



Proceedings of the Central Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on Selecting Appropriate Mesh-size for Hilsa Gillnets

Venue: Hall Room, Matshya Bhaban, Dhaka

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Enhanced Coastal Fisheries in Bangladesh (ECOFISH-Bangladesh)
WorldFish, Bangladesh and Department of Fisheries Bangladesh
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Central Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on Selecting Appropriate Mesh-size for Hilsa Gillnets

1 Executive Summary

This proceeding presents a summary of the presentations of all speakers and feedback received from the participants in the '**Central Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on Selecting Appropriate Mesh-size for Hilsa Gillnets**' organized by ECOFISH-Bangladesh Project jointly implemented by WorldFish, Bangladesh and the Department of Fisheries, Bangladesh at the Hall Room, Matshya Bhaban, Dhaka on May 23, 2019. The objective of the workshop was to share the findings of the drift gillnet selectivity study and harvest the views of the stakeholders for determining the mesh size for the legal gillnets used in the hilsa fishery.

The seminar was chaired by **Mr. ASM Rashedul Haque**, Director General, Department of Fisheries, and a number of dignitaries such as **Mr. Md. Towfiqul Arif**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock, **Dr. Md. Abdul Wahab**, Team Leader, ECOFISH-BD project, WorldFish, **Dr. Yahia Mahmud**, Director General, BFRI were present in the workshop. WorldFish Scientist, Dr. Md. Jalilur Rahman presented experimental findings of WorldFish and BFRI on appropriate mesh-size. A total of 60 participants from different organizations including District and Divisional Officers from DoF, BFRI, Universities, River Police representatives from Fishers Associations, and other stakeholders (Annex-1).

The seminar was conducted in three sessions. At first, a short introductory session followed by a keynote presentation and finally an open discussion session covering the views of all participants. The program was highly appreciated for taking such a great initiatives to select appropriate mesh sizes based on the research findings and opinions of the stakeholders and highlighted the management implications of the appropriate mesh sizes. After thorough discussion, a replacement of currently used 4.5 cm mesh size for Hilsa gillnets by an appropriate mesh size between 6.0 cm and 6.5 cm has been decided unanimously. MoFL will take the final decision and promulgate a gazette notification shortly in this regard.

2 Introductory Session

At first, the Chairman welcomed everybody and conducted the self-introduction session. After introducing the agenda, the Chairman briefed the background highlighting the importance of the workshop and invited everyone to take a look at the presentation on the research and findings on the mesh size selection.

3 Presentations

Dr. Md. Jalilur Rahman presented the details of experimental fishing, data analysis, findings and recommendation related to the mesh size selection for different types of twines used in the legal hilsa fishing nets. The detail of the presentation is attached in Annex 2.

4 Speech from the Chair

The Chair of the workshop Mr. ASM Rashedul Haque, Director General, Department of Fisheries expressed his satisfaction to attend the workshop regarding stakeholder consultation on mesh size. He found the workshop as a very fruitful one because of the involvement of fishers in the mesh size determination process. He mentioned that this year Govt. included 67,000 artisanal fishing boats

under 65 days marine fishing ban and agreed to allocate rice for them @40 kg/month/Fishers ID Card holder. He also mentioned that DoF successfully protected Pangas and Hilsa juveniles through strictly implementing March-April sanctuary fishing ban period. Some illegal net manufacturing industries has already been closed and many others will be closed soon. He suggested to prepare the recommendations mentioning the names and designation of the discussant participated in the open discussion and based on the recommendations the mesh size rules will be amended and strictly implemented.

5 Speech from Mr. Md. Towfiqul Arif, Joint Secretary, MoFL

Mr. Md. Towfiqul Arif, Joint Secretary, MoFL emphasized on providing the information about the rules and regulations to all stakeholders for successful implementation. He said that Fisheries Officers should clearly identify the legal and illegal mesh-size. He did not agree to allow bycatch of Jatka with allowable mesh sizes. He assured that the recommendation of the workshop will be implemented by the ministry at earliest convenient time.

6 Speech from Dr. Md. Abdul Wahab, Team Leader, ECOFISH-BD project

Dr. Md. Abdul Wahab, Team Leader, ECOFISH-BD project mentioned that long before he pointed out the miss-matching allowed 25 cm fish size and 4.5 cm mesh size, so, ECOFISH took necessary steps to conduct the experiment to resolve the issues. He suggested to maintain 7.0 cm mesh size for marine fishing gillnets, but considering the socio-economic condition of riverine fishers, the mesh size should be maintained between 6.0 cm and 6.5 cm for the gillnets operate in the riverine and estuarine habitats.

5 Speech from Dr. Yahia Mahmud, Director General, BFRI

Dr. Yahia Mahmud, Director General, BFRI emphasized on research and precise recommendations on mesh-size, MSY and carrying capacity for sustainable Hilsa management. He mentioned that the recommendations will be submitted to the ministry for further action to amend the rules related to the mesh-size of Hilsa gillnets.

