

Overview of Mediterranean fisheries based on the analysis of the FAO-Fishstat database¹

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Mediterranean FAO/GFCM Fishery Statistics (FAO Fishstat) provides a useful overview of fisheries catches in the region and in consequence of the fisheries situation. This overview allows us to identify the main fishing areas and resources as well their trends globally and by countries or subregions, species groups and species. This data base, accessible through internet and also widely distributed by FAO in CD-Rom format, has been built using the data officially reported by the countries in a standardized way.

It is necessary to bear in mind that trends in landings does not necessarily reflect the evolution of resources, because the impact of fluctuations of other elements not taken into consideration like, for example, fishing effort or also environmental factors that impact on resources also intervene in the result of the fishing activity.

In any case, the trend of landings constitutes a complementary source of information which preliminary analysis gives us several general references very useful to establish a preliminary framework before to carry out a deeper analysis of the Mediterranean fisheries.

A few simple examples are provided in order to show how this database can be used and how it could be used for further similar analyses.

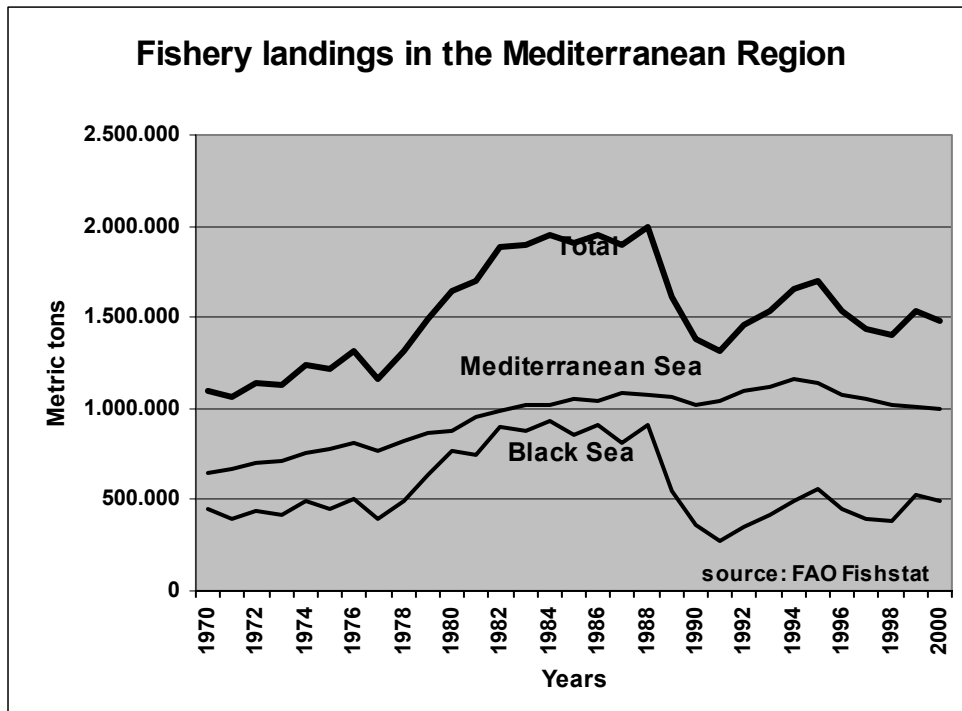
Mediterranean and Black Sea catches (Figure 1)

First thing that can be realized looking at the total landings reported for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is that they cannot be analysed together due the differences in trends observed in each subregion, mainly to due to the collapse of small pelagic stocks observed in the Black Sea in the 80s.

By comparison the catches in the Mediterranean Sea have fluctuated little, remaining, in the last decades, around 1 million tons. By contrast the catches in the Black Sea present wide fluctuations.

