



Abstract

# Fishers' Experiential Knowledge about Biological Traits of Commercial Marine Species in the Azores <sup>†</sup>

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**Abstract:** Fishers' experiential knowledge (FEXK) is increasingly recognized as a potential source of information on fishery resources, particularly in data-deficient scenarios. In the Azores, fisheries are classified as small-scale because around 60% of the vessels are smaller than nine meters in length and target several species. Local communities benefit from this activity in various ways, including cultural aspects, employment, and food security. However, for some commercially exploited resources, information on biological and ecological aspects remains poorly known. This study analysed the potential of small-scale FEXK to supply information on the biology and ecology of commercially important marine species, including veined squid *Loligo forbesii*, blue jack mackerel *Trachurus picturatus*, and blackspot seabream *Pagellus bogaraveo*. We conducted interviews with fishers on the bio-ecological characteristics of these species and reviewed the scholarly literature on the same subject. The findings indicated that fishers thoroughly understand species movement, growth, diet, and reproductive aspects. Our results confirm that FEXK might be a valuable source of ecological characteristics for these species, hence assisting in managing fisheries in the Azores.

**Keywords:** local ecological knowledge; small-scale fisheries; demersal; population aspects; Azores



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