

Brazil, NGO warns about lack of sardine fishing monitoring

Since the beginning of the sardine fishing season, on 15 February, the sector has lacked adequate monitoring by the Government, warns the non-government organisation Oceana Brazil.

"The peak of the fishery landings occurs exactly at the opening of the harvesting phase, which begins when the ban ends. Therefore, not having records of those landings from the beginning is fatal," said Monica Brick Peres, Oceana Brazil general director and Oceana International vice-president.

Currently, the data on the landings are only collected by state and private institutions, according to the NGO.

"These initiatives are valuable and the data we have from the recent years come from them," continued Brick Peres. "Without data, it is not possible to perform a fisheries management of the main marine food resource that supports the most modern fleet in the country and generates thousands of jobs."

Statistics from the Brazilian Food Industry Association show that the sardine canning industry moves around BRL 1500 million (USD 524 million) a year.

This pelagic resource represents about 22 per cent of all marine fish catch in the National Seashore. In 2013, sardine catches totalled 98,600 tonnes in 2014, 100,000 tonnes.

Brazil also imported sardines, which supply about 10 per cent of the domestic market.

Between 65 per cent and 70 per cent of all sardines caught in the country goes to the canning industry while the rest is sold as frozen and fresh products.

The largest Brazilian sardine producers are in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Santa Catarina, which concentrate the main headquarters of the national sardine fleet.

According to Oceana Brazil, there are about 160 registered vessels and an undetermined number of boats operating without registration.

The conservation organization points out that the sardine fishery collapsed between 1999 and 2003, when catches dropped from 120,000 tonnes in 1997 to 20,000-40,000 tonnes. And it highlights that thanks to the availability of the data generated by the monitoring carried out at the time, the problem could be identified and the measures that allowed the sardine population recovery since 2004 were taken.

The latest systematic collection of data on sardine took place between 2013 and 2014, but was not performed by the government but by ProSard research project, 'Assessing the impact of the closure for the true sardine fishery recovery in the Southeast and in the South', details Oceana.

The study was funded by Universidad del Valle of Itajaí, the Fisheries Institute Foundation of Rio de Janeiro State (Fiperj), the Fisheries Institute, the University of

San Pablo, the Federal University of Paraná and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, of Chile.

"We hope that the sardine does not require re-entering in a collapse phase and end up in the list of endangered species for it to be monitored again," stressed Brick Peres.

Source : [http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?monthyear=3-2015&day=3&id=74973&l=e&country=0&special=&ndb=1&df=0\(03/03/15\)](http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?monthyear=3-2015&day=3&id=74973&l=e&country=0&special=&ndb=1&df=0(03/03/15))