

7. REGIONAL FISHERIES BODIES

7.1 Asia-Pacific Fisheries Commission (APFIC)

Summary of role: *The Asia-Pacific Fisheries Commission (APFIC) is an Article XIV FAO Regional Fishery Body in charge of promoting the full and proper utilization of living aquatic resources in the Asia-Pacific region.*

Summary of work: *No work reported on pollution from marine plastics in documents made available online by APFIC*

Keywords/research fields: *Asia-Pacific Fisheries Commission; APFIC; function and mandate*

7.1.1 Function and mandate

The Asia Pacific Fisheries Commission (APFIC) and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) are the two main regional intergovernmental bodies for fisheries, together with the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (ASWGF).

The APFIC was founded by the Fisheries Committee of the UN FAO in 1948. It has a wide membership which includes the majority of states in the region.

7.1.2 Work on marine plastics

The latest APFIC document available online is the 2017 Report of the 76th session of the APFIC Executive Committee. It does not mention pollution from marine plastics in general or from fish aggregating devices (FADs), ghost nets or abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFGs) as sources of such plastic marine debris.

7.2 Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)

Summary of role: *The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) is an autonomous inter-governmental body established in 1967 to promote and facilitate concerted actions among the Member Countries to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in Southeast Asia.*

Summary of work: *SEAFDEC has been studying the presence of microplastics in fisheries products and the loss and discard of fishing gear.*

Keywords/research fields: *RFB, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre; SEAFDEC; plastic pollution from fisheries; ghost nets; ALDFG;*

7.2.1 Function and mandate

The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) is an autonomous intergovernmental body. It was established in 1967 with the mandate of developing and managing the potential of fisheries in the region. Its mission includes ensuring sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in Southeast Asia. It has 11 members: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. It does not include China.

7.2.2 Work on marine plastics

SEAFDEC has been studying the presence of microplastics in fisheries products for a few years. Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) has also been a focus area.

The Council of SEAFDEC has indicated that the 2020 Regional Plan of Action should take into consideration: marine debris and microplastics (linked to food safety issues) and environmentally friendly fishing gears. This suggests that more studies can be expected on these topics.

Although few publications are available at this point, a study of causes of gear loss in the Arafura Sea, south of Southeast Asia, provides some interesting and valuable analysis for the region. See Richardson et al. (2018), available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X17307406>.

The SEAFDEC Training Department (SEAFDEC/TD) organized the 'Technical Ad Hoc Meeting on Marine Debris in Thailand' on 29 January 2020 in Thailand. It brought together 15 participants from Japan and Thailand. The aim of this meeting was to establish collaboration between SEAFDEC and the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) Programme, and to develop a 'Centre of Excellence for Marine Plastic Pollution Studies in the Southeast Asian Seas'. SATREPS is a Japanese government programme that promotes international joint research. The programme is a collaboration between the Japan Science and Technology Agency, the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.