

Project Update: May 2015

Throughout February to April 2015 subsequent to a comprehensive training provided for the project team, consisted of information about the mobulid ray, an exercise for data collection and the storing of samples for genetic studies at the fish market, and visiting the fishing boats and nets used for catching the *Mobula mobular* and landing sites. Surveys were conducted at the main landing sites in order to collect data on each mobulid ray landed. The species of each specimen was identified and biological data such as disc width, body length, gender and sexual maturation was recorded. Photographic images along with samples for DNA analysis were also taken.

A total of 75 individual specimens were recorded, 10 were females (14%) and 65 were males (86%), with all the fish captured being mature (totally calcified claspers). Moreover, a total of 25 DNA samples for genetic analysis were collected and the samples were retrieved from the dorsal, ventral, neck, tail, and cephalic fin. The samples for the genetics analysis will be transferred to the lab to be analysed.

The survey pointed out that this species have been caught as bycatch; however a well-established and specific target fishery also exists. The meat is consumed fresh by locals. Interviews with fishermen indicated that selling meat of this fish is the only driving force behind this fishery.

The data collected in this study indicated broad and enormous lack of knowledge and awareness among all sectors (consumers, fishermen, professionals and fish dealers) about vulnerability of mobula, threats they face, the fisheries and trade that target them and finally the protection status, procedures and present protection actions.



Fishermen release *Mobula mobular* specimen from the fishing boat.



Measuring the disk width of a landed *Mobula mobular* specimen.



DNA samples collected for genetic analysis