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Half a century of fisheries changes in West African fisheries as reflected through available statistical data¹

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Abstract

This document gives a quantitative overview of fisheries evolution (in numbers and in production) in the maritime area of the Sub Regional Fisheries Commission for the last 50 years. It is mainly based on studies conducted by the West African national statistical correspondents as well as the European partners (French, Portuguese and Spanish) collaborating in FIAS project.

The data we used, created from the statistical systems currently in place, has been gathered, formatted and compiled into a sub-regional statistical tool: StatBase. For the oldest periods, we have sometimes used a few statistical estimates found in the literature.

This reconstruction of fisheries evolution gives us the opportunity to describe briefly the nature of statistical monitoring systems and their evolution in the last 50 years. We also used this opportunity to detail the exact content of the different data sets and to outline the problems linked to their use (double counting, bias, precision, coverage ...). We identified some possible solutions

¹ Complete text in French.

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in order to further improve this database, essential to a good evaluation of where the situation really stands at and what the challenges are for fishing activities in the region.