6 Open Discussion

Many of the participants actively took part in the open discussion sessions and provided various valuable comments. Some important comments are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of comments provided by different participants in the open discussion

Participants	Major comments/suggestions
Mr. Shah Alam Mollik, President, Bangladesh Jeley O Nowka Malik Samity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesh-size for Hilsa gillnet should be 5.5. cm • 10-15% Jatka should be allowed
Mr. Manik Dewan, Member (EC), Co-management Ghat Group Committee, Chandpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesh-size for Hilsa gillnet should be 5.5. cm
Anwar Hossain Shikdar, General Secretary, Bangladesh Khudra Matshyajibi Jeley Samity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In marine, 8-9 cm, in Bhola 7.0 cm, in Barishal 6.5 cm and in Chandpur 5.5 cm are appropriate, so, in an average 6.0 cm can be recommended
Advocate Islam Ali, President, Bangladesh Jatiya Matshyajibi Samity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-10% Jatka should not be allowed, rather such mesh size should be selected through which Jatka can be escaped

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If large mesh-size be used, that will be good for fishers as they will get large Hilsa in the waters
Sri Rabindra Nath Barmon, President, Bangladesh Fisherman Unity Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mesh-size for Hilsa gillnet should be between 5.0 cm and 6.0. cm
Dr. Zoarder Faruque Ahmed, Professor, Dept. of Fisheries Management, BAU, Mymensingh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mesh size that fishers accept should be selected If any technical issues be found, scientists will be informed
Dr. G C Haldar Ex-Director (Research), BFRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very happy to see the appropriate mesh size is going to be selected and implemented and hope hilsa production will be doubled in future Mesh size should be 7.0 cm, but poor inland fishers should get the opportunity to change the net
Mr. Saleh Ahmed Additional Director General, DoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishers and Fisheries Department are not rival of each other and we should obey the findings of research
Ms Kazi Shams Afroze Director (Inland), DoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such mesh size should be selected through which Jatka can be escaped
Mr. Mohammad Habibur Rahman Project Director, Union Project, DoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of 2 cm mesh size from previous 4.5 cm mesh size due to increase of 2 cm fish size may be analyzed
Mr. Md. Serajur Rahman Project Director, Brood Bank Project, DoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mesh size should be 7.0 cm as found through the research
Mr. Md. Oliur Rahman Deputy Director, Barishal, DoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mesh size 7.0 cm would be too large and 4.5 cm would be too small, so, 6.5 cm could be selected as the most appropriate
Dr. Muhammad Abul Hasanat Director (Marine), DoF, Chattagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present trawl mesh-size in the cod-end is 6.0 cm, but substantial quantity of Jatka have been caught by this mesh size, so, mesh size should be 7.0 cm
Dr. Md. Anisur Rahman PSO, BFRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the sanctuary, the gillnet mesh size should be 6.5, but in marine it should be 7.cm, but if finally minimum 6.cm approved, he would be happy with that
Dr. Mohammad Ashraful Islam SSO, BFRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hilsa when grows to 32 cm then become sexually mature, so, to provide the opportunity to spawn once in its life time, mesh-size should be 6.0cm -7.0 cm.
Mr. Kazi Iqbal Azam DD, Dhaka, DoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mesh size should be larger than 6.0 cm and 7.0 cm would be the best
Mr. SM Azharul Islam DFO, Bhola, DoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is very difficult to change the rules, so, we should think before amending the rules for its long time use The mesh size should be 7.0 cm
Mr. BM Harun-Ar-Rashid River Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Police will help in implementing the mesh-size regulation whatever the size selected from the workshop, but Fishery Officers should be able to identify the legal or illegal mesh size

Summary of Opinions

- Mesh-size for Hilsa gillnet should be 5.5. cm and 10-15% Jatka should be allowed
- In marine, 8-9 cm, in Bhola 7.0 cm, in Barishal 6.5 cm and in Chandpur 5.5 cm are appropriate, so, in an average 6.0 cm can be recommended
- If large mesh-size be used, that will be good for fishers as they will get large Hilsa in the waters
- Mesh-size for Hilsa gillnet should be between 5.0 cm and 6.0. cm
- The mesh size that fishers accept should be selected
- Mesh size should be 7.0 cm, but inland fishers should get the opportunity to change the net

- Such mesh size should be selected through which Jatka can be escaped
- Mesh size 7.0 cm would be too large and 4.5 cm would be too small, so, 6.5 cm could be selected as the most appropriate
- Present trawl mesh-size in the cod-end is 6.0 cm, but substantial quantity of Jatka have been caught by this mesh size, so, mesh size should be 7.0 cm
- To provide the opportunity to spawn once in its life time, mesh-size should be 6.0cm -7.0 cm.
- Mesh size should be larger than 6.0 cm and 7.0 cm would be the best
- It is very difficult to change the rules, so, we should think before amending the rules for its long time use, and mesh size should be 7.0 cm
- River Police will help in implementing the mesh-size regulation whatever the size we select, but Fishery Officers should be able to identify the legal or illegal mesh size

Conclusions

Replacement of currently used 4.5 cm mesh size by an appropriate mesh size between 6.0 cm and 6.5 cm has been decided unanimously. However, for marine fishing, the mesh size could be 7.0 cm. MoFL will take the final decision and promulgate a gazette notification shortly in this regard.

Pictorial views of the Central Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on Selecting Appropriate Mesh-size for Hilsa Gillnets held on 23 May 2019 at Hall Room, Matshya Bhavan, Dhaka



Dignitaries sitting on the front desk (from left to right): Dr. Md. Abdul Wahab, Team Leader, ECOFISH-BD project, WorldFish; Mr. Saleh Ahmed, Additional Director General, DoF; Mr. ASM Rashedul Haque, Director General, DoF; Dr. Yahia Mahmud, Director General, BFRI; Mr. Md. Towfiqul Arif, Joint Secretary, MoFL, and Ms Kazi Shams Afroze, Director (Inland), DoF.

Participants interacting with the dignitaries