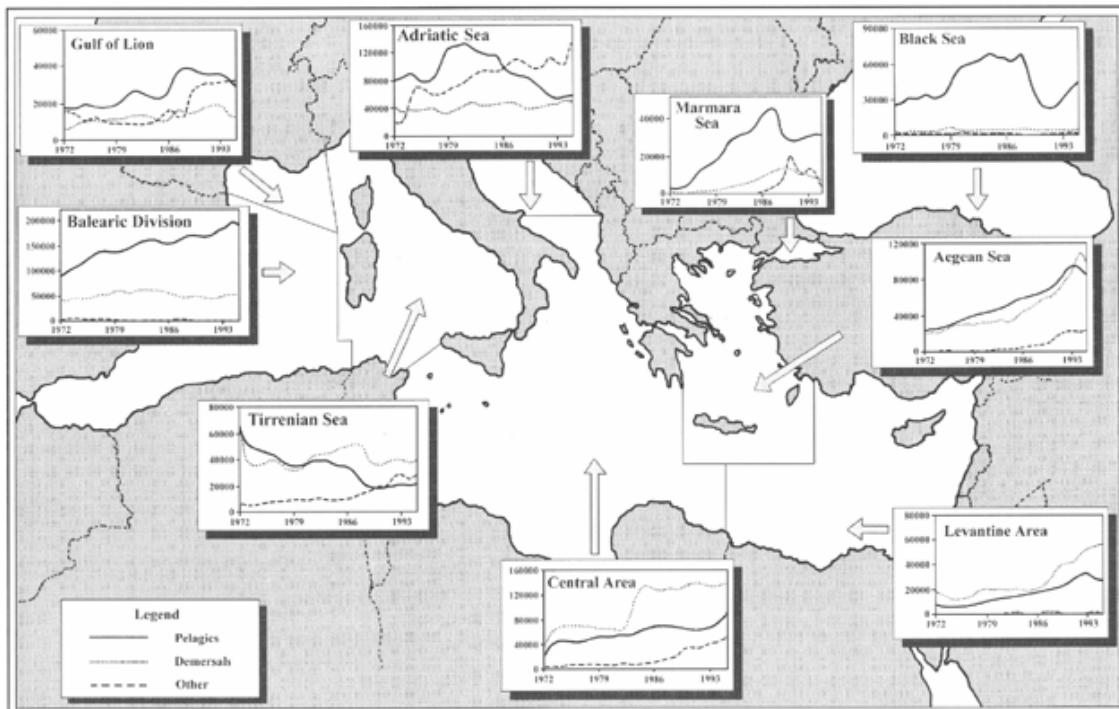
Statistics of the Mediterranean region, i.e. Mediterranean and Black Sea catches aggregated exists since 1950; nevertheless they were not separated by regional statistical divisions until 1970. In consequence we can analyse them separately only since this year.

¹ Document prepared by Pere Oliver (IEO), Ramon Franquesa, Jordi Guillen (GEM-UB) and Jordi Leonart (ICM-CSIC).



