

## Thailand's Progress in the Reduction and Control of the Thai Fishing Fleet

As a part of the Thai Government's efforts to eradicate IUU fishing, the Department of Fisheries and the Marine Department have taken important steps to reduce the size of the Thai fishing fleet and impose strict control against illegal fishing vessels in order to address the problems of overcapacity and overfishing.

Progress of this undertaking can be summarized as follows:

### 1. Database of the Thai Fishing Fleet

- As of 15 November 2016, the Marine Department concluded a nation-wide survey and confirmed a total of 39,309 fishing vessels with a vessel registration. This figure comprises of two broad categories of vessels, i.e. 26,838 artisanal fishing vessels (less than 10GT) and **12,471 commercial fishing vessels (greater than 10GT)**<sup>1</sup>

- The Department of Fisheries further **confirmed a total of 11,045 commercial fishing vessels with a fishing license to operate within Thai waters and 20 with a fishing license to operate outside Thai waters.**

- This leaves a total of **1,406 vessels<sup>2</sup> with a vessel registration but without a fishing license**. The Marine Department has since imposed strict control measures against this group of vessels to prevent them from engaging in fishing activities.

- A fleet database has been created to synchronize the information from the Department of Fisheries and the Marine Department**, and is updated every 15 days. The database includes information such as the number of vessels with a vessel registration and a fishing license, vessel registration type, vessel fishing location (Gulf of Thailand or Andaman Sea), and fishing gear.

### 2. Control Measures Against Vessels with a Vessel Registration but without a Fishing License

- Out of 1,406 vessels with a vessel registration but without a fishing license, 1,102 have actual vessels, while the other 304 do not have actual vessels. Out of 1,102 found with actual vessels, 812 have reported their vessel's location, 114 have suspended their vessel usage, 176 have not reported their vessel's location and thus have been legally charged and subjected to a fine calculated based on the size of the vessel.

- For vessels that have reported their vessel's location, the Marine Department has proceeded to **lock and bind the helm**, as well as **painted visible markings on the vessels**, to prevent this group of vessels from engaging in fishing activities. These vessels are also monitored regularly to ensure that they do not leave their reported location.



**Bounded Helm**



**Impounded vessels clearly marked with orange and white stripes**

<sup>1</sup> Out of 12,471 commercial fishing vessels, 3,100 vessels are greater than 60GT.

<sup>2</sup> 12,471-11,045-20 = 1,406

### 3. **Fleet-Reduction Scheme**

- Now that the fleet status is settled and a database has been created, the Government has introduced a step-by-step fleet-reduction scheme to gradually reduce the number of the Thai fishing fleet and limit the number of fishing days/year to achieve sustainable fisheries. The ultimate goal of the scheme is to **reduce the number of the Thai fishing fleet to correspond with the Total Allowable Catch (TAC)<sup>3</sup>, and limit the number of fishing days up to a maximum of 250 fishing days/year, by 1 April 2022.**

- To do so, the Government first adjusted the number of fishing days and issued fishing licenses in accordance with the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), resulting in 11,045 commercial fishing licenses being issued in 2016.

- From 2017 onwards, the Government will further implement fleet-reduction measures, details as follow:

- (1) **Change of Vessel-Type**: owners of fishing vessels can apply to change their vessel-type for non-fishing activities. To date, 77 fishing vessels without a fishing license and 1 fishing vessel with a fishing license have been authorized to change their vessel-type.

- (2) **Entry-Exit Scheme**: vessels can be exchanged based on the vessel size ratio of 1:1.2 (entering to exiting). Vessels that “exit” the system will be sunk and turned into artificial reefs. In 2017, a point system will also be introduced to determine whether vessels can stay, exit or enter the fishing licensing system. Criteria used to assess the points are as follows:

- o Safety and standard (i.e. the age of vessels)
    - o Economic (i.e. the number of fishing vessels belonging to one owner)
    - o Behavioral (i.e. history of wrongdoings)

- (3) **Vessel Market Campaign**: a market campaign will be organized for trading and exchanging vessels in 2017. Vessels that remain after the end of the campaign period will be removed from the system via the Government’s buy-back scheme.

- (4) **Vessel buy-back scheme**: due to budget constraints, the buy-back scheme will only be used when all other fleet-reduction measures have been implemented. Details of the scheme are as follows:

- o Set up the buy-back criteria and implementation measures.
    - o Inspect vessels that meet the criteria and estimate the required budget.
    - o Allocate the required budget (possibility of funding the scheme with fishing licensing fees and other related fees as well as fines levied against those found in violation of the Royal Ordinance on Fisheries 2015. A fund might also be set-up specifically for this scheme.)

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<sup>3</sup> Thailand’s TAC is calculated based on the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) which is calculated on three groups of fish: demersal, pelagic and anchovies.