Fisherwomen ofAl-Wusta Governorate, Sultanate of Oman

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Gender disaggregated data is not collected by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth of Oman. Consequently, there is a deficiency of information relating to what roles women play in the national fishery. Accordingly, in an effort to fill this knowledge gap the present study examined the involvement of women in artisanal fisheries in the Al-Wusta Governorate. Eighty-five (~20%) of the total population of approximately 400 fisherwomen were randomly interviewed to gain greater insight into their socio-demographic status and precise function in the artisanal fishery. Field-based observations on the molluscan, holothurian and crustacean fisheries in which females are engaged are also presented. Interviewees (mean 36 years old) were separated into groups based on age distribution. Over 40% of responders were illiterate with only 20% having attained secondary level education or above. Three-quarters had offspring with 60% of these having 4 or more children. Fishing activities involved 5-10 hours per day for a 3 day week. Women were engaged in gathering (gastropods and bivalves), gleaning (sea cucumbers) and spearfishing (cephalopods and crustaceans) as well as exclusivity in capture, processing and marketing of marine gastropods. Major problems experienced by fisherwomen were distance to the fishing grounds and lack of financial and technical support. Finally, recommendations for gender sensitive intervention, incentivisation and support are presented.