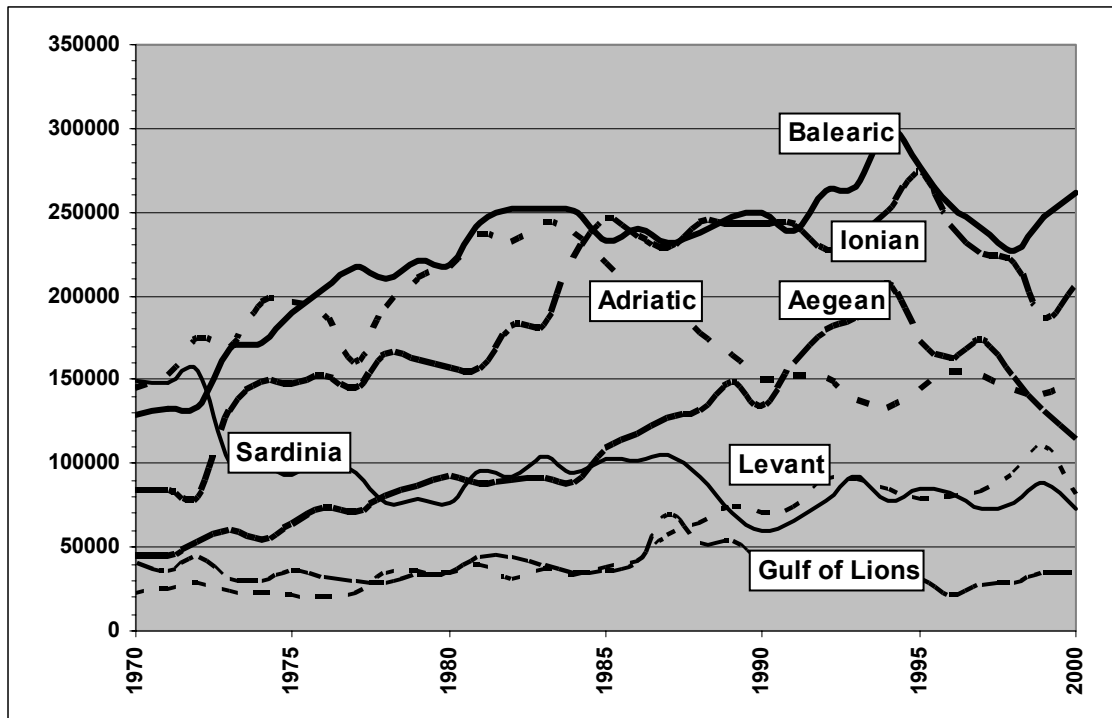
Catches by Sub regions

Fishstat allows us to analyse the catch data by statistical divisions or Mediterranean subregions as they are presented in Figure 2 together with the trends of demersals and small pelagics catches in each one of them.



Source: FAO Fishstat

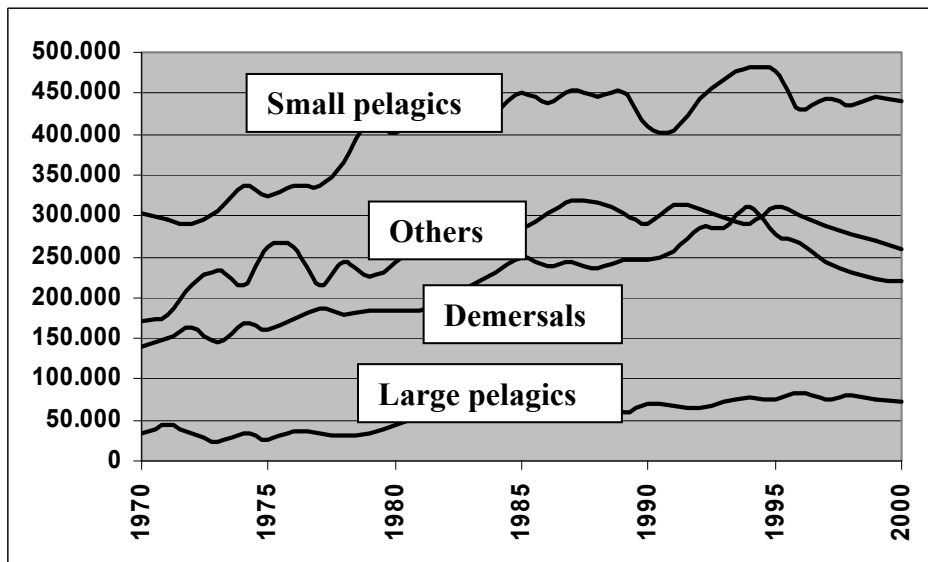
Looking at the trend of total catches by subregion all together in the same graphic (Figure 3) it is difficult to recognise a common pattern.



Source: FAO Fishstat

Landings by species groups (Figure 4) ²

Looking at the trend of catches of demersals, small pelagic and large pelagic fishes separately we realised that they have to be analysed separately due their different trends and obviously due their different dynamics.



Source: FAO Fishstat

² The group large pelagics corresponds to the ISSCAAP group “tunas, bonitos and billfishes”, the group small pelagics to the FAOStat group “pelagic marine fish” excluding the previous one, the demersals to the FAOStat group “demersal marine fish” and others is the rest (all these categories in FAO Fishstat).

The distribution of catches (in Metric Tons) of EU and third countries by species groups shows that 50% corresponds to the EU countries

In 2000 the EU catches average 50% of the total catch and Italy declared around 50% of the EU catches.

