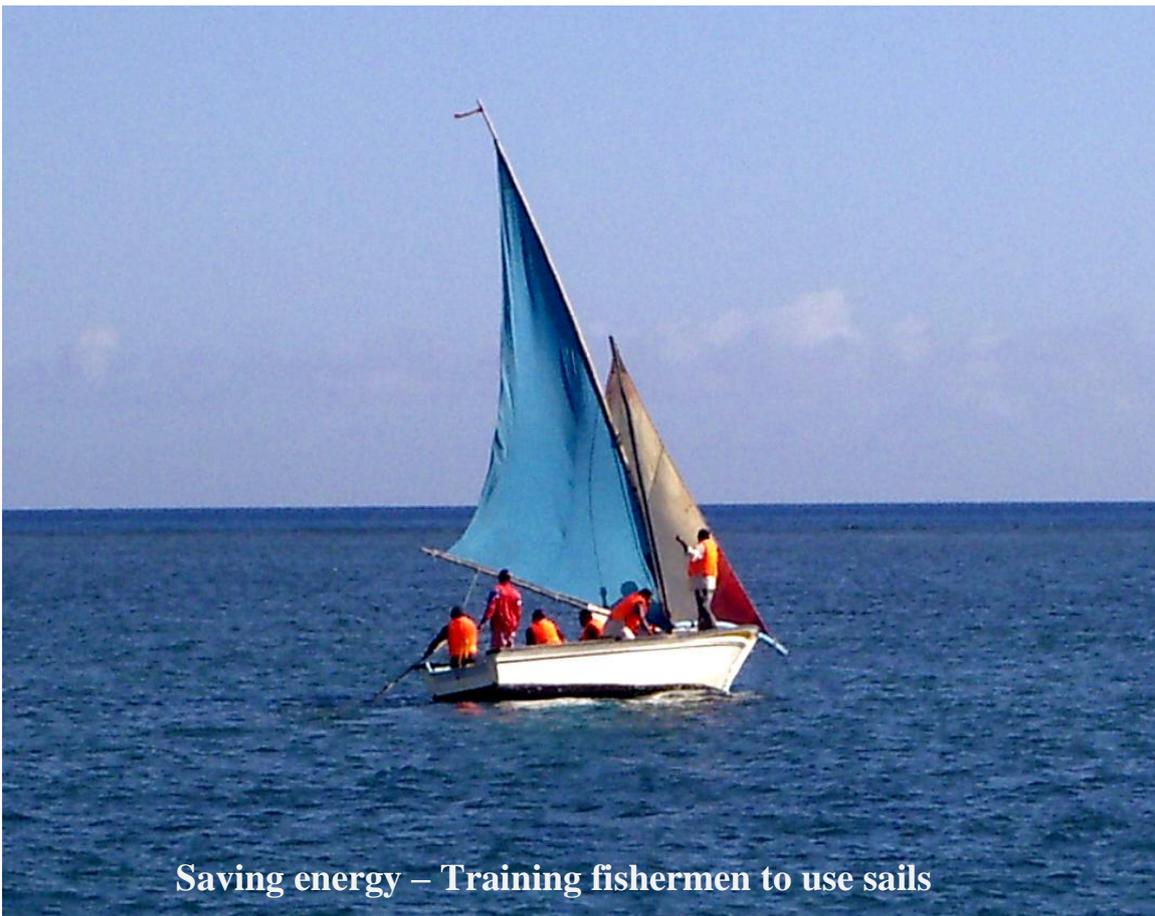


Republic of Mauritius

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security

Annual Report 2008

Fisheries Division



Saving energy – Training fishermen to use sails

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security

Annual Report 2008

Fisheries Division

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Fisheries Division for the year 2008. The report highlights the main achievements of the Fisheries Division as well as that of the fisheries sector in Mauritius. It contains information relating to the artisanal, banks and tuna fisheries, fisheries management including licensing of fishing vessels, import and export of fish and fish products, transshipment of fish, studies on the marine ecosystem, marine parks, aquaculture and fisheries protection. It also illustrates the ongoing activities of the Fisheries Training and Extension Centre which are focussed on training of fishermen and development of the FAD fishery.

Seafood hub activities are now recognised as contributing significantly to the economy. During the year, 56 723 tonnes of fish were processed by the local cannery and processing plants. 588 fishing vessels called at Port Louis for transshipment and related activities. 250 licensed fishing vessels reported to the Fisheries Monitoring Centre. The training programme for fishermen was pursued. An average of 20 Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) were kept active around the island.

