

Chapter 18

Demersal Resources



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18.1 Introduction

Fishery in the Mediterranean has been around for centuries, so the current fishery model is the result of this long history, and not only the result of a specific management policy. Several Greek and Latin authors attest to fishing activities in the Mediterranean, among which the works of Aristotle and Pliny should be highlighted. For example, Pliny dedicates the Book IX of his *Natural History* to aquatic animals and to describe the places where fishing was exercised using the concurrence of dolphins (Camiñas et al. 2004). As for the Alboran Sea, numerous salsary piles, created in Roman times to make garum, have been found around the coast (Camiñas et al. 2004). Technological progress and new techniques developed over centuries have gradually increased the fishery capacity of coastal peoples, but the expansion in the use of engine 100 years ago saw a significant increase in fishery pressure, with serious consequences for the state of the resources (Lleonart 2011).

Total landings in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea increased irregularly from about 1 million tons in 1970 to almost 2 million tons in 1982. They remained relatively stable during most of the 1980s before declining abruptly in 1989 and 1990, largely due to the collapse of pelagic fisheries in the Black Sea. In the Mediterranean, landings continued to increase until 1994, reaching 1,087,000 tons, and subsequently declined irregularly to 787,000 in 2013 (Fig. 18.1). Algeria, Greece, Italy, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ukraine are together responsible for slightly more than 80 percent of total landings in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (FAO 2016).

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