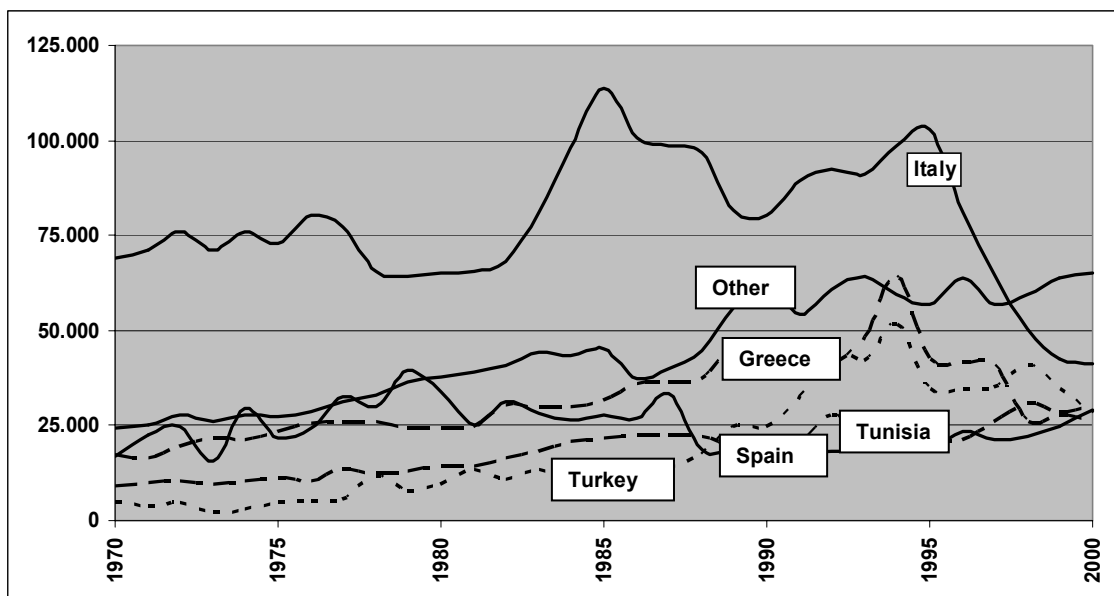
Countries Fishstat, 2000	Total marine catch Mammals and plants not included	Demersal All FAOstat invertebrate groups included	Small pelagic FAOstat pelagic fishes excluding large pelagic	Large pelagic Tunas,bonitos and billfishes ISSCAAP group
EU Member countries	559,714 56%	171,549 41%	220,648 50%	35,509 49%
Third countries	310,254 44%	241,177 59%	221,623 50%	36,926 51%
Total	991,606	412,726	442,271	72,435

Note: EU countries are France, Italy, Greece, Spain and the other Mediterranean countries rest are included as third countries. Other non Mediterranean countries like, Japan, South Korea, Belize, Honduras, Sierra Leone, Panama, Philippines, Taiwan, USA and Portugal are fishing in the region, however not all of them are reporting their catches.

Source: FAO Fishstat

Demersal fish species (Figure 5)

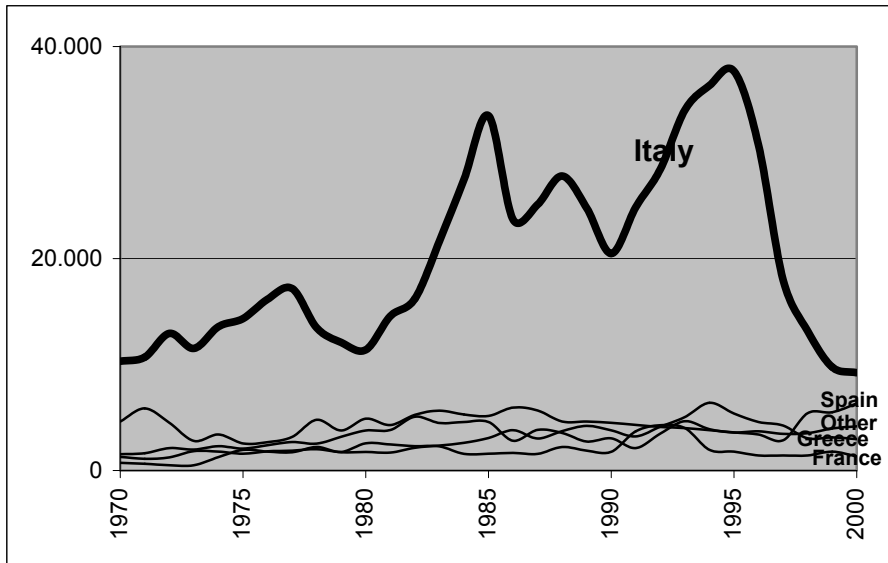
Until 1995, a significant part of landings of demersal fishes corresponded to the EU countries, however in 1997 a sharp decline in catches is observed mainly in Italy, but also in Greece. A decline occurred also in 1980 in Spain, however in this case catches seems to be slowly recovering. In 2000 Italy declared 41,000 tons, Spain and between 25,000 and 30,000 tons and France almost 6,000 tons.



