

Project Update: September 2016

Fieldwork: Impressions from fishermen interviews

Fishermen interviews in São Tomé and Príncipe suggest that these islands have undergone significant but somewhat “unpredicted” changes in fishing activities over recent decades. First, virtually all fishermen reported an increase in the number of fishermen and fishing effort, a decline in catches, and also in the frequency of shark sightings. Second, older fishermen have not declared largest catches than younger fishermen. It seems that reefs were underexploited in the past and the arrival of new technologies (such as nylon and boat engines) has allowed for largest catches and catches of larger fish. Some fishermen, however, recognised that catches had been declining more recently. Third, many of the fishermen confirmed the large scale use of destructive fishing activities, such as grenade fishing, and capture of organisms such as seahorses and gorgonians to sell to tourists. Further data analysis might review other interesting patterns.



Left: Interview with fisherman. Right: Talking about marine reserves.