





Introduction to Ghana





Fashionable neighbor. Mpatado: July, 2017

- The first nation in Sub-Sharan Africa to achieve independence from European colonial power. Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, became independent from Great Britain in 1957 (CIA, 2016).
- GDP is \$42.7 billion, up 32% increase from 2010; From 2000 to 2016, Ghana's per capita GDP increased from a \$263.1 to \$1,513.5 USD (current USD; World Bank, 2016).
- The surge in Ghana's GDP can be explained by remarkable growth in the service and industrial sectors, which represented, respectively, 56.8% and 24.3% of the total GDP in 2016 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2017: 5).
- Natural resource profile includes gold, diamond, bauxite, manganese, aluminum, oil, cocoa, and timber. Gold is presently Ghana's leading export (42% of total), followed by cocoa beans (18%) and crude petroleum (9.1%) (2016 data; AJG Simoes et *al*, 2011).
- Prevailing issues include insufficient public funds, inadequate infrastructure, and a fluctuating international oil market (Molini et *al*, 2015).

Background on Ghana's Fishery

- Fishing industry contributes between 1 and 4.5 percent of Ghana's total GDP, but its contribution is declining (FAO, 2016 and Ghana Statistical Service, 2016).
- The fisheries sector employs 10 percent of the entire Ghanaian labor force (FAO, 2016).
- The vast majority are employed in the small-scale, artisanal fisheries sub-sector, which consequently provides over 70 percent of total fish catch, and employs over 60 percent of women engaged in the industry (lbid).
- Fish comprise 50-63 percent of the total intake of animal protein in Ghana, representing the highest proportion in Africa (FAO, 2016; Anon, 2000 in Béné *et al*, 2005).



Negotiation over tuna catch. Dixcove: June, 2017



Fish production has decreased from 377.6 in 2000, to 203 in 2014, though consumption has remained steady, at around 586, and Ghana's population has increased (thousand tons; World Bank, 2016; FAO, 2016; FAO, 2016b).



- Shark species are apex predators, situated at the top of the food chain, and prey on smaller fish and marine animals. Apex predator mortality affects trophic interactions, and thus life further down the food chain (Stevens et al, 2000).
- "Slow growth, late attainment of sexual maturity, long life spans, low fecundity, and natural mortality" make shark species especially vulnerable to overfishing (Ibid: 476).

- Illuminate the extent of the artisanal shark fin trade in Ghana.
- Examine the social, political, economic, and environmental aspects of the shark fin trade in Ghana.
- Twenty-five semi-structured interviews.



Panorama of the fishing village and coast from rooftop. Shama Apo: June, 2017

Plenty of Fish in the Sea? Shark Fishing and the Fin Trade in Ghana: a Biting Review

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Sharks and the Fin Trade

- Sharks are caught as targeted species and as bycatch in Ghana, and provide locally-consumed animal protein, and a source of income for artisanal fishermen (meat is consumed locally and fins are exported).
- Sharks products include meat, fins, shark oil, cartilage, skin, and other parts are used in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics (FAO, 2016b; Dent *et al*, 2015).

Apo: May, 2017

Tema: July, 2017



Weighing the fins. Tema: July, 2017

- Shark meat is dried under the sun and sold as a jerky (Fante: Kako).
- 30 percent of shark and ray species are threatened (IUCN, 2016).
- In 2015, 8152 tons of sharks, rays, skates, and chimeras were caught in Ghana (FAO, 2016).

Objectives

Methods

- Informal interviews/conversations.
- Ethnographic observation.
- Literature review.
- Shama, Dixcove, Axim, Tema, Sekondi, and Takoradi.

Results

I. Agreements

- cash loans to fishermen in exchange for exclusive buying rights to the fins.
- Fin buyers will demand a lower price, often a third to half lower, for the fins if the seller still owes money.
- Loyalty and trust a major factor in these agreements.