Source: FAO Fishstat

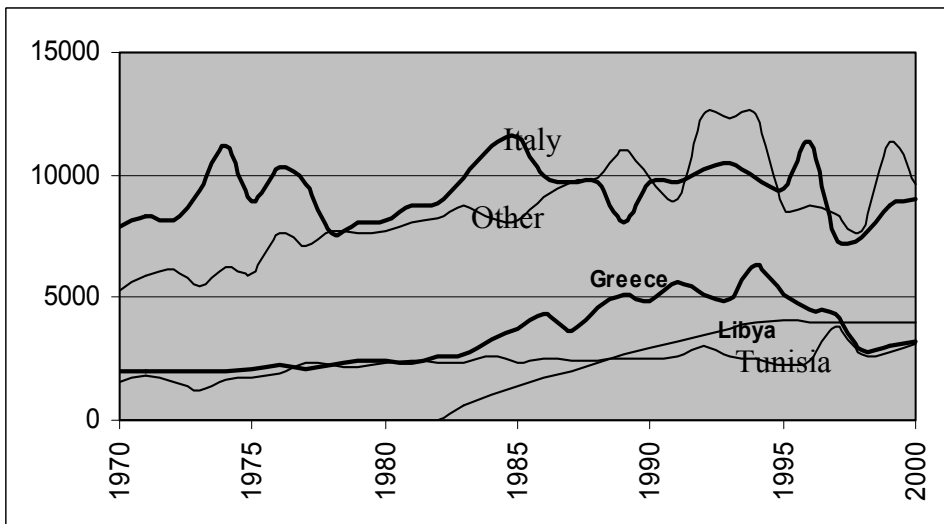
The main Demersal species (Trend of catches in metric tons) Hake (Figure 6).

Looking at the main demersal species it can be realised that the decline of Italian catches is mainly due to hake (around 50% of the decline)..



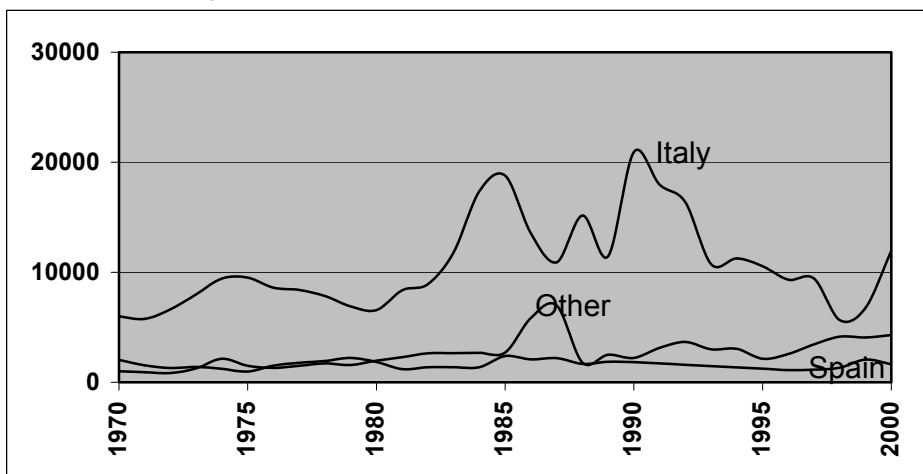
Red mullets (Figure 7)