The Blue Bay Marine Park was officially designated as a Ramsar site in January 2008 and included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

The Norwegian Agency for Development and Cooperation (NORAD) and Mauritius entered into an agreement in April 2008 for financial assistance to fund projects for sustainable utilization of marine living resources in the waters of Mauritius.

Mauritius participated in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) meeting and implemented all measures adopted by the Commission. Joint fisheries patrols were held in the waters of Mauritius and other member states of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) under the “Plan Regional de Surveillance des Peches dans le Sud Ouest de l’Ocean Indien” project. The South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project (SWIOFP), a regional fisheries project including Mauritius, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Reunion, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania as members, became operational.

I hope that this report will give readers a better insight into the activities carried out by the Fisheries Division and the development of the fisheries sector in Mauritius and will be a valuable source of reference for the public.

I take this opportunity to thank all the staff of the Fisheries Division, particularly the editing team for the preparation of this report.

Mr. V. Gondeea
Ag. Permanent Secretary

Vision

To be an economic pillar of Mauritius with due regard to sustainability of aquatic resources and social development for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Mission

To provide an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable development of the Fisheries Sector and to ensure continued economic growth and social development within the framework of good governance.

Objectives

- Establish a conducive environment in which the fishing industry can develop.
- Contribute towards the development of Mauritius in a world class seafood hub and derive optimal benefits from marine living resources.
- Promote and regulate the optimal long-term sustainable utilisation of living marine resources.
- Carry out and promote applied research, development and management of aquatic living resources.
- Ensure that all fisheries activities allow for the conservation of vital marine ecosystems.
- Foster the interest of Mauritius within the international fisheries community, including encouraging the international trade of fish commodities within the framework of international law and conventions.
- Provide professional, responsive and customer friendly services.
- Deliver our services efficiently and effectively providing value for money.
- Continuously invest in human resource development.
- Promote the social welfare status of fishermen.

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Executive Summary

Fresh fish production in the coastal fishery was 682 tonnes comprising 367 tonnes from the lagoon and 315 tonnes from off-lagoon areas. There were 2 028 fishermen and 1 457 boats operating in the artisanal sector.

A total of 1 694 tonnes of frozen fish was landed from the fishing banks and comprised mostly of lethrinids (91%). The total amount of fish and fish products produced from the St. Brandon fishery was 454 tonnes. Besides, 21 semi-industrial vessels landed 173 tonnes of chilled fish and 7 tonnes of frozen fish from the Albatross and Nazareth banks.

The long term monitoring of the coral reef ecosystem and seawater quality was continued at the established sites around the island. No coral bleaching was observed. The pilot project of coral farming in the lagoon of Albion was initiated. Coral fragments from different species were collected and cultured on basal plates deployed in the lagoon of Albion. The cultured coral fragments settled successfully and were growing.

A 5-year action plan for the accreditation of the laboratories at AFRC was formulated. Designs and layout for the renovation/upgrading of the laboratories as well as the animal house were prepared.

Seed production of berri rouge, fresh water ornamental fish and the giant freshwater prawn were continued. Breeding techniques of sailfin molly, platy and goldfish were successfully developed. Technical advice was provided to 350 persons willing to embark in aquaculture projects.

The monitoring of the two marine parks was continued. 105 new permits were issued to the different users of the Blue Bay Marine Park (BBMP) and 246 permits were renewed against payment. The BBMP was officially designated as a Ramsar site and listed as a Wetland of International Importance.

A total of 46 fishermen had benefited from various training courses dispensed at FITEC. An average of twenty FADs was kept active around the island. Regulations for the control of fishing around FADs were drafted.

99 fishing licences were issued to foreign fishing vessels to operate in Mauritius waters while 23 licensed Mauritian vessels were involved in different fishing activities. A total of 588 fishing vessels called at Port Louis for transshipment, bunkering, dry-docking, provisions and changing of crew. 250 fishing vessels reported to the Fisheries Monitoring Centre comprising 31 local and 219 foreign vessels.

Licensed and non-licensed tuna longliners transhipped 20 250 tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species. The amount of toothfish transhipped was 1 764 tonnes.

The Fisheries Sector Strategy Plan (2008 - 2015) was prepared and submitted in December for incorporation in the Agriculture Sector Strategy Plan with the objective to embed the Medium Term Expenditure Framework within the Programme Based Budget.

Sea cucumber surveys were carried out at 8 sites in Mauritius to re-assess the status of the stock. The overall density was estimated at 58 000 individuals/km² in the lagoon around the island. A maximum allowable catch of 275 tonnes (wet weight) was imposed for the exploitation of the resources for the period 1st August 2008 to 31st July 2009 with a closed season from January to March 2009.