II. Experience.

- owners and middlemen reported having been in the fin trade for an average of 18 years (range of 3 to 37 years).
- III. Trade Complexity
 - The average number of canoes owned by canoe owners was 2 (range of 1 to 4).
 - Most canoe owners and middlemen reported selling to only one buyer (68%). The rest reported selling to two buyers (32%)



Canoe owners waiting for the incoming catch. Dixcove: June, 2017











• Middlemen reported buying from an average of 19 sellers (range

the sharks are landed on the separate prices. Shama: June, 201



canoe owners and middlemen said buyers were from Guinea (41%), followed by Ghana (35%), Ghana and Guinea (12%), and China (12%). No canoe owner reported their buyers to be Chinese, and no middleman reported their buyer as Ghanaian.

IV. Livelihoods

• The majority of middlemen (80%) reported that shark fins were their main source of income. Few canoe owners reported that shark fins were their main source of income (38%), citing fish as their main source of income (mostly tuna species).

V. Technique and Seasonality

- Distance: 155km (average), with a range of 77.5km to 250km.
- Length: 4 days (range of 2.5 to 5 days).
- Cost: 1,250 to 2000 Ghana Cedis per trip (average of 1600 Ghana Cedis or ~360 USD).
- Fishing is year-round. Productive upwelling seasons in Ghana are December/January - February and July - September, though fishermen indicated that the latter was the bumper season. Shark season is unknown.

Distance, quality of the bait (i.e. dolphin),

and the lunar cycle (bait is more visible

when the moon if full) are important

Sharks are caught using hook and line

determiners of productive shark catches.

Dolphin cart. Tema: July, 2017

VI. History

• Fin trade began sometime in the mid to late 1970s.

technique.

• Early trade was not monetary, and fins were bartered for nets, lanterns, pans, lamps, soap, sugar, and rice.

dry. Shama : June, 2017





Fisherman repairing net. Dixcove: June, 2017

- Canoe owners and middlemen are not aware of laws governing the catching and/or trading of shark products.
- Some canoe owners knew that it was illegal to catch dolphins and sea turtles.
- Fisheries Act 2002 (Act 625): marine mammals, which include dolphins, are not allowed to be fished for Ghanaian waters, and "Any marine mammal caught incidentally shall be released immediately and returned to the waters from which it was taken with the least possible injury" (MOFAD, 2002: 37).

Name

Great Wh

(tail only)

Common Thresher only)

Hammerl

Milk

Blue

Sand Tige

Common Tiger

Common Guitarfish

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Amma and I. July: 2017



- Despite the law, fishermen caught dolphins anyway, and would hide them if necessary. They also cited lax enforcement.
- VIII. Catch and species composition
- Shark catches have dramatically decreased.
- Shark catch has become less diverse over time; catches are mainly comprised of Blue sharks.
- Fishermen must travel farther distances to catch sharks.
- IX. Species, fin price, and conservation status

	Scientific Name	Local Name	Price paid to canoe owner (average; no money owed on loan; expressed in GH¢ per dry kilo)	Middleman sale price (average; no money owed; expressed in GH¢ per dry kilo)	Conservation Status (IUCN, 2016)
ite	Carcharodo n carcharias	Edu	275	367	Vulnerable
(tail	Alopias vulpinus	Katsipole /Pole	213	280	Vulnerable
nead	Sphyrna spp.	Anto	247	305	Vulnerable
	Rhizopriono don acutus	Esua	256	355	Least Concern
	Prionace glauca	Semin/ Agrogro	112	170	Near Threatened
ər	Carcharias Taurus	Ewia Ber	102	162	Vulnerable
	Galeocerdo cuvier	Mpo Agyina moa	107	137	Near Threatened
	Rhinobatos rhinobatos	Esin	196	200	Endangered

Acknowledgements

Mpatado:



Amma and the kids. Mpatado: June 2017



Alfred and Amma at home. Acquah Mpatado: June 2017