Source: FAO Fishstat



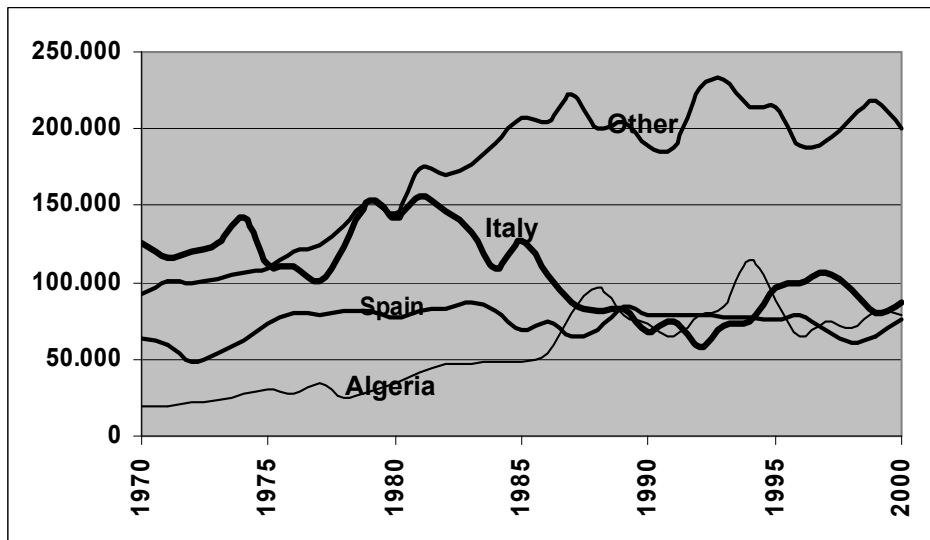
Shrimps (Figure 8)

Source: FAO Fishstat



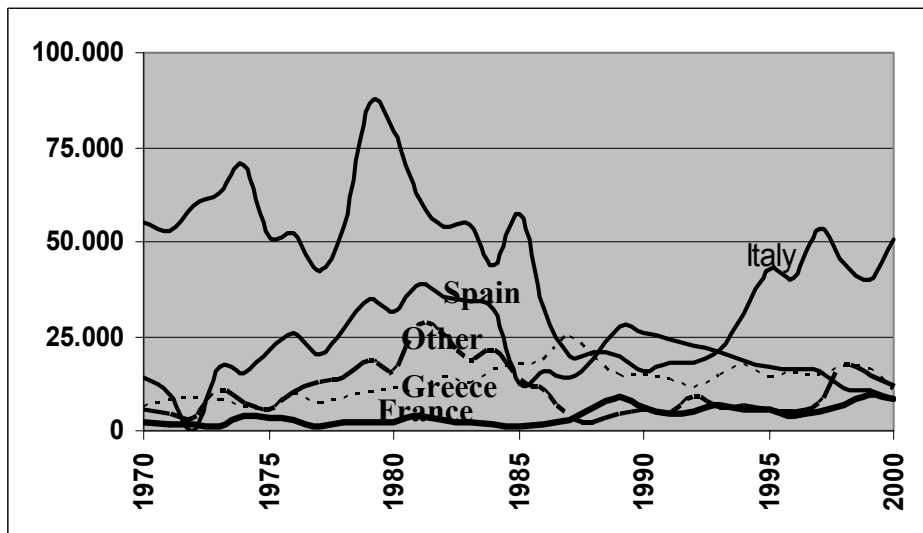
Source: FAO Fishstat

Small pelagics species (Figure 9)



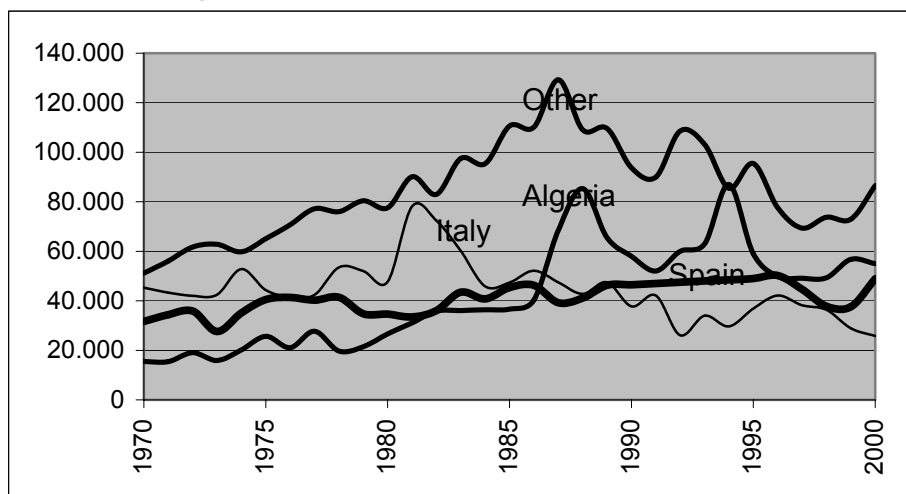
Source: FAO Fishstat

Anchovy (Figure 10)



Source: FAO Fishstat

Sardine (Figure 11)



Source: FAO